

Jaymie: This is the Resilience for Life VLOG. I'm Jaymie Meyer. Hi Charlene.

Charlene: Good morning Jaymie, how are you?

Jaymie: I'm great. Thank you so much for doing this, I'm really excited to share your knowledge and your expertise with my readers, and hopefully many other people in the world who can learn about your good work. We go back a little bit, we share the Yoga for Arthritis program that I know you've been deeply involved in, and now we're mentors for those people coming through. I also know that you wear many hats, and you have a business called The Urban Herbalist.

Charlene: Yes, that's right.

Jaymie: I'm so curious, I want to know more about that. So tell me, what is the Urban Herbalist?

Charlene: So the Urban Herbalist is a little company I started a few years ago, maybe 10 to 12 years ago. I say that it is a company that is focused on creating and cultivating a community that lives as nature intends for us to live. So how do we go about that healing process? I have tools in my toolbox, there are several things that I love to do, and have studied. That is yoga therapy, herbal medicine, and nutrition. So regardless of how folks get acquainted with me, be it through yoga therapy or yoga class, or they seek out a nutrition consultation, or herbal consultation, I usually use all three of those tools in my toolbox to cultivate and help folks to move towards their healing.

Jaymie: Great. Tell me the three again, I just want to be clear. I know yoga therapy ...?

Charlene: Yoga therapy, herbal medicine, and nutrition.

Jaymie: Okay. Wonderful, wow that's very comprehensive. How did you get involved in this work?

Charlene: Well I have to credit that with my mom, in that my mom was a professional dancer. So she was pretty fanatical about her body, as dancers are. She also was an early practitioner of yoga. She introduced me to this many, many years

ago. I've been practicing yoga for about 30 years. Then decided to go much deeper in the study of it, and I didn't come into the study thinking that I was going to teach, or do yoga therapy. That yogi just sort of evolved out of me somehow through this walk and this journey.

Then from the herbal medicine and nutrition perspective, when I started my little family and my sons, they were born in Seattle and my midwife happened to a naturopathic doctor and professor at John Bastyr. So after my sons were born she would share tips and treatments and strategies and remedies that I could use with them. So my friends and family learned that I was doing these things, so I became that go-to person. I also volunteered at a local food co-op, and from there did store tours and learned a lot about whole foods. So all this was sort of organically done, until I went forward and did more formal, master's level training.

Jaymie: Tell me about your master's level training.

Charlene: So after a while I thought that I wanted to get deeper in my own knowledge and understanding of this. Here in Maryland we have what was once known as the Tai Sophia Institute for the Healing Arts. It was originally designed to do master's level acupuncture classes. It then began to expand its programming, probably about 10 year ago, and they offered a master's degree in herbal medicine. I was fortunate to be in the third class there. With that, we had a phenomenal amount of teachers from all over the world come in and do training for us.

With that it's also a clinical based program, which means that not only are we getting the academics around physiology, pathophysiology, biochemistry and botany, we also had 1,000 hours of clinic hours where we saw clients one-on-one in order to have a clinical based practice. From that I was able to sit for the certified nutrition exam based on the course work for that, and become a certified nutrition specialist. Then the yoga therapy. I had been using yoga therapy along with my herbal medicine, and with that was fortunate enough to grandparent into International Association of Yoga Therapists certification.

Jaymie: Just a few credentials there.

Charlene: Yeah, well like I say, the most important letters past my name are HB, human being. All the other letters are really for the world, but I'm proud to be a good human being, which I'm striving to do. I don't know if I quite have that title yet.

Jaymie: Well you have a very warm energy, which I'm sure is one of the things in traditional healing. The idea to hold that space, and to really be in the presence of whatever is presented is so beneficial.

Charlene: Yes, I mean the traditional healing methods, I would say, they are really intuitively based. Yet, unfortunately most of us are not really tied into where our intuition is, or we don't trust it enough. So part of this I like to say in my practice is, I'm striving to be their bridge in between. So helping folks sort of move out of their cerebral lifestyle, and get more into their heart. So how do we do that? How do we get back into that intuition? But for a lot of us, particularly here in the west, we're very cerebral, so we really have to unpack that from a scientific perspective, and then walk it back to an intuitive perspective.

Jaymie: I know you sent me a graphic, a wonderful graphic, would it be useful to look at that now?

Charlene: Yes.

Jaymie: Okay, I'm going to share the screen so that everybody can see that. Very interesting. Can you see that now?

Charlene: Yeah, I can. I can. I can do a little bit of explanation of it. It's a model that I have been working with and studying with. Of course it's not something that's unique to me, other than the way that I maybe formulated it. What I'm finding is that whenever I'm working with clients, it is this foundational rung of prayer meditation, or what I call self-study, that is usually missing in most folk's life. They'll have some level of health crisis that forces them to pay more attention to where they are at. They'll try all the other things in the upper rungs of this pyramid. Herbal medicine, energetic medicine, of course allopathic medicine, before dealing with some fundamental, root-level changes or introspection that needs to happen.

Regardless of where you're at in your journey of life, the importance of having a level of self-study or prayer or meditation, however you'd like to face it, has to be foundational. From there, the next rung of that, of course is food and diet. I say that because 70% of our immune system is in our digestive system, in the GI, that is because the biggest assault that we have on our body is what we put in our mouths, yeah? If the body or the creator of human life was so wise as to say 70% of the immune system has to be here, then we need to deal with what's happening with our food and our diet. The effects of that on our mood is absolutely proportional. Folks also don't necessarily ... They have a disconnect about how am I feeling, versus what I'm eating.

From that, that next level is movement. Our bodies were designed to move, not be sedentary. I think that one of the biggest tragedies of the industrial revolution was that we created all of these ways of innovation in order to free ourselves up, but we freed ourselves up not for creative pursuits, and evolving us as human beings creatively. We created all this time, and then we ended up becoming couch potatoes. So those are the three foundational bottom ones. Then we're moving into the more energetic medicines, via herbal medicines, or our Reiki, massage, acupuncture, all of those are dealing on a deeper level. Those energetic meridians and personal spaces.

So if we're not intuitively in tune with that level, then those particular energetics don't necessarily work. So folks will say, "Oh, you know I've been having GURD for 10 years now, the doctors don't understand what's the problem with me? having this gastric reflux, I've tried everything. I've had all kind of medications, I still can't seem to get to the bottom of it, I'm going to try some acupuncture." Well they go to acupuncture, but if you're not in tune to why that would work, then it doesn't necessarily work for you. So you have to get back to that introspection. What is going on in your mind, in your life, that's causing you to experience the symptoms that you're having? And of course, what are you eating?

Then of course allopathic medicine, that has a place. It's a very important science that we need in order to heal ourselves. Most of us flip this pyramid upside down, and that's the first place we run. Then when we're in a big crisis,

then the last alternative we use is prayer and meditation. Where if we just turned it around, we might have more results quicker.

Jaymie: Mm-hmm (affirmative), great. I'm going to go back to the screen, I have a question for you. You know, I'm so impressed when you were talking about the pyramid at what a holistic approach it is. I mean it's really so encompassing of mind, body, spirit, of course.

Charlene: The definition of healing is the root word is hal, H-A-L. The root word of that, or that's a derivative of the word holy. So when we think about being a holy being, then mind, body, and spirit they're equal in balance, or should be. It's not one or the other, they have equal weight in who we are as these dimensional beings. So they need to be addressed equally and wholly together in an integrative way.

Jaymie: What types of clients do you typically work with?

Charlene: All types of clients. All ages, all races, all shapes, all sizes. However, predominantly women, and that's probably because I am a woman, so they're who are attracted to me. I would say that I'm dealing with pretty much what's happening in western health challenges these days. That is metabolic syndrome, diabetes, hypotension, and autoimmune diseases, like fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's. All kind of digestive challenges from GURD to food allergies, to food sensitivities, colitis, Crohn's. All kind of mental health issues too, anxiety, depression. So the gamut of what's happening, what I have seen is that for folks who are struggling with a pharmaceutical which may stay the course for a time, but in order for there to really be lasting benefits, there needs to be an understanding of having a lifestyle change. Living with what's happening right now and making those changes, then there has to be a deeper dive into this healing process themselves.

So I do, I actually have a lot of physicians who will refer clients to me when they're at their wit's end. You know, I've done all that I can do, and when it's idiosyncratic, as they say, when they really can't find any structural or functional process that is easy to hit with some allopathic medicine, they send their clients to me. We can have more time to unpack those kinds of things.

Jaymie: Good. It sounds like you're very comfortable then if somebody is under the care of a physician currently, and aren't referred, but you're still open to working with them.

Charlene: Absolutely. Absolutely, and I offer that always. Then there are a couple of clients that I would insist on those who are having deep health challenges, like certain cancers, and active HIV. Then I would insist that I be able to speak with the physicians, because the contraindications, even with very mild herbs or supplements, has to be watched and monitored.

Jaymie: Clearly you're trained in that, so that that is ...

Charlene: Absolutely.

Jaymie: Tell us, what might a typical wellness visit look like?

Charlene: Well whether you come for yoga therapy, or nutrition or herbs, I ask that you fill out an herbal health form, a survey I call it. That's just giving me some basic history about yourself, also talks about what your emotions are like, what you do like to do, what your exercise levels are. I also ask for a 24-hour dietary recall, because most of us will put what they think they should be eating, and not what they're really eating. The only way we can really unpack what's happening in your diet is to look at what you're actually eating. 24 hours is a pretty good indication, regardless if people say, "Well yesterday wasn't typical." It usually is.

Then from there, the consultation is usually about 75 to 90 minutes, and the first one is really about a conversation about what your health goals are, and where you want to move from. There will always be some movement and dietary strategies that I'm offering, and then we'll also have a conversation about supplementation. Again, I use herbs and supplement, nutraceuticals, as supplements. I ask that you bring your blood work so that we can look at it, and see where you're at. There's no sense in taking additional supplementation if your diet is doing what it needs to do.

Jaymie: Got it.

Charlene: Yeah, and folks can be with me one visit, or they can stay with me up to a year, it really does depend on what their goals are and how much help they want along the way.

Jaymie: Wonderful. People can work with you locally, and also by distance, yes?

Charlene: Yes, they can. Just like this, I work with clients via video streaming, or telephone, or email, yeah.

Jaymie: Good, and I want people to know how to get in touch with you. What's the best way?

Charlene: Well I do have a website, it's UrbanHerbalist.org. Or Charlene@urbanherbalist.com Best place is to visit the website, there's some information that's available there. There are tip sheets from me, some of the papers that I've written, research papers, et cetera. I've a podcast, that's also listed there. Then contact information, absolutely.

Jaymie: Okay, good. Great, is there anything else that you want to share with the viewers today?

Charlene: Well I want to thank you so much for inviting me to speak on your program, and also that we're in this wonderful paradigm shift, and so keep studying. I would just say we are so interesting as individual beings, and the best place to start is in your own heart.

Jaymie: That's beautiful. Thank you so much for sharing.

Charlene: Thank you so much.

Jaymie: It is, it's so exciting, it's an exciting time. It's an honor, isn't it, to be part of the bridge between this ancient and newer wisdom - the western modalities. There's so much that we have to take advantage of and be thankful for.

Charlene: Absolutely. Thank you so much.

Jaymie: Thank you for your time.

Charlene: Okay, thank you so much. Namaste.

Jaymie: Namaste.

END OF TRANSCRIPT