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THE MAGAZINE FOR *Wellness*

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Naturopathy
THE MAGAZINE FOR *Wellness*

Get your vitality on...

The theme for this new issue of Naturopathy magazine is **Vitality** – that super-charged feeling that (sadly) you can't buy, bottle or sell but which you can boost when you embrace a naturopathic lifestyle, especially by making sure the food on your plate will deliver a powerful dollop of energy and life force to your system.

Take a look, for example, at the food on the cover of this issue. The vibrancy of that dish practically sings off the plate and that's what vitality is all about. It's that extra shine to your hair, that healthy glow to your skin and that noticeable skip to your step as you go about your day.

We've got lifestyle tips, advice on safely supplementing your diet, mouth-watering recipes and so much more to share in the pages ahead. And without wanting to brag too loudly, we've also landed a coup in catching some chat time with American naturopath Dr Jolene Brighten who is nothing short of a breath of fresh air.

We've exclusive extracts from not one but two books coming out next month (April 2023) – including Dr Brighten's latest offering – and we also take a trip down memory lane to ask how naturopathy has changed in the 25 years since CNM opened its doors to its first students.

So, take a stroll yourself through the pages of this latest issue of the magazine and I promise you'll emerge at the end (round about page 54) feeling as if you've had a vitality boost without even stepping out of your front door. ●



Susan
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Happy Birthday CNM

We've got hybrid cars, hybrid jobs and now a hybrid magazine. *Naturopathy* magazine is owned by the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM) but its editorial content is independent and curated for anyone who has an interest in natural health and the naturopathic lifestyle.



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What Really Works

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A Lifestyle for Vitality

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Meet CNM student, **Jasco Ilgenfritz**, who is in his second year of a three-year herbal medicine course. Jasco says having witnessed a close family member go through a serious health crisis, there was never any doubt he would find his way to a career in natural health.



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Our exclusive 'sneak preview' extract from Dr Brighten's fabulous new book, *Is This Normal?*, which is published in the UK in April. She says it is the single most common question clients walk into her consulting room and ask.

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CNM is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Happy Birthday CNM! Here, Director of Education, **Bobby Qureshi**, looks back over the last quarter century to see how naturopathy has changed and does a spot of future-gazing to predict what changes we can expect to see over the next 25 years.

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Mara Clavi has lots of suggestions to lift tired-looking post-winter skin and recommends her favourite Bach Flower remedies which tackle the emotions and not just the visible symptoms of conditions that affect our skin.





What really works?

Natural remedies and other healing traditions that will get the job done!

By Susan Clark

The Health Costs of Shadow Work

Is it just me? I don't know where the hours go, except I have a feeling a lot of them are swallowed up by the everyday demands of life – and that's before we factor in work.

I read a really interesting piece in the *Financial Times* which explored the economic cost of Shadow Work. This is a term first coined by the Austrian philosopher and social critic Ivan Illich in 1981 and was used to describe all the unpaid work that takes place in an economy, including mothering and housekeeping and caring.

More recently though, the term has expanded to include the work that companies have turned over to their customers, thanks to advances in technology.

This includes those myriad tasks we all now have to do as part of our everyday lives, from banking to bagging our groceries, from downloading apps to pay parking tickets or just to resolve our own IT issues.

Nobody knows just how much time this takes us but you don't need researchers to tell you the toll it takes because it feels like just running your life and all these processes is your 'other' job.

Craig Lambert is the author of a book called *Shadow Work: The Unpaid, Unseen Jobs That Fill Your Day*, which focuses on those myriad jobs that other people used to do for us but which we now have to do ourselves. He says, "I'm just amazed

how we've been suckered into spending our time straightening out things other people used to do for us."

The FT was interested in this topic because of recent reports showing post-pandemic productivity falling, particularly in the US.

I am interested because you don't need to be a researcher or a rocket scientist to extrapolate and see how Shadow Work is going to take a toll on our health and wellness.

Lots of us already work multiple jobs and then spend additional hours on Shadow Work which, to my mind, is a recipe for Burn-Out if we don't take care to manage the extra stress and relentless demands.

And Burn-Out is no joke.

I once had it so badly (juggling multiple jobs for an employer) that I went to work one Monday morning and couldn't read any more. The letters on the page were all jumbled and made no sense whatsoever. Which is not helpful when you work with words.

I had an understanding GP who prescribed two weeks away from my desk, long coastal walks with my husband and my dog and a lot of daytime sleeps. Which worked.

Thanks to Shadow Work and the associated increase in stress levels, I'm not sure that 'natural prescription' would work today for anyone veering into Burn-Out so I am devoting the whole of this issue's column to managing stress through diet, exercise and supplementation. ●



Simply Buddha Bowls

The main theme in this issue is Vitality and finding ways to support and even strengthen your energy levels or life force (whichever way you want to think about it) is to make sure the food on your plate is as vital as it can be.

And that means cooking from scratch, using fresh ingredients and being ruthless when you open the fridge and see something a little worse for wear. If it's fading round the edges, throw it away or you will start to look and feel the same.

Our cover image for this issue captures all the vitality you could ever wish for with a picture of a simple, single bowl dish – sometimes called a Buddha bowl – where the vitality of the ingredients used simply sing off the plate.

A Buddha bowl is really just a big bowl of health food – usually plants – served over a bed of grains or greens and topped with a delicious dressing.

Here's a simple Buddha bowl recipe for you to try at home.

Make it with love and great, fresh ingredients (make friends with someone with an allotment if you don't grow-your-own and haven't already) and you'll be powering through the Shadow Work, as well as your normal day job!

Grains – brown rice, farro, bulgur, quinoa

Greens – spinach, kale, long-stemmed broccoli, crunchy lettuce

Protein – chickpeas and beans, tofu and maybe add a soft boiled egg

Healthy fats – avocado and nuts

Healthy carbs – fruits

Delicious extras – Nutritional yeast flakes, spring onions, spices

Yoghurt dressing:

¼ cup plain Greek yoghurt (or vegan alternative)

¼ cup orange juice

2 tbsp honey or agave syrup

½ teaspoon cinnamon

Pinch of salt and pepper

Method

Line your bowl with your chosen greens or grains and start piling the other ingredients on top.

Drizzle with the yoghurt dressing and there you have it, a basic Buddha bowl and V for all the Vitality you could wish for on the plate.

“

...I am devoting the whole of this issue's column to managing stress through diet, exercise and supplementation.

Your questions

Q *I wake up each morning wishing it was bedtime. It's not that I don't love my life – I do, but I am stressed just thinking about the day ahead. Can you recommend a supplement that would help?*

As we age, it takes our bodies longer to recover from stress and we also have lower levels of a stress-busting natural hormone called dehydroepiandrosterone. I know, it's a mouthful, but thankfully we shorten this to DHEA.

DHEA is produced by the adrenal glands which sit atop the kidneys but by the age of 40, you are producing half the levels you produced at 20.

Happily, you can easily supplement levels with nutritional supplements, most of which have been extracted from wild yams.

Q *Life is stressful, and I'm not sleeping well so now I'm getting stressed about that and not being able to perform at work too. How can I break this unhealthy cycle?*

A natural tranquilliser, Kava Kava, is a Pacific island herb (first discovered by Captain Cook) which works to promote feelings of calm and wellness, especially when we are feeling particularly stressed.

It will break this cycle of not sleeping and then worrying about how tiredness and anxiety is affecting your performance at work.

Check your local health store for DHEA supplements but you might struggle to find Kava which I suggest you take in tincture form, so check out this supplier (www.desertcart.co.uk) who imports the Kava Kava tincture from the US. Do not use DHEA if you have been diagnosed with a hormone-sensitive cancer.



Susan Clark is a Kundalini Yoga Teacher and an award-winning health writer, journalist and Wellness author who has studied natural health remedies and traditions around the world for over three decades. So, if she says it works, it does.

CNM 25^{YEARS}

COLLEGE OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

Anniversary Celebration

Sat 20 & Sun 21 May | 9-5pm | Friends House, London | £20

Join the 25 year anniversary celebration of CNM, the leading training provider for natural therapies at Friends House. The event is packed with interesting lectures given by leading experts in their field. There'll also be a range of exhibitors in the field of natural health for you to meet, network and shop!

GUEST SPEAKERS (speakers / timings subject to change)

- Dr Jenny Goodman: **Staying Alive in Toxic Times**
- Mike Murphy: **Living a Heart Healthy Life**
- Peter Jackson-Main: **Herbs to Boost Your Immune System**
- Herman Keppler: **How to Become a Naturopathic Practitioner**
- Vicky Mudie: **How to Become a Health Coach**
- Keith McFarlane: **Rebounding for Health & Fitness**
- Pippa Campbell: **Eat Right – Lose Weight**
- Lee Holmes: **Supercharge Your Gut & Brain**
- Dr Lyons: **Optimise Health Using Oxygen**
- Valerie Salt: **Optimising Fertility and Hormones**
- Dr Erica Mallery-Blythe: **The Effect of Radiation**

Ticket sales end 18 May 2023.

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Vitality

... the state of being strong and active and that immense power that gives continuance to life.



Get Your Vitality On

LUCIA BYRNE has some naturopathic tips for those looking to boost their energy levels and their vitality and says for those living in temperate climes, Spring has a powerful impact on our Vital Force

March, UK. We welcome you. Gentle misty mornings, mindful movements and the cheerful daffodils standing tall. After a cold and crisp winter, March gifts us spring; a reminder to uncurl ourselves from our warm winter cocoons. It's the end of the hibernation period and the start of the preparation for a season of revival and reinvigoration.

There are no better months than March and April (for those living in more temperate climates) to recharge and reboot our sense of Vitality. You can think of Vitality as being the Vital Force, the *Prana* or the *Qi/Chi* that flows in each and every one of us. It is a vital energy that both supports and promotes optimum health. It prevents and cures disease in the body, bringing us back into a healthy balance, lifts our spirits and boosts that glorious feeling of wellness.

According to naturopathic principles, health is far more than the 'absence of infirmity'. When we talk about being healthy, we are talking about a physiological and psychological state of abundant vitality. There are many people with no history or diagnosis of a medical condition who still lack energy and vitality. Relatable, right? Sadly, certain culprits have become the warp and weft of our daily living including stress, poor dietary choices and lifestyle habits. These then work to squash, squander and suppress our vitality. Naturopaths understand and recognise that the vital force has been blocked, barricaded or diminished and they use natural approaches to help achieve a state of abundant Vitality.

So, what's the big secret?

Healthy children have it and you can see it shining from their pores. Pregnant women often have it too – when it is referred to as that 'special glow'. But the most beautiful thing about Vitality is that it can be recaptured so easily just by implementing a few very simple steps.

“It's the end of the hibernation period and the start of the preparation for a season of revival and reinvigoration.”

Vital Force is restored through fresh air, daily doses of sunshine, clean water, fasting, a healthy diet and detoxification. You can probably implement the first four steps easily into your daily routine but you may need a little more steering and direction on the final two – diet and detoxification.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Everyone has heard the quote: “*Let food be thy medicine*”, famously coined by Hippocrates, the acclaimed Father of Modern Medicine. And it's no secret that eating nutritious foods is one of the simplest mechanisms for improving health, healing and vitality.

Diet has been recognised as a profound supporting pillar to health since the beginning of time. It is one of the principles of Ayurveda, an ancient intricate natural system of health and wellness, originating in India, some say as long as 5,000 years ago. Ayurveda literally translates as 'the science of life' and is recognised in India as a medical science deeply focused on healing as well as on maintaining the quality and longevity of life using soul-led sciences such as spirituality, psychology and philosophy.

According to Ayurveda, the cornerstone to health includes mind-body balance and using diet as a tool to ultimate health. Ayurveda recognises that each person has a unique constitution (*dosha*) which is indicative of certain foods and practices that help to keep the digestive fire (*agni*) burning bright, powering us through life. Not only do we digest food but we also digest emotions, senses and experiences around us. Therefore, a good strong digestion is pivotal to promoting vitality.

If your *agni* is set to a sluggish simmer, you can begin to feel stuck and depleted physically and emotionally. Unprocessed emotions and experiences are just as harmful as unprocessed foods, increasing the toxic load on the body and mind.

In modern Ayurveda, food is classified according to its nature – *sattvic*, *rajasic* or *tamasic*.

Sattva is that feeling of waking up in the morning with the energy to take on the day. We all have *sattva* inside and should actively seek more of it. *Sattva* evokes intelligence, helps to mitigate infirmity, calls forward cognition and creativity and

nourishes the body and mind with a sense of lightness. Sattvic foods give the body energy without taxing or extracting from it. Think of that feeling after a nourishing, healthy meal — grounded, energised and satisfied. That is sattva in full swing! Think of incorporating some sattvic foods into your main meals for that feeling of vibrant vitality you have been longing for. Examples include whole foods such as fresh vegetables, juicy fruits, raw nuts, legumes and spices including turmeric, ginger, cinnamon, fennel and cardamom. The sattvic tastes are fresh, light, nourishing, sweet and juicy.

Fancy a brew bursting with Vitality? Then try the Ayurvedic Tridoshic Tea (recipe below) suitable for all dosha types.

BANISH THOSE ENERGY-SAPPING 'BLUES'

So, let's dip our toes into detoxification and discover why it's important as part of healthy hygiene habits. Think of the human body as a home and the physical foundation for all of the body systems to reside in. The exterior form takes the brunt of external forces like the weather (rain, hail, shine), protecting the interior systems.

While the interior body systems are exposed to external stimuli regularly (through the senses), the body is interdependent on internal purification practices for the exterior to maintain its integrity and strength. Enmeshed in this is the liver, the body's primary detoxification organ.

The liver is a warehouse that is continuously detoxifying on a daily basis and its strength and effectiveness are largely determined by a person's health status. Although the liver acts in a transformational manner, it is not invincible and can become overburdened when it's overwhelmed by toxins, lacking in, or not absorbing, essential nutrients.

In ancient Yogic tradition, detoxification practices known as *shatkarmas* are practised regularly in order to create harmony and allow Vitality to be expressed.

IN PERFECT BALANCE

Shatkarmas are used to balance the three *doshas* in the body — *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. According to Ayurveda, an imbalance in the *doshas* can give rise to disease in the physical and mental bodies. Shatkarma practices are used before *pranayama* (techniques used to regulate the breath) and other higher yoga practices in order to purify the body of toxins.

There are six main purification practices that target specific locations around the body to enable purification.

- **Jala neti** is a process of cleansing and purifying the nasal passages using a neti pot of lukewarm saline water.
- **Kapalabhati** is a breathing technique known to purify the brain's frontal regions and activate the digestive fire by toning the abdominal muscles.
- **Trataka** is the cleansing practice of intense gazing at one point or object which develops the power of consciousness.
- **Basti shatkarma** is a technique of washing and toning the large intestine.
- **Nauli** involves a method of massaging and strengthening the abdominal organs (not for Western practitioners).
- **Dhauti** is a series of three cleansing techniques that purify the stomach and the intestines.

While the spring season brings forth new growth and regeneration, this is a wonderful time to refresh our systems through gentle detoxification and those purification practices (above) that most resonate with you. True, for most Westerners, Dhauti may feel like a step too far, but if you are interested in exploring some of the practices mentioned above, I recommend working with an experienced Ayurvedic practitioner as contraindications, constitutions and cautions must be taken into consideration for everybody's unique bio-individuality and above all, to prioritise safe and sound practice. ●

Tridoshic CCF Tea

Cumin, coriander and fennel stimulate the digestive system, help the body remove toxins and increase nutrient assimilation. This tea is recommended throughout the day to keep the agni burning bright and the Vital Force strong.

- ½ tsp cumin seeds
- ½ tsp coriander seeds
- ½ tsp fennel seeds
- 1 litre (1 ¾ pints water)

Lucia Byrne is studying naturopathy and herbalism and is a member of the new CNM Writers' Club





A Lifestyle for *Vitality*

The naturopathic diet is designed to deliver optimum health and restore vitality, writes **TRACEY WALKER**, but it can feel overwhelming to make big changes overnight so start small and build on that



We all want to feel alive - full of energy, with a great passion and zest for life so what can we eat and what can we do to tap into our vitality and make that a reality of our everyday lives? The first thing to remember is that it's not just what you eat that counts, it's how you live, what you think and how you engage in life that really defines how you will feel.

If you were to put sub-standard fuel in your car, you'd expect a mediocre or even a poor performance and the same applies to our bodies: what we put in will influence how we look, feel, and perform. So what nutritional nuggets can we factor into those everyday choices we make in order to boost our vitality?

1 LIMIT PROCESSED FOODS AND TAKEAWAYS

Tucking into a favourite takeaway or reaching for the easiest 'go-to' meal has become a way of life for many but hands up if you can relate to that horrid sluggish feeling that always follows? This can be attributed to the lower fibre content of these meals, resulting in slower digestion but also the slower release of any energy-boosting nutrients (and let's face it, these will be negligible) that have actually made it into the 'dish'.

Limiting takeaways or ready meals sounds easy, but sometimes cooking from scratch is just too big a mountain to climb. Implementing step changes is less daunting and there are so many things we can do like swapping in a meal delivery subscription where the ingredients are already provided. Another, especially for those really wedded to the supermarket ready meals, swapping to a healthier alternative such as the meals offered by Field Doctor (www.fielddoctor.co.uk) is a good starting point.

2 EAT IN SEASON, ORGANICALLY WHERE POSSIBLE, AND WITH A DIVERSITY OF COLOURFUL FOODS

Seasonal foods will always offer more bang for their buck in terms of optimal nutrient content. Build on this, ensuring colour and diversity within weekly menu plans capturing quality and organically-grown foods. As a result, you will have more chance of hitting nutrient targets. A good target is to aim to eat 30 different plant-based foods each week to optimise the diversity in your diet.

“ A good target is to aim to eat 30 different plant-based foods each week to optimise the diversity in your diet.

3 INCLUDE PROTEIN IN EVERY MEAL, ESPECIALLY BREAKFAST

Given the long-term energy source that protein provides, it makes sense to start the day well, warding off the mid-morning munchies! Easy, protein-packed breakfast ideas include omelettes, shakshuka, scrambled tofu, protein pancakes with Greek yoghurt and berries, quinoa porridge and overnight oats. Or, for the less adventurous try poached eggs with mushrooms, or salmon with cottage cheese and avocado, both on a lovely sourdough toast.

4 CHECK YOUR VITAMIN D STATUS

Seasonal slumps of vitamin D levels are widely acknowledged in temperate climates like the UK. This will vary of course by individual and geographical location, but it's always worth getting a consultation with a naturopath who will assess their vitamin D levels for clients who've lost their sparkle.

5 INCORPORATE FOODS RICH IN B VITAMINS

B vitamins play a key role in energy production, so it makes sense to include an abundance of vitamin B-rich foods in your diet. More specifically, B12 is, of course, synonymous with red blood cell production and a deficiency in this crucial vitamin is linked to tiredness and anaemia.

6 MAGNESIUM-RICH FOODS

Magnesium is a superhero among nutrients! Involved in hundreds of biochemical processes, it's critical from the cellular level up. Like the B vitamins, one of its main roles is as a co-factor in energy production, so make sure magnesium-rich foods feature regularly in any Vitality-boosting eating plan.

7 DON'T FORGET ABOUT ZINC

Quietly understated, and usually more associated with immune system function, zinc also plays a role in cell and enzyme metabolism, as well as being essential for development and growth.

Simple ways to increase your dietary intake of zinc include:

- Eating organic, grass-fed, red meat, poultry, seafood, shellfish (oysters, crab, lobster), and more dairy (milk, yoghurt, cheese).
- For vegans: increase your intake of nuts, pulses, wholegrain cereals and spinach.

8 COENZYME Q10 (COQ10)

Another key player in energy production, CoQ10 is stored in the mitochondria of cells. Many cosmetic brands are also now adding this as an ingredient in face creams due to its antioxidant protection properties. Exercise performance can be enhanced by leveraging CoQ10's ability to improve mitochondrial function as well as decrease oxidative stress. There are many good food sources of CoQ10 which include organ meats, fatty fish, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, legumes, sesame seeds and pistachios.

9 STAY HYDRATED

Water is used by every cell in the body; it assists bowel regularity, it maintains skin elasticity, it lubricates joints, and it alleviates feelings of lethargy. For those who really struggle to remember to stay hydrated, invest in a portable, refillable water bottle and set an alarm on your phone to remind you to hydrate at regular intervals throughout the day. You can also check out apps like HydroCoach.

10 EMBRACE PLANT POWER!

Plant-based diets nod to the naturopathic principle of restoring alkalinity to tissues and removing acid waste, often associated with a diet that is high in both meat and dairy produce. Try a couple of plant-based meals each week and notice the difference in how you feel.

The plant powerhouse *Withania somnifera* (otherwise known as the Ayurvedic herb, Ashwagandha), is a popular go-to since it's thought to support energy production and athletic performance as well as enhance cognitive function and improve sleep.



Stressors, whether physical or psychological, deplete vitality. Living in a constant state of fight or flight can be exhausting and will show up as lower energy levels and a diminished zest for life.



• Mycotherapy (medicinal mushrooms)

Cordyceps (*Cordyceps sinensis*) is a star among medicinal mushrooms for supporting energy; it's often used clinically to support sports performance and reduce muscle recovery time. However, with so many medicinal mushrooms now on the market, be sure to do your homework so you know what you are taking, how much to take and what benefits you can expect from introducing mycotherapy.

Nutrition, of course, is only part of the jigsaw and so when we're chasing the goal of increased vitality we need to think about some of our other lifestyle choices. Here are just a few simple ideas that will restore your get-up-and-go.

• Dry brushing!

Helps accelerate the removal of toxins from the body, and delivers multiple additional benefits:

- Stimulates the lymphatic system, promoting lymph flow/drainage
- Reduces the appearance of cellulite
- Exfoliates dead skin
- Improves blood flow and circulation
- Provides softer, smoother more radiant skin.

Note: Not recommended for those with skin conditions (i.e., acne, eczema, psoriasis) or where there are open wounds.

• Manage stress levels

Stressors, whether physical or psychological, deplete vitality. Living in a constant state of fight or flight can be exhausting and will show up as lower energy levels and a diminished zest for life.

• Acupuncture

Often used for pain relief but it also releases blocked energy channels within the body. So how does this actually work ...? Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) believes our vital life energy, known as *Qi*, flows smoothly through passageways (called meridians) throughout our body, maintaining our sense of equilibrium. However, if these passageways become blocked, the *Qi* is obstructed, resulting in imbalances and manifesting in either physical or emotional illness. Acupuncture helps clear the meridians to restore balance, with small needles being inserted at various acupuncture points to encourage healing and stimulate the release of endorphins. Wider benefits include improved sleep, digestion, and an overall sense of wellbeing.

If acupuncture feels out of reach given the current economic climate, student clinics could be the answer.

Visit: www.naturopathy-uk.com/resources/student-clinics/

• Exercise

Considered one of the simplest and most effective ways of banishing fatigue and promoting increased Vitality. This doesn't need to be a marathon run or cross-fit session! Walking, swimming, yoga, pilates, tai-chi, resistance training, rebounding, cycling all count too.

• Sleep hygiene

To replenish our physical and mental energy stores, we need to rest. Most of us are constantly on the go, and this doesn't stop when we go to bed. Even though I know I shouldn't, I'm sometimes guilty of checking my phone before I sink into the pillow. On days I don't do this, my sleep is most definitely deeper and less interrupted. Here are my top sleep hygiene tips to optimise overnight rest and recovery:

- Avoid blue light
- Avoid stimulants
- Don't eat too late
- Exercise earlier in the day (not before bedtime!)
- Manage your sleep environment – is it relaxing?
- Establish a routine, take time to prepare and wind down.

• Live with purpose

Do you know what your 'why' is? Pause, and take a moment of self-reflection. Do you know your purpose in life? What do you want this to be? I love the Blue Zones' mantra: "*Live better, longer.*" The Blue Zones are diverse geographic communities, yet they all have common themes in the way they choose to live their lives. One such principle is summarised by the Okinawans – *Ikigai*, or the Nicoyans' equivalent, *plan de vida* – put simply: "*Why I wake up in the morning.*" It's suggested that having a sense of purpose can add up to seven years to your life expectancy so what's not to love in exploring what this means and extending our own existence!

Book recommendations:

The Blue Zones Solution by Dan Buettner

Ikigai by Hector Garcia & Francesc Miralles

• And finally, practise gratitude

By practising gratitude, we can positively influence neural pathways and boost our feel-good neurotransmitters. There are many physical and psychological benefits, all contributory factors to enhance your zip and zing! Here are just a few:

PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF PRACTISING GRATITUDE

Reduced physical response to pain

Fosters a positive outlook

Boosted Immune system

PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF PRACTISING GRATITUDE

Increased self-satisfaction

Enhanced circadian rhythm (sleep/wake cycle)

Enhanced awareness and empathy for others

So, as you can see, the naturopathic lifestyle, whilst centred around core principles embracing the healing power of nature and your own body, is also diverse. These are just a few nutritional and lifestyle highlights focused on Vitality to adopt so that you can be sure of enjoying a vibrant, vital, meaningful, and healthy life. ●

Tracey Walker is a naturopath, member of the new CNM Writers' Club and Affiliates Manager for this magazine. She can be contacted at affiliates@naturopathymagazine.com



And Breathe ...

Vital breath is not called 'vital' for no reason, writes **RITU AWASTHI**. Our ancestors knew what we are only just discovering, which is that the breath is the bridge to restoring vitality

In modern times, while we focus on balancing the essential pillars of health - food, movement, and sleep - we tend to overlook the power of breathing. But as the author, James Nestor, states in his remarkable book *Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art*, breathing is the missing pillar of health.

Proper breathing is essential for efficient brain function, organ function, blood-oxygen exchange, energy release, and other physiological processes. Correct breathing will also prolong both longevity and the quality of that life. It is also a reflection of our physiological and mental state.

Shallow and rapid breathing activates the sympathetic nervous system (also known as the fight or flight system) which prepares the body for action. This results in increased blood flow and increased heart rate, but the chronic activation of the sympathetic nervous system can lead to high blood pressure and anxiety. Slow breathing can reduce these effects by activating the parasympathetic nervous system, known as the 'rest and digest' system, which promotes a state of relaxation and calmness.

The Vagus nerve which controls and measures the activity of many internal organs is also a part of the parasympathetic nervous system. As the Vagus nerve is stimulated, the body becomes calmer, the heart rate slows down, blood pressure decreases, and muscles relax. When the Vagus nerve informs the brain of these changes, it too, relaxes, increasing feelings of tranquillity.

And it is, of course, easier to manage our energy when we are calm because we are not constantly feeling overwhelmed and at risk of burn-out. In a calmer state of mind, we are able to focus and prioritise our energy on what needs to be done, and can get it done much more quickly. Voluntarily manipulating our breath can help us shift the balance toward parasympathetic activation which can reliably lower blood pressure and relieve anxiety states.

So, how should we breathe?

1. NOSE BREATHING

As simple as it may sound, we often breathe through our mouth instead of our nose. As James Nestor points out in his book,

"Ninety percent of children have acquired some degree of deformity in their mouths and noses (from dysfunctional breathing). Forty-five percent of adults snore occasionally, and a quarter of the population snores constantly. Twenty-five percent of American adults over 30 chokes on themselves because of sleep apnoea; and an estimated 80 percent of moderate or severe cases are undiagnosed. Meanwhile, most of the population suffers from some form of breathing difficulty or resistance."

Breathing through the mouth instead of the nose has a lot of negative consequences for our health and wellness and is also linked to an increase of stress-related hormones, high blood pressure, fatigue, irritation, and anxiety, as well as sinus infections and sleep apnoea.

Shallow gulping of breath is also associated with neck tension, mental agitation, panic attacks, and so on.

*To practise nose breathing, start by becoming aware of your breathing pattern throughout the day. Deal with nasal blockage or obstructions if they are preventing you from breathing through your nose (which just means blow your nose or use a jala neti pot).

Check your sleeping habits too. If you are constantly waking up in the morning with a dry mouth, you might be breathing through your mouth while sleeping. Use specially designed tape to keep your mouth shut at night.

2. EQUAL BREATHING

With this type of breathing (as the name suggests) the inhale and exhale phases of the respiration cycle take an equal amount of time. In normal breathing, we either inhale or exhale for a longer duration. Equal breathing helps in bringing awareness to the present. It is also helpful in increasing the efficiency of the lungs.

*To practise this, sit comfortably on the floor or in a chair with your spine erect. Inhale through your nose to the count of five and exhale through your nose to the count of five. Repeat at least 10 times slowly and rhythmically. Once you feel comfortable with breathing in/out for five counts, increase the duration. Gradually, you can work up to breaths that last up to 10 counts.

3. DEEP BREATHING

I remember in one pranayama class, we were asked to count the number of breaths that we take in a minute. It was around 12-14 breaths for everyone. Next, we were asked to slow it down as much as we could. The result was 4-6 breaths per minute while one exceptional student could slow it down to 2 breaths per minute.

Breathing less facilitates the delivery of more oxygen to the lungs as well as every other organ in the body which helps in increasing their capacity.

*To practise slow breathing, sit comfortably on the floor or in a chair. Inhale slowly through your nose for 4-5 seconds and exhale slowly for 6-7 seconds. One round of inhalation and exhalation should take around 10-12 seconds and 5-6 breaths per minute. Practise this for 10-20 minutes per day. You can increase your inhalation/exhalation time gradually thereby reducing the number of breaths you take in a minute.

Practising good breathing habits is one of the easiest ways to positively impact our overall health and wellness. And the good news is, it is never too early (or too late) to start breathing in a way that will instantly boost your Vitality. ●

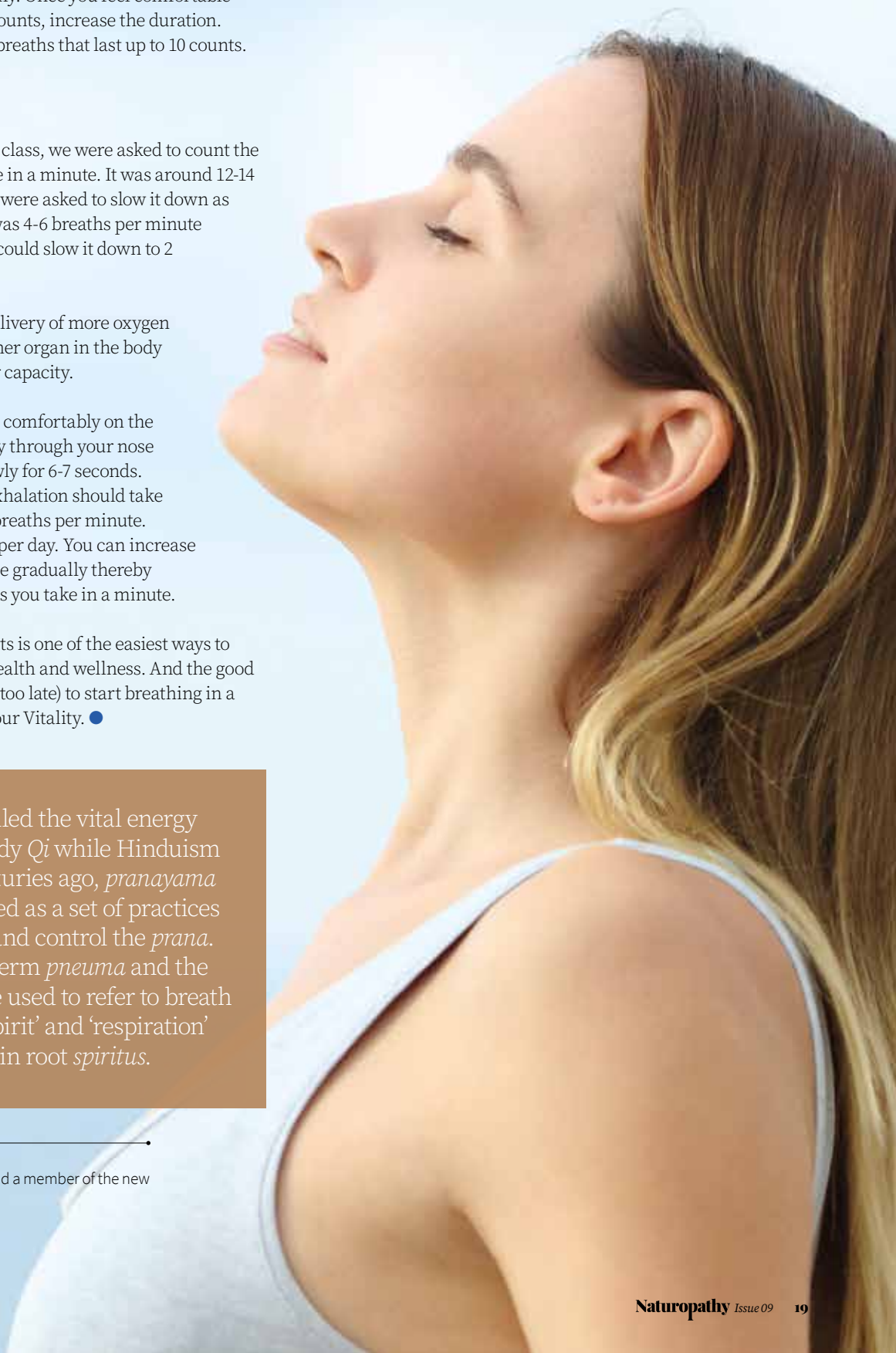
The ancient Chinese called the vital energy that flows inside our body *Qi* while Hinduism defines it as *Prana*. Centuries ago, *pranayama* (breathwork) was devised as a set of practices to modulate breathing and control the *prana*. In the West, the Greek term *pneuma* and the Hebrew term *ruah* were used to refer to breath and divine presence. 'Spirit' and 'respiration' both come from the Latin root *spiritus*.



*As long as there is
breath, there is life.*

- Lama Govinda, Foundation
of Tibetan Mysticism

Ritu Awasthi is a Health Coach and a member of the new CNM Writers' Club.



Fix Your Fatigue

In her new book, nutritionist **KARINA ANTRAM** explores how using the right supplements can help fix your fatigue

The Lifechanging Benefits of Supplements: why, what and when

If BIG nutrition, gut health, sleep and exercise are the first steps to fixing long-term fatigue, then the next step is to look at additional ways we can help our body – and our mitochondria – to start producing enough energy again. Although they will never replace good nutrition, sleep and movement, there are many times when supplements will be the answer to giving your body the boost it needs.

YOU SHOULD CONSIDER TAKING SUPPLEMENTS IF:

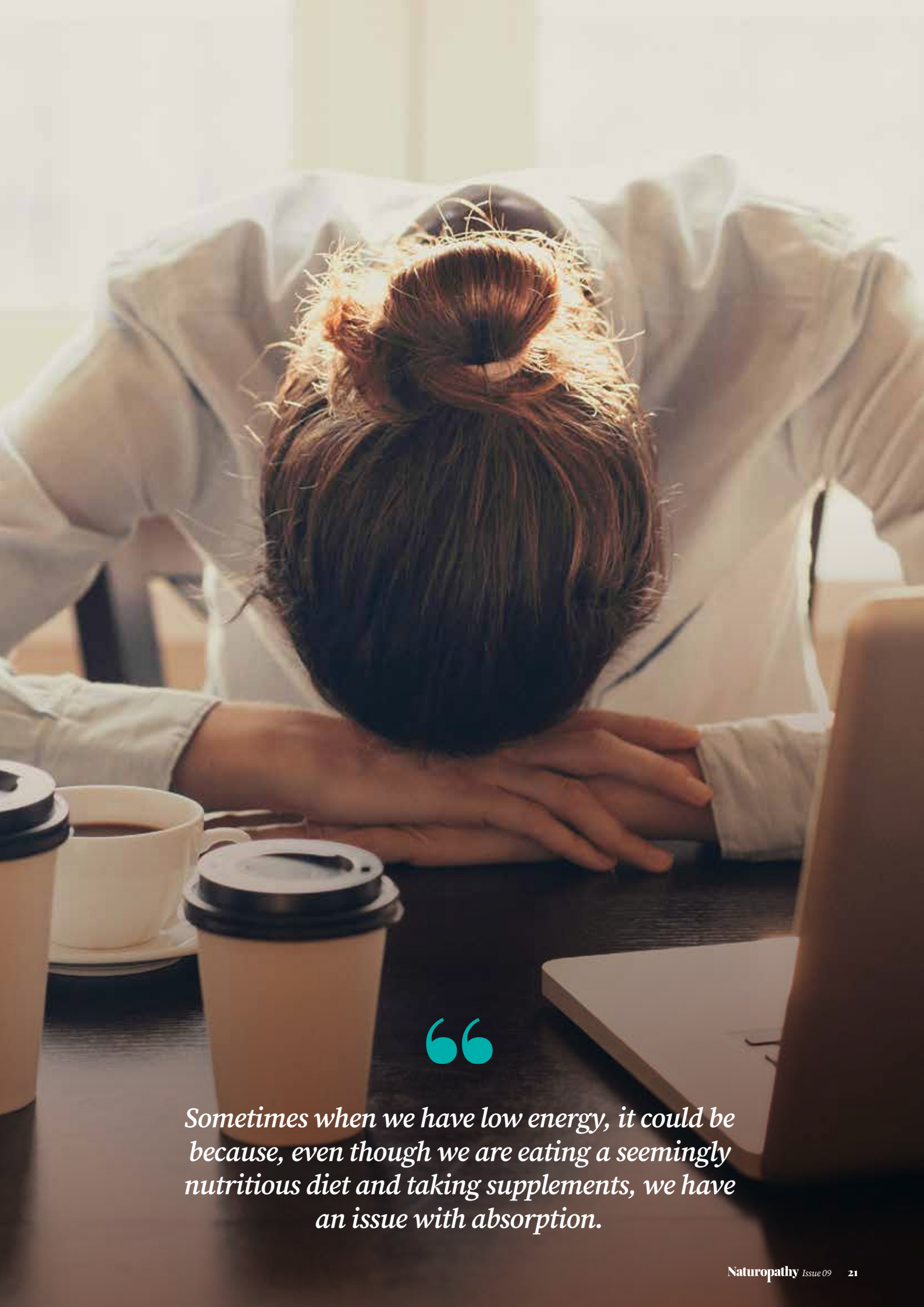
- you have been ill, e.g., with a virus
- you've felt very tired for a long time despite changing your diet
- you are vegan or vegetarian
- you have an illness, such as anaemia
- you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- you suffer with gastrointestinal issues
- you are over 60

You could also consider supplementation if you experience any of the following symptoms alongside your fatigue, as they might be a sign of a specific vitamin or mineral deficiency:

- eyelid twitching, which is a sign of magnesium deficiency
- restless legs
- pins and needles
- cracks in the sides of the mouth (stomatitis)
- mouth ulcers
- brittle hair and nails
- scaly patches or dandruff
- red or white bumps on the skin, such as behind the arms (keratosis pilaris)

Even if you're not experiencing any of these symptoms, there still could be a place for supplements in your diet and not least because our soil's microbiome is not as diverse as it once was. It's not as rich in vitamins and minerals as it used to be, due to pesticides and intensive farming. This means that the nutrient status of plant foods is less than it was a few decades ago. Add in modern processing methods, storage and transportation, and the result is that a lot of the nutrients in our food are lost.

As a result, even if we think we are eating a healthy diet and including as many different micronutrients as we can, we will often still struggle to get enough nutrients



“

Sometimes when we have low energy, it could be because, even though we are eating a seemingly nutritious diet and taking supplements, we have an issue with absorption.

“ Always buy from a reputable healthcare source. Many supplements can be counterfeit or low quality.



from the food we eat. And in some cases, we would need to consume more than is physically possible just to reach the RDA. This is where supplements come in.

Finding the supplement that you need

Supplements are a great way to boost your micronutrient levels at particular times. However, there are times when supplements can do more harm than good. Many products are poor quality and contain ingredients we shouldn't be consuming, such as fillers and binders, known as excipients.

Here are a few ingredients to watch out for when choosing supplements:

- **magnesium silicate** – can cause health issues when digested
- **magnesium stearate** – a binder that might be unsafe for humans to consume
- **titanium dioxide** – a colourant linked to some cancers
- **carrageenan** – a thickening agent that can inflame the digestive tract
- **potassium sorbate** – a preservative that can cause allergies

HOW TO SELECT A SUPPLEMENT:

Always buy from a reputable healthcare source. Many supplements can be counterfeit or low quality from large online retailers.

Make sure you know why you are taking it. Do you have a deficiency or particular need? If not, don't take supplements just for the sake of it.

Have some blood tests first. If you have any questions, ask to speak to the supplements clinical team from the company that you buy the supplement from and make sure you are selecting the right product for your needs.

Register with the supplement companies' websites and take advantage of their promotions and bulk buy to save money.

What to take and when

If you find the world of supplements confusing and expensive, you're not alone. How are you supposed to know what to take, why, and when? And how much? First things first, if you are currently taking any medication, it's important that you check with your doctor or nutrition practitioner before you start any supplements, as many of the most commonly prescribed medications negatively interact with supplements and herbs.

The dosage really does depend on how severe the issue is and whether you are working with a qualified practitioner. If you are, they may suggest taking a UL dose – the tolerable upper intake level – which is the maximum you can take without any serious side effects. However, if you aren't working with a nutritionist, it is best to stick to the dose suggested on the bottle.

Next, you need to understand which supplements to take for the symptoms you're experiencing. Of course, all vitamins and minerals are important within the body. However, some are more important than others when it comes to energy production and reducing fatigue.

Absorption

Sometimes when we have low energy, it could be because, even though we are eating a seemingly nutritious diet and taking supplements, we have an issue with absorption. Antibiotics, lactose intolerance, damage to the intestine where absorption takes place from infection or inflammation, low stomach acid, reduced digestive enzymes so our food cannot be broken down properly or just the simple fact that we're not taking the supplements correctly can all affect absorption.

Two ways of improving absorption are to combine certain vitamins and minerals and take them at the right time of the day and chew more mindfully. Many of these micronutrients work synergistically together and one without the other will have a hard time getting to where it needs to within your body. ●

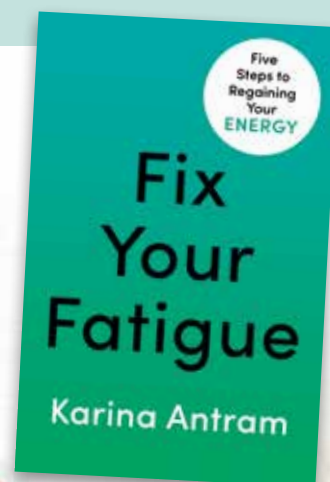
“ Even if we think we are eating a healthy diet and including as many different micronutrients as we can, we will often still struggle to get enough nutrients from the food we eat.



@JodiJohnston_photos

Karina Antram (BSc Hons, Dip NT) is a registered nutritionist and graduate of the College of Naturopathic Medicine and an executive coach. Karina is hugely passionate about health and wellbeing after her own health struggles led her to seek out naturopathic practices. After being diagnosed with IBS, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Lyme Disease, Karina tried out a multitude of tests, diets, health practices, different foods and herbs to try and combat her debilitating symptoms which, at times, led her to being hospitalised. Karina is now recovered, having made numerous changes to her diet and lifestyle, but is fully aware that consistency and continuity is key.

Fix Your Fatigue is published in hardback on 2 March 2023 by Michael Joseph, Penguin Books, RRP £16.99



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Student Spotlight

Jasco Ilgenfritz

In this issue, the spotlight falls on **JASCO ILGENFRITZ** who is in his second year of a three-year herbal medicine course and who says there was never any doubt he would take this path ...

Hello. My name is Jasco Ilgenfritz. I am 23 and have been a student at the College of Naturopathic Medicine in London since 2019. Having completed my first year of Biomedicine and Naturopathy, I am now into my second year of my three-year herbal medicine course and so I will be graduating in 2024.

Originally from Hamburg, Germany, I came to London with my family aged 16 to finish school and start a new life in a new country. Directly after finishing my education, I made my way into the world of naturopathy because I have always known it was what I wanted to do.

My path to herbal medicine and naturopathic medicine as a whole is very similar to the path of most others; my family and I reached a point where the limitations of conventional medicine became too obvious to overlook, and the benefits of natural medicine too profound to disregard. When you see a family member outlive their projected life expectancy by over ten years - solely through natural means - and have the blessing of that person living and thriving with you still today, you soon understand that, when it comes to good health, you have an obligation to look further.

When you start to learn about the traditional ways of healing, and the holistic approach to health that has been tried and tested for thousands of years, you start to understand that these teachings apply to all aspects of our lives. Learning these skills sets you up to better understand the world around you and makes you more competent in most areas of human endeavour, so what I have learned is that this branches out much further than the initially perceived and desired benefits of better health.

So, I went out and looked for the best way to acquire as much of this knowledge as possible; to learn more for myself, my family, and to eventually work within a field that I



am convinced is the answer to most of today's questions regarding health and wellbeing. I stumbled upon CNM, and I dove in headfirst.

I have always been interested in ancient knowledge, placing a higher value on its wisdom than most of the modern, scientifically informed worldviews. You soon realise that cultures all around the world have had it right for millennia, their teachings standing the test of time and overlapping with those of others, creating a complimentary and complete picture of human beings informed by true wisdom and understanding.

In addition, a great aspect of this course is the opportunity to be taught by the experts, including pioneers of the field with a wealth of knowledge. To be in such proximity to people like that, so early in your own career, truly is a blessing. ●

“ My family and I reached a point where the limitations of conventional medicine became too obvious to overlook, and the benefits of natural medicine too profound to disregard.”

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*Even in childhood,
I was fascinated
by the marriage
between the
natural world
and science.*



Introducing...

The breath of fresh air that is Dr Jolene Brighten

Interview by Susan Clark

DR JOLENE BRIGHTEN is a woman on a mission and that mission is to change the way we talk about women's health – especially our hormones. With her new book, *Is This Normal?* being published in the UK next month, we discover what makes her so relatable that she has over 400,000 Instagram followers, and what makes her so passionate about natural health

Before our interview, I am sent a formal document – a kind of guide, if you will – about how to interview Dr Brighten. This is the first time in too many years to count since journalism school I've been guided on how to chat with someone for a profile piece and I am not sure what to make of it.

At the very least, by the time we get to our allocated interview slot which is first thing in the morning for Dr Brighten who is based in the US and after lunch for me, I am not sure what to expect, which makes it even more of a delight that the good doctor – Doctor Disruptor as I'd quite like to call her – is a veritable breath of fresh air.

I thought I spoke quickly but I'm a laggard compared to Dr Brighten who is chatting at the speed of one of those Japanese bullet trains (320 km/hour, apparently). I love it. Because far from being stuffy or formal, she is one of the liveliest people I have ever interviewed and so passionate about naturopathy and helping people to optimum health, the 3000-mile gap and vast ocean that separates us (never mind the culture) closes instantly and I am putty in her formidable healing hands.

Dr Brighten likes to tell it like it is which is probably why she has such an enormous following on social media. She tells me her two superpowers are as follows: (1) she is relatable and (2) she likes nothing better than to take complex science, especially of the hormone-related variety, and turn it into content, spoken and written, that anyone can grasp.

Her first book, *Beyond The Pill*, tackled the practically taboo topic of the repercussions of prescribing synthetic birth control (hormones) to women of all ages and pretending there would be no long-term repercussions.

Published in February 2018, it offered a 30-day program supporting women transitioning off the pill, tackled the thornier topics of moods, fertility, periods and lost libido. In other words, here was a health practitioner finally willing to put their head above the parapet and tell not one but several generations of lost (in the health sense) women how to reclaim their own bodies.

Next month sees the UK publication of Dr Brighten's eagerly anticipated second book, simply entitled *Is This Normal?*

"It's the single biggest question and the one I get asked in my clinic the most," she says by way of explaining the book's name.

But before we dive into what we can expect from this latest offering, let's go back – way back – to where Dr Brighten's interest in health started and discover more about how she found her way to being one of the most respected naturopathic practitioners in the US and here.

We'll start this exploration with a young child, who at the age of just eight, decides she wants to be a pharmacist when she grows up. Yup, a pharmacist!



“I had a friend whose mum was a pharmacist, and she would talk to us about the plant compounds that were used to make medicines, which I thought was the coolest thing. So even then, in childhood, I was fascinated by the marriage between the natural world and science,” she recalls.

Dr Brighten is the daughter of Mexican immigrants who made a new life in California and so she was also the first person in her family to go to college – eventually. I say eventually because she explains how, at the age of 17, she ‘tested out’ of school so she could find work and meet her family’s expectations.

She landed a job as a dental assistant and at the age of 20, encouraged by her dentist employer who recognised just how smart she was, made a plan to go to college and train to be a dentist herself.

“I was blown away by the idea that what you eat becomes you, which I understood was a really important health message that needed to be shared.”

And this is where her story becomes one where sometimes the truth really is stranger than fiction, because there she is, all ready to study dentistry, when a dog bites her on her right (dominant) hand and damages her ring and little finger so badly, there’s no way she will be able to wield those instruments that your dentist uses, closing down that pathway as a career choice.

Still keen to study, Dr Brighten decided instead to first study organic chemistry and then take a Masters in nutrition.

“I was blown away by the idea that what you eat becomes you, which I understood was a really important health message that needed to be shared and so I would give talks about nutrition in local health stores near my home,” she explains.

Again, fate, if you will, took a hand in what happened next. Dr Brighten was giving one of those nutrition talks when a woman who described herself as a naturopath interrupted to tell her she had it all wrong and that all anyone needs to get and stay healthy is an enema and regular colonics.

“Of course, the woman was a fraud representing naturopathy that way but if she hadn’t come to my talk and spoken the way she did I wouldn’t have gone home to research what she had said and then discovered naturopathy for myself,” she says.

Now in her 11th year of practice, Dr Brighten is a born disruptor. Far from seeing herself as someone who ‘fixes’ or

“When it comes to women’s medicine, it seems to me it is done to women, not with them. This needs to change.”

‘heals’ her clients, she talks about the importance of teaching people how to heal themselves and I’m pretty sure that’s just one of the reasons her followers love her – she’s all about empowerment and especially, when it comes to their bodies and their health, the empowerment of women.

“I discovered that doctors withhold information from patients all the time which, combined with the fact most people only go to the doctor when they are sick, and are not encouraged to think about their health any other time, is very disempowering. I want to have the conversations that will change that.”

Dr Brighten is also not a fan of hectoring.

“We can encourage and show people how to shape their own health but not by only talking about what not to do: don’t drink, don’t smoke. How about the things they are doing that are good for their health and doing well? Why aren’t we talking about those things?”

In some ways it is solely down to fate that Dr Brighten has so much to say, share and teach about hormonal health, because even as she started her training to be a health practitioner, she thought she’d specialise in gut health. She’d suffered from digestive problems as a child and only later in life discovered she’d had a *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) infection which was responsible for her sickness and symptoms in childhood, including heartburn and gastric problems that she remembers as being “horrific”.

But when she began to study hormones and realised she could easily make sense of the hidden biochemical pathways that these compounds take in the body, seeing ‘patterns’ that many of her fellow student naturopaths struggled to understand, she had what she describes as an epiphany, and knew this would be her future.

“I can easily see patterns in chemistry that others just don’t see and so for me, hormones are just sexy,” she says.

In decades of health writing and reporting, I have never heard any health practitioner – or any of their clients/patients – describe hormones as sexy. I grew up overhearing women of a certain age talk about ‘The Curse’ and periods were something to be endured.

“It seems to me women’s medicine is something that is done to them, not with them, and this needs to change.” Dr Brighten suggests. *“I remember hearing stories of traumatic births among the women in my own family and so I think for too long, women have not been listened to.”*

“We need to pay a lot more attention to women’s health and the conversations that currently take place on this topic are conversations I want to disrupt in a big way! The most important thing is to have the conversation and that’s what both my work and my books are about.” ●

About

Dr Jolene Brighten NMD, is a hormone expert, nutrition scientist, and thought leader in women’s medicine. She is board certified in naturopathic endocrinology and trained in clinical sexology. Dr Brighten is the author of *Is This Normal*, a non-judgemental guide to creating hormone balance, eliminating unwanted symptoms, and building the sexual desire you crave. A fierce patient advocate and completely dedicated to uncovering the root cause of hormonal imbalances, Dr Brighten empowers women worldwide to take control of their health and their hormones through her website and social medical channels. Dr Brighten is an international speaker, clinical educator, and medical advisor within the tech community. She is also a mum.

www.drbrighten.com

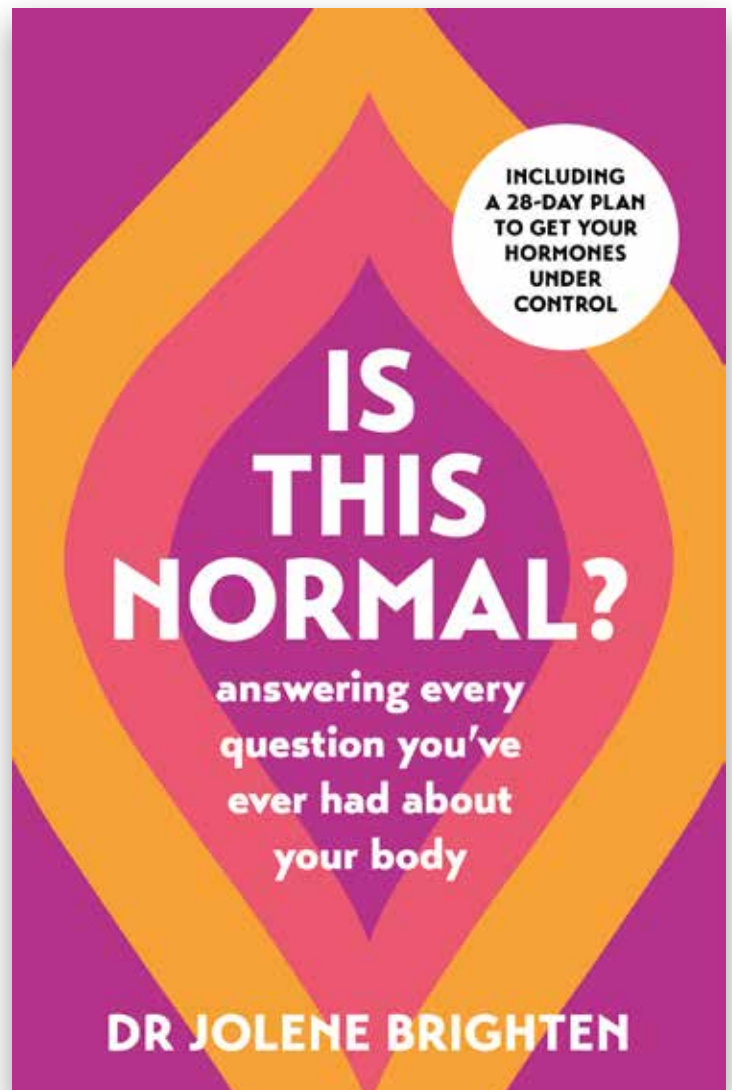


Is this Normal?

In her new, hotly-anticipated book, DR **JOLENE BRIGHTEN** tackles all those questions you may be too embarrassed to ask your doctor or even your best friend. The new book, which is published in the UK in April, explains (and celebrates) women's hormones and health as they are, and not as we think they should be

Is down there normal?

- You can refer to your genitals any way you like but knowing your anatomy and how it all works is incredibly valuable.
- Your clitoris is much bigger than most people believe, and it exists solely for your pleasure.
- The clitoris is smaller than a penis but is estimated to house over 10,000 nerve fibres.
- The vulva is the outside. The vagina is the inside.
- Vulvas and labia vary in shape, colour, and size. They are not symmetrical or uniform in colour, and it is totally normal for the labia to be darker (your anus, too).
- The labia minora have nerve endings and connect to the clitoral hood, which is why you feel pleasure when they are stimulated.
- When it comes to hair removal down there, it's not necessary. But if you do choose to remove it, some methods may work better for you than others.
- 'Queefing' is normal. It's just air and, unlike a fart, doesn't have an odour.
- You never need to clean the inside of your vagina. Douching can seriously mess things up and is associated with pelvic inflammatory disease, bacterial vaginosis, and even ectopic pregnancy.
- Washing the outside can be as simple as warm water and a washcloth.
- Glow sticks, cucumbers, candy, and your headphones shouldn't go in your vagina.
- Lumps, bumps, blisters, or sores that are new require a trip to your medical provider.



“Your adrenal and blood sugar health are the foundation for creating hormone harmony. Addressing these are key to balancing your thyroid, estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and a healthy libido.”



Is my libido normal?

- Your baseline sexual arousal over your lifetime is how to measure it.
- Your libido differs from that of your partner, neighbour, and friend in the same way your energy, mood, and period might.
- What influences your sexual desire is complex and individualized, as is what causes you to become aroused.
- Sexual desire can be spontaneous (like we see in the media) or responsive. Both are normal, and you can experience both in the same relationship.
- Your libido fluctuates with your cycle, can change with life events or medication use, and is dependent on factors such as the health of your relationship.
- Everyone has both a gas pedal and a brake that determine their sexual desire and receptivity to different stimuli. Some of us have more sensitive brakes, and others have less sensitive gas pedals. All of this is normal and identifying what is true for you can help you gain sexual satisfaction.
- Your adrenal and blood sugar health are the foundation for creating hormone harmony. Addressing these are key to balancing your thyroid, estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and a healthy libido.
- Testosterone is the hormone most closely associated with libido. Taking steps to create healthy testosterone levels can help improve sexual desire, arousal, and orgasms.
- Not self-lubricating when turned on, and self-lubricating when you receive sexual stimuli but aren't turned on, is known as arousal non-concordance, and it's normal.

Are my breasts normal?

- Humans are the only mammals who have permanently enlarged breasts. So, ask a llama if your breasts are normal and it's a "Hell no!" But who really cares what a llama thinks anyway?
- There's no perfect size of breasts, and size does not correlate to pleasure. While a significant number of women report being unhappy with their breasts, a significant number of men report being happy with their partner's breasts. Houston, we have a disconnect.
- Big breasts can be a big pain in the back. If your breasts are interfering with your quality of life, chat with a healthcare provider about it.
- Everyone is capable of orgasm from nipple stimulation alone, but it certainly takes mastery, and with the clit being a sure bet, you might not be into this pursuit. Want some tips on nipple and breast play (because why not pull in this highly erotic area)?
- Brain imaging shows that nipples stimulate the same pleasure-related area of the brain as our genitals.
- Having dark nipples and areolae, a third nipple, inverted or flat nipples, or some hair around your areolae is totally normal. Most breasts don't look like what we see in the movies.
- Breast tenderness caused by your menstrual cycle is normal, unless it's impacting your ability to just live. Seriously, annoying.
- Breast implant illness is real, but there are options to help mitigate it.

IS THIS NORMAL? by Dr Jolene Brighten is published by Orion Spring on 6 April 2023 and is available in Trade Paperback, ebook and audio, priced £18.99

Back in Shape

Program

What Does Vitality Mean & How Do We Improve & Maintain It?

Improvement in Vitality is something many of us would seek given the chance! If you execute the right strategies, you might even find that you end up having more Vitality in the next 5 years than you have had in the previous decade, or longer. We know this from clinical experience and with our members over the years. For some, following our guidance has meant their

initial consideration of early retirement due to pain and a lack of Vitality was completely transformed. Instead of winding down into their 60s, they have renewed Vitality to push on further! We've had others, with objective markers like bone density increasing at a time many (women in particular), resign themselves to a "managed decline".

Firstly, a quick Google search of the definition of Vitality gives the following:

"Vitality: The state of being strong and active; energy."

Vitality can mean different things to different people, but we see in the Oxford Dictionary quote above, the definition in its truest form.

Starting with *"being strong"*. Looking at those further on in life, we see there is the absence of strength, primarily in the musculoskeletal system. Without appropriate strength in the body, we start to see activity being affected.

The ability to remain *"active"* is inextricably linked to the attribute of strength. Without appropriate levels of strength, the ability to move around your own home, let alone further afield could be terribly impacted.

It is inevitable that the inability of the body to move itself around means that the capacity to generate or utilise energy becomes diminished. At the extreme, we see an individual with a lack of strength and activity who barely has the energy to get out of bed.

Although this paints a gloomy picture, it is easily avoided; breaking down the words helps us better understand the links between these three core tenets of Vitality. You will also see how addressing the first one at the outset, can create a positive feedback loop that can powerfully oppose the negative feedback loop described above.



Strengthening As the Central Strategy To Boost Your Vitality

Improving muscle mass and strength is the cornerstone for Vitality inasmuch that it directly addresses that first component, “being strong”. How we go about this is important: this is why we would recommend that everyone spend 30 to 60 minutes, 3 to 5 times a week to work on resistance training; this could be done at home or in a gym.

In order to benefit properly from resistance training though, we must make sure we do it in a responsible manner.

STEP 1: FOCUS ON SIMPLE EXERCISES DONE WELL

Spend a little time learning how to do exercises correctly. Strengthening does not need to be complex or intimidating. Begin with simple movements that you are already doing every day. For example, squats. You are already doing this movement every day when you get out of bed, or off any chair. Learning to do it technically well is important for your whole lower body: your lower back, hips, knees, and ankles.

In the Back in Shape Program, we help members learn to do these movements correctly, giving a reference for good form. You would be surprised how many struggle with doing a simple squat with full range and good form. Try recording yourself as you do these so you can judge your technique more objectively, and see change over time!

STEP 2: ADD RESISTANCE TO MEET THE REQUIRED INTENSITY

Once you have mastered the technical skill to be safe, you can begin to make them effective. Adding resistance by using exercise bands or weights to provide the stimulus for change is our focus. This means working out at a level that challenges your muscles, testing their ability to maintain the movements, like the squat, competently.

It is common that working out at the right intensity will initially create some delayed discomfort in the muscles. This is called *delayed onset muscle soreness*. It's something that often occurs in the 24 hours following exercise. It can be off-putting but know that it is a good sign that you're at the right intensity. You will not continue to feel this delayed muscle soreness after every session; your body will change, provided you follow step 3.

STEP 3: CONSISTENCY AND PROGRESSION OVER TIME

The last part of this puzzle is to do the above over the long term. You will find that exercises become less challenging, as your vitality increases! Progression is a steady increase of the resistance used over the long term that will help you continue this strengthening process.

Being Active; Energy

Improving strength as mentioned above allows your body to be active. At a basic level, for some, the action of getting out of a chair is a struggle; this is primarily why we previously referenced squats - it is a foundational exercise that is applicable to all of us.

Maintaining a strong body allows us to be active, have energy, and avoid the scenario mentioned above, as well as having secondary benefits such as improved cardiovascular health.

As you do more, your capacity increases: for example, if you could only do 5 good squats to begin with, then you can do 10 and later still, you're able to do multiple sets of 10 reps with a 10-kilogram weight, you have changed! What your body is capable of has changed too. As a result, the daily activities you wish to participate in become less strenuous.

The more you do, the more you can do!

Devote some time each week to improving your Vitality!

There are 168 hours every single week; investing an incredibly small amount of time doing 3 to 5 sessions amounts to less than 0.03% of your week. Adding resistance training is something all can do.

For such a great reward, why would you not want to improve your Vitality? At its core, to have Vitality is to be strong and active, with energy. Give yourself the opportunity to experience this; if you do it right, in the blink of an eye, you will find your body already reaping the rewards of this endeavour. ●



Michael Fatica is a Consultant Osteopath for The Back in Shape Program, an online, rehabilitation program for treating back pain. The program was created by Michael and his wife, Lara, who both studied at the University College of Osteopathy.

Michael has been treating and advising patients for the past 10 years, specialising in the spine and spinal mechanics. Previously founders of The Mayfair Clinic in London, they developed BIS during the pandemic as a means of helping patients who were unable to seek face-to-face expert help for back pain. For more information, please visit www.backinshapeprogram.com



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Past, present and future: 25 years of Naturopathy

When the new and pioneering College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM) opened the doors to its very first students of Naturopathy 25 years ago, the world – and the world of natural health – was a very different place. Here, CNM’s Director of Education, **BOBBY QURESHI** reflects on just how much has changed in that time and looks forward to what we can expect in the next 25 years ...

Since CNM’s inception 25 years ago, the field of Naturopathy has evolved considerably. But what – specifically – has changed over this time, and are all these changes for the greater good of the patient/client/natural health consumer?

From my own experience within this profession (one that I am so proud to be a part of), I want to give you a glimpse into what I have observed over the years and also share what I believe the future of Naturopathy will look like. So, let’s dive in ...

WHAT HAS GROWN IN THE LAST 25 YEARS?

Naturopathy is a philosophy of healthcare that many would traditionally describe as both an art and science. Out of these two pillars, it is certainly the ‘science’ element that has transformed during the last couple of decades.

Evidence-based medicine has become the dominant paradigm within the field of conventional medicine which places great emphasis

on the findings from “best available current research”. This model, I have noticed, has gradually become more accepted by many naturopaths, with practitioners seeking a deeper understanding of *how* a nutrient, herb or other natural remedy may work in the body. This has certainly filtered through into naturopathic training, where students are given an insight into what we now call ‘mechanisms of action’.

However, the inclusion of an evidence-based approach presents many challenges. The type of research generally regarded as the ‘highest quality’ within this framework is typically very isolated. And it also does not take into account that naturopathy has always placed a strong emphasis on treating patients individually; ‘standardised protocols’ simply do not work when we are trying to address the real underlying cause of a patient’s symptoms. For example, 10 individuals with eczema will have different underlying causes, and so the approach needed to resolve each case of eczema will differ.

As discussed widely by the highly regarded Dr Aseem Malhotra, another problem with this model is that many studies are now funded only because they are likely to be profitable. For example, drug companies will often fund research into drugs they are looking to have approved. Even more alarming is learning that the drug regulating agencies are often largely funded by these companies too: for example, in the UK, 86% of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)’s budget is derived from the pharmaceutical industry.

I have certainly observed how easy it is for naturopaths to shift into a more ‘prescriptive’ approach when applying the evidence-based medicine model. This can very easily result in what we might call ‘green allopathy’!

“
Thankfully, urine therapy is no longer a feature in a typical naturopath’s clinic!”

So, we have to ask ourselves, is this model truly fit for naturopathic practice?

Technology has advanced drastically over the last 25 years too – with so many fantastic opportunities for the field of naturopathic medicine.

It has provided the opportunity to study naturopathy online from any corner of the globe, learn from the world’s leading practitioners and even enable practitioners to host clinic consultations online. Technology has most certainly expanded the reach of naturopathy, and I myself am now working remotely with many patients from around the world, which is quite amazing. Thank goodness for Zoom!

One area of technology that is continuing to grow by the day is **comprehensive (‘functional’) testing**. This is certainly a way of gaining a deeper understanding into the functioning of a patient’s body.

We now have comprehensive stool tests that reveal insights into the functioning of the digestive system, genetic testing that reveals a body’s genetic strengths and weaknesses, comprehensive hormonal testing to understand how the orchestra of the body’s hormones is working together, and so much more.

I have found that, when used properly, some testing can greatly benefit the decision-making process around certain clinic cases. But with this area being so new and ever-evolving,



there is a risk of test results not being used in an optimal way.

For example, we may have a stool test revealing an overgrowth of bacteria within the small intestine, causing bloating. But we still need to be asking ourselves: why are the bacteria overgrown there in the first place? Unfortunately, I see so many naturopaths making this mistake and neglecting to dig a little deeper in the more traditional ways.

One area that has excited me greatly in more recent years is the emergence of **medicinal mushrooms** usage in the West. (I may have to hold back my unbridled excitement on this one!) Mushrooms such as Shiitake, Reishi, Lion’s Mane and Turkey Tail have, for hundreds if not thousands of years, been a key feature within the medical systems of many Asian countries, and with our understanding of how these amazing fungi work growing every day, it is no surprise to see their popularity increasing in Western countries.



“

One area that has excited me greatly in more recent years is the emergence of medicinal mushrooms usage in the West.

Higher quality supplements are continuing to be developed and are becoming more accessible, which ultimately provides much greater benefits for patients. I remember when I first learnt about probiotic supplements, there were only a couple of brands on the market and they all used the same bacterial strains. Fast forward to today and we now have probiotic formulae targeted at just about every area of concern, e.g., the skin, gut, reproductive tract, mouth, and so much more!

WHAT HAS DISAPPEARED OR BECOME LESS POPULAR IN THE LAST 25 YEARS?

Well, thankfully, urine therapy is no longer a feature in a typical naturopath's clinic! We have certainly made progress in some areas. Jokes aside, there are areas which have declined in use and, sadly, most are probably at a loss to the profession.

The **shift to focusing on 'evidence'** to support the application of certain natural interventions has resulted in the decline of some therapeutic modalities that simply do not fit within the methodology demanded by the evidence-based medicine model. Modalities such as Bach flowers, Bush flowers and Kinesiology seem to be less popular as a result, which is a great shame for patients who would be served very well by these approaches which we might consider 'energetic'.

I often ask students in my CNM lectures: should we dismiss a modality just because a research study does not show 'evidence' that it works, despite the results experienced by so many patients? I talk from my own experience, and also that of so many other naturopaths who use these modalities with great success, when I say that these natural approaches mentioned can produce the most profound responses.

My own favourite of the 'energetic' medicines are the Bach flowers, which are emotional remedies that can provide a sense of balance when someone is feeling emotionally 'imbalanced'. For example, if feeling resentful, impatient, overwhelmed, anxious or struggling with grief, Bach flowers can work a treat! (See our article on page 46 for more about the Bach flower system and how it works).

For many naturopaths, acceptance within a conventional medical setting is important.

Whilst for some, this journey can be successful, for others, this search for acceptance and respect can result in practitioners becoming less aligned with fundamental naturopathic principles, ultimately resulting in patients not being given a truly holistic, cause-focused and individualised approach to care.





SO, WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IN THE NEXT 25 YEARS?

The future of naturopathy looks extremely bright. With the rates of chronic disease continuing to rise every year, the general public becoming more aware of the limitations within current conventional healthcare models, and the increased interest in people taking responsibility for their health, more people are likely to keep seeking naturopathic support.

In a world that has become increasingly digitalised and disconnected, the value of a naturopathic consultation is likely to be given greater emphasis. I am realising more and more just how therapeutic the consultation process itself is, before I even give my patient their naturopathic plan. What does that tell you? Equally, in this modern world where so many people are 'out of touch' with each other, I imagine 'hands-on' therapies will also become more popular.

I also expect to see energetic practices come back more strongly as the pendulum always swings. At CNM we have spent years updating our naturopathic training to the point where we now have a beautiful balance between applying traditional naturopathic concepts and energetic modalities, whilst drawing upon new knowledge that can help inform the clinical decision-making process.

It is the fundamental principles of naturopathy that we must not forget, because it is this 'art' that makes naturopathic medicine so unique and effective. And, of course, over the next 25 years, I look forward to welcoming more students who want to truly make a positive difference to people's lives and who decide to come and study naturopathic medicine with us at CNM. ●

“

Modalities such as Bach flowers, Bush flowers and Kinesiology seem to be less popular as a result, which is a great shame for patients who would be served very well by these approaches which we might consider 'energetic'.



Bobby Qureshi is a highly respected nutritional therapist, naturopath and holder of a Masters of Osteopathy degree. He is the Director of Education for the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM) and has helped over a thousand patients around the world improve their health with natural medicine.

 [bobbyqureshinaturopathy](https://www.instagram.com/bobbyqureshinaturopathy)



The Natural Chef

Taste of the Earth

SAM HAMBRETAN on how the food on your plate can be a force for positive change

Nettles, sorrel, radicchio — some of the stunning, underrated produce we glimpse at this time of year. As we move further through the year, the soil yields more and more, seeds wake up and stretch to the light, the precursor to the glut of summer vegetables and fruits.

I love food: I work as a chef, nutritional therapist and as Academic Director of the Natural Chef cooking school at the College of Naturopathic Medicine so, in my world, there is science as well as magic on every plate.

I obsess about each ingredient in a dish: not only the taste but the incredible stories behind them. I think of the people that have put their life's work and their life's love into creating something that will be shared with the people we cherish, or to become comfort food for one on those dark nights when we most need nourishment.

Planting the Seeds

I believe that food not only has the power to fuel us but is a force for positive change in our bodies when we're sick or out of balance. Need to calm an overworked nervous system? Let's try a nervine tea to give you a warm hug from within. Struggling to bring your hormones into balance? Add these cruciferous veggies to remove those toxins and help your liver process higher-than-normal levels of oestrogen. Feeling run down?

Let's build meals that support your body and what it's going through at this moment.

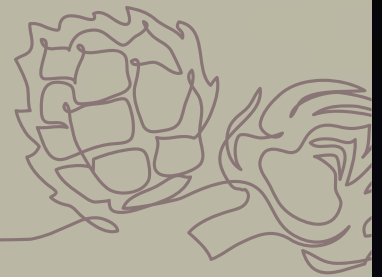
I've seen clients and students experience the most incredible changes to their health through eating differently, by beginning to connect to how our ancestors tended to eat and by listening to our bodies and prioritising plant magic over processed food.

This is why real food for me, and true food love, really begins in the soil, where our food starts its journey to the plate. I've had the pleasure of learning and cooking at a land workers' cooperative growing food in the Lea Valley — a magical space between an ancient forest and London's concrete trees.

Time stops when you enter; robins hop around the glasshouse in winter and, in the spring, those creeping longer days give life to bushels of luscious broad beans, handsomely thick rhubarb and the green glimmering shoots of plants to come later in the year. The first time I put my hands in the earth there (and the compost heap!) I began to truly connect to what was on my plate and understand the love it really takes to create every single bite that we so often take for granted.

So, the next time you pick up some freshly-dug leeks from the market or stumble across a woodland thicket of wild garlic that is so pungently special at this time of year, I challenge you to try a recipe you never have before, to add an ingredient that scares you a little — perhaps you'll find a new favourite home classic! ●

...the recipes



Jerusalem Artichoke, Shiitake and Lemon Verbena Soup

An immune-boosting dish that packs an umami punch. Jerusalem artichokes are a fantastically creamy root for a soup, and are low GL, so great for stabilising blood sugar.

6 dried shiitake mushrooms
1 tbsp dried lemon verbena leaves
1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
8 shallots, peeled and finely sliced
1 bay leaf
350g Jerusalem artichokes, roughly peeled
500ml vegetable stock (homemade or shop-bought)
5 sprigs of oregano
2cm fresh ginger, peeled and grated
1 apple, cored and cubed, skin on
Smoked salt and pepper to taste

Reserve the shallot skins and scrubbed Jerusalem artichoke skins for your next vegetable stock.

1. Boil a kettle of water. Add 300ml water to the dried shiitakes and lemon verbena leaves, set to one side and leave to infuse and rehydrate for 20 minutes.
2. Heat a medium/large stock pan with a tablespoon of olive oil on the hob. Add the shallots and bay leaf, sweating on a low/medium heat till soft and glossy.
3. Finely slice the Jerusalem artichokes and add to the pan with 100ml of the vegetable stock (this is to stop the vegetables sticking). Follow with the oregano leaves and fresh ginger.
4. Season well with smoked salt and black pepper, then leave to soften for 5 minutes before adding the apple. Cook on a low/medium heat for another 10 minutes until the Jerusalem artichokes are very soft. Add a little more of your stock if the vegetables start to stick.
5. Add the rehydrated shiitakes in thin strips, the remainder of the bone broth and the lemon verbena and shiitake water.
6. Remove from the heat and, with a hand blender, blitz until the soup is creamy. If you would like it a little thinner, add a little water to your desired consistency.
7. Top with fresh apple slices to add crunch and freshness or dehydrated fresh shiitake mushrooms to enhance the immune-boosting properties of this soup.

“ In my world,
there is science
as well as magic
on every plate.

Wild Garlic and Watercress Pesto

Wild garlic, like its bulbous cousin is powerfully anti-inflammatory and great for calming an overworked body. Paired here with watercress, a bitter leaf that helps to stimulate digestion, this pesto is a good tonic for gently removing toxins from the body.

80g wild garlic
70g watercress
1 smoked garlic clove (unsmoked will do if you can't find smoked)
½ lemon, zested and squeezed
50g sunflower seeds, toasted
Extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

If you can't forage wild garlic locally, it can be bought from farmers' markets or good greengrocers when in season.

1. Wash the wild garlic and watercress, then dry well. Place both in a blender and blitz till they are beginning to break down.
2. Add the garlic clove, zested and squeezed lemon and toasted sunflower seeds to the blender, pulsing again till you have a thick paste.
3. Slowly, with the motor running, add the olive oil in a steady, slow stream till you have a loose pesto. This should be to the texture that you like; I always aim for my pesto to be loose enough to fall from a spoon with ease, but to not be as runny as double cream.





A Doctor's Journey

Dr RAMIZ AHMED-MAN, a junior doctor in the NHS, is currently studying to qualify as a Nutritional Therapist and Naturopath. He tells the story of his own health crisis which brought him to wanting to learn more about Natural Health

What is a doctor? It may seem obvious, but it's never stated explicitly in medical school. Looking back to the countless days I spent sitting in lecture theatres, many of my lecturers tried to answer this question simply by referring to the Medieval Latin word 'doctor', meaning 'teacher' or 'scholar'. This association between the title and academia has been present since the 14th century and still rings true today for those awarded PhD degrees at university.

It wasn't until the 17–18th centuries that the title 'Dr' started being awarded to medical school graduates. This happened first in Scotland and was in recognition of the level of education they had acquired through their degree. And so, looking simply at the profession's history, it's easy to conclude that a doctor is in fact an academic.

Of course, if a passenger is taken ill mid-flight and someone shouts out: "Is there a doctor on this plane?", we all know they're not looking for an academic. There is a more common understanding of the word's meaning, and that is that a doctor is a healer. Or, as one of my patients likes to put it: "A doctor is someone who fixes people, right?"

When I signed up to become a doctor, I didn't sign up for the chance to earn a prestigious education or a title; I signed up for one purpose — to 'fix' people; to heal them. But after five years of medical school training and three years of working in the NHS, I've realised something. Healing is not the priority.

Symptoms of Management?

So what is the priority? One word — management. Patients with chronic diseases visit their doctor for help with the management of their symptoms. Patient flow in a hospital falls under the remit of bed managers. Services and resources have a whole host of management teams to ensure efficient and cost-effective allocation. Staff members are managed by the Human Resources (HR) department and supervisors. Welcome to the system, one designed to enact a consensus approach to the following questions ... "How does one manage the health of a population?" and "How does a state manage the health of its citizens?"

This is also, of course, why pharmaceuticals play such a key role in healthcare today because, when looking at the health of a population on a macro scale, the question itself becomes a statistical problem. For example, if I give a statin to all of my patients with known heart disease for five years, published research trials and meta-analyses say that one life in 83 will be saved. If I give antibiotics to each of my patients experiencing an exacerbation of their COPD, published research trials and meta-analyses say that one in 12 won't need to go into hospital. The problem is, what about the other 82 with heart disease whose lives weren't saved? And what about the other 11 with COPD exacerbation who still

needed to go to hospital? When solely focusing on statistically managing the health of the masses, one accepts the losses. This is, after all, going off the (presumed) best available evidence that research has to offer. And who carries out the plan put in place for public health management? The doctor.

Now, obviously, it's not just the doctors that carry out this strategy which the public health service adopts; many other allied health professionals carry out the same shared work. But after eight years of training and working in the service and looking back on the reason why I became a doctor, I couldn't help but ask myself: *"Am I actually healing people?"*

When interacting with patients on the ground, it's not possible to treat them as a statistic. People are individuals,

with their own individual collection of problems. And anyone working in general practice will agree, the drugs simply don't work for everyone. Patients come to us seeking help with their chronic health problems yet, statistically, most of the drugs we prescribe are more likely to have little to no positive effect and this is not even considering the likelihood of a patient experiencing an adverse effect from a drug.

Ultimately, the system deals with the statistics, but the workers on the ground – the doctors and other health professionals – are the ones tasked with helping the individuals. I realised the statistics aren't stacked in the individual's favour. And I came face-to-face with this stark realisation one day when I became the patient.



“

After five years of medical school training and three years of working in the NHS, I've realised something. Healing is not the priority.

“ I realised the statistics aren’t stacked in the individual’s favour. And I came face-to-face with this stark realisation one day when I became the patient.

Inflamed Diagnosis

Eczema is a common condition characterised by dry, itchy skin, usually starting in infancy and being episodic in nature. My experience of suffering from the disease intensified dramatically during medical school. What was once a mild annoyance became an unbearable burden within a five-year period. Spreading over my entire body and with associated night sweats, insomnia due to itching, and multiple daily flares, my life and studies were forcibly put on hold.

Aware of the potential side effects of oral steroids and methotrexate, and having exhausted all topical treatment options, my mind started to wander into the future and to a life constantly burdened by my disease. Was I destined to live this way for ever? What would life be like without my disease? Illness is more than a ‘weight’ one carries. The choice to pick up the weight is never given to us, or at least not with some awareness of the true extent of its burden. Instead, the weight attaches itself to us, slowly increasing over time, making movement along our journey in life more and more arduous and exhausting, until we stop being able to move entirely. Steroids, for me, were like a temporary boost of energy, allowing me to keep moving along my path, but with a cost and without a resolution. I needed a cure. No more temporary fixes. I needed to shed that ‘weight’, for good.

I started like anyone would these days, with a Google search: **“How do I overcome eczema?”** I searched for people who had successfully reversed their disease progression. I studied their stories and their journeys. I started to discover alternative views regarding the causes and development of eczema, theories not backed by rigorous scientific research, but by historical understandings of the disease. I started to make changes. I looked at my diet, my lifestyle, my habits. I made, failed and re-made changes again and again.

My disease got better and worse. After two years from the point at which I chose to take control of my health, I had reached a state of balance, where I could function and control my disease progression, but only if I led a strict lifestyle. It had taken a while to develop the discipline, but that didn’t make it any less tiring. The spontaneity in my life had been traded for the ability to live freely, but I still wondered: *“Am I truly free of my disease?”* Perhaps. You see, it still dictated what I could and could not do in my life. I hadn’t rid myself of it, only learnt how to manage it.



What is it like to be truly free of disease? To be carefree, not to have to worry about what I do and how I live. In two years, I’d learnt how to be responsible for my health, but I still hadn’t shed the ‘weight’ of my disease; I’d just become strong enough to carry it. My search for a cure began at that point. The knowledge I have gained since has been nothing short of incredible.

What is it like to heal people? The answer is two-fold.

- 1) To help them gain full responsibility for their health, and
- 2) To help them find a cure for their disease.

As a doctor, this is now my mission. This is not about going against the grain of any particular type of medicine. This is about advancing it. This is about seeking a level of care for the patient that mitigates and removes any and all disease. This is a direction. This is about taking healthcare into the future. One not solely focused on statistics, but on the individual, and what they need to rid themselves of disease and to reach an abundance in health.

This is my mission, my vocation, and this has been my own journey. ●

“ This is about taking healthcare into the future. One not solely focused on statistics, but on the individual, and what they need to rid themselves of disease and to reach an abundance in health.

Naturopathic Beauty

Dull-looking skin?

Acknowledging our emotions is the first step to getting healthy skin. And using Bach Flower essences - a simple and non-toxic plant-based solution - to alleviate some of the more common health problems that undermine our vitality is the second, writes **MARA CLAVI**

Typically, the first thing we do when we have a skin problem is open our bathroom cabinet, take a soothing cream or lotion, apply it to our skin, and the problem – whether a rash, eczema, urticaria or even psoriasis – will (we hope) just vanish.

Unfortunately, topical applications only provide a temporary relief for our ailment and as soon as the lotion's superficial benefits wear off, the problem returns with a vengeance. In addition to being uncomfortable, this is also very annoying. We must literally start from scratch. We thought we'd conquered the problem, but it is clear we still have work to do.

This is where a fresh perspective is required. Imagine, for a second, that our skin's reaction is simply our body's way of communicating with us. What if a physical symptom – what we see on the outside – has deep emotional roots inside and that what we see as a skin complaint is actually the physical manifestation of an emotional imbalance? What if negative emotions are at the root of a troublesome skin condition? If this is a possibility, then it is worth spending some time thinking about why we feel badly, what causes negative emotions and, crucially, how we can change them into healing positive energy.

How does this work?

The notion that emotions influence our physical bodies is not new. Gabor Maté, one of the most esteemed psychologists of the past two centuries, describes in his writings the significant impact that his clients' emotions have on their physical health. However, addressing emotions is not a simple task, particularly as many of these suppressed feelings can evoke painful memories and force us to confront deep-rooted issues that we would rather avoid.

“Bach Flower Remedies offer us a safe system to transform negative emotions into positive ones in order to rebalance our mental state.”

The good news is that there are numerous ways to support our emotional exploration journey. The use of Bach Flower Remedies is one of my favourite techniques to alleviate mental suffering, transform negative emotions into positive ones and positively influence our physical state.

What are Bach Flower Remedies?

The Bach Flower Remedies system was developed in the 1930s by a physician named Dr Edward Bach, who was a keen observer of human nature.

After treating and curing thousands of patients in his busy London clinic, he became convinced that the physical and emotional states were interconnected.

If the emotional state was out of balance, the physical body would exhibit the corresponding symptoms.

Dr Bach set out to create a remedy system to “transform negative emotions into positive ones and balance the mental state of his patients”. In this manner, he developed a system of floral remedies that we now know as Bach Flower Remedies.

How can Bach Flower Remedies help our skin conditions?

A 2011 article published in the *Worldwide Journal of Psychological Research* reviewed 30 research articles on the link between skin conditions and negative emotions and identified multiple emotional factors that contribute to skin conditions including fear and anxiety, depression and sadness, rage and revulsion. The symptoms that may result include skin rashes, hives, psoriasis or irritated skin. The good news, though, is that all of these emotions can be addressed and rebalanced using Bach flowers which in turn then helps tackle skin problems.

Choosing the right Bach flower for the right emotion that we want to rebalance can be tricky for beginners so here's some guidance to get you started once you've identified what's really going on with you:

FEAR AND ANXIETY

Not all forms of fear are identical. Therefore, there are many Bach flowers for various forms of fear and anxiety.

If you have a phobia of something you can identify, *mimulus* is the Bach flower to use. For example, you have a fear of dogs and so you're scared to go anywhere near your neighbour's house because they have a dog which you're scared might jump on you.

Another sort of dread is when not only a specific object or situation terrifies you, but also the thought of the situation induces a feeling of horror. For instance, you have a fear of flying and the mere notion of boarding a plane makes you queasy.

In this instance, the flower remedy *rock rose* will help.

Some people live in a constant state of fear without understanding why. They appear to be terrified of life. They frequently fantasise about being killed in horrific ways. If you fall into this category, you can take *aspen*.

If your worry is mostly about your loved ones, and you fret over the safety of your children, parents, partner or dear friends try *red chestnut*.

DEPRESSION AND SADNESS

Depression is not an easy condition to live with but, again, Bach Flower Remedies may provide some comfort.

Gorse, for example, can be used when you have given up and believe there is no hope. You believe you have tried everything possible, yet nothing has worked, and you are convinced there is nothing else you can do. *Gorse* restores faith and promotes an optimistic attitude on life.

Mustard is a Bach remedy that can aid with unexpected depression. You may experience elation followed by a sudden onset of profound melancholy for which you have no explanation. Utilising *mustard* in this situation is advantageous.

Try *larch* if you lack confidence and believe you are not good enough. It will increase your self-confidence.

In contrast, *elm* is your go-to floral treatment if you are typically a confident person, but you are taking on too much, you begin to doubt your power and you are in danger of giving up.

Pine is a remedy that can be used when you believe that you are responsible for everything. You accept responsibility for everything that goes wrong, notwithstanding your innocence. This can result in a melancholy condition and *pine* can alleviate feelings of guilt.

ANGER

Anger may be extremely tiring and difficult to control. Angry individuals are capable of erupting into violent rages that are sometimes dangerous to themselves and others. When you can tie your emotions to envy, jealousy, or wrath, *holly* is recommended.

If your anger stems more from intolerance and a sudden lack of sympathy for others, *beech* can restore your comprehension of the lives and decisions of those around you.

DISGUST

When we have a skin problem, we may experience disdain for our own bodies, and we become extremely self-conscious about displaying our skin to other people. *Crab apple* is a remedy that can help restore equilibrium to this feeling. *Crab apple* is recommended for those who dislike their appearance and believe they require constant scrubbing.

Opening up the case book

So, now let's look at some examples of Bach flower essences helping. Let's examine some concrete examples.

Because we experience multiple unpleasant emotions at the same time, a combination of Bach flowers can be taken concurrently to address the various negative emotions we are experiencing. Each situation is unique to every one of us. It is difficult to design combinations for widespread use; however, combinations can be achieved through examples.

CASEBOOK 1

Sally is 30 years old, unmarried, and works at a stressful financial institution. Her job requires her to present in front of hundreds of people. She has realised that, whenever she is having to deliver one of these presentations, she develops urticaria and rashes.

Therefore, she dresses accordingly to conceal her skin condition. Sally is terrified of public speaking, and she has physical horror when she thinks about it. This makes her feel embarrassed and causes her to lose confidence in herself. How is it that she can become so worried about something others deem so trivial? This combination may be beneficial for Sally: *Mimulus*, *rock rose*, *larch*, and *crab apple*.

CASEBOOK 2

Beatrice, aged 50, is the mother of two teens and is happily married to Sebastian. Beatrice has been diagnosed with atopic dermatitis and has attempted to repair her skin via numerous methods, but the issue persists. Beatrice is menopausal and is prone to unexpected mood fluctuations that can induce depression in a matter of seconds.

She is a doting mother who is constantly concerned about her children, especially when they are out and about. Her menopause symptoms influence her perception of her physique, which she dislikes more when her dermatitis reappears. She now feels unattractive and holds herself responsible. Beatrice could try the following: *Crab apple*, *pine*, *red chestnut* and *mustard*. ●

At-a-glance summary:

Fear and anxiety:

Mimulus, *rock rose*, *aspen*, *red chestnut*

Depression and sadness:

Gorse, *mustard*, *larch*, *elm*, *pine*

Rage and revulsion:

Crab apple, *holly*, *beech*

How to use Bach flowers:

“Pausing to reflect on our emotions and attempting to adjust them may be the key to our rehabilitation and skin health restoration.”

Generally diluted in water, Bach flowers can be taken directly by applying the prescribed number of drops directly onto your tongue. They can also be applied directly to the skin, taken as a spray or as non-alcoholic sugary tablets. However, Bach flowers are preserved in brandy and, therefore, not recommended if you have an alcohol addiction, certain religious beliefs, are pregnant or administering to children.

Mara Calvi is a member of the new CNM Writers' Club. She is about to publish her first book on working with Bach Flower Remedies.



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