

Michael Roessle...: All right. We're live. Hey, everyone. Thanks for joining us. I am here with my friend, Brodie Welch. Thank you for joining us, Brodie.

Brodie Welch: It's a pleasure to be here, Michael. Happy to share what I know if it can possibly help anybody out there.

Michael Roessle...: Yeah, yeah. This is going to be interesting. We just had a chat ourselves off air that went over what we're going to talk about. Can you just give a little bit of your background? It will be better if you do it than I do it because I don't want to butcher anything and I don't have a bio prepared today because these are all on the fly. I just know you're one of my very brilliant Chinese medicine friends. So I'll leave it at that.

Brodie Welch: Thank you. Well, Chinese medicine, yeah, I've been practicing Chinese medicine for 16 years, which includes not only acupuncture, but Chinese herbal medicine, qi gong meditation, as well as lifestyle and diet as levers that we can pull to influence our health. I've been a long time student of consciousness and the body mind and I'm passionate about helping people take the tools that we can all do every day to take care of ourselves and really live life that is all about fostering health and balance on all levels. So in Chinese medicine, we think about the mental, the emotional, the spiritual, and the physical all relating to each other and all of that needs attention and care right now. So it's essentially in addition to practicing and putting needles in people and prescribing herbs, I have certifications in qi gong, yoga, meditation. I do a lot with coaching people online to get people to prioritize the self-care strategies that really move the needle on keeping us well and healthy and stress-free.

Brodie Welch: So yeah, that's basically... And I also have a podcast, A Healthy Curiosity, to hopefully spread the word and connect the people with the information from functional medicine and Ayurveda and Chinese medicine to people that could benefit from it. So that's what's kind of in a nutshell what I do.

Michael Roessle...: I love your combination of skills. It's really neat. Because you work a lot in the mental-emotional area as well, which I know the traditional Chinese medicine does, but a lot of people in this culture or their experience with it is merely acupuncture or merely herbs. It doesn't have a spiritual component to it. I've heard various reasons for that. I heard some things about how when the Communists took over in China, they kind of systematically removed some of that from Chinese medicine because it was religion. I've heard that. But that in true traditional Chinese medicine, it is a spiritual practice as well. It does have that component to it.

Brodie Welch: There's three treasures in Chinese medicine. The qi, the jing, and the shen. Right? The qi, we've all heard probably about qi, which is roughly equivalent to prana or the life force. That's the energy of day to day living, right? That's the air that we breathe, the food that we eat, and the positive digestion of our life experience. That's what we should be living on. The shen is the consciousness. Right? It's like how we look at the world. Then the jing is the reserve energy. It's this reservoir that we dip into. It also has our unique essence. The three treasures all have to be taken into consideration in order for someone to be fully healthy. I define health as living in accordance with who we really are.

Michael Roessle...: Perfect. Thank you for that clarification. I know just enough about Chinese medicine to be dangerous.

Brodie Welch: Well, you got that right. But-

Michael Roessle...: I know a little bit about a lot of things with it and I don't know a lot of it about any one specific thing. So we're going to dive into a few things that we think may be relevant for you in this current situation. We are not making medical prescriptions. These are not cures, preventions, or treatments of any kind. We're not giving you any specific here's how to cure COVID-19, here's how to make sure you don't get coronavirus. This is not what this is. I'm trying to bring in some of the smartest people I know and the people I know who have the most unique skillsets that can share their expertise and their angle on this thing in a way that can be helpful.

Michael Roessle...: I'm doing it on the fly and we're not going to have tons of structure. We're just going to talk and I have some questions and some things we want to talk about. I think it will be helpful and informative and help empower people to make good decisions and to utilize some things they might have around the house that could be helpful. Because I also realize in this time that acquiring things is a challenge. So I don't want to come on and be like, "You need to buy this, this, this, this, this, and this, and this, and this supplement or this thing or whatever," when I know that acquiring a lot of things is a challenge right now. We're going to try to give you practices you can do in large part with what's around and give some other advice too. But we want to give actionable things that people can do right now.

Michael Roessle...: So first, you mentioned qi, the life force or the prana or the energy. I have recently finally begun more of a regular qi gong practice after years of saying I was going to and knowing how important it is and knowing how valuable it is as part of the training I'm doing through the Wellness Awareness Institute. It's actually part of our homework in our training and when we go to our training modules, it's a large part of the day. As an energy medicine school, the qi gong practice, what I've noticed, has allowed me to be much more attuned and much more sensitive to certain things that before I couldn't feel or see or understand. So I've noticed that aspect of it and just feeling good.

Michael Roessle...: So can you just share with us a little bit more about the qi side, or the qi treasure? We talked off air about cultivating protective qi. You attended a workshop recently that was focused on autoimmunity and Chinese medicine and herbs and qi gong and learned some pretty cool things about cultivating what would be considered protective qi. So I think we'll start there.

Brodie Welch: Okay. Yeah, great. So first of all, I think it's helpful to just pan back a little bit and just get a sense of how Chinese medicine looks at the body and looks at health. So I've mentioned that the three treasures all have to be online and balanced. But since qi is the life force, it becomes very hard to talk about without subdividing it. So the first major subdivisions of qi is we think about yin and yang. So yin being the cooling, the moistening, and nourishing energy and yang being the active, moving, transforming energy. Within that, we can think about every organ system. Like the heart, the lungs, the spleen and the stomach, the kidneys, all of the organs in the body have yin and yang energy within them. So we can get very, very specific

in Chinese medicine. We look at that every organ system supports a different organ system and keeps another organ system in check.

Brodie Welch: So we think about you can't... For example, when we think about things affecting the lungs, the mother of the lungs is the digestive system, the spleen and stomach. The lungs govern... obviously they are what we're thinking about in terms of respiratory illnesses or staying healthy, keeping healthy lung qi requires the protective qi coming out to the surface of your body and beyond. So we know about the human bioelectric field, right? That our energy expands past our body six to 12 inches, maybe further. And that this is kind of our energetic bubble. We can think about the kind of energy that keeps us defended against external pathogenic influences. Viruses, bacteria, fungi, things from the outside world that could come into our ecosystem and wreak havoc. That having strong, protective qi is the most important thing so that those things don't get us.

Brodie Welch: So that's powered by lung qi, but also it has its root, like the pilot light of this whole thing, is way down. It's the kidney yang and it's mediated via the digestive system. So if we think about the most important thing we can do to have healthy protective qi is to live within our energetic means. This means not overworking, not overdoing, not making your days longer by making your nights shorter. Really conserving your energy. So really un-sexy stuff, like do less than you're humanly capable of, prioritizing sleep, also getting out in the sunshine. Super important. And keeping your microbiome, especially your digestive system in balance.

Brodie Welch: So this starts with... In Chinese medicine, we think about the digestive system as like a campfire. Right? The idea that in order to turn non-self into self, this requires a fiery dynamic process of transformation. The quickest way to shut that down is by throwing a wet blanket on it, right? So if you can think about you're pouring wet leaves on your tiny little campfire, you're going to smother it. It's not going to be super strong. Right? Just in terms of what we can be doing dietarily to help our middle burner, our digestive qi, stay strong is warm, cooked food. So soups and stews as opposed to salads and green smoothies. I'm not saying those things are bad. I'm saying that basically what... especially if you have any digestive challenge whatsoever that keeping your spleen and stomach fire active is really critical. Other really important ways of doing that is leaving space between meals and enabling a 13 hour fast at least between dinner and breakfast. So meal spacing as opposed to snacking all day. Warm, cooked food. Simple food that you can easily digest is super important right now.

Brodie Welch: So that, as well as not being stressed, right? We know that stress, it depletes the immune system in a major way. It also prevents us from being able to digest well. So any body mind practice that you can use to get a handle on stress is going to be vital and a really important daily practice. It could be yoga. It could be meditation. It could be just a breathing practice, letting your breath be long, slow, deep, easy, and gentle. Or it could be qi gong, which is like Daoist yoga. Or I wrote an article a while back for Huffington Post about how qi gong is basically yoga's less sexy, less popular cousin, but who should not be underestimated because essentially it's instead of... Like yoga, we're combining breath with sometimes movement, sometimes not movement, with our intention. These practices literally direct energy around the body.

Brodie Welch: So I did want to share with you, it's so... I teach qi gong. I have an online qi gong class available as well as breathing meditation. But I just thought I'd lead you through one super simple qi gong breathing exercise that helps boost the protective qi to the lungs and it also involves humming, which as some of you may know, can influence the vagus nerve and help us to relax. So it can be nice for both that stress relief piece as well as that increasing the wei qi or that protective qi. So is it okay, Michael, if I lead people through that? Okay. Great. So the way this works is-

Michael Roessle...: Somehow I got put on mute. So yes.

Brodie Welch: Okay. I saw you nodding.

Michael Roessle...: Yeah. I'm all for it and I will go through it with you.

Brodie Welch: Great.

Michael Roessle...: I just wanted to say a couple things off your list. The sunlight and getting outside. Now, here in the Bay Area, we're on pretty much full quarantine right now. But you can go for walks. You can go walk around the block. I heard two people say they were going to go adopt a dog this week so that they are allowed to go on walks. You don't need a dog. You don't need a dog to go on a walk. My in-laws live about three blocks down the street, nearest parents, and her mom is asthmatic and 68. So we're doing our best to keep her away from absolutely anyone and everyone. But she is a person that in this situation needs a hamster wheel because she is always exercising, walking, going for walks, hikes, bike rides, these things, that things. So they're out of their mind. So what they're doing is they loaded up their backpacks and they're backpacking around their house and their yard and their area right there.

Brodie Welch: I love it.

Michael Roessle...: They're talking about all their memories from their backpacking trips to the Sierras and to all the other places that they've gone. So they're doing that, like laps, every day because getting out in the sun and the nature and the fresh air is great.

Brodie Welch: It really is. The viruses tend to hate sunlight and in general, also exercise clearly boosts the immune system. It moves our lymph. So if you're someone for whom movement is difficult, even just doing something like gently stroking your neck, little lymphatic massage, or dry brushing, wearing shower gloves or even using your hands and just moving your lymph every day is super critical. Also staying hydrated, right? Warm water every 15 minutes can be a really nice thing to do for your lymphatic system.

Michael Roessle...: Yeah, thanks for the tips on the lymph. I've heard things about alternating warm, cold water shower also moves lymph. Is that another one-

Brodie Welch: Yeah. It increases circulation, so-

Michael Roessle...: So for people who are a little braver. That's not for me. Then something else I saw there. Something I love about Chinese medicine is the inter-connectiveness with nature, how you mentioned the digestive fire and you wouldn't put damp, wet leaves on a fire because

it would put the fire out. Almost everything I've been taught in Chinese medicine, there's a metaphor with nature and-

Brodie Welch: Yes, exactly. We're all about the metaphors.

Michael Roessle...: It helps people really understand though. So the warm, cooked food, soups and stews, it's not that it makes more digestive fire. It puts less... you're using less of it.

Brodie Welch: Yeah, you're making it easy for your body to process those things. Similarly, if you were having a giant steak for every meal, that would be the equivalent of throwing a giant redwood tree in your tiny little campfire. Like it just wouldn't be able to handle it and it would leave a lot of leftover excess. So there's certainly, like when we think about food, it's dietary theory and Chinese herbalism are linked in that we look at not only the macro and micro nutrients that a food has or whatever particular phytochemicals a herb might have, we think about the nature and energetics of the food. So is it cold, cool, neutral, warm, or hot?

Brodie Welch: And we think about the taste. So for example, all things that have a spicy nature, whether that's a warm spicy like ginger or garlic or a cool spicy like a peppermint or cilantro, that all spicy things open the exterior of the body to kick out a pathogen. Right? So kind of like we don't want to be loading up on sour for example because that is astringent. It draws things in. So if you're trying to fight something off, if you're actively dealing with a cold for example, that this is where you want your spicy soup. This is where you want that kind of thing as opposed to large amounts of pickles or something super sour.

Michael Roessle...: Good, I hate pickles.

Brodie Welch: Yeah, no pickles. But anyway, and of course, every taste has a function. Every taste goes to a particular organ system of the body and is medicine for that organ system as well... Really, it's like when we think about specifically COVID-19 and the nature of this as a pathogen... Well, one thing we should say before that is that there is a premise in both Ayurveda and Chinese medicine that like increases like. So if you have a lot of hot, spicy stuff, your ecosystem internally is going to heat up.

Brodie Welch: If you have a lot of cold, energetically cold food, like a cucumber is cold even if you cook it, right? It's still going to have that thermal nature that we can all understand. That eating a lot of cold in a cold, wet winter is going to decrease the yang energy and increase cold and dampness in the body. Dampness we think of as, this is a metaphor because this is kind of like what the experts that I respect most who are on the ground in China, many of them who are dealing with COVID-19 up close and personal, have classified COVID-19 as a damp pathogen or a damp plague. So a very powerful pathogen that tends to have a damp nature in the body.

Brodie Welch: Now, without getting super into the weeds about what that means, symptoms of dampness that have nothing to do with COVID-19, just symptoms of dampness in general in the digestive system, it could show up as gas and bloating or loose stools. It could show up as nasal discharge or vaginal discharge, cysts. It can show up as brain fog or confusion or even dizziness. So this idea that it's like fog in the body. It's turbidity. It is a substance that is lingering and hard to get rid of and sticks around. Fungal infections, toenail fungus or athlete's foot or these kind...

like red skin eruptions that have some mass to them. Right? So like a cystic acne. That kind of thing. All of these are manifestations of dampness.

Brodie Welch: So if you have dampness, basically eradicating dampness is one of the most important things we can do in terms of helping our digestive fire out and helping our immune system out and about being an inhospitable host to a damp pathogen. So in general, that's again where drinking some fresh ginger tea every day could be really lovely. Barring any contraindications for whatever medication you might be taking, fresh ginger is... it promotes digestion and absorption of a lot of things and it is-

Michael Roessle...: You just put fresh ginger in hot water?

Brodie Welch: Yeah. You can grate it. You can hack off a couple slices, put it in maybe a tea ball or a tea basket or just throw it in hot water and then strain it and drink it. I'm doing that several times a day because digestion is a challenge for me and it's just one of those things that I do to support my system in a preventative way. Also, fresh ginger, it's in that spicy category that can release the exterior of the body to potentially kick out an invader. So this is-

Michael Roessle...: It's probably not all picked over at the grocery store.

Brodie Welch: Probably not. Probably not. There's maybe not a lot... Interesting note, dried ginger is the not the same in urban Chinese medicine. It has different properties and it's more internally warming. So yeah. Prescribed for different things and different reasons. Black pepper is another really common kitchen spice that kindles digestion and is useful for supporting the microbiome, supporting digestion, as well as being aromatic. Cardamom is another one. Really anything that's in chai is going to be... Chai originally, it was a digestive beverage, so a lot of those herbs tend to be pretty hot. Like cinnamon and clove. But some of the more neutral ones, cardamom, can be great. Even cumin.

Michael Roessle...: Good. I like those.

Brodie Welch: Yeah. So okay. So diet, black pepper-

Michael Roessle...: So ginger, black pepper, chai, cardamom, cumin can all be helpful for damp presentations.

Brodie Welch: Yeah, exactly.

Michael Roessle...: As a general thing. Again, we're not making specific claims or recommendations. Just that would be... You come across someone who presents with excessive dampness based on the symptoms here and [crosstalk] is one of them?

Brodie Welch: Yeah, and the first thing I tell them...

Michael Roessle...: Those things would be some easy things to throw into their [crosstalk 00:20:14].

Brodie Welch: Absolutely. But the most important thing is actually about taking out the bad stuff, right? Because we can always think about what's medicine as far as the things that we include, but we can also think about medicine about what we exclude. So it's really important if

your digestion is not optimal to be avoiding the things that are unnecessarily heavy and greasy. So not a lot of fried stuff. Not a lot of refined sugar. Alcohol. Dairy products. These are probably the most dampening things that exist. Gluten also... Like gluten, literally sticky, right? If you wanted to see an embodiment of dampness, it's stuff that is sticky and mucous producing, right? So this is where basically warm, cooked whole foods can be great. Even actually, if your digestion is terrible, even white rice. It's not a whole grain, but it's easy to digest. Right? So it's that things.

Brodie Welch: Also, fermented things like miso or sauerkraut or kimchi or all these things. Just a couple forkfuls of fermented anything per day, awesome for our gut flora, which in turn powers... So the spleen qi powers the lung qi, which powers the protective qi.

Michael Roessle...: Perfect. Well, thank you. We can go back to the... You were about to teach-

Brodie Welch: To the qi gong, yeah.

Michael Roessle...: ... some breathing, yeah.

Brodie Welch: Exactly.

Michael Roessle...: You called qi gong-

Brodie Welch: I know. A long teaser.

Michael Roessle...: Yeah, a long teaser. You called qi gong yoga's less sexy cousin or something like that.

Brodie Welch: Yes. Yes.

Michael Roessle...: So it doesn't have its own style of pants. Although maybe. Qi gong masters always wear that big, baggy white ninja costume.

Brodie Welch: You don't need one though. That's the thing is no-

Michael Roessle...: You don't need a ninja costume?

Brodie Welch: No ninja costume, no stretchy pants required. Actually, with this, with qi gong, you might even break a sweat a little bit and that's great. Right? Like I said, breaking a sweat means that we have activated that wei qi, that protective qi, and we've pushed something out of the body. So sweating every day, it's one of the ways that we detoxify. We also have to poop every day. Sorry to go there, but we have to. It's another way that we detoxify.

Michael Roessle...: Our focus is on microbiome and digestion most of the time. Our audience is-

Brodie Welch: Poop talk.

Michael Roessle...: ... very well versed on poop talk.

Brodie Welch: Exactly. Yeah.

Michael Roessle...: I actually caught myself a couple times. We've done some pretty... I had never done extensive qi gong before, like long qi gong sessions. We've done some 30, 40 minute qi gong, which for an amateur is quite a long time. It's not the little five minute YouTube video. I did find myself starting to get warm and sweat. I wasn't moving enough to sweat. It wasn't like a... I'm not doing this kind of thing. I was starting to get really warm and sweat. I even went up to the teacher afterwards. I said, "I was getting really warm and sweating." He said, "Good, you're doing it." I was like, "But I'm not moving." He said, "It's the energy." They taught us that the qi follows awareness.

Brodie Welch: Yes, exactly.

Michael Roessle...: And that the blood follows the qi. It's at that speed. So bringing your awareness into an area of the body will bring the qi the area of the body in a slow way.

Brodie Welch: Very true.

Michael Roessle...: Then from there, the blood follows the qi.

Brodie Welch: Yeah, that's absolutely-

Michael Roessle...: Totally irrelevant to this. It's just something I learned and I'm proud of myself for doing.

Brodie Welch: It's not irrelevant. I think it's very relevant because it brings up the power of intention and the power of awareness. Really, the difference between Western sense of exercise as pumping iron and running, these things that can be kind of exhausting to the body, I'm not saying they're bad. I'm saying that that's one way to look at exercise, whereas in the Chinese version of what exercise is, is the cultivation. Because qi gong can be translated as energy cultivation, energy skill, energy practice. But basically it's like it's the practice and cultivation of using your energy in a skillful way and that can be done for the purposes of martial arts, right? That you can cultivate qi. It's like the power in martial arts-

Michael Roessle...: But it's balanced. Most marital arts are balanced with a slower moving, more traditional practice as well.

Brodie Welch: Yeah, and the power behind martial arts, right, is that it doesn't come from the physical strength. It comes from the ability of the practitioner to focus their qi. So you can use it for martial purposes, you can use it for self-healing purposes, or you can use it for spiritual development purposes. I focus on the latter two in my practice, in my training, and with my clients.

Michael Roessle...: No boxing in your room there?

Brodie Welch: Not so much, no. There's thousands of different forms. If you can imagine it being practiced on different mountain tops, like everybody's going to have a slightly different version about what to do.

Michael Roessle...: It's fascinating stuff. If people want to dive into it, I encourage it during this extended little hiatus that we have where we're locked in our homes.

Brodie Welch: It's a great time to learn.

Michael Roessle...: It's a great time to learn and it's really fascinating. I don't want to take us on any more sidetracks, so let's-

Brodie Welch: Okay, let's do it.

Michael Roessle...: ... do the breathing.

Brodie Welch: Okay.

Michael Roessle...: I'll do it along with the audience.

Brodie Welch: Okay. As a podcaster, I'm wary of having dead air, but we're going to have about 30 seconds of dead air here. So the way that we start, so the purpose of this movement again is to bring energy to the upper body, to the lungs, and also to open the exterior, right? To get energy up to this, to power it all the way to the edge of our bio-energetic domain. So we start by taking a nice deep breath into the chest.

Michael Roessle...: Should I stand or sit? Does it matter?

Brodie Welch: You can do it seated.

Michael Roessle...: Okay.

Brodie Welch: Yeah. So breathing into the chest and hold the breath for at least 30 seconds or as long as you can if you happen to be a practitioner of any kind of breath work, you can likely hold your breath for a long time. Minimum 30 seconds or as long as you can. Then when it's time to exhale, we're going to hum and direct the energy towards the third eye. So all that air that you've just built up is going to come out in a humming sound, where you can feel the bones in your face vibrate. You can feel the energy is in fact getting into the nasopharynx, that it's getting into the brain, that it's getting into the head. That's it basically.

Michael Roessle...: You want to focus your awareness here.

Brodie Welch: Yeah, third eye. The space between the brows. You're going to repeat that eight times.

Michael Roessle...: So big breath in-

Brodie Welch: Big breath into the chest. Hold for 30 seconds or as long as you can, followed by an exhale humming sound. It doesn't really matter the pitch. The focus is on the third eye.

Michael Roessle...: Okay. Can you explain a little bit about what's happening there or what the-

Brodie Welch: Yeah. I mean, essentially it's like... So the lungs govern the nose, the throat, the upper body, and also the outer reaches energetically, right? But another super simple qi gong move, right, is drawing and imagining your aura, right? Inhaling, stretching up, exhaling, bringing the arms down and visualizing a three-dimensional cocoon around your body and just simply abiding in it and keeping that visualization going. That's another one that is

about your protective bubble. It's about your protective qi. Plus also, as we're breathing in and holding the breath for a long time, we're empowering the lungs. We're bringing the qi to the lungs.

Brodie Welch: If you do that, even practicing it a few times in repetition, you'll start to feel, very likely, some movement happening within your lungs. It's making space in this area and kind of like strengthening your bicep, right? You're using it. So to strengthen your lungs, you're using them. Right? Most of us don't breathe fully and therefore... and there's a tidal volume of air that remains in the lungs. We're really, especially if you do this outside, you're bringing in new, fresh qi into your body, which is fresh energy. Remember how we produce qi, right? It's the food that we eat, that we can digest well. It's also the air that we breathe, right? So if you have a cold, if you have a respiratory infection, you're going to be tired because half of what's contributing to your qi equation is down for the count. So we can literally breathe ourselves energy just like we feed ourselves to get energy.

Michael Roessle...: Okay.

Brodie Welch: So I don't know, and then I think-

Michael Roessle...: That's a great explanation. Yeah. So that is a simple practice that anybody can do. How many times a day or how often or what's the-

Brodie Welch: I do it twice a day.

Michael Roessle...: Okay.

Brodie Welch: Twice a day. This is something that I prescribe for my autoimmune patients, my patients who have just really any autoimmune conditions or any condition involving dampness where we want to activate that protective qi and basically open the doors so that things can move out.

Michael Roessle...: All right. That is awesome. Thank you so much. We talked about dampness. We talked about protective qi. I think sometimes going outside. Any other medicine cabinet type stuff that would be around... You mentioned ginger, black pepper, chai, cardamom, cumin-

Brodie Welch: Oh, yeah. Yeah-

Michael Roessle...: ... for dampness. Is there anything?

Brodie Welch: I would also say avoiding iced liquids or ice water. Terrible for the digestive system or terrible for like... Basically, you don't want to become a swamp and the fastest way to become a swamp is to kill your digestive fire or your-

Michael Roessle...: What about room temperature water?

Brodie Welch: That's totally fine. Yeah. Exactly. I would drink most of your water separate from meals. So again, you're not smothering your little campfire. I want to underscore the importance of avoiding those things. This would be a great time to breakup with sugar and refined flour products and dairy products, alcohol, et cetera. All the things that we kind of know

are not great for us. It's like all of those are damp producing. Exercise is also really key, right? Like moving your qi allows us to get rid of it, to transform it.

Brodie Welch: Also on a psycho-spiritual level, letting go of guilt. Letting go of heavy, lingering turbidity that drag... Anything that makes you feel heavy. Anything that makes you feel weighted down. It's a great time to forgive yourself. It's a great time to let that go. Practice self-acceptance.

Michael Roessle...: That would be related to dampness?

Brodie Welch: Yeah. If we think about... All emotions have a trajectory through the body. Right? Anger moves us up so that we can stand up for ourself. It's righteous indignation. Right? When we're sad, it closes... Usually it affects the lungs. We close down. We move inward. So again, for dampness, it's going to be guilt and shame. Yeah. Things that make us feel heavy and that pull us downward and inward.

Michael Roessle...: That's so interesting. I love that it's addressed because those things are not addressed in even functional medicine yet. We had a conversation, it was probably close to a year ago now, about... I'm still working on the platform that I was creating that is now done with branding and design and a whole bunch of things, but it's on hold obviously. But that was a big hold that after going through my own dark period of depression and suicidal situation and really dangerous mental health period, that I realized is almost wholly unaddressed in functional medicine. Not so much as to say functional medicine practitioners wouldn't have at least 12 supplements to recommend me if I wasn't feeling very happy or get outside more or these things, but looking at it, that's still looking at it as the diet and lifestyle can act on and fix the emotional or mental. But not that acting on the emotional or mental can fix the physical.

Brodie Welch: It absolutely can.

Michael Roessle...: That's the elephant in the room and that I've watched this transition over the last 10 years of being in the field from these traumas and these emotional scars and these things don't have anything to do with physical disease to they might have something to do with physical disease, to they probably do, to they definitely do, but we don't know how to address them. Then they might have one colleague who does hypnotherapy. So they they send every person to hypnotherapy. That'll work for some people. It'll help some people. It's not everyone's jam. That's where I see the functional medicine world at right now in addressing those things. I think Chinese medicine is only about 3000 years older than functional medicine.

Brodie Welch: Thereabouts.

Michael Roessle...: They've had a little bit more time to... Because it's so obvious.

Brodie Welch: Yeah. Each meridian, like the points, are basically portals of consciousness, right? Like each accu-point has a particular function. In points used in combination, it's like playing chords on a keyboard or either a keyboard like music or a keyboard like control, alt, delete is I'm doing something different than control-V. It doesn't matter. But that we use these points in connection with each other to facilitate a change in the body and that we have a very sophisticated way of looking at... that it's not as simple as, "Oh,

sadness affects the lungs and anger affects the liver." It's like that's where it starts, but just like disease change form-

Michael Roessle...: They're non-linear.

Brodie Welch: Exactly. They can lodge anywhere. So it's not as simple as, "Oh, low back pain is about fear." It's like that's a very simplistic... It's an oversimplified way of looking at it. It's going to show up differently for different people. That's actually the last point that I wanted to make about food and herbs and things like that is that, again, we treat the person. Our job as clinicians in Chinese medicine is to strip off the labels, right? Whether that label is depression or anxiety or influenza or whatever. We're supposed to strip off those labels and just see how is this person presenting? What are their symptoms physically? What are their symptoms emotionally?

Brodie Welch: So it's not enough to say, "I have anxiety." It's like well, how does that show up? Is it difficulty sleeping? Where do you feel it? Is it in your gut? Is it heart racing? Is it panic attacks? Just all these different things because we'll treat the same condition 10 different ways for 10 different people potentially, which is why I'm not offering these are the herbs for COVID-19. Right? Even though that might be tempting to do because... But this is a time where I feel like it's important to note that Chinese herbal medicine is the take-home version of acupuncture.

Brodie Welch: As you might imagine, thousands of years ago, getting stuck with a needle, which was like a giant piece of metal or bamboo or whatever, was a big deal. So a lot of times, moxa or stimulating points with burning mugwort or prescribing herbs were the safer ways of going and we have these herbal compendiums, these formulas, recipes of synergistic combinations that have been handed down through the ages and that are so specific about like, for example, the early stages of a cold. If you've got a hot cold, like fever, yellow snot, and a sore throat, we're going to give you very cold herbs that release the exterior as opposed to someone who has chills, fatigue, and a drippy nose with clear mucous. That person's going to require a very different herbal formula to release the exterior. But we're going to use warm herbs to do it.

Brodie Welch: So as we think about the possibility of getting infected with a virus that's classified as damp, we're going to need to release the exterior. That's going to still stay strong. We're going to not want there to be resonance between the dampness of the thing out here and the dampness that we might be harboring in our microbiome so that we can be less hospitable hosts. But this is a time where Chinese herbalists, if you can do a phone consultation with somebody, we might have a very particular, specific herbal idea for you that could be really useful no matter what you're dealing with. Really across the board. Chinese herbal medicine can be used for all kinds of things to support the body. Of course, we can't say that we are treating any particular disease, but historically and traditionally, it's been used in this way. Surely China has seen its share of plagues. So there's a rich history in terms of what to do at different stages.

Michael Roessle...: For those who don't know, there were Chinese medicine doctors in Wuhan on the front lines with the conventional doctors working together. That's just how hospitals are done there, that they have acupuncture in the hospitals, they have a Chinese

herbal dispensary in the hospitals, and that this is done together and that the patients that are being treated together are much better outcomes there than just the Western medicine alone.

Brodie Welch: Similarly with here, even the people who are dealing with all kinds of conditions, when Western medicine and Chinese herbal medicine are used together, outcomes are often much greater. Of course, there are certain contraindications, which is again why I'm not making some blanket statements here, but that there really are... It can be a really useful adjunct and you don't have to choose, right? It's just pragmatism.

Michael Roessle...: Yeah. Then now those doctors are traveling and a lot of them are in Italy. A lot of them are probably going to end up here. That's just really great to see the collaboration that's happening. We were talking before we went on air that this is the first time that humanity has faced a pandemic with the internet. The capability that that provides for sharing information real time and quickly amongst front line workers who are trying to save lives and-

Brodie Welch: It's been amazing to read these case studies out of China. Even there, doctors are collaborating over video chats and figuring out herbal prescriptions for people and comparing notes on what's working and what isn't. It's really inspiring to see people being able to pool their knowledge in this way.

Michael Roessle...: It's a tool that I know gets a lot of criticism. We waste a lot of time on the internet and the internet has not done wonders for certain aspects of our society and our lives and things like that, but it also is a really valuable tool when used in effective ways. So it's great to see the collaboration that's happening. I took a lot of notes. I hope everybody got a lot of good info. I'd like to just list... Your website is brodiewelch.com. B-R-O-D-I-E-W-E-L-C-H. I'll have buttons. We'll make some clicky things below the video. Your podcast is A Healthy Curiosity and there's some subtitles there that continue going. But that's over [inaudible 00:39:27]. I'll have a button right below the video where we can get to the website, the podcast.

Michael Roessle...: Then as mentioned, and I want to be really careful with how we preface this, I'm not doing these webinars to sell anything. I'm not doing these videos to sell anything. We're not trying to use this as a business marketing thing. If you're interested in the qi gong and learning more and you want to spend some of your time during this time at home for an unforeseen amount of time, she has an excellent online based qi gong class called the 12 Treasures Qi gong. She's got a coupon code for \$30 off that is breathe. We'll have that beneath as well with a button to the course.

Michael Roessle...: If that's something you want to learn and incorporate into your life during this time, there's a lot more qi gong than what we just did with the breath exercise. I've found qi gong in general to be a very valuable practice for me and it's even been part of my wife's recent recovery. I mentioned off air that I have one of my teachers from [Wilderness] is a Daoist master that teaches qi gong. He gave her a little customized qi gong and meditation practice that she's been incorporating and we're seeing some really solid improvements with that too.

Brodie Welch: So good.

Michael Roessle...: So yeah. It's just another tool. And creating resiliency and creating an unhospitable environment for an organism to cause an infection. It's just as important as what you do when you get it.

Brodie Welch: Absolutely. And-

Michael Roessle...: Probably more important. You'd rather just not get sick.

Brodie Welch: Exactly. This is about the daily practices, right? In Chinese medicine, when we think about yang shen practices, which is nourishing life. Right? So this is a time to root for the righteous qi and support the upright qi. These are strategies that have been handed down over the years. It's like the best... It's so much better to not get the thing than to have to treat the thing. The best thing we can do right now is take care of our nervous systems, conserve our energy, digest well, connect with each other in a heartfelt way, not physically, but again, virtually. Pick up the phone, get outside. Come back to basics and really let this be an opportunity to reset. Really, when we think about yin and yang and the balance there, our society is so yang. We're so focused on the externals and the speed and the productivity and the doing-

Michael Roessle...: Doing your business, yeah.

Brodie Welch: ... and being. I've had to close my clinic for an indefinite amount of time for acupuncture. Still available for online herbal consultations, but it's one of those things where I'm looking at a lot of time to focus on sleep and doing my daily qi gong meditation, yoga, whatever it is. Making myself healthy food, telling my loved ones that I care for them, and doing things like this, like showing up and hopefully giving information that can maybe help people... give people permission to take care of themselves. Because that's really the more you can do to center down into yourself and keep your nervous system in balance, the more you can radiate that piece to the people around you. We're going to need that to get through this together. So Michael, thank you so much for inviting me today.

Michael Roessle...: [crosstalk 00:42:52].

Brodie Welch: I really appreciate the opportunity to connect with your Rebel Health folks.

Michael Roessle...: Yeah, let's do it more in other contexts in the future.

Brodie Welch: Would love that.

Michael Roessle...: I agree. Just this is going to be a perspective change for a lot of people. I'm hoping that while this is going to... This thing is just kicking off. It's going to be hard. It's going to be scary. It's going to be life changing for a lot of people in a lot of ways that aren't good. But a silver lining that could come out of it, I hope, is a new level of appreciation for our health and our bodies. Because that's been something absent in our culture for a long time.

Brodie Welch: Yeah, really true.

Michael Roessle...: It's people with chronic diseases and comorbidities and conditions and things that are being the hardest hit by this thing. That is a lot of our population in the current

situation. It may help teach people to slow down. It may give people a moment to connect with their self and sit with themselves instead of 100% distraction all the time. It may lead to more spiritual practices. It may lead to better connection, like you said, even if not in person, I'm going to be using my Zoom, which is how we record this, to set up things where I can hang out with my family via distance and with my friends back home via distance and kind of all just go through this together. Why don't we do that normally? Why have I never put together a Zoom meeting with my friends back home? I'm from Chicago. I live in the Bay Area now. Why I haven't ever done that before? Why don't we do those things? And-

Brodie Welch: It's an invitation, right? Sometimes it takes a disruption to force us to think differently. So maybe that's the opportunity here if we can stay centered and connected enough to hear what [crosstalk] for.

Michael Roessle...: We're going to have to rely on each other more than we have before ever in our lifetimes.

Brodie Welch: Really true.

Michael Roessle...: This is going to be a big thing that's going to cause people to have to work together. So thank you so much. There's so much valuable info here. I'll put the relevant links below the video. I'll let you know when we have it if you want to share the link.

Brodie Welch: Of course.

Michael Roessle...: We'll definitely keep in touch.

Brodie Welch: Thanks so much, Michael.

Michael Roessle...: Yeah, thank you.