



What type of therapist am I?

It's one of the most common questions I get. People want to know: Am I an alternative therapist, an integrative therapist, a holistic therapist, a natural therapist?

The answer? I'm none of the above!

In fact, I trained as a lawyer and businessman and when, at later years, I became unwell I couldn't see how the body could be separated into specialties. I just could not imagine that somehow all the symptoms I had were unrelated.

So, I kept searching for a different approach and I became interested and later trained in nutrition, diet and stress management as a way of helping to improve my health and later-on, when I became a professional in the field, that of my clients.

Through my learning, experimenting and experience I realised that although therapies such as alternative, integrative, holistic and natural therapies might be less toxic and even effective for some people, they still don't help us understand and treat the person, instead they treat the symptoms of the disease.

Finally, I discovered the type of therapy that I wanted to practice. It's called functional therapy, or systems therapy and it falls under Functional Medicine. And I believe that it's the future of wellness. It is an entirely new direction in the world of health and illness.

How is functional therapy different than alternative, integrative, or even conventional therapy? First, let's define the differences between all these different labels and types of medicine.

Alternative medicine: includes ancient traditions and new techniques, such as Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda, homeopathy, herbal medicine, and newer health techniques such as chiropractic, energy medicine, and even orthomolecular medicine. All of these systems can have great benefit in treating chronic disease. And these alternative modalities are often effective and complementary to other therapies.

In fact, the way they view health and disease is similar to that of functional medicine. Like functional medicine, many of these other types of medicine take into account interlinked relationships between all aspects of a person's health, however, only functional medicine treats the person who has the disease, not the disease that the person is suffering from!

Everybody wants to be able to put a name tag to their disease and conventional doctors and therapist are only too happy to play this game (which is the basic reductionist principles of conventional medicine). It allows physicians to name a disease and then find the drug or treatment for that disease. It works well for dramatic and sudden or acute diseases such as trauma, infection, and emergencies. Unfortunately, it doesn't work when caring for chronic diseases such as allergic, digestive, hormonal, neurologic, and metabolic problems – which most of us suffer from on a regular basis. Thankfully, the advance of scientific understanding of biology has provided an opportunity for an entirely new way of approaching diseases based on systems thinking.

This new approach is called functional medicine.

what exactly is functional medicine? First, it is profoundly science-based. It has emerged from new discoveries in what we call systems biology — the understanding of the deep interconnections of the basic systems of the body. That's because, in systems biology, NAMING diseases becomes increasingly meaningless as we understand the inner workings and function of our cells and biological systems within the context of our entire organism. You see, disease occurs because of the body's attempt to correct underlying imbalances. It is the body's best attempt to deal with a difficult set of circumstances.

Healthcare professionals who practice functional medicine believe that health depends on your constitution, which is partly genetic, and partly determined by your lifestyle and environment. Your constitution can also be called your "biological print." This determines your resilience and capacity for self-repair and healing.

Functional medicine is founded on a number of key principles.

1. We are all different and genetically and biochemically unique and have to be treated as such.
2. Everything that happens within us is connected in a complex network or web of relationships. Understanding those relationships allows us to see deep into the functioning of the body.
3. Our body has the capacity for self-regulation, which expresses itself through a dynamic balance of all our body systems.
4. We have the capacity to enhance and optimize our organ reserve and prevent nearly all the disease of aging.
5. Last but not least – health is not just the absence of disease, but a state of profound and resilient positive vitality.

This new medicine is personalised. It treats the individual, not diseases. And it supports the normal healing mechanisms of the body, rather than attacking disease directly.

But what does this mean for you? Well, here's some examples: It means that an infection or cancer requires a weakened immune system to take root.

It means that imbalances in your intestinal tract's bacteria flora trigger inflammation throughout your body and can lead to autoimmune diseases and arthritis. And it means that deficiencies in folate and vitamin B12 prevent your body from producing the neurotransmitters that help to balance your mood. When you have health problems such as these, you have a choice. You can choose the drug-based treatments of conventional medicine, or you can help heal your body with functional medicine.

So, you can either take antibiotics or use toxic chemotherapy drugs to attack the infection or cancer, or you can discover how and why your immune system is not protecting you. You can take powerful anti-inflammatory drugs for autoimmune diseases or you can change your diet and feed the healthy bacteria the fibre it loves, and even help to "re-plant" new healthy bacteria back in your gut.

You can take an antidepressant for depression or you can take folate and vitamins B12 and B6 to help your neurotransmitters, including serotonin, function better.

I know that my choices are clear!



So what to expect from a session with me? First, rather than diseases, I investigate systems. These are the new systems to consider when analysing patterns of imbalance or dysfunction that give rise to symptoms. These are the new concepts that can help us to solve the puzzle of complex chronic diseases.

They are:

- Your immune system
- Your detoxification system
- Your hormonal and neurotransmitter system
- Your energy production system
- Your acid-base system
- Your redox system (the balance of oxidants and antioxidants in your body)
- Your structural system
- Your mind-body/body-mind system
- Your nutritional balance

During our session and in the preceding forms you're requested to fill up, I ask many questions about every aspect of your genetics, lifestyle, medical history, environment, beliefs, and attitudes. These deeply influence these systems and provide clues to the source and cure of the imbalances.

Then together with your GP, I investigate the landscape, your "biological print." I try to find out the nutritional imbalances you have, the toxins you are exposed to, whether you have hidden infections, which allergens affect you, what types of stress you're under – in other words, I learn what things are pushing you off balance.

Next, I work persistently to discover those things (often with the use of specialised testing) and help you eliminate them or get rid of them. Simply put, you cannot heal if you don't deal with the cause of your imbalance or symptoms. Sure, you can treat the symptoms, but you're not getting at the root of your problems.

See?

You've got to treat the CAUSE of your problem!

Let's get back to our appointment. After I've narrowed down the cause of your imbalance, I look at what you might be missing which will help you thrive. To know what's missing, you have to know what makes you thrive — and what it means to be healthy.

Health is the ability to maintain resilience and balance and to respond effectively to life's challenges, whether these challenges are germs, toxins, allergens, stresses, or poor food choices.

So how can you stay healthy and resilient? Actually, it's quite simple.

You need to learn what makes you 'tick' and make sure you provide it to your body. You have to learn what works for you and what doesn't. And you must learn what makes you recharge and what depletes your health and life force. Sounds easy, but it isn't always. That's where I come in.

The trick is identifying YOUR particular needs and the right balance for you.

How can you get and stay healthy? For 80 percent of people, simply getting what you need to thrive will lead to a robust good health. For those other 20 percent who are still sick, medical guidance is necessary. This is where our partnership with your GP comes in.

With functional medicine, your healthcare practitioner can pinpoint exactly what is pushing you off balance and exactly what you need and in what amounts to repair and heal. Unfortunately, functional medicine is so different that for different reasons only a few dedicated practitioners currently practice it. I hope I've inspired you to learn more about functional medicine. After all, it is the future of health!

I look forward to our session!

