Introduction to Sensory Overload in Lyme

Hi, and welcome to another episode of the healing Lyme summit. I'm your host, Dr. Myriah Hinchey. And today we're going to talk about a symptom that I see in a lot of my patients.

It's something that can lead to irritability. Anxiety can be very isolating and actually impact to a lot of patients relationships. I'm talking about sensory overload.

And for those of you who are lucky enough to not know what it is, it's a phenomenon where the environment is actually overwhelmingly uncomfortable. And here to help us navigate through the link between Lyme disease induced sensory overload is Dr. Tom Moorcroft.

He is a great friend and colleague and I am beyond excited to do this interview with you. So, Dr. Moorcroft, please tell our listeners a little bit about yourself and how you came to specialize in treating tick borne disease.

Well, thanks so much, Dr. Hinchey or Myriah, for having me here. And it's such a blast to be able to have this conversation because as you pointed out, I love the word you use.

Isolated is such a critical one to understand.

Dr. Moorcroftu2019s Lyme Journey

And so in my story, you know, I was, you know, working at the Institute, Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, New York. It's now called the Carey Institute.

But basically they do a lot of landscape ecology, biology research and then they do education. And then I was working in education because I love research.

I love a whole bunch of, you know, older people getting together and talking about papers. And then what we might study next before we do something. But I really wanted to know, how can who takes action if we get them excited about Mother Earth, who takes action?

And it's the kids So I started teaching kids, and one of the things that, ended up happening was I started to have job performance issues, several months after I took this position.

And my boss is just like, what the hell is going on with you? Because, you know, you've gotten like 14 hours worth of work done in like, five hours on a regular day.

You're just like the Energizer bunny. I'm like, I don't know. And she sat me down. She said I needed to get work done on this project. And she said, hey, I'll come back and check on you an hour.

And when she came back, she actually found me staring at the wall, and she had to shake me to kind of get me to come to. But my eyes were kind of open.

And then we both looked down and found out that I was drooling all over myself. And within a couple of days I got this big ol rash. And then I get this.

I realize, oh well, I was kind of tired. My brain wasn't working. I wasn't hanging out with my friends as much, and I went to the doctor. They diagnosed me with acute Lyme disease, and then they treated me for ten days with doxycycline But over the course of the next eight years, pretty much every symptom came back.

And then so I had a lot of brain fog, joint pain and fatigue. And then I would go to the doctor and tell him this about, oh, you're depressed, like you're dead.

I'm like, well, I'm not, but okay, sure, I'll try the meds. And they didn't work. And then they said, oh no, you don't have that. You're like, you have bipolar depression.

You know, the all the good doctors and lawyers have that because it gives them the extra umph. I'm like, right now I'm getting very irritated because one I've tried it, I've listened to all your stories, I've tried all your medicines and they don't work.

And I'm actually not. I'm irritated because I'm in pain and I can't think and you're not listening to me. And so I became increasingly, increasingly isolated from the medical community.

And then people around me didn't know what was going on. So, you know, family and friends are like, what's your problem? I mean, you're, you know, everything looks great in your life.

You know, you look great. I'm like, I feel like crap. And you're telling me I look great, so I'm okay. And so over time, basically what happened was I was my back was against the wall.

I found myself staring at another wall again, going, I have my life is going to hell in a handbasket. Like I'm following this path and it's not working.

I don't like it, and I know if I keep down that path, it'll be the same. I didn't know all the things I know today. I didn't have exposure to naturopathy.

I was new to osteopathy in medical school, but I didn't know about nutrition. So I just like, I'm just going to choose something else. I just said, what are my goals in life and what do I want?

And I, you know, I've been recently married. I wanted to have a family. I love going outside and playing with the dogs and yada yada. And in the end, I was like, I'm just going to pretend that that's my life, because I know if I just keep doing my normal life, I'm getting the same thing.

And then somebody handed me a yoga DVD and I started doing yoga, and then my body started to hurt less. And then I noticed that other people irritated me less.

And then I also noticed that, like, I was engaging with other people more. And when I went to the store, the lights weren't attacking me anymore. Sound that was really low wouldn't bother me and it had to be much louder, almost like a normal person.

And then I started to change my diet. And then ultimately I met two amazing doctors in Maine who treated me for the next four years. And it took me about six years to get better.

But as the time of recording this, I've been symptom free from Lyme and babesia for over 12 years. And all of those sort of pieces of that sensory overload, as well as the isolation from everyone around me because they didn't know what was going on and they just thought I was crazy, that all that sort of fallen away as the symptoms, went away with effective treatment.

Yeah. And that's awesome. Thank you for sharing that story with us. So, you know, first. Yeah. So one other thing. So why do I do this? Because I don't want anybody else to have to suffer like that.

And if they are already let's help them get better quicker, you know. Yeah. And there's so many, so many people who are so, so, you know, firsthand what exactly we're talking about here with this sensory processing disorder and sensory overload.

for for those people listening who don't know what that is, can you talk a little bit about just in general, what a

sensory processing disorder means and what some symptoms are?

Yeah. I think at the top you really highlighted it really well. And it's really this condition where it's a it we describe like we call it a condition, but it's like when your brain is processing sensory information from the outside.

So things you see, hear, smell, taste, touch or even how you emotionally feel in an area, it's not so much that the thing coming in is bad or in and of itself, overwhelming, but it's the brain's response to it.

It's it's interpretation of the external stimulus that really is the thing that drives symptoms. So, some people can't put clothes on. I mean, I have kids who literally are basically wearing these, you know, a dress with no underwear, no bra, no socks, no nothin.

And it's like three times too big for their parents. But that's the only thing they can be in. Or someone can only wear certain clothes, someone you know, and they have to stay dirty because cleaning products and water bothers them.

Or the opposite is they can't get clean enough. Which kind of borders in OCD. And a lot of what I see is like and what I personally experience is like, you can see there's lights on me right now, right?

I would have died 15 years ago. There's no way I was like glasses, you know, huddling. I and I would go like shopping in a mall or something when we used to have those things and it was like, I literally felt like the ceiling lights were attacking my body and my nervous system would get all wound up.

So the same thing can happen. It could be a smell that does it to you and for me. I could never stand perfume. and it's not like I love going through like a mall setting where they're spraying it all over.

But now I can appreciate it. And I can smell a flower and not feel like it's attacking me.

What Sensory Processing Disorder Feels Like

And so essentially, it's like whether it is taste or touch or smell or hearing or whatever, it's this part where your nervous system hyper reacts and everything is like, you know, you're like, oh, and and sometimes it can be even worse, but it's like and it's nonstop.

Right? So it's like and and it's almost like, you know, sometimes it really can be an intermittent thing. But for most people it starts intermittent and it becomes more and more and more common.

And it can be really disabling because you're not able to trust what's coming in. You're like, yeah, I know that there's only like two lights in there on the dimmer, but I feel like it's attacking me and that's really what it is.

And so the sensory information coming in is processed at a much higher degree of gain than it, than it really probably deserves. And that's really that the brain processing disorder that comes through with sensory processing disorder.

And how does how does Lyme disease bring that out or exacerbate it if it's already there. Yeah, I think this is like so key. And I think there's two main ways.

There's the direct way. And then there's kind of the indirect way and the direct way is that things like Lyme, Bartonella, even the babesia can change, like the way you see things, right, or the way your muscles work and one of the classic ones, at a very basic level, is a thing called convergence insufficiency.

And essentially what that means is, you know, we've got our two pupils, the little black dots that allow us to, you know, they constrict and dilate to focus and, and also tolerate the light well.

But babesia can actually change your ability to regulate how your pupils close or open. So they may be more

dilated when the lights are bright, which is the opposite of what they should be doing.

So then you would be overwhelmed directly. But the other thing is we also see with convergence, which is kind of like if I hold a pen in front of my eyes and I think I have one, I want to in order to focus, I need to put both my pupils on one point.

And same thing for reading. If I'm reading something, I have to be at a focus. There. However, Lyme can change the way I see, and many people talk about visual snow and things of that nature, but it also can change the control of the muscles.

So if you've if you try to focus or you have somebody hold a finger or a pen in front of them and keep their focus on that one dot, if my fingertips are your pupils, they should go like this when they come in and they should go out.

So we always have one point and that allows us to focus normally well in Lyme. And a lot of these other infections, we screw up the processing. So the muscles of the eye work well.

The eyes themselves work perfectly. So you go to the eye doctor oh I got 2020, but I can't focus on the page. What we find is when we ask them to do that, their pupils do not line up.

And that's a processing process within the brain itself, directly caused by Lyme. And it also can be caused by things like head injuries. So we also know that Lyme and Bartonella can affect the eye.

We know that they can affect your hearing. And so some people get tinnitus, but other people just get acuity increases or decreases. And when you start to hear a lot of stuff at a much higher degree, that can be kind of overwhelming.

So that's part of how it can happen. And then I think that the indirect one is a little more insidious because it's all about the in my mind, the toxin loads, someone has.

So and Lyme not only directly causes toxins toxin load, but it so pro-inflammatory. So it increases inflammation. And now it's kind of like you have a glass and it overflows.

And so the problem then becomes the more inflamed you are, the it's almost like in mast cell activation syndrome. Right. So in that disorder we're talking about the immune system and looking at like everything coming in.

It's trying to protect you from everything, as if everything in your environment is an insult. Similar when we get Lyme and our nervous system gets all jacked up.

It's trying to protect you, but it views everything because of this low lying sort of inflammation that chronic Lyme creates. That every single thing around you, your nervous systems like wait, wait, wait, that might be coming after me.

And so then you get this, that kind of hyper irritability. And even as I'm talking, I can feel that like I'm almost experiencing it under my skin because, like, I remember what it feels like.

So Lyme really can drive the toxin overload in, as so many of our patients know, it's kind of the straw that broke the camel's back. Oh, so they lived in a moldy environment, but they were okay.

Oh, they had heavy metal feeling like mercury fillings in their mouth, and they were okay with it. Not great, but they're okay. Then they get Lyme and now it just kind of the cup overflows and it's kind of really hard to get everything back under control.

So that's where a lot of our Lyme people sound crazy to certain people because they're like saying that, hey, I went to the supermarket and it flared my Lyme. And people are like, are you crazy?

But I'm like, yeah, because they only had 1% more toxicity and inflammation they could deal with, but they got a 25% boost when they went outside and now they're down for a week.

So the set this is really like a place where what goes on, in our chronic Lyme patients where they seem like a lot of other people from the outside, unfortunately, leading to this isolation, think that they're overreacting.

And so the thing is, a lot of times, it's not that you're overreacting, but it's that your immune system and your nervous system are in fact, hyper irritable.

So they are overreacting. But that's not a personal choice. That's a reflection of the infection, you know, and one of the things that Lyme disease that and healing is we have to feel safe.

Right. And the problem is and I'm sure we can dive much deeper into it. But the big issue with Lyme is that in order for you and I to understand that we're safe because most of us know we're safe to heal, right?

We're like, no shit, duh, I'm supposed to get better, right? It would be safer for me to be not sick with Lyme disease, but our nervous system doesn't process it that way.

And the cuz of safety, particularly fish under standing facial expression, vocal intonation and then gesture, you know, and body language. All of those are processed in areas of the brain that Lyme disease can actually slow down the function of.

So if you're chronically sick, those areas stop working and you can't understand you're safe for whatever reason. Even just isolation from Covid can do that.

But then if you get Lyme on top of it, that is also blocking the same pathway. And it's literally preventing you from recognizing the safety that everyone around you tells you you have.

And so then you get more irritable at them, and then you get more isolated because they don't think that you're listening to them. And it's just kind of a downward spiral.

Right. And so that's kind of the the bigger picture piece. And but it's I would say that, you know, it's it's a it's difficult to tease out which one it is, but because we're starting from both sides, either the Lyme directly causing a problem treatment can handle that can help with that, but then getting it back on track for any of the other reasons.

Each person listening to this has the ability to access healing from that perspective as well. So the nice thing is, no matter which side you're on, we have access to healing.

Right? And I think as long as you are kind of looking at the person as a whole and not trying to do things like in a linear fashion or piecemeal, like if you're tackling the whole ball of wax at once that that individual is struggling with, then you're going to see a much better resolution, incomplete sort of resolution of symptoms.

you alluded to. So you, you gave the example of going into a moldy building. So obviously that would be, you know, a trigger that could bring this out in a patient who already was suffering from Lyme disease.

Can you talk about if they're first of all, elaborate a little bit more about mycotoxins, illness, playing a role, but what other triggers would there be, that could potentially exacerbate this in a patient?

Yeah, I feel bad. I usually have my clear my clear water cup with me, but I today I have my, my nice one. It's actually one of my mom got me for Christmas.

It says Tom miss hot coffee. It's so cute. But the it's really simple in my brain. I like to keep it super simple. There's a vessel that has so much that it can hold.

And if you've got stress in your life that's up here, you're doing all right. But then and you've got a little bit of mold in

your life and you're all right.

But now you get Lyme disease and now you're not all right. And the vessel or you, your body can't handle the amount of toxicity that you're exposed to.

How Lyme and Co-Infections Exacerbate Sensory Issues

And so the problem here is if I were to have removed that mold now, my Lyme and my stressor of life are right here and I'm in a better place. But when you have mold and Lyme, now you're over the top.

And so this is the challenge. We have more common things that will cause problems like mold, like a crappy diet, like lack of exercise, like stress in your life because I mean, stress is the number one cause of inflammation in the developed world.

But you do. You have the mold exposure. You may have heavy metal fillings in your mouth. you can have a whole number of things, but then people are like wired, somebody getting triggered by going on a hike, like a really mild hike.

Well, the problem was it was a stressor that sometimes is good for you, but you were at a point where you couldn't handle it. And that's really the thing.

So anyway, once you're initially triggered by something like Lyme or a co-infection or from mold, then it can re trigger people. And the challenge with some of our toxins, including mold like you're saying, is these you can become either 1 or 2 in your environment where you're living and or you can become colonized.

So you can walk around with it. And even if you go to a different environment, bring it with you. Same with Lyme. You are in an environment, you got it, but now it's in you.

So no matter where you go, like when I was at the mall when I was in high school and it was beaten the hell out of me, I could just leave, you know, and I feel like crap for an hour, but then I would recover.

But when I can't leave the mall because I'm either living in it or I'm walking around with it, or I can't leave the Lyme in the Berbizier because it's in my body.

That's kind of where they become a bit more challenging. And it really brings up a concept called for misses and I think it's a really important one because it will give us understanding of how to heal in general, and also specifically how to overcome this.

Because for me, this is essentially this concept of you could have something that in the proper dose, while in the inappropriate dose and too high of a dose are too long of an exposure would be toxic, you know, like let's take the example of exercise.

If you do too much exercise, it breaks down your body. But if you do just enough exercise, it actually stimulates growth, healing and optimal immune function.

So in hormones it's it's like making sure I do just that. I get a the best. Like amount of exposure to the toxic substance for the appropriate amount of time.

And it's like Goldilocks, it's like you don't want too little because if you don't ever stress your body, it will never heal. It'll actually fall apart.

And if you stress it too much, it won't heal. It'll also fall apart. So there's this beautiful curve that people show, and it's literally just it's just it goes up and it comes down and it's just like a bell shaped curve.

And what's so nice about it is as you stress out your body a little bit more and you challenge it a little bit, you

actually will hear more quickly. But when you get to the top of it, then you start to slide down the curve and then you start to get diminishing returns.

I often see this where we're pushing in a treatment protocol, and then people start to plateau, or they start to see a few things in there. Oh no, no, no, my lyme's worse because the treatment's not working.

That might be a possibility. Or you could be on the downhill because you're pushing too hard. And then the thing is, once you go below the original kind of up and down and you go below, it becomes toxic, which is essentially saying that there's an area, a sweet spot where if you challenge your body a little bit, push through a little bit, but not a lot, you'll get better faster.

And what's beautiful is that there's over 1500 studies on what optimal hermetic stressor doses. And I'm sure that means nothing to almost all of us. And it almost means nothing to me, except I read a lot on it.

But it's 20 to 30% above someone's baseline level of stress is enough. More than that typically leads to true toxicity quicker. So my message about this, even if it sounds like a little bit of mumbo jumbo, is you want to push a hair, but you don't have to push really hard.

So a lot of the things I hear about everybody, oh, that's a huge Horkheimer. It's great challenges. How many people have you seen that either they're doing a little better and they push and they get a timer and they crash because they just went immediately to toxicity or they're getting or they get better.

So they're just like, boom, they take right off. But almost everybody gets, you know, snapped back and they have this big crash. And people are wondering why.

And it's because we pushed our nervous system too hard. We pushed our physiology too hard. So this is a great concept that allows us to take a deep breath and just allow our body to heal at its own pace and our pace.

You know, you're in my pace of recovery from a particular incident will be completely different and unique and personal. And this is powerful because now we learn that while we can learn from what everyone else around us is talking about their experience, we need to have our own because I would say that while we started off talking about isolation from our family, our friends, or even the medical community that at the time we trusted and then they betrayed our trust.

The biggest isolation I see is the damn Lyme field, isolating each and every one of their own members, doctors or doctors. Wow, I'm getting excited here. Doctors are doing this.

Patients are doing this. The online forums are like, if you're not doing what I'm doing, you're not doing it right. Well, but I'm not you. So let's not have that conversation because I get more medically overstressed and I go into mental emotional toxicity, which then suppresses my immune system and allows my Lyme to get worse.

When I try to treat myself as if I were someone other than me, right? By comparing myself them. So my my thoughts and my message would be learn from other people.

Learn from this entire amazing summit, and then sit down with your health care provider and figure out what's uniquely appropriate for you, because that is actually the number one way that people with Lyme get sicker is trying to have someone else's healing journey.

Yeah, I couldn't agree with you more. I think that, different people are going to respond to different treatments that are right for them. And, you know, that's why there isn't a one size fits all.

You know, there there's no like, here's your standard protocol to cure Lyme disease, right? Like, it just it doesn't exist to my knowledge. and I think as medical providers, we have different styles that attract different, patients to us.

And really, you know, I think I think patients have a lot of really good instincts and they're drawn to the people that practice medicine in a way that resonates with them and is going to be able to heal them.

So I want to give you the opportunity and our listeners, the opportunity to learn how to find you. So please share how and where our listeners can find you.

And if you have anything exciting coming up that they should know about. And then we're going to dive deeper into this conversation. Dr. Moorcroft, please let everyone know where they can find you.

Thank you so much. And I certainly encourage everyone to become a member because I was like, wait, we're done. We have so much about empowering people to start making a change at home today.

So definitely take advantage of that. and I thank you so much. I know my medical practice is Origins of Health. Com you can find out all things about myself and my partners in the people who've trained with us and work with us to help other people just like you heal from Lyme mold exposure and even pans and pandas with kids and so that's our big thing.

And then, you know, one of the most important things to me is I can't see everybody by myself. I know that you and I talk a lot offline. Like we're so busy helping, but that's why we do things like this.

And so one of the things that I've really, felt the benefit of is the mentorship and the mentors that I've had, including Dr. Horowitz. And, you know, you and I have talked so much and I gained so much from talking to other practitioners.

So I do a practitioner training program called the Lyme Disease Practitioner Certification and Mentorship Program yearlong, where practitioners who are seeing patients have the ability to get real, firsthand knowledge.

We take what we learn in workshops and what we learn at conferences and what people are talking about. Inform and give you true one on one and small group mentorship, as well as fill in any of the blanks.

So it's a true medical fellowship level of training and people can find out more at tommoorcroft.com. Awesome. Thank you so much. Okay, so let's dive back in by talking first about how would you.

Triggers, Toxic Load, and Hermetic Stress

And I mean obviously if your patient has a diagnosis of a tick borne disease, then, you know, we kind of know that some of this sensory processing disorder is linked to that.

But can you just talk a little bit about symptoms of like a true, dare I say, like a true sensory processing disorder versus one that is being sort of exacerbated or ignited or caused by Lyme disease.

Yeah, that's a challenging one. And I think the big thing is timing. Like if you've had a kid who's just always been that way. Now, granted, I in my head I already hear the, the peanut gallery go, well, they get out of control, I don't want it's possible, but do a really good history.

But if you have someone who is born and everything's okay, and then they're developing, they're three, 4 or 5 years old and they've got like, one thing or one really small thing, and there's probably no history of these other infections.

It might be a true sensory processing disorder. The issue is what drives it. Is it a head injury that they had when you didn't really like I remember my daughter Talia had fallen down the stairs like 4 or 5 stairs.

It wasn't anything crazy, but she tripped and landed with her head down and hit the banister. When she is three and a half and it was like two years later, she started having some challenges reading, even though we did everything right.

Right now granite. She just need a little extra help and then got past it. But in the history we thought it was from the head injury. So but her challenge was from something.

It was just not apparent in the beginning. We had to track back and then we had to rule out everything else. So for me, a lot of this is sensory processing disorder is kind of a, a diagnosis of exclusion.

It's really about is there any I'm always like, is there something treatable? And everyone it is not all Lyme. I just want to get it out there. It's like, God, if it were, I mean, one, we would have more money in research.

But we're getting a lot more research now. But there are other things that can do it. I mean, and we see autistic children are a great example. They have a lot of process and a lot of sensory issues.

And in some of them there is a Lyme overlap. But there's a big difference in a kid who's got like non Lyme, non tick borne related autism like symptoms and true autism.

Right. And it's like I know that there's overlaps right. But there are people with other things. But the question with autism is what is it. Because so many people find a biomedical approach to treatment.

We'll find that if they do the nutrition they find out that they've cerebral folate, you know, receptor antibodies and all these other things are, you know, that we can improve a lot of that.

So my question always is it's kind of like genetics versus the environment. Right. So much of what pushes our sensory processing is actually our environment and a lot of our ADHD.

And and I'll use the example of ADHD right now technically not sensory processing disorder, but it kind of is because they can't focus on one thing in their environment because they're being overwhelmed by everything.

And the only thing that can cause in the focus is like a video game that's moving at 100 million miles an hour. And so then they tune it out. But most of us might enjoy a video game from time to time, but that should not be our medication, right.

And so I'm just going like, well, why can't you handle everything around you and so much of it is the tools that you've learned to deal with it and also the, the I and I need.

I know the work you do, and it's like, I don't really think of you as the person who starts with infection. I mean, unless it's like the most obvious thing you need to do.

And I would agree with what you said earlier, sometimes you do it all at once. But I mean, I know that there's this baseline of like, how is the body itself functioning and is Lyme because lyme's a part of the fully functional body, because your body.

The other thing too, is the body is always 100% in perfect compensation. It is literally doing the very best it can for you at any given point in time.

Now, you might not like where it's at and that's why we do things like treat the infections. We see Dr. Hinchey and we get like our gut fix stuff. We get a good diet plan, we get the right supplement.

We all do these things. So but it's to me, it's like it's a true sensory processing disorder is kind of this leftover piece after we verified it's not other things, you know, because otherwise like with what I'm like, why?

Why can you why are you not handling it like what is not now we can be born. Our brains aren't wired quite right. I mean, we can't help that. That's just part of normal development.

But for most people, I can't recall anyone I've ever seen where they they haven't been able to see some improvement in their ability to handle their environment and interact with it more appropriately.

If they take care and fuel their body with the right fuel, they sleep properly. They learn some of the tools, which I know we're going to talk about in a minute to help them get out of their own way when they get stuck in a mental loop, because Lyme sets those up too.

So it's like I'm willing to do all the work because I think everyone here listening deserves to actually have optimal health. And my optimal health and your optimal health and someone else's may be different, but we all have this ability to lift up the bottom.

And so that's really the big difference is, I mean, and if you were completely fine and then you got Lyme disease and now you're not, well then we know where it came from.

That's a little more cut and dry. Right. So you're dancing around my next question, which is, you know, in addition to treating infections, if the sensory processing disorder or sensory overload is infection driven, what would be other treatment modalities or therapies that you would use to help to resolve it?

Yeah, I think this goes back to where we say Lyme can cause your brain to get stuck in this mode, and there's also other things that can get you stuck.

Right. So like isolation and stress, just being sick for a long period of time irregardless of what caused it. So let's say we have Lyme and we have these stressors.

The beauty is now we have two sides. And this side you access healing like you said by treating it. The other side is we go, oh, I have access to healing.

So maybe my Lyme is not moving as well as I like with my treatments. Maybe it's not because I'm not treating it hard enough. Or like we said earlier, maybe I'm treating too hard and I need to pull back a little, which I actually find works way better than most people would pontificate about.

But it's actually finding that sweet spot. But over here is where we have a lot of power, because any time we remove the stress, you know, when we take the level down on our mug and we take some of that stress out, that is analogous to boosting up our immune function.

So then we have less hyper irritability. So over here I do a ton of things. I mean one of the most basic is sleep. You know, I mean we could talk probably for days on that.

and so that's a really key because that's when your brain optimally detoxifies most of your brain detoxification happens in deep sleep through the lymphatic system.

So we want to focus on that. But then people are like, oh, I can't sleep because my mind keeps racing. Right? Okay. So now let's take charge of what we're thinking about.

So the first thing I suggest for people is figure out what you really want and focus more on that than what you don't want, because it's really hard to forget that you don't want Lyme disease, and it's hard to forget about your symptoms.

So don't worry if you try. So if you focus on what you want so much that you can't remember what was wrong with you, then you're better, which is great.

And the other thing is your body doesn't sterilize itself. Your excuse me? I said that incorrectly. Your medications and your herbs do not sterilize your body.

If you become sterilized from Lyme, it's because your immune system did it. We just bring down the load with the antibiotics and the antimicrobial herbs.

So if you're not concurrently working over here now, I would also say nutrition is critical, not just because it's your

microbiome and your, you know, and your immune system, but because of the feedback from the vagus nerve up to your brain and the relationship of of nutrition to mood and thinking and cognition.

And we know that if you do standard American diet, I can make you stupid. I can literally make mice forget things by giving them a standard American diet.

And I oh, you know, and if you eat, two baked goods or processed foods per week, you increase your risk of depression by something like 56% wild. So it it kind of makes us wonder.

And then when we get to the other things that we often overlook. If you think about poly vagal theory, I so many of us talk about fight or flight as our sympathetic nervous system and then rest and rejuvenate is parasympathetic.

But Dr. Porges tells us there's this other part because like fight or flight means I'm going to the saber tooth tiger hopped into my camp and I'm like, dude, I can win. I'm going to fight him.

Or you're like, oh my God, that's a saber tooth tiger. I cannot fight him, but I can run away and I have a chance to win the challenge.

Practical Healing Tools for Patients

If the saber tooth tiger grabs me in his mouth or her mouth, what do I have left to do? I've already not flighted well enough and I certainly haven't fought well enough because I'm in the mouth.

So what can I do? Well, usually what you do is play dead because cats tend to get bored and then they drop you and then you can scurry away. So when I get caught and I feel like I no longer have a chance to win, I no longer feel like I actually have the ability to heal.

That's the time where I freeze. And the freeze state is really not great for our immune system, because it leads to more suppression of the immune system, greater inflammation, lower detoxification, lower gut function.

And lo and behold, you also see people start doing more of this. And they have greater withdrawal, which leads to greater isolation, which leads to greater free state.

So they're stuck in this thing. This is where you need to feel safe in order to heal. And I want to change that word for a minute. Safety is safety to your reptilian keep you alive nervous system, not to your brain that knows you are safe, but it just still can't take action.

This is that reflex protective mechanism that does its best to allow you to pass on your genes, and being alive and passing on your genes is not necessarily related with feeling great.

So how do we push? And let's change the word to comfort zone, right? Because if you're familiar with something or you're comfortable, then your nervous system is like, okay, I'm safe.

So if you're sick with chronic Lyme, you have the easier or mold, Bartonella, whatever for a long period of time that becomes your familiar state, aka your comfort zone.

So if I ask you to change too quickly yet snapped out of it and it just pulls you right back, that's where we are talking about at the top of the talk, right?

So that's also where Hermes comes in. I need to push a little bit. Not too much, because if I don't push at all, I won't heal. But I don't want to push so hard that I either become toxic or I overwhelm my familiarity.

Set point. So we want to move a little bit. So the question is how do you do that? And one of the really easy things that you can do is to take a deep breath at the end of the day and go, what were three things that went well today?

And it doesn't matter how big or small, and I would actually suggest the more nuanced and smaller the better. But start anywhere you want. And I when I started this with our daughter years and years ago, she go, I go.

What was great today she goes, my cat, okay, all right. We need to get three. What was great today? My cat. What was great today? My cat I'm like, okay, well, if we're an adult we could probably come up with three.

But when I'm talking to a 5 or 6 year old, let it be their cat. Because I did this for a few weeks and then it was like my cat, my cat, my friend. Right. So do that.

And then the if you want to uplevel this whole thing so that you get a little bit of gratitude. Gratitude opens the heart and gratitude and love equals safety because the nervous system becomes parasympathetic.

And if you want to get into science, it also boosts heart rate variability, which is an indicator for resilience to stress and infection and increasing immune function.

So literally, yes, by just recognizing the small goods in the sea of crap that you've experienced today will boost your immune system probably more than any supplement you can put in your mouth.

So then after you write those down and that should only take you a minute or two, write down three wins you're going to have for tomorrow and then put it down.

When you wake up in the morning, you read those six things and you're good to go. 4 to 7 days into doing this, you're going to go, oh my God, I have like ten things I'm grateful for.

And now I'm sleeping better because you become parasympathetic, not frozen, but you get into rest and rejuvenate, which then lets you go to sleep, which allows you to brain detox, which also boosts GI function because it happens primarily while you're in parasympathetic and when you're sleeping, it's a great time to heal your gut and then all of a sudden you can think more clearly and your immune system works better.

And then. So that's one thing I love to start with, because it's simple. And then a lot of what we do in our different programs with our patients, I work a lot with breathwork and guided meditations as well as I teach people.

Self-hypnosis and hypnosis and meditation are really interesting words, and my favorite way to look at meditation is to define it as, to become familiar with.

So it's not about focus, it's not about breathwork or or quiet. It's to become familiar with the state that you want to live in. So I ask you this throughout your day today, what kind of meditation have you been in?

Have you been in a positive meditation focusing on what you want and acknowledging that some things in your life aren't the way you want? Or have you been focusing on what you don't want aka a negative meditation?

Because the more whatever you think about the most is what you bring more of in your life, and it can be challenging to get started with. Which is why I say just write down three things.

Don't stress yourself out here. Like I got up and I was able to go pee by myself today. You know, I was up for 30 minutes before I got overwhelmed by the light rather than 20 minutes.

Like, look for the nuances because it'll pick up steam. And really. And the same thing with hypnosis, the thing that's a little different is we teach you ways to go around your conscious mind, because right now, I would say that probably 75% or more of the people that just listen to what I just said are like, I can't do that, or some version of that popped through your mind and that is your, your, your critical factor, your conscious mind going, nope, that didn't work before and I'm going to protect them.

I know I need to do Deanna or Gupta for six years before I'm going to be better, because I read it on the internet like your body is protecting you. So a lot of people try to work on going around the conscious mind and just

reprograming the unconscious or that subconscious mind, because that's the kind of the the workhorse of changing your mind and boosting your health.

But what I would suggest is let's make it easier. Let's chill the conscious mind, install new programing into the subconscious mind, and allow the conscious mind to say, oh, I'm allowing that to happen.

And then it you get it in a relaxed state, but you don't try to avoid it. And I hear the a lot of what we teach in Vegas retraining and, and a lot of our amygdala retraining and all of these other things we do is we're trying to essentially trick the conscious mind to let us go around it.

And what I'm saying is that ain't going to work in the long run. Or if it does, it will require a lot of extra energy and work that many of us don't have.

I know I didn't have it, but what I realized over my journey was if I started to recognize that what I was doing for myself was incrementally working more and more every day, and some days I'd go back.

But I just had a little more today than yesterday, and I kept that up and my the thing I didn't tell you guys is in the beginning, like I said, for the first eight years I didn't have a diagnosis.

So the first two years of my treatment, I didn't have a name for it. I went the actual healing treatment. The six years of doctors being a is a different story, but it was really interesting because I didn't have a label.

So when I started to get better, I was just like, this is amazing. I'm getting a little bit better and like 1% better for me was like the most amazing stuff ever because I had felt like dirt for the past six years and I was like, oh, this is amazing.

So that's a lot of what I like to do. And it's really to empower people to understand that with very simple techniques that they can literally reprogram not only their current state of health and healing to optimize both sides, not to just say, I'm oh, now you don't need Lyme treatment.

I'm a great example. I needed two years of prep work, and then four and a half more years of treatment. But now how many people can tell you they haven't been sick for over a decade?

You know, and that's what I want to share with people that hope, but also that all the work you're doing over here in that sort of stress, mental, emotional stage to help you move out of that fight or flight, fight flight free state is that's actually a part of the healing that you have control over.

And every time you do a little practice that sounds so stupid, spend three minutes. No more writing down three things that were great from today, and three things that are going to be great tomorrow and do it for a week and a half.

And I bet you'll never stop doing it. That sounds like too simple to be true, right? But I would challenge everyone here to do that, and I would love for you to reach out to me and let me know how that changed your lives, or if it didn't, because this is empowerment.

And one of my the big things are if you can develop the skills to provide your body with the appropriate hermetic stress, like enough and you don't overdo it, then you can actually start to gain momentum in healing and then you become more objective.

So I'm on double dose zone. I'm on disulfiram. I'm on to quit. I'm on crypto, lapis, knotweed, cat's claw, whatever it is. And I'm feeling worse. Am I pushing too hard or am I not pushing hard enough?

And the problem is, most of your doctors aren't living in your body unless you're the doctor and the patient. So we can do our best to ask you question, but what we need is you to be totally in touch inside.

And one other thing where I that really I'm glad I didn't forget the sensitivity that is developed by most of our Lyme patients and Lyman friends. And Tickborne co-infections, I would suggest, is an amazing gift because when I was grew up, I could feel all kinds of crap and my parents thought I was crazy and weird, and they didn't want other people to think that.

So they tried to beat it out of me. So I was kind of like, you know, in a cocoon, not being fully me. And then Lyme disease blew it wide open. And then I felt like everybody who touched me, I was raw, like they were, you know, lemon and dirt and salt in a wound.

So it was like two extremes. But what I learned was when your sensitivity actually brings you back more to your natural state. So I'm always looking like, what is this infection giving me as a benefit?

And so I said the Lyme disease. I said, you know what, thank you so much for all the gifts on your way out the door because you're no longer welcome in my life.

Please leave a note that reminds me which gifts I'm supposed to be learning about in the future. But I didn't say, get the hell out of my body, you piece of crap infection.

I hate you because then it'll never leave. Because it'll be cemented in like, my cocoon. My parents tried to make. But the point about the sensitivity is you can learn to turn it down, and you can learn to turn it up.

But right now, I remember in the beginning it was so hard to turn it down. But now I can go into a more and I can be wide open, or I can close it down.

The airport's my favorite if I like to keep it tight, because there's a lot of weird energy going on. But you can learn to do this and when you learn to do that, you go, hey, I adjusted how I feel right now.

Three things changed, but two didn't because those two things may be more the physical. So explore this mental, emotional, spiritual, voodoo, whatever you want.

I love using the word voodoo because I think it's awesome, but this energetic side of yourself that's truly 100% part of who you are and and and love on it and learn it and ask what it's about.

Because to me, this is the place where a lot of us stop. And so in our practice, we also use a lot of things like homeopathy to make it a little bit easier.

I might do this guided meditations and breathwork I talked about, but I might have binaural beats in the background. Right? Because it's bringing we're helping with technology to achieve the brain state for you.

How Caregivers Can Support Loved Ones

So we can do that. But a lot of like the other work out there, it's hard. I give people tracks that they put headphones on and they can chill. And through just participating at the very basic level, aka turning it on and listening for ten minutes, we've done the heavy lifting for them, right?

And then when they're ready, they can go to those next levels. Yeah, I think that's all great advice. And I think just you planting the seed that there are things that you can do and that you can do at any time.

And I think we all know that feeling, right. Like when we're going into fight or flight or when something has triggered us and we're overwhelmed and, you know, it's almost like you just lit a stick of dynamite.

It's like, if you can just remember to like, stop, take a deep breath, count to three, do something right. You can actually slow or stop that whole ignition process and literally stop yourself from going into like this full overload or even into a panic attack.

But I think for a lot of people, they don't even realize that they have the power to effect any of this, right? Much less inhibited. So, and I love just starting with we have like a little, you know, at dinner time, right.

Like it could be a simple dinner time check in with the whole family. Like, it doesn't have to be something that the patient does by themselves. Right. Go around the table.

What's three great things that happened today? Or good things or three things that didn't suck at least, you know. And then. Did you learn from the bad stuff.

Right? That too. Right. If something bad happened, what? Right? What did you or could you learn? Sometimes we need other people to help point that out.

but that being said, so we talked about the care, like the patient and what the patient can do. Right. What advice would you give caregivers or loved ones?

Because a lot of times, no offense, they just don't get it. So like, what would you say to parents and caregivers of a patient that has a lot of this sensory overload, whether it's in relation or not, to an infection?

Yeah, I, I totally agree with you. Like first of all, I would say look in the mirror, take care of yourself first and check your shit at the door. Because seriously, like, is there ever a time in your life where you felt a certain way or thought something and someone else didn't understand and you it has happened to you?

I would say I've been doing this for over 15 years exclusively. That's it. All I do. I may have seen one person who may have had more than 50% secondary gain going on in their brain.

Most of the people I have ever met, despite what it look like on the outside, are not just taking advantage of this. Yeah, right. They are not making this up.

And if they did start to make some of it up, it's because they are on that loop that we talked about earlier with the fight flight freeze. And it's like the more they feel like crap, the more they're going to feel like crap.

So first things first, support the patient. Recognize there is something going on. You have to acknowledge their experience of themselves because you don't know what they're going through.

And one of the number one ways to disassociate, or anyone in your life is to invalidate their experience of themselves. And then they feel betrayed by you and other people, and then they get worse.

So let's stop adding fuel to the fire. And then I'm a big believer in not leading by the example of power, telling them to do this or that, but to actually lead by the power of example.

You should be. If you're telling someone else to do something and they should act a certain way, look in front of that mirror and go, hey, what in my life am I not showing up the way I'm telling them they're not?

And you need to lead by example first and then also means I know I work with about 50% children in our practice, many of whom have infection triggered autoimmune encephalitis aka pans pandas.

Really nasty behavioral stuff going on because of the infection and what it triggered. most of the parents are trying so hard to help the kid that they're not taking care of themselves.

And a lot of times the kids start to not do the things parents want. But it's probably, at least in part because you are not doing the things that you need to do for yourself.

And they get it. They might not be at a verbalize it yet, but they're following your example. And even adults, like if I want to change something that my wife Jill is doing, I have to make sure that before I open my friggin mouth, you know, I need to look and say, what am I doing?

That's similar? And more times than not, if I change a behavior that's on a similar thread, she'll change. So really take care of yourself first so that you have the energy to show up for the other person.

You can't be a great partner, a great, you know, friend, a great parent if you feel like dirt too. So take care of yourself and try not to tell them what to do.

So one of the things that I learned that was really cool, I call it Leia. Leia, just because it's easy to remember, but it's listen, echo and ask. So you listen to them.

And as you know, it's really hard for me to listen because I just like, want to fix things. But you listen and notice there's no fix in here anywhere.

It's listen echo and ask. So you're going to listen to them and then you're going to echo back kind of paraphrasing what they said. Because that way they know you were listening to them and then you're going to ask them about it.

So in a social example we could make health ones but would be like, you know, my daughter was on a ski team where they were very intense, very high level, but she was the youngest girl by a long shot.

And then there are a couple of boys who are close in age, but she didn't. But they were kind of all they want to do is ski or play on their phone, which she liked the skiing part, but the social part of watching boys on a lift play with a phone, it's kind of like, that's not how we live.

So she was telling me. Then we tried a different team that was more social, and then she's telling me how it's not, neither one is good and blah blah blah.

And I was like, so thank you so much for sharing that and letting me know. So it sounds like, you know, being on that ski team last year there, there weren't really all that many good things or some I use some of her words and then she's like, and you could see her change.

She was like thinking like, wait a second, I just said that out loud, And I said, well, were there any times where it went? Well, but there any even like for 30s, was there something good to happen?

And then she goes, well, yeah. And then she didn't stop talking for 30 minutes. And you can do this with your health. It's kind of like, hey, I had a really shitty day.

Thank you so much for sharing that I'm okay that you had a crappy day. I hear that your day was really one of the worst ones you've ever had. Was there anything in there that wasn't as bad as the rest of it?

So I didn't even ask if it was good to say. Is there something that was less bad than the worst? And there always is. And then you can go and you can explore that.

But nowhere in here did I try to fix it, which is hard for me. I'm a doctor. I'm a Type-A person. I'm a dude. All these things add up to tell Tom something.

Tom automatically fixes it, even if that's not what Jill wanted. So really, there's so much power in using this on yourself and others. and just love on these people.

I mean, this is a person I'm assuming that you love in your life. If you're a caregiver, go back to the place of where they live in your heart and understand that they may have an infection.

They are not the infection. And that's really the big thing. And if you can just listen. And the biggest thing that I experience in so many patients is that invalidation, the accident or betrayal of people who don't understand them, the goal, it's like I've heard that statement, a little catchphrase, of course.

Listen to understand. Right. And another way to and like to define communication is really the goal of

communication is the response you get. So if you are communicating with your loved one and they start, you know, throwing blades back at you or they hate, you know, hate speech, maybe you kind of missed the point of what they need today and you're just adding more stress to it.

So but if you talk to them and you listen to them, you echo what they're experiencing and you ask them a question that can help them move to the next level.

Now they're like, they open up and you can see their guard goes down and oh my God, all of a sudden they're parasympathetic. So you just gave them a gift of healing that may be powerful, that any medicine they put in their mouth all day because you gave them the love and that vibrational relief.

Because even if I just said that when I just said when I was hurt, I could feel my whole body calm down. Right? I'm very kinesthetic. I feel all this crap as I'm talking it, so I always have to make sure I end on a good note so that my energy is all nice.

But yeah, love on a man, love on those people because they're sick. But also remember all the other things we talked about and, and use that in your own life so that you can help them see how to use it in their lives.

Love, Healing, and Where to Find Dr. Moorcroft

And this is really I think the most challenging part is we're all responsible for ourselves and no one else. And we are so influential around over everyone around us.

And one of the reasons I say this is, like all the things I try to teach people are things that work in health, and then they can use it in the rest of their life too.

So it's not like, oh, you're just using it to get better from lyme. And then you go about your life. These are actually life skills that allow you to remain healthy for as long as you can.

And so that's really I mean, it's a little bit of a long winded thing, but I think caregivers are the most underrated. And the other part is understand that we all understand that you're under stress.

It's not just the kid who's sick or the the wife for the husband or the partner, you know, who's actually sick. We understand that the the lover, the caregiver, the parent is feeling this.

And a lot of times as a parent of a teenager, I don't know the right answer, but what I do know is that telling him this shit that I know that they don't want to hear, or if I accidentally say and pisses me off if I keep going, that makes them feel worse and makes me feel worse drains our energy, suppresses our immune systems.

So if you screw up to say, hey, I'm sorry, why don't we try something different, have fun with it. But what you'll find is when you caring for someone else and helping lead by your energetic and your physical example and your mental emotional example will help you feel better and then feel better.

And then you'll all be at a higher level of health together than you were when they started. Yeah, that's great advice. I, I honestly couldn't agree more.

So before we wrap up, I want you to let our listeners know what you think the most important thing in general, this is a wide open question. what do you think is the most important thing to keep in mind when dealing with, healing Lyme disease?

And that's a beautiful question. One thing. One thing, one thing of one word love. Because like love yourself. Try this one on for size. Love Lyme today.

Because. You know, the thing is, if you. One of my mentors said and she shared this from her mentor, who's a very influential osteopath, who said, if you treat everyone and everything from the highest vibrational frequency of love,

no matter what you do, it'll work better and it will eventually work. And for me, it's not so much about curing people from Lyme disease.

I would like that to happen. But you've heard of people cured from Lyme, cured from cancer, cured from whatever else they have who are miserable. They make the world less fun and they aren't happy themselves.

But if I if we heal, if we allow someone to become whole again, meaning feeling love and gratitude deep in their every nook and cranny of their being, then they become whole.

And to me, that's healing. And it is easier to heal if you're a whole. It seems it's easier to to achieve cure as part of healing than it is to cure and hope for healing later on.

And if you start with love, not everyone's going to make it. This is the real world. Everybody you know, people that live and die at different times and different durations.

But what I do know is if you have love in your heart, you're going to enjoy the time you have, the health you have to a higher degree, and you have the much better chance to get to that next level.

Thank you for that. Okay, so that's going to conclude our interview. And honestly I don't think we could have left it on a better note. So for all of you watching, I really hope that this discussion has helped and is helping you along with your journey and healing.

Lyme disease. Dr. Moorcroft, before we go one more time, just let patients know where they can find you. Great. I'm at originsofhealth.com and tommoorcroft.com.

Awesome. Thank you. And we will see you all at the next episode of Healing Lyme. Bye bye.