

Swell AI Transcript: EIT Cellular Wellness Podcast V1.mp3

Matt Eastland:

If you share my interest in wellness and health, you've likely pondered the connection between our consumption habits and its impact on our bodies. While it's widely acknowledged that our dietary choices significantly influence our health, have you ever contemplated the potential of using food and plants to fight chronic illnesses? Well, one doctor has, and he's here to share how food and plants can be used to help overcome chronic health issues that conventional treatments may not be able to address. Hi, everyone. I'm Matt Easton, and welcome to the Food Fight podcast from EIT Food, exploring the greatest challenges facing the food system and the innovations and entrepreneurs looking to solve them. And I am overjoyed to welcome Unlocking Lyme and the Cellular Wellness Solution bestselling author, Dr. Bill Rawls. For over 30 years, Dr. Bill Rawls has dedicated his life to medicine. When a health crisis in his early 40s abruptly changed his quality of life, he came face to face with what he saw as the limitations of modern medicine and began to research the vast possibilities of alternative treatments. Now, Dr. Rawls is here to share the revelations that helped him reclaim his life and find his own path to wellness. Dr. Rawls, welcome to the show.

Bill Rawls:

Thank you. Pleasure to be here, for sure.

Matt Eastland:

Great stuff. Great to have you on. I read something quite incredible the other day from the European Commission on our side about health in the EU, which I'd really like to share with you and get your thoughts on. So the quote goes like this, so non-communicable diseases, NCDs as they're called, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, mental disorders, neurological disorders or cancer are responsible for 80% of the disease burden in EU countries and are the leading cause of avoidable premature deaths, which is a staggering statistic. And I just headline thoughts as we go into the show. Surely, you know, we can't solve that all with a healthy diet and plants, can we?

Bill Rawls:

We can put a big dent in it, no doubt about it. Yeah. But, you know, that's one parameter of wellness that I've been exploring over the years. But quite frankly, when you really dig into it, understanding what's driving most illnesses is not that complicated. And there is so much that we can do about it. Disease is not genetic. Disease defines our risk profile, but it doesn't define that we're going to get sick. So it's what we do in life, what we eat and how we go about life that has an especially important bearing on those specific diseases, which affects so many people.

Matt Eastland:

Yeah, thank you for that. And sorry if that was a little bit pushy, but I think it's really important that, you know, everybody on the show realizes that, you know, this is a staggering statistic. All of these things, you know, terrible things are happening now, but there is so much more that we can do to fight that. So thank you. Also, I've been working my way through your book, The Cellular Wellness Solution, which I am loving, by the way, and it teaches people how they can transform their health from the inside out. Can I ask you, why write the book in the first place? Where does that need come from, from your perspective?

Bill Rawls:

Therapy. I write for therapy. And to figure things out, you know, it's if you can write something in a way that someone understands it, then you have had to take a pretty deep dive yourself and then pare that down into what's most important. So way back 30 years ago, when I was first in practice, I was writing for patients, you know, I created this thing that I call the optimum health sheet, right, that was six pages long, that I could, you know, this, here are the things that you really need to pay attention to. And through time, and oddly enough, even back then, looking at health habits, life got in the way. And I wasn't able to keep my health at the level that I wanted. I broke down into a chronic condition in my late 40s. And that was a real eye opener that totally changed my life. So I restructured everything, really doubled down on that question of what does it take to be healthy, regain my health, So I've been writing ever since and exploring that question to help others to avoid some of the pitfalls that I had, but also, you know, all the folks out there that are struggling. I mean, here in the United States, 60% of people, 60% of people are defined as having some kind of chronic illness. Wow.

Matt Eastland:

That's crazy. It's not that much better on this side of the Atlantic either, I have to say. Am I right in saying that there, you mentioned a chronic illness that you had, am I right from reading the book, this was Lyme disease, is that right?

Bill Rawls:

Yeah, you know, I've come away from using diagnosis quite as much. What our diagnostic protocols are for are defined medical therapies. And for acute illnesses, acute Lyme disease, medical therapies, i.e. antibiotics, are the right solution. Broken leg medical therapies are the right solution. But when you look at chronic illness and when you move into what's defined as chronic Lyme disease, the medical therapies end up just treating manifestations of the illness, the symptoms, hormone imbalances, inflammation. but don't necessarily get at the root causes of the illness. So our medical therapies typically for chronic illness typically don't result in an

endpoint of wellness. People end up in a state of managed illness and they stay that way the rest of their lives. You know, it just doesn't have to be that way. And I think it's a real shortfall in our worldwide medical system that's very expensive and just doesn't work very well.

Matt Eastland:

God, I've never heard that term before, a state of managed illness. Yeah, I imagine there's a lot of us, probably myself included, who can relate to that. And Bill, in your book as well, you talk about this specifically about the healthcare system, and it'd be good to just unpack that a little bit. I read in your book that there's a quote here, most people turn to the healthcare system to keep them well, but the system was designed to treat illness and injury, not to maintain wellness, which I found really interesting. You know, in a previous episode, we've had a nutritionist and a GP on an episode talking very specifically about how you can use nutrition to get better after going to hospital. But from what I'm reading from your side, this is a slightly different angle. So do you feel that health care systems are broken or have we just pushed them too far beyond the limits of what they were meant to do?

Bill Rawls:

Yeah, I think we're asking the system to do something it wasn't meant to do. So if you look at before, say, 1970, The medical system was really doing wonderful things with vaccines, new antibiotics, new drugs, new therapies, new surgeries, but all of that was directed toward acute illnesses. And for that, we do an exceptionally good job. Acute intervention, we're right at the very top. But when you go beyond that, so after the 70s, there was a pretty dramatic rise in chronic illness because of the things that we were doing. And that acute intervention doesn't work as well for chronic illnesses. So, you know, just taking that chronic Lyme disease. So first of all, the microbes that cause chronic Lyme disease are pretty low grade pathogens. A lot of people who get bitten by a tick don't get sick. So they don't know it. So, when somebody gets tested later and they find they're carrying the microbe that they have chronic illness, what's happened there is their body has lost the ability to contain the microbes. What I found is everybody, we're all exposed to these low-grade pathogens all the time from the time we come out of the womb and start putting things in our mouths. We pick up Epstein-Barr virus, and all these other viruses, and mycoplasmas, and chlamydias, and all of these things, you know, we have this idea that, well, once the symptoms are gone, the microbe is gone, the immune system has taken care of it. And that turns out not to be the case. You know, researchers gradually uncovering the fact that we, our bloodstream is more like a freeway than a sterile space, and microbes are coming and going all the time, and they become buried in our tissues and become dormant inside of our cells. And when our cells are stressed, they reactivate. And that's what's happening in chronic Lyme disease. You have cellular stress. The microbes reactivate in different parts of

your body and start breaking down your tissues, basically to make a food supply to grow more microbes. Simple as that. So take that model and apply it to any chronic illness, absolutely any chronic illness, and it's exactly the same. We're starting to find these microbe connections. Borrelia, the microbe that causes Lyme, it's very commonly found in multiple sclerosis, all of these microbes, but not just Lyme. And so what we have the ability to test for is just scratching the surface. Truly, it's just scratching the surface. Researchers are starting to call this the dormant blood and tissue microbiome. And they're defining that illness is reactivation of that. And what I'm able to do, what I've been able to do in my work is start to piece together, to take any chronic illness and go, okay, let's look at these factors and look at this microbe component, and you start to get logical explanations for every chronic illness, every single one. So it's really a fascinating area of study.

Matt Eastland:

Yeah, that is fascinating. And OK, so, you know, traditional medicine is there to help cure when something's gone beyond and, you know, you really need ideally someone to step in. But before that, you know, you talk a lot about wellness with regards to chronic health conditions. So where does wellness come into that? And what kind of choices? I mean, we're going to get into food because we're big into food here. But what kind of like lifestyle choices should we need to make in order to have this kind of path to wellness? Let's call it. All right.

Bill Rawls:

Can we take it down to the cellular level?

Matt Eastland:

Oh, let's do it.

Bill Rawls:

Let's go there. All right. So your body is a composite of cells, right? Everything that happens in your body, whether it's your heart beating, a brain impulse firing, thyroid hormone being produced, bones and cartilage being knitted together after an injury. Absolutely everything that happens in your body results from the actions of cells. So collectively, it's our cells being all the cellular functions in our body being coordinated with hormones and signaling agents, cells working together that make us whole, make us a unit. So you can think of your cells as little microscopic machines that have a job to do. So they're all independently functioning machines that their functions are coordinated. And brain kind of leads the charge, you know, it's constantly monitoring what's going on inside and outside. And so it coordinates all those cellular functions for whatever your given activity or conditions are. Cells are the center of everything, and you can explain

everything about wellness or illness in terms of cells. So take that little individual unit. Let's just pull one cell out. That cell, that little microscopic machine, needs five categories of things to be healthy. So you want your microscopic machines to be all healthy, right? So they need five elements. The first one will go right into the top. Food, the right nutrients. So when we eat, we think about it, how it satisfies cravings, but what we're doing is nourishing ourselves. And different cells need different nutrients, like thyroid cells need iodine to make thyroid hormone. Heart cells burn predominantly fat, that slow, steady burn. Our brain needs something a little quicker, burns carbohydrates. So our cells need different nutrients. And if you're eating a whole food diet with a wide range of foods, you're going to supply all that. So the right nutrients, that's number one. Second one is they need a clean operating environment. Our cells, you know, it's like you throw sand in a motor and it's not going to work very well, right? And it's going to work harder and burn out faster. So that's what happens with all the pollutants that we're exposed to in the world that get in our food and our water and our air. That these petrochemicals and all the things that we're exposed to in life, basically, it's like throwing sand into our cells. They work, but they don't work as well. Number three, our cells need downtime. Now, some cells, like our heart cells, rest in between beats. But most of our cells are working all day long. They're churning along, and that creates wear and tear that they have to recover from. And where they recover the most is nighttime. So that calm environment, that unstressed environment during the day leads to a good night's sleep. And that's where you get cellular recovery to start. And if you're not getting that eight hours of sleep, you're starting your day with cells that haven't recovered from the day before. It's as simple as that. Fourth category is good blood flow. So the solution to pollution is dilution. So washing those areas, those spaces between the cells. And we do that by moving. So when we're active, we move blood, we increase our blood flow, and that flushes the spaces between our cells and helps cells purge those toxic substances. Really super important. You know, there are a lot of great benefits of exercise, but good blood flow. blushing ourselves. That's the most important thing. And then number five is protection from microbes. Microbes, these low-grade pathogens that we're all exposed to all the time, they're our cells' archenemy. So microbes are constantly getting inside our body, and what they want is to break down our cells and use them as a food supply. When you look at those factors, you can, you know, when I sit down with someone doing a consult, you know, they'll typically say, here's my diagnosis, and here are my symptoms. And it's like, great. Okay, I want to know why you got ill. So let's look at your diet and your sleep and you know, possible microbe exposure, maybe even going back to your acute when you were a kid. It's like, sometimes you can trace it back and find that, oh, yeah, you know, I had a lot of antibiotics. When I was a kid, I was constantly having, you know, sore throats and all this kind of stuff. And and they trashed their microbiome early on, and they've been suffering from it ever since. So looking at these factors and looking at, well, how do we restore cellular health? Well, it's those same things. You eat a great diet, you clean up

your environment the best you can. It's impossible to get it completely clear. You get a decent night's sleep every night you can, and stop doing things that harm your cells. move as much as you can during the day. And yeah, that herbal protection, that will help your immune system. But if you're struggling with a chronic illness, what I found that helped the most was herbal therapy because plants all have antimicrobial properties. They have to. So when we take an herb, we're actually gaining all of the plants, defense systems and regulatory systems that help us. So that's basically health. That's the formula for wellness right there. It's that simple.

Matt Eastland:

OK, I love it. I mean, I love having the kind of five pillars, I guess the challenge, of course, is, is that everyone's pillars are slightly different sizes. Right. So, you know, some people will get like a really great night's sleep, but have, you know, poor diet. And although I imagine they all probably interact with each other as well.

Bill Rawls:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I am not saying that it's easy. It's you know, it took me years to get around to where I am now and I still have to stay vigilant. And, you know, I fall off the wagon and get back and it's like, you know, But I've gotten so much better at it because your body is constantly giving you feedback, even mild symptoms like mild joint pain or a little bit of fatigue or low energy. All of those things are giving you feedback as to how your cells are doing. You don't need any fancy tests to do it. It's just your body is telling you that all the time. And when you go through those five categories, it's like, all right, I'm not feeling so great the past couple of days. Where have I been messing up? And you go, oh yeah, that's it. And you correct that thing and you get better. And it's just, it works every time.

Matt Eastland:

I mean, you've already started to introduce, you know, how food can help, you know, support better wellness and overcome chronic diseases. Maybe if we could just start with, you know, what foods should we all be eating more of and why, you know, what's your kind of prescription, so to speak?

Bill Rawls:

Yeah, I've gotten it down over the years. You know, it used to be about four pages, but I've gotten it down to four basic things that I tried to do with food. The first one is eat whole foods as much as I can. I think that's really important because whole foods are whole cells, right? Right. So it's like an apple. got a lot of carbohydrate in there. But all that carbohydrate is inside cells, and you're getting the parts of the cells, which are nutrients for your cells, as opposed to a donut that you're just getting raw

carbohydrate and fat, you don't get all those extra components. So whole foods is really important. I don't make my own mayonnaise. So not everything, but whenever I can, The second is, and this is really the hard one for so many people, and I've just gotten used to it over the years, is I try to eat more vegetables than anything else, plants. And I think it's just really important. And then I divide the rest of my food up. You know, I eat some nuts, I eat some fruit. I'm not a vegetarian. I eat some meat, but it's a pretty small amount. And I try to get that, you know, 50% vegetable every day. The third component is, and this one keeps you honest, is I try to keep my total carbohydrate count below 150 grams a day. That's not ketogenic. You know, I think ketogenic is uncomfortable and it forces people to eat a lot of animal fat, which I don't think is good for you. But I do try to, and I think, you know, depending on how active you are, 150 to 200 a day is very reasonable.

Matt Eastland:

On that particular point, Bill, could you just give our listeners an idea of 100 and 150 grams a day of carbs? What does that look like, you know, in terms of normal food?

Bill Rawls:

Yeah. Bananas, about 27 grams. An apple, depending on the size, is anywhere from 18 to 25 grams. A cup of sweet potatoes, about 25 grams. So, you know, some of your vegetables are going to have a higher carbohydrate count, especially your root vegetables. A piece of bread, that can be, you know, some of the Better whole grain breads might be 13 grams, but your average slice is going to be just a slice of bread. It's going to be about 25 grams. Coffee latte at Starbucks, one of the kind that people really enjoy, is going to upwards to be 40 to 50 grams right there. Boom. So, you know, part of it is just living. But gosh, you know, I didn't do that my whole life. You know, that's only been maybe the past decade that I've been doing that. But I do feel so much better. And it's not like I don't have any treats. You know, I mean, one of my favorite things is is nuts of various kinds. And I put chocolate chips in there and maybe some dried blueberries. So, you know, that kind of gets my carb fix. But And occasionally, some ice cream. It's OK. I have treats. And I don't carry around a little book. It's more just a conscious thing of, where's my limit today? Some days, maybe I do trip that 150 mark. But most days, it's that or below. And it just kind of keeps me honest.

Matt Eastland:

Got it. OK, so whole foods, lots of vegetables, you aim for 50 percent, not too many carbs and intermittent fasting. So those are your kind of four food based kind of principles, which, again, it's great because it's quite easy to remember. But then, OK, on the flip side, those are the foods and food related things we should be doing as part of our lives. What foods? Maybe an obvious question, but let's have it. What food should we be avoiding then?

Bill Rawls:

All food comes from something living, but it's how we process food. It's taking foods that are whole foods and then breaking them down to the raw carbohydrates and fats. We have a strong drive for wanting to eat carbohydrate and fat because, for most of human history, those things weren't very prevalent in nature. Now with petroleum production, one guy on a tractor can produce enough grain to feed a city. So we've just got this huge infusion of fat and carbohydrate, the things that we want the most, or our brain tells us that we need, at a much higher rate than we've ever had. And so it's those kinds of foods, what we define as processed foods, typically derived from grain. And I'm not suggesting that people would never eat a piece of bread or those kinds of things. Some people don't tolerate gluten. And there was a period in time that I didn't. But it's just that you know, that that infusion of these raw carbohydrates and fats and foods like doughnuts and foods like bread and foods like the sweet drinks that everybody drinks. Our system just is not designed to tolerate it. You know, our cells are designed to run lean. They don't need much carbohydrate and fat to run. And when you overload them, it's really damaging. I use the analogy of a steam locomotive. Like you've got a steam locomotive that's run by dumping coal into the engine and creating a fire. So you take that steam locomotive and you put the brakes on hard and you keep loading coal into that engine and keep stoking that engine as hot as it can get. But all that energy, there's nowhere to go and that thing is going to blow. Well, that's basically what you do to your mitochondria inside your cells when you're eating all this raw carbohydrate and fat. And you're doing that to every cell in your body.

Matt Eastland:

Right. Okay. I mean, I love the analogy. It's making me kind of, I'm mentally scanning through my own menu thinking, oh dear, you know, there's some, definitely some things I can do better. Can we talk a bit about microbiome as well? So we've had people on the show talking about microbiomes. I think it was episode 55 of our podcast. We had the brilliant Lisa McFarlane on and she's from The Gut Stuff and also Anthony Finbow from Eagle Genomics, one of our startups. You speak about microbes and cellular health in depth throughout your book. So from your perspective, what have you found? So what role do microbes play in our health and why are they so important?

Bill Rawls:

Well, it's a huge role then that again, the biggest threat to our cells is microbes. And when we talk about microbiome, people are typically thinking about the gut and the skin. But technically, those things are outside barriers or within barriers, right? So when you look at your defenses, so all microbes, the purpose of any microbe is to make more microbes. And as long as food is present, they are going to keep growing, all right? So for us, we have

protected food and freely available food, and all the protected food is behind a wall. So our micro defenses, our first level of defense is barriers. So we have skin to keep microbes on either on the surface or outside of our body. We have the linings of our nasal passageways and sinuses and lungs. And our, our intestine is actually a barrier. You know, the intestinal wall keeps the food and the microbes inside. So the largest concentration of microbes in the body is in our intestinal tract. And what kinds of foods we eat very much defines what kinds of microbes we have in our gut, much more than taking a probiotic or anything else. You look at different populations, they have different microbiomes. But there are a lot of microbes there because there's a lot of free food. All that food that we're not digesting or absorbing, that's for them. And we've just had this long-term relationship that that's happening. Microbes on the skin, basically live off of oils that we produce to lubricate our skin, so the bacterial concentration on our skin is much lower. But those things are behind the wall. So the food, the protected food, is our cells, our tissues. So we want to keep those things contained. But all of those barriers are leaky. And what was interesting to find is that bacteria are constantly leaking from our skin. from our intestinal tract into the bloodstream. Again, our bloodstream is more like a freeway. There's studies showing that we actually have a microbiome of the brain with bacteria from our gut, from our skin that end up in our brain cells. We all have that, yes. So these things are constantly crossing. So the immune system is your second level of defense. So all these things coming across, whether it's a new invader getting in through the skin, across a barrier like through a tick bite or respiratory infection. What they all want is to get to the bloodstream because the bloodstream is the highway to all the tissues and that's the food. So the immune system is there to stop those invaders but some of them every single time even things that you don't know about get through and they invade our cells. So our cells are a third level of defense. Our cells, using a process of autophagy, can expel or destroy microbes if they're healthy. If they're healthy. If you're not healthy, then you become food. Your tissues become food. It's really a big deal. But one thing that's really fascinating that some researchers are starting to explore is the concept that bacteria, viruses, other microbes can invade cells. And remember, they're really small. They're like 1000 times smaller than a cell and become dormant. So dormancy is a survival mechanism used by all microbes. If you look at the total mass of microbes on Earth at any given point, 60% of them are dormant in a dormant state. Right. So if conditions aren't right, if that cell is hostile, if it has a healthy and has defenses, they can just go dormant. And it turns out that things are happening, viruses, bacteria, all kinds of things become dormant in our tissues, and they stay there and our cells keep right on working. So think of your body with microbes, bacteria, just kind of scattered in some cells in your body. Some worse than others. Some with a higher potential to cause illness than others, but all pretty much low-grade pathogens that have entered your system through your life. But then you have a situation like me in my 40s. By the end of my 40s, I had been taken in the hospital every second to third night, which meant most nights not having sleep and eating on the

run and carrying the stress of trying to do it all at one time So, I ended up with pretty intense cellular stress by the end of my 40s, and my whole body started breaking down. And what I know now is microbes throughout my body were reacting, not just Borrelia, the Lyme microbe, but other things that I picked up through life, through tick bites, through respiratory infections. Those things started reacting, and they started breaking down the tissues of my heart and my brain. my nervous system and my joints everywhere in my body. And that's what was happening. That's why I was having widespread symptoms. But that's basically what's happening with any kind of chronic illness. So yes, we do know that things are trickling across from our gut. Why do they want to do that? They want to get to that good tissue. Yeah. I'm going to make us food, you know, skin infections, skin rashes, that's bacteria breaking through a weakened barrier to get to the good stuff down below. You can look at any illness and this kind of thinking starts to explain what's going on.

Matt Eastland:

Got it. OK, thank you for that. And yeah, it's a lot and there's a lot to digest there, so to speak. And maybe we can talk about some of the things that, you know, we've already introduced it, but some of the things that you do specifically to kind of help combat that in your book, for example, you talk a lot about the sort of plants and herbs that you take, which would be great to go into in more detail, I guess, just before we do that, though, so You know, we do have to be careful, of course, you know, there's a lot of people out there who advocate for various supplements. You know, we talk about fads a lot on the show. And, you know, there's lots of people pushing on social media, for example, things that actually might not be based in, you know, like really well grounded science. So, I mean, from your side, how does the work that you do ensure that this is always science based and how has that kind of led you to kind of herbs? Let's maybe let's start there.

Bill Rawls:

Yeah, you know, I, I turned to herbs out of desperation. I read about an herbal protocol that people were using for Lyme disease. I didn't want to go to the invasive antibiotic route and other kinds of things because my intuition just said that wasn't the right way. And within three months, I started getting my life back and within several years of taking herbs every day, all of the symptoms disappeared completely. And, of course, I was changing my lifestyle at that time, but even the lifestyle changes weren't working. The herbs had this remarkable difference. So, I spent the past 15 years really digging deep into science, At first, I explored herbs and herbology from the point of view of traditional herbology, traditional Chinese medicine, traditional Ayurvedic medicine, et cetera, Europe, North America. But those kinds of things predated science. They were observational. It was great information. But I wanted to know what was going on actually inside the body. How were they affecting our physiology? Unfortunately, over the past 20 to 30

years, there's just been an explosion of science looking at how the actual chemistry of the herbs affects our chemistry. Basically, what it boils down to is that when you take a plant, and more herbs than food plants, because the problem with our food plants is they've been cultivated to produce food, produce calories, not to protect themselves. That's why we have to use so much pesticide and herbicide on our food plants is because they don't know how to protect themselves anymore. We bred that out of them. So when you look at an herb, you're getting a wild plant with all its natural defenses. So when we take an herb, we're basically borrowing the plants defense system that includes a wide spectrum of chemicals against a wide spectrum of bacteria, viruses, protozoa, yeast, but also chemicals to neutralize free radicals, toxic substances, radiation, even protect us from some of the damaging effects of excessive carbohydrate consumption. So when we look at all of those cellular stress factors, taking the plant is actually protecting us against every single one of those things. So whatever effort we're making, the plant is going to compound that effort by providing these things. So studying the science has been just really interesting. And that's one of the things that I tried to do in the book, took a long time to write the book, is to tease out the science to make sure that absolutely everything that I was saying, I could back that up with a scientific study. But looking at it that way, so also you're getting the plant's regulatory systems So, plants are multicellular, so they've got to coordinate cellular functions, and they use a lot of the same hormones and chemical messengers that we use to coordinate our cellular functions. So, when we take a plant, we have the effect of balancing hormones that have been disrupted, especially stress hormones. So, many herbs have that. Now, some herbs have pronounced drug-like effects, and I tend to stay away from them. That's what a lot of people are actually looking for. So I'm more in a range of adaptogens and herbs with antimicrobial properties that don't have drug-like effects. And purely what I'm looking for in an herb is something that is a cell protectant. It's protecting cells from microbes, free radicals, balancing hormones, and restoring normal cellular balance. And the interesting thing about herbs is, unlike an antibiotic that is one chemical that kills everything in the body, including your normal flora, herbs, interestingly, that defense system has some intelligence about it. And actually, I found a study that proved that herbs suppress pathogens but don't disrupt our normal flora. So we talked about levels of defense. First is barriers, second is immune system, third is cells. Our fourth level of defense is our normal flora and our gut that are happy just to eat that free food, but they also produce substances that suppress the pathogens. They're not doing it for us. They're doing it because they want more of the food. They're trying to cut out the competition, but it works for us.

Matt Eastland:

I love that. Okay, and I guess then the natural next question is, so you talk about herbs which have that protective element. What herbs are you supplementing with yourself, the adaptogens?

Bill Rawls:

Yeah, there are just a lot of great adaptogens out there. Rhodiola is a favorite. Reishi, your medicinal mushrooms and cordyceps have some really nice properties. Lion's mane for the brain, those are all wonderful. Turmeric is a great cell protectant, has great antimicrobial properties. Some of the more antimicrobial herbs, Japanese knotweed, a lot of people don't like it because it's an invasive in their garden, but it's a great source of resveratrol, better than wine, which is great for our cardiovascular system. One called Chinese skullcap, which is a wonderful antimicrobial, but also a good immune modulator. It balances our immune system functions. Andrograph, it's one of the best antiviral herbs on the planet. And then there's garlic and ginger and some of these other things. And our culinary herbs like basil and oregano, they all have these wonderful properties. We all use culinary herbs now for their flavors, but the real reason that people used to use herbs and spices is for their antimicrobial properties to reduce spoilage in food.

Matt Eastland:

Is that right? Right.

Bill Rawls:

I didn't know that. That's that's the big reason, because all of all plants have antimicrobial properties. They have to all living organisms, all fungi. Now, some plants like nobody would make the mistake of eating poison ivy twice as medicinal. So some plants just don't mesh well with our biochemistry. But the things we define as herbs and medicinal mushrooms are things that humans have selectively found mesh with our biochemistry over thousands and thousands of years of use.

Matt Eastland:

That totally makes sense to me. And I'm kind of mentally scribbling notes in my mind to be like, am I getting enough of these? So yeah, I'm going to be looking all of these up afterwards. Bill, can I ask you as well, your view on supplements in terms of vitamins and minerals. So we've asked this question to various people on the show, but it would be good to get your take on it. Should we all be supplementing with vitamins and minerals for better health?

Bill Rawls:

Yeah, but yeah, it is a big question in people's minds. And first of all, I wanted to add that as far as the herbs, the concentration of the photochemistry matters. So a lot of herbal products that people are using have a lot of fiber in them. They basically just crush up the herb, the dried herb, put it in a capsule, and it's just fiber. And they're not getting much. So a standardized extract, they're

extracting just the phytochemistry from the plant. So you're getting a high concentration. So the preparation you use really matters as far as the results you get. So looking at the difference of herbs and then vitamins and minerals, which people often throw together, Vitamins and minerals are things that our cells need to function, all right? So vitamins and minerals are cofactors that are important for making enzymes work and making mitochondria work. So all of these things are nutrients. So nutrients, the best way to get your nutrients is from food. For people struggling with a chronic illness, I do sometimes recommend, you know, nutrient and vitamin supplements. So those are nutrients. Those are things that cells need to function properly. They need those things to do their job. That's basically raw materials. So plants, when you do an herbal preparation, a standardized extract, it's nutrient deficient. It's not a good source of vitamins and minerals. What you're getting is this protective phytochemistry that's protecting your cells from microbes, free radicals, and all these other stress factors. So one is a protectant, one is a nutrient, raw materials to help them work. So interestingly, to think about it, if your cells are stressed, they're working harder, they're burning through a lot more nutrients. So sometimes people that are chronically ill do need more than just what a good diet will supply or what their GI tract can absorb because a lot of times they have GI issues. When you take an herb, you're protecting cells and reducing cellular stress. So, when you reduce cellular stress, that nutrient demand goes down. So, even though herbs don't supply nutrients, they decrease demand for nutrients. So, actually, it helps your cells work better. So, if I'm going to have a choice of taking one or the other as far as supplementing a healthy diet, I'm always going to go with the herbs first.

Matt Eastland:

Got it. Very good advice. And yeah, that tends to gel with a lot of what we've heard people say about the fact that generally speaking, if you are getting a healthy, balanced diet, which includes great things like herbs, you tend not to need that kind of supplementation unless, as you say, there is a proper medical reason for you to have that, which is good to know. Bill, we're kind of getting to the end part of the show. And I was wondering if you would allow me to put you on the spot a little bit with a, let's call it a case study. So let's say that there is someone who comes to you, let's call him Matt, who having listened to you for the last 40 minutes, is starting to see that actually all of the things that you're talking about, the stresses, the lack of sleep, the maybe not getting enough of the good diet, the overloading on carbs, things like that. There are lots of warning signs, but it's, as I'm sure you've gone through yourself, it's quite difficult to kind of start reversing that. And I think you even mentioned that this took you seven years. So where might somebody like Matt start on this journey? What would be your method to say, okay, well, this is what you now need to do first? Sure.

Bill Rawls:

Behavioral modification is always a challenge, and I'll tell you, it was for me. It took me years of work to get where I am now, and it's still a work in progress, and I think it is for everyone, and part of that is just the society that we live in puts a lot of pressures on us that aren't very natural for our normal survival. So, the easy thing is taking their herbs and taking a collection of adaptogens, anti-inflammatory herbs. One of the combinations that I use just for the kind of thing that you're talking about has rhodiola and turmeric and reishi. Reishi is a medicinal mushroom. It's widely available. It has had more studies done for its anti-cancer property than any substance on earth. It's just a really good one. But they protect your cells. They balance your hormones. Then gotu kola is a good one for the brain. That's a really nice herb. So just that basic collection. For people who are struggling, I typically add on some of the antimicrobial herbs. Japanese knotweed, Chinese skullcap, andrographis. Those are some basic ones to add. Sometimes another immune modulator like cordyceps, which is a mushroom That is a really great place to start. And most people notice some differences subtle, you know, it's what healing is, is the ability of cells to recover. So when you start reducing cellular stress, your cells start covering better. So it can take like several months before people notice a different. In fact, it's so subtle. I've had so many people take a combination product like that. And then, you know, say, you know, I didn't know how good it was until I stopped it. And then about a week later, I'm going, something's off, you know. So then you start just etching at everything, working on your diet, working on your sleep, just paying attention to that bedtime and, you know, trying to allow a little bit better time span that you can actually get that good night's sleep. Sleep is so valuable. So many times I've had people come and ask me, you know, my health is terrible. I'm in this terrible situation. What therapy should I use? Should I, for, you know, for some people, should I do IV antibiotics and all these invasive things? And I go down that list of five things and I go, you know, you're only sleeping four hours a night and that's been going on for a while. If you don't fix that, none of these things are going to make a difference for you. So you start working on these things individually. I still drink alcohol, but I don't drink socially anymore. I just drink like a glass of wine or a beer with to enjoy a meal. So it's not very much, you know, it's it's a toxin to yourselves. So gradually kind of brought those things down to a reasonable level. and then just getting out and moving, whether you're doing yoga classes or qigong or whatever, but just getting out and walking. I try to set a limit of at least walking three miles a day. You know, if you can just do a minimum of three, and it's not like all at one time, you know, I get up and take my, my dog gets me going. I do a mile in the morning, a mile at lunch and a mile in the evening. And it's not that hard. It's like 20 minute blocks. And then in between, I try to just get up and move whenever as, as, as much as I can. And, you know, it's, it's one of those things. I do a lot of writing. I'm spending a lot of time on the computer. So I try to get up and just move around while I'm thinking or whatever. And Qigong is really good for that. Q-I-G-O-N-G. It's a easy movement art from China. And I'll just get up and do

10 minutes of those kinds of exercises and then get back down to doing whatever else I was doing. That little bit, just intermittently, just has a huge effect that makes a difference.

Matt Eastland:

Okay, I've been kind of nodding along as you've been talking and you know, I think everything you say makes perfect sense. And I think the challenge is often that, you know, when you get into a situation where you're not quite sure where to start, it's like, you need something to give you a bit of a boost, you know, you don't get into the spiral of, well, I don't have enough energy, therefore, you know, it's difficult to make myself good food. And it's difficult to work up the courage and the energy to get out and to do the exercise that we all know that we need. Start with herbs, plants, food, that perspective, build yourself up a bit, then start working on sleep, then start working on exercise. There is a pathway through here for people. I'd love to talk to you after the show more about this, but that's something else. Thank you, Bill. As we come to the end, I'd love to get your thoughts on the future of where you think this space is going. We've spoken a lot about healthcare, and I really like the way that you see things in terms of healthcare is really meant to be about curing critical problems. It was never really intended to be preventative. Where do you think the ideal future of healthcare should go to? What should be that balance and how do we get there?

Bill Rawls:

Yeah. I think it's up to individuals. And it's really about us learning to take better care of ourselves so we have better quality of life and rely on the medical system for what it does best, which is acute intervention. And that way we put less pressure on the system. So whether it's the system you have in the UK or here in the United States, it's the cost burden because people have such or health habits is just extraordinary. And there's no way, there's absolutely no way that that system is going to hold up under that kind of pressure. So I really think a lot of it is up to us. And part of that is just learning to rely less on the system. I think we, you know, we need a healthcare system for something when something terrible happens, but a good illustration. I mean, it's it, you know, and part of the system is there's a lot of profiteering with the pharmaceutical companies and the people involved in the system. But here in the United States, oncologists, cancer doctors are constantly patting themselves on the back. Fewer people are dying of cancer every year. And we have all these wonderful therapies. Well, those therapies are really toxic. And those people get a lot of other healthy conditions from it. And quite frankly, the rate of cancer is just going up and up and up and up. And the system is doing absolutely nothing to curb that. And I don't think it has the capacity to. I don't think it ever will. I think it's really up to us. And it's people like you and I having this conversation. And the more that we're having this conversation as a global society, then I think we start doing a better job of

helping people make better choices and helping them realize that those choices. It's not a burden to make those choices. It really enriches life. And, you know, so moving in that direction is where I think we all should be going.

Matt Eastland:

Amazing. Dr. Bell, thank you so much. And I totally kind of echo what you're saying. And you know, this is kind of what we are trying to do on this show by having these sorts of discussions. It is to extend awareness and make sure that people realize that, you know, there is more that we as individuals can do of course you know we need to transform the food system but it's great to know that we are not powerless and actually we by focusing more on our own choices we you know we can do better which which is really encouraging and I think very hopeful. Can I ask then Dr. Bill your your new book The Cellular Wellness Solution it's out now I definitely recommend people to go check it out. I'm thoroughly enjoying going through it. So where can people go for more information about the book and also more broadly about yourself?

Bill Rawls:

Yeah, I assume that they are hard copies for sale through Amazon in the UK. Certainly you can get it on Kindle. Either way works. I work through a company that I founded with my daughter called Vital Plans that we create programs and pathways for people using high quality herbs, mainly recovering from things like chronic Lyme disease and other similar chronic illnesses. On our website, the book is available. We do ship to the UK, but I can't tell you cost and that sort of thing. Just to tackle on to that, one of my projects right now is creating a community and something called Mighty Networks of creating a community of people to come together that are struggling with various kinds of health issues. be able to work together to solve these problems. So again, it's how we function as a society, how we bring these things together, I think is just really super important.

Matt Eastland:

Well, Dr. Bill Rawls, thank you so much for being on the show. A fascinating conversation. I could absolutely talk to you for hours. Unfortunately, I don't have the time on the show, but definitely going to be doing that afterwards. So thank you once again. And yeah, really looking forward to finishing the book and hearing more about this wonderful community you're forming. Wow.

Bill Rawls:

Thank you, Matt. It was just such a pleasure.

Matt Eastland:

So that was a fascinating conversation with Dr. Bill Rawls there

about his approach to wellness. And it's quite rare when we get on the show where we get someone who's really got a very solid system for this. So one of the things that I really took away from the top of the show Dr. Bill was saying that a lot of us are living in a state of managed illness, which I found quite powerful. But his view was this really doesn't have to be the way. So Dr. Bill's focus is all about making sure that our cells are healthy and the best they can possibly be. So his five principles for wellness with that regard were one, food with the right nutrients, we need to eat, you know, we need to eat good food. We also need to have a clean operating environment. So what he meant by that was minimize the chemicals and pollutants that we take in and that we're exposed to. He said that we need to help ourselves rest. And what he means by that is we need sleep for recovery. You know, he mentioned a good solid eight hours sleep a night. He said we need to get the blood flow pumping. So we need to exercise. And he also spoke about protecting us ourselves from microbes. And he spoke a lot in the show about the powerful protective qualities of things like herbs and plants. And then finally, we spoke about his four principles, I guess, for healthy food choices. So it was very much about eating whole foods because whole foods, you get all the cells which then complement our own cells. His approach was mainly to eat vegetables. He said that he always strives for 50 percent vegetables in everything that he eats. He also said we should try wherever we can to be low carb. So no more than I think he was sort of saying 150 grams if possible every day. And he also was an advocate of intermittent fasting to help the cells kind of recover and clean themselves. So lots of amazing stuff in this episode. Big, big thanks to Dr. Rawls. And I hope that you all get a lot from this. I personally have definitely gotten a lot from this and I'm really going to be diving in even more into Dr. Rawls' book. So everybody, thank you all for listening in. This has been the Food Fight podcast. As ever, if you'd like to find out more, head over to the EIT Food website at www.eitfood.eu. Also, please join the conversation via the hashtag EIT Food Fight on our X channel at EIT Food. And if you haven't already, please hit the follow button so you never miss an episode. Thanks again, everyone. See you soon.