Drumming, dance, and ancestral medicine

And that power of drumming, of hearing druming, wakes, I believe, really awakens something deeply primal in all of us, regardless of our ancestry, because all our ancestors were tied to rhythm.

All of ancestors danced. And I said this this morning too, like we grieve together, we celebrate together. We have rites of passage and ceremony together through dance.

And we've been disconnected from it for a variety of reasons, mostly through colonization, truly, that separated people from their power. And when you're around drumming in particular, and what I experience so much with my dance company is no matter what kind of physical, emotional, mental, spiritual state I'm in, when the druming begins the brain, the front of my brain just stops and the deep primal need to move kind kicks in and it just floods you with all the good feeling hormones, you know?

That's the medicine. Hello and welcome back to the Evolution of Medicine podcast. We are here at the Institute for Functional Medicine's annual international conference.

And today I have the pleasure of being with Guy Tamaker-Clark, who kicked us off this morning with the first keynote. And we're going to talk about that, but maybe I could just wind it back a bit.

Give us a little bit about the journey of how you ended up here, keynoting this conference and your journey to be in the role that you are now. Yeah, thank you.

Well, it was such a thrill and a delight to be invited to keynote the conference.

Keynoting IFM and the power of community

I have been part of the functional medicine community through my trainings in various modules and doing AFMCP and working with other functional medicines practitioners in my practice, but this is my first time attending the IFM conference, so it's a complete thrill to be able to keynote and, you know, my message and my work reflects so much of what this community and the integrative medicine community is really all about, which is community.

Yeah, wonderful. Well, it's my favorite topic, so we're going to jam into it. I want to actually give you a great compliment to start with here because Having put on functional medicine events and been to functional medical events, my take is that in general, if you try and do some sort of dance thing at a functional medicinal event, it doesn't typically work in America.

Now, two years ago, I went to the Mexican Association of Lifestyle Medicine. I was speaking there. All I can say is at the conference was the medicine.

Part of it was when they put the music on, everyone danced. And not just like dance like it's nine o'clock in the main conference room, but dance, like, it is the Saturday night party at nine.

They're full on all the time, all away. And I was like I don't think American doctors are capable of that. But I saw a bit of it today and I didn't know whether you built it up and wow, this is a most powerful thing you can do for your health and your brain.

So they're just so excited to like do the healthy thing. Or there's a lot of new younger practitioners here who are ready to jam. But whatever cause and effect there was, it happened today.

And I was there and I saw it. So well done. Yeah. Thank you very much. I will say that I've been doing this at

various conferences for a few years now.

And I also was skeptical that you could get an entire conference room full of mostly type A, very cerebral, heady folks standing up and dancing. And, I have been surprised every time.

I think it speaks to the fact that we are deeply connected to this medicine of music and dance. When given the opportunity, and especially when given permission, It lights us all up.

Yeah. It's part of our humanity, really. I'll tell you the next level. The next levels are also at that same conference in the evening. On the second evening, they had an African dance troupe.

OK. And so you have the drummers are in middle. So it's not just like music coming through the, you know, through it. Like literally, physically music where you can feel it, right?

And then they have a few like ringers who obviously brought in to get everyone going and doing it And I would say about half an hour in, the permission field has grown and everyone's into it.

And looking across, I'm like, that's Patrick Hannaway doing it and look at Sarah Gottfried and Austin Pearlbutt is over there. I mean, my wife's there, we're having the best time.

This is fun to dance at a conference, but that was like a physical release that only comes from a certain type of dancing that I would venture is not really, that is different to access.

There's a different level of participation, there's different levels of coordination, but I agree with you that that's our birthright. Absolutely, and I think that you may not know this, but I'm in a West African dance company.

I juiced it. And that, you intuited it for sure.

Singing, touch, and shared sensory healing

That power of drumming, of hearing druming wakes, I believe, really awakens something deeply primal in all of us, regardless of our ancestry, because all our ancestors were tied to rhythm.

All of our ancestors danced, and I said this this morning too, like we grieve together, we celebrate together. We have rites of passage and ceremony together through dance.

And we've been disconnected from it for a variety of reasons, mostly through colonization, truly, that separated people from their power. when you're around drumming in particular and what I experienced so much with my dance company is no matter what kind of physical, emotional, mental, spiritual state I'm in, when the druming begins, the brain, front of my brain just stops and the deep primal need to move kind kicks in and it just floods you with all the good feeling hormones, you know?

That's the medicine. Wonderful. Well, if you make it to the party on Saturday, watch out for Bob Roundtricks. He's an incredible dancer. I know that. And you'll witness that on saturday.

Where it's like, yeah, you do karaoke from the stage, but it is one. But there's something powerful about the chorus and people singing together that I think activates in the same way.

Do you agree with that? Absolutely, I do. I've recently gone to a few circle singing experiences. Have you ever done that before? Well, I'm in a men's group and one of the guys in the men group decided that we were going to bring back singing and communal singing as a way of like getting back into the power.

And I was like, that sounds cool. I mean, and I've now experienced it for like a year. Um, like he's totally right. This is also our birthright and we're never doing it.

In the junior school, up 8 till 12, singing is not cool. So when the hymn comes on, you don't sing because you want to sing. Then I go into the senior school where you've got like the testosterone kicking in and you realize that the 18 year olds are belting it out.

And it's cool now to singing as loud as you can. And that like let something go in me. So I can remember like the classic Anglican anthems like Jerusalem, which is like this, you know, basically like a British Zionist song about Jerusalem happening in England or whatever.

But there's something like really powerful and suddenly, 500 school kids all belting it out at the same time. I mean, something's happening. In that vortex.

Yeah, that's really beautiful. Now to come back again and do it with like lyrics that I would align with, which is not British Zionism, you know, but to like be present and the lyrics, that the person in my men's group brought along, it reawoken me to the fact that, yeah, I don't sing in community at all.

And I wish that i did. I'm glad that do now. So when you were talking about the dancing, i was like, this is the same thing. It really is. There are so many medicines.

I chronicle some of them in my book, but there are many that I didn't even include. Touch is another one. It's an incredible medicine that we get separated from over time.

And there's just so few people that actually touch us in the course of a day. For some people, no one else is touching them. And then you go to other cultures and everybody's hugging and embracing and kind of brushing up against each other all the time.

And so I think there's so many ways in which a sensory experience that brings us together and reminds us that we are actually herd animals and we belong together on multiple levels through our voice, through out bodies, though our affection.

It's all healing, healing work. It's funny, you mentioned something in your talk that you called them all medicines, but like you also sort of intimated by calling them medicines we sort strip them away because we have this feeling that medicines have to be prescribed and ultimately we had access to this at any time, right?

If we're in the right community.

Medicine as environment, not just intervention

So how do we shift people's expectations in such a way that they get to do this without it having to come through the medical system or to the be medicalized, even though maybe the medial is like a permission field.

So I just want to take a minute to talk about the incredible mission partners that we have here at The Evolution of Medicine that have made this possible.

So first and foremost, I want thank Fullscript and Full script journey. Full scripts has been an amazing partner for 10 years. We only pick partners, that can help us achieve our vision and help you achieve your practice vision.

And Full Script have been incredible partner, for a decade, but their new offering journeys, this is why we called it The evolution of medicine journeys.

is allowing practitioners to combine the relationships that they have with the newest technology to sell direct-to-consumer lab testing and use it as a funnel to bring into your practice and it's a game changer for the whole industry.

So go to goevomed.com slash journeys and you can get started on building the journeys for your practices an optimal way into practice. We're going to have some conversations about it.

This is a Game Changer. Next, Jenova. Janova have been fans of the Evolution of Medicine for a long time. We're big fans with them and they now have a lot more specialty testing.

They have lot of more tools and it's a key part of understanding the body ecologically. So go to goyomed.com slash Jonova to find out more. Come on over here.

I want to show you about the other mission partners. If you've been following us for a while, you know that these are organizations that we trust, that add a lot of value.

Freedom Practice Coaching, I have been supported by them since the beginning. And so many of the issues that practitioners face in building a successful practice, scaling a successfully practice come down to having the right support with people who have being there and done that.

Go to govomed.com slash fpc. Big boost marketing, Uli and his team are the best in the business when it comes to really understanding how to market your functional medicine practice.

Go to goevomed.com slash big boost and see how they can help you. And then what you're going to be hearing a lot about is the formation of clinical networks.

And ultimately, True Neura is our first effort at that, which is to build an integrated clinical network combining independent practices from across the country into a network that can reverse cognitive decline.

And if you go to goevomed.com slash TrueNeura, you can get a demo. You can see what it means to be part of an integrative clinical networks. That's mentorship, that's software, and that makes it easier for you to get incredible outcomes in a disease state where there are no other options.

So thanks to our mission partners. Let's get back to the content. Right. Well, I mean, that's what I'm really hoping is that we actually as a community can shift this paradigm of medicine, shift from individual to collective, Shift what that word means so that We can reclaim really what medicine always that Word is really actually always meant for our ancestors.

Yeah. you know, which is something that brings healing. Not a substance, not something comes from a doctor, and not necessarily an intervention. It can be.

But that all of these things that bring about healing, that bringing about environments that create healing are medicines. And I think that's very possible.

Yeah. So tell us about the book. It's coming out and I'd love to have our audience understand it because I feel like there'll be resonance with the concepts and some of what you shared today.

Yeah, so it's called Medicine for All People, Science and Ancient Wisdom for Revolutionary Healing. And specifically, I use the word revolutionary healing because this really is a book about social justice.

And to me, it is revolution to think about how we can be accessible and equitable in the way that we speak about health and wellness and healing.

Rebuilding social fabric and revolutionary healing

And while so many of us, I think, were very well-meaning in our desire to provide the best possible science, the most possible intervention to our patients, to out communities, a lot of can agree that it's becoming more and more inaccessible to be able to even provide some of the integrative therapies that we're all…

you know, we all know work very well. And there's a variety of reasons for that, systemic reasons mostly, you now, healthcare system root causes here in America.

But the book is really looking at, can we really open up that lens? Can we widen and expand the way that we think about medicine and look back to those medicines like food?

and plants and dance and trust and gratitude and community building and service as ways of actually awakening our deepest abilities to innately heal that we all have.

Our bodies are very sophisticated, our systems are sophisticated. We know how to heal as the environment is conducive to that. And I do believe that all of these medicines allow for that and that they are readily available I mean, the implication then is that the way that we solve healthcare crises is the rebuilding of the social fabric, right?

Yes. And that's no tool order. Is there any special advice that you have in the book about what that would take to rebuild it in that way? Well, yes, indeed rebuilding the social order is a massive undertaking.

The book frames it and the work frames as something that we can all be doing every day because truly the power is with the people. So if each of us is rebuilding for ourselves, even as healthcare providers, as practitioners, healers, facilitators of healing, we are taking in these medicines, regulating our nervous systems, allowing ourselves to be able to resist the forces that are making our lives more challenging and difficult by taking care of ourselves, we can pass that energy on to the people around us.

And as we do that, the ripple effect is massive. So, and I do think that's what revolution is really about. Revolutions have always started with a small group of people.

Yeah. What are some of the favorite recommendations that you have for someone who gets it, they read the book, I'm in, tell me what to do? I'll start with dance because that's my favorite one.

I really do believe if every person gave themselves a couple of minutes of dancing every day, To feel joy, to feel exhilarated, increase their excitement about their day and their mission and purpose, that can be a game changer.

And I've noticed this with my patients. People who dance even a couple of minutes a day, over one, two week period of time, they're noticing really significant changes in the way that they are feeling and motivation.

I have a chapter on plants and I I Have a relationship with plants that means a lot to me And I think most of us enjoy the idea of plants But we've lost our ability to relate to them in the ways that our ancestors did most Of us have grandmothers or great-grandmathers who actually knew the plants That were growing in their garden or like had favorites that they used for specific reasons and And so I talk about cultivating that relationship again, even if it's just with one plant.

And it doesn't have to be a whole great big garden. It can be like one herb that you're growing in a pot on your windowsill that your developing a relationship with.

How to use it, how to cook with it. What it smells like, How it makes you feel. These are simple things. Nature, being in nature, connecting with nature.

Being barefoot in Nature. Yeah. these are all ways that we can connect ourselves back to earth energy and connect back for ourselves. I'll tell you a story you'll like.

So I made this thing a couple of years ago. The IFM conference was in Las Vegas and I used to do always the pre-party. And I was like, what could we do that would be fun?

So, I did this think called Vegas Fest. Vegas fest was basically like a festival of nervous system regulation to go into a conference in Vegas, right?

Daily practices: dance, plants, and nature

Because I feel like that's what people need. So I was testing out the methodology of the Vegas Fest and part of it

was to do a bunch of things in order that could, you know, heal the nervous system.

And one of those things that we did was laughter. the doctor who was doing the process, sort of just basically gave permission for everyone to just laugh.

And she just said, she had spent the last few years finding funny podcasts and watching funny movies and looking for comedy because she recognized that she needed to laugh, but in that moment realized she could just laughed at any time and didn't need anything to stimulate the laughing.

And the laughing went like, even though she was doing it, it was a group of people that just decided they were gonna laugh together. And, the physiological change inside her was so magnificent.

She was like I've spent 50 years not realizing this was available to me at every moment. Isn't that wild? That was just such a cool experience. Oh, I love that.

You know, I'll share with you that my grandmother in India who passed away last year, she was part of a laughter club. I don't know if you heard about this in Indian, but there was a Laughter Club and it's mostly elders who would go walk together in Bombay along the seaside and they would just get together and just every morning they'd just laugh, spontaneously laugh.

Like no one had to tell a joke or give any specific reason to do so. One person would start laughing and everyone else would stop laughing. And she is part this group for like decades.

And I went with her, you know, I was probably in my late 20s when I first went to her laughter club and I remember being like, this is ridiculous and amazing.

Like what's keeping us from just spontaneously laughing? It feels great. Well, I think we have to come to the understanding that there is a reason why we're all so isolated.

And like, you know, if you have a whole society of insufficient nodes, then they need to source things from companies that sell those things. I mean, it's important for people to understand why, we've got to this point, because unless you understand how we got here, than you don't understand the root back.

That's exactly right. So we need to understand that you have to intentionally build back that fabric because the bonds have been broken because then you're more needy.

And I think that there is some sort of process that needs to happen for people to And, you know, so many times you think like, do you really need a professional grief counselor?

Or do just need an elder that you can be with? I'll give you an example. So I've built an alternative school that both my girls go to. And part of it is because, I needed to have the flexibility of homeschooling for curriculum because I wasn't going to do the public school thing because they know what it But at the same time, recognizing that like, so in the community that I live in, and so my five-year-old daughter, her teacher is like the wisest, most regulated grandma in 150 Dunbar's number that we live.

And you know what I mean? And it's like obviously if you were living in community, that would be the person you put with the little kids. Because you don't necessarily want the mums with the little kids, because they're fried, they've got a million things going on, their reactive, so many responsibilities.

So when I was able to take a step back, I'm like, this is community in action, but you can only, you know, it took a lot to sort of facilitate to make this thing.

But now that I've made it, anyone else that they tell about it they are like… They know that that's also their birthright and they haven't got it because it's a lot of work to build your own school thing that I was basically for three years, I had to do it to like a part-time job and now it kind of works.

But I just, you know, there's so many things where you sort of remember that, that is how it is meant to be, but you only remember because you get a view of it and an inkling for it.

And yeah, so much of that just lost. Yeah. I think you put it really well, though, by saying that we can rebuild that tapestry. We can re-build that fabric.

Just as it was dissolved in very specific ways, it can be brought back together in specific way. In conferences like this, you see how bringing people together of a common mindset, of similar goal, You can feel what that energy feels like.

Laughter, isolation, and reclaiming connection

It's very… It feels safety. It feels like belonging. And we can create that in all of our communities in the way that you did in starting a school, in a way, that, like, you can volunteer just for an hour a week at an animal shelter, even, if you don't want to deal with people, help with dogs, and you cultivate back in yourself that desire for connection.

Because I do think, actually, loneliness and isolation can make one feel that they don' even want connection, because they're so far apart from it. or they've forgotten what it was like, or forgotten the benefits of it because they haven't felt it for so long.

That's right. And that's why I like frame all of this as a remembrance in reclamation because it truly is a remember of like this is how my cells are supposed to feel in work.

Yeah. You know, one of the things that you touched on this morning was the sort of, obviously the huge gap in health outcomes, you know across American society particularly.

What are some of things in your day to day work that are sort the green shoots of what could be possible to solve that? So, I think what I'm really enjoying and I have for a decade now is running this culinary medicine program at the University of Chicago Medical School where we're training physicians, young physicians medical students, to understand what it means to have conversations with patients around food, around cultural humility, and certainly to learn about nutritional science.

So I love working with young people, whether it's middle schoolers or with medical students, because I really feel like they understand some of the challenges of modern health care, and they're responding to what patients want as well.

Patients want a doctor that they can talk to about food. They don't necessarily want to go to a referral to another person to have that discussion. And so that feels really hopeful to me.

That's been a green chute for a long time that I've been watering and watering, actually bigger than a chute now, and those programs have expanded across America.

We have like over 80 plus culinary medicine programs around the country and academic medical centers. And then working with patients, I really find that, you know, for me, it's about understanding orientation, right?

Understanding the orientation and the environment that a patient is living in, but also what matters most to them. And so when we hear from patients what matters most to them, I actually feel that there's a lot that we are able to meet as physicians, as practitioners, that might seem that might seem different than what we think we're supposed to do as practitioners.

You know, we kind of are like, oh, you're coming in with this problem, I need to fix it. And I actually think people are coming and saying like this is what really matters to me, like how can you help me make this a bigger priority in my life?

And I will call that a green shoot because to me, it's a different frame.

Culinary medicine, cohorts, and hopeful delivery models

And going in with a difference frame actually means we can be more rewarded as practitioners and that people can feel much more successful with the appointments and the times that they have with their.

you know, healing professionals. Yeah, wonderful. Well, I think that's… I honor the work that you're doing. I got very excited for a few years about the delivery of this kind of care in groups.

because I recognize that part of the prescription or actually not even groups but cohorts, so groups over time. And I've started to recognize through that journey that if you could prescribe the healthy things that you know, the medicines, but to live it in a healthy cohort, you're starting to rebuild even in that group and that could be something that can be prescribed and it could something the Medicaid could pay for and could it be organized in And so I'm grateful for you coming and sharing that medicine here because ultimately, some of the historic, I think, shadow or people who don't understand it really would say, well, this is just medicine for rich people.

But I do feel that if you look at even the people that I am interviewing and some other work that they're doing at different levels, there is an intention and there's certainly activation to bring this into all populations, you just have to really think about the delivery system.

That's exactly right. To understand how it can actually work. How will it be excitedly, not just tolerated, but enjoyed. Who's going to pay for it and who's gonna execute it?

How are you gonna get the people to show up? And I'm really glad that there are people like yourself who are thinking in those terms and finding those green shoots and executing forward in that because we need it.

We need innovation, we need creativity, and I think most of all we just need to keep hope alive. And hope is a muscle, you gotta keep using it. Yeah, for sure.

All right, well, check out the book. We'll have all the details in the show notes. That's coming out later this summer. You can probably pre-order it now in anywhere that you get books.

Thank you for leading the charge here today. This has been a wonderful episode of the Evolution of Medicine podcast. We've been here with Dr. Geeta Mehta-Clark in Keynoted this morning's conference and I hope that some of this resonated with you and if it does, feel free to take some the next steps.

This has been a wonderful episode. We'll see you this same time next week with another episode from IFM. Thanks so much for tuning in and we'll se you next time.

So we are here asking practitioners about their practitioner journeys and the reason why is because Journeys is a new product from Fullscript. Journeys allows you to set up your own lab offerings as the top of the funnel.

Give the patients what they want. They want to know about themselves and it's the easiest way to bring them into your practice. We have all types of practices from across the country that are building their own unique lab panels for their unique practices, selling them to their community and acting as a great funnel into their practice is a massive innovation.

I think this will accelerate the evolution of medicine. You can go to goevomed.com slash journeys to find out more, set up your own journeys in half an hour and transform the health of your community.

Go get them. So that was the podcast. What an epic session. Thank you so much for tuning in to the Evolution of Medicine podcast, we'll be back again next week.

And thanks so