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OPTIMIZING YOUR IMMUNE PROTOCOL BY RICHARD J. CLOFINE, DO

The purpose of this article is to provide advice gleaned from clinical practice. The content will not be based on scientific studies, though many exist to support these recommendations. The pearls of wisdom I will offer may be applied to all healing endeavors. These “pearls” are based on my life experiences over the last thirty years that include five years as an organic farmer, thirty years as an energy worker and healer, 15 years as a board certified Obstetrician Gynecologist and twenty years as an Osteopathic Physician who uses Manipulative Therapy or hands on healing bodywork.

Individuals with Silicone based immune dysfunction face the challenge of having a wide range of symptoms that may be varied and individualized. These individuals need intensive therapies, which could include major surgery, to implement healing. For most individuals radical changes in lifestyle (diet and activity, etc) are required. There are however a vast array of therapeutic options from which to choose. Some of these options are more scientifically based than others. How to choose which therapies to work with and what options to choose from can be overwhelming for someone and no one can, or should, utilize every option available. Here are some ideas on how to bring order to the chaos.

- **NAMING AND OWNING YOUR ISSUES BRINGS ORDER**

I have found that for most individuals the simple act of listing their specific issues will help to bring order. In my consultations I use this technique and I am not sure if it is the validation that, yes, I agree with you that these are issues you face or whether it is that seeing them listed that helps to contain the emotions around them. At the end of a session with a patient, I will take a blank piece of paper and list their issues. Not EVERY issue in their life, rather the major points that we discussed over the visit and that we are now going to specifically address. A holistic program for those particular issues will ripple through a person’s life with subsequent benefit in many other areas.

Almost always, the first issue I list for people is “Creating Health via Baseline Lifestyle”. This is honoring, for both the patient and myself, that the MAIN factor in creating health throughout their life is how they live every day, their baseline lifestyle. This baseline lifestyle is the accumulation of patterns developed over the years which include diet, activity, hydration, emotions and spirit. In other words how they live their life, every day This information empowers each person to realize that their health is about what they themselves do daily, rather than what we do in our office visit. Hopefully, our office visit will provide nurturing support for them to make practical lifestyle changes, or to institute a new immune protocol.

- **NO MAGIC BULLETS**

Holistic medicine seeks to treat the whole person. Holistic medicine strives to recognize that the issues which will eventually manifest in disease are complex and involve many aspects of the person’s life. These issues need to be addressed with multiple levels of healing support. Rarely are there ‘magic bullets’ to fix these complicated situations.

Our culture in general and in particular our medical culture, is very impressed with the concept of ‘the quick fix’. The ‘true fix’ is more often about shifting and changing the underlying baseline life journey patterns that we have developed over the years. These conditioned patterns often result in ways of being that are dysfunctional and do not serve our optimal potential. These patterns will include the ways we view our physical, psycho-emotional or spiritual person. We humans are very plastic and changeable, while at the same time we can be very set in our ways. It is this very nature which through daily consistent attention to changing our lifestyle can result in tremendous benefits. Attention to consistency can help balance and optimize any healing journey.



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- DEVELOP HEALING PARTNERSHIPS

Oftentimes patients seeking holistic care have not been satisfied with their interaction with conventional medicine. Sometimes they have been ejected from conventional medical care because they do not fit in the nice neat box of a simple diagnosis. They have challenging and complex issues that involve many aspects of their life. Sometimes they carry a diagnosis not accepted by a conventional caregiver. If a clean diagnosis cannot be made, it can create frustration for the conventional caregiver and confusion about what to therapeutically offer the patient. This leads to an unhappy physician and patient. Ordering the issues around the client's life, as opposed to trying to fit pieces of their lives into little boxes, allows complex issues to be addressed.

Healing partnerships are relationships maintained over time that bring about improvement in specific issues or life patterns. They involve care givers (really, I mean people 'who care'). They are individuals who can help you grow the garden of your life (I use a lot of garden metaphors, having been an organic farmer for five years). Our life, and health is our garden and it is OUR responsibility to grow it well. Healing partnerships empower you to garden well. They do not require you to relinquish management of your garden to an outside concern (this is a great loss of personal power). It is YOUR responsibility to decide what you want in your garden and plant it there, as well as weed out what you do not like. Sometimes a visit to a special gardener, or other expert, can help you know what to plant where, or what special fertilizer to use. Sometimes there is a big stump or boulder that needs to be removed with a backhoe (like surgery) to make the garden more fertile and fruitful.

Healing partnerships nurture us to take things into our own hands.

- DEVELOP MULTIPLE LEVELS OF NURTURING SUPPORT

Most individuals with complicated health issues require multiple layers of healing partnerships. You should seek to have a primary caregiver that keeps a handle on the big picture for you. Someone you can bounce things off of. There is no special degree attached to that role. Seek to expand options with individuals that are non-dogmatic and open to both alternative and conventional therapies, each at the right time and place. Holistic physicians are well suited to the role, yet I know many chiropractors, naturopaths and homeopaths that also fill the bill.

This practitioner can help you know what to weave into your life. You may require care by medical or surgical specialists. For someone who lives a holistic lifestyle, seeking conventional medical care can be challenging. My advice to you is to have proper expectations. If you are seeing a specialist, have proper expectations about what that person can do for you. They can provide you with good conventional medical diagnosis and therapy. If you expect them to be holistic and discuss herbs, vitamins and spirit then everyone is unhappy. It is an unreasonable expectation that will lead to discontentment. Honor what people can and cannot help you with. Everyone will be much happier with the interaction, and more satisfied with the outcome.

Having multiple healing partnerships is not uncommon. Maybe you have a massage therapist you see regularly, or some other type of body worker. Over the last twenty years, I have found my hands on healing work, through Osteopathic Manipulative Therapy, to be most successful and gratifying in a diverse range of clinical situations. I recommend everyone have hands on healing work in their lives. Depending on your needs and desires, maybe you see a Homeopathic Physician, or receive acupuncture, Reiki, or aromatherapy. The list can be long or short and as narrow or as varied as your needs dictate.



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- **BROADEN YOUR DATABASE**

If things are not clear than broaden your database. Seek educated opinions, conventional or alternative. Have your holistic physician review all this with you. Seek more objective tests. Sometimes conventional medical diagnostic tools are wonderfully revealing and can help monitor a situation over time with some level of objectivity. Sometimes testing does provide a definitive answer, but more often than not it only provides additional data points to add into the informational soup before tasting. There are many functional medical tests that the average physician is not aware of or educated in the use of. Many options exist to broaden your database.

- **DEVELOP A PRACTICAL PROTOCOL AND FOLLOW IT CONSISTENTLY**

Some patients seek alternative care in a very conventional medical frame of mind. They are only interested in long lists of things to do (like taking long lists of supplements, or pharmacy medicines) and are determined that test results will hold 'the answer'. Individualized supplement regimens tailored to the individual patient can sometimes be extremely therapeutic. Usually they work best not as a stand-alone regimen, but as part of a holistic approach that is dealing with the issues on multiple levels.

Holistic Healing Protocols can be complex regimens. The protocol is NOT the long list of therapeutic options handed to you from a file drawer. These lists are helpful as informational resources. The list, though, needs to be individualized to your particular story. This is your family and personal history, lifestyle, personality and financial resources. These are some options from which a holistic practitioner might draw therapeutic interventions. A holistic healing protocol is best developed in 'healing partnership' with a holistic caregiver. From these options an individual protocol should be drawn that is practical. That means it honors what you are willing and able to do CONSISTENTLY. It must fit your life, be within your budget and be able to be approached successfully. It must be a plan that can be followed with successful consistency.

Living our lives in the modern world creates multiple levels of intense stress. These issues are always impacting us and creating chaos in the world around us, and in the world within us. Our diet fluctuates as our days vary and our food quality is also variable. Our schedules fluctuate. We need to be able to follow our holistic support program with consistency. That is how we will be able to change our lifestyle baseline (how we live day to day). Our lifestyle baseline needs to be a rock solid foundation to carry us through the day, each and every day. So if an individual can take four supplements consistently, let's use that and not set that individual up for failure by recommending twelve. Let us be practical so we can make consistent progress. Simple changes, in many things, that can be maintained over time.

- **HAVE APPROPRIATE EXPECTATIONS**

When people do not feel well, it can be very frustrating waiting for a change. We need to be honest and realistic about what to expect. We can do that and STILL hold space for miraculous healings to occur! If you have a condition that developed ten years ago and has been a persistent problem over that period of time, do not expect it to be better in a week! A more appropriate expectation might be to spend one month of consistent holistic healing work for every year you have had the problem. So reevaluate the issue at three months, six months and nine months. Also, be honest about your progress.

- **MAKE CHANGES WITH ATTENTION**

It is not uncommon for me to see patients who have done MANY, MANY alternative therapies over the last several years. Though when I take a history from them it is near impossible to determine exactly what they have done, in what order, at what dose, and whether anything has helped. It is typical for them to tell me about thousands of dollars spent on tests



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and therapies with no idea as to whether anything is helping. This is very understandable as we want to 'do something' to make ourselves better. Being impatient to feel better, we often switch therapies before an adequate trial of the one we are using has been accomplished.

If we decide to make changes in our program, they are best made one at a time. If we change six things in our protocol, we will not know which has made us feel better or which has now caused a bothersome side effect. By changing things individually and with attention, we learn to gather wisdom over time. Wisdom about what is helping us, which might lead us down other pathways of benefit. Also we want to gather wisdom about what is not helping us, so it can be dropped from our regimen to keep our regimen as simple as possible.

- **FRANKLY REEVALUATE YOUR PROGRESS OVER TIME**

Once you set out on your journey, make sure to take a look every now and again to see how you are doing. There is one word I like in that regard... "better". It is a good place to be, things getting better. I am not so interested in 'all better', though that is a good thing. I am most interested that the patient has the overall impression that things are improving.

I have had patients refuse to acknowledge that a condition was worsening (such as a tumor enlarging). I think it is the role of the practitioner to help patients be frankly honest with how things are progressing. I am always ready to tell my patients if I feel their worries are out of proportion to their situation (that is to say, don't worry about it). And in the same way, I am just as ready to speak up and voice any concerns I have. Of course voicing those concerns will include a plan to deal with any situation that exists.

- **CONTINUE ON YOUR HEALING JOURNEY**

The healing work is YOURS to do. As a holistic physician, I am here to accompany you on your journey. In fact part of your journey becomes mine, and vice versa. Yet I am very clear that it is your work to do. It is not my job to do that work for you, in fact I cannot. I will support you and provide options and opportunities for us to follow together.

Daily sitting practices are very important in changing our internal environment. While we may not be able to control all the worldly circumstances that bring about stress, we always have the ability to change how we respond to stressful circumstances. This takes consistent practice over time. Daily sitting can be a combination of meditation, breath work, and prayer or relaxation practice. Whatever suits you will be the best method(s). Ideally it is performed twice daily, without struggle. Go for consistency in your practice, as opposed to intensity or duration. Cultivate a feeling of gratitude. Find a nice spot in your living space and dedicate it to your sitting. Adorn it with inspirational items. In the morning calm yourself to move into your daytime. In the evening clear yourself of the day's events, to move into dreamtime.

Consistent baby steps are good. They are easy to take and can be applied with consistency. You can see where your next step is being placed, and from whence it came. Sometimes the growth is hard to see on a day-to-day basis. Like watching a child grow, being away for a while makes the changes more dramatic. Allow yourself to be nurtured. First receive it from yourself, and then you will be able to receive it more fully from others, and the universe.