

DR. JOHN DOUILLARD

Ayurveda: Creating Balance & Following Nature's Rhythms

Jason Prall:

Hello, and welcome to Awaken the Healer Within. I'm your host, Jason Prall. And with me now, I have Dr. John Douillard. He brought LifeSpa back into life in 1994, started as a small Ayurvedic clinic and Panchakarma retreat center. And while it doesn't do Panchakarma retreats anymore, it has really grown to become one of the biggest Ayurvedic sites online. And he's got an online database containing over a 1,000 articles and videos providing ancient medicine using modern science, as well as an online store providing a multitude of Ayurvedic remedies, herbs and supplements. LifeSpa is located at the base of the Rocky Mountains in sunny Boulder, Colorado.

Jason Prall:

And I first got familiar with Dr. John through one of his cleanses that I did is Colorado Cleanse, which is a really easy thing to go through that just walks you step by step through some of Ayurveda's principles, ideas, and ways to cleanse the body. So, Dr. John, welcome.

Dr. John Douillard:

Thanks, Jason for having me. I appreciate it.

Jason Prall:

So, I'm curious, you didn't start out as an Ayurvedic practitioner, I think, right? You were a chiropractor, you did some sports medicine stuff, how did you find yourself venturing into Ayurveda and really having that lead your path?

Dr. John Douillard:

Yeah, I was in chiropractic college, and I heard... I was studying acupuncture actually, and I heard the word Ayurveda and I was somehow, I don't know. The word just connected with me, and I needed to know what it was. And this was 1980, and there was no Ayurveda in America in 1980 to speak of.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, in 1986, I had a chance to go to India for about a three, four week vacation to try to learn Ayurveda. So, I went there, and ended up planning a teacher who took me in like a grandfather figure to me. And so, I studied with him for about a year and a half. And then, I met Deepak Chopra there in India, and he was starting his career at that time, too, when he was starting an Ayurvedic center back in the states, and asked me if I'd come back and run it.

Dr. John Douillard:

Today, I just finished all this training. And I said, "Yeah, sure, I had nothing else to do." And so, I came back and he was training a lot of medical doctors. So, I actually started teaching medical doctors. And that's when I put the two together the ancient Ayurvedic medical wisdom, which is time tested use for thousands and thousands years, still used today.

Dr. John Douillard:

And the head of then, those teaching medical doctors, they defined science to appease them and to bring it together. So, that's what launched me into the whole ancient wisdom, modern science thing, which now we do at LifeSpa.com was we just write articles about the ancient medical wisdom, and the science. Because science alone, as you know, coffee is good, coffee is bad. It can prove whatever it want. Soy is good, soy is bad. It really isn't reliable, unless you really read a lot of the studies and make your own decision.

Dr. John Douillard:

Where if you have something that's been around for thousands of years, or hundreds of years, and is time-tested, is still being used in practice today, and you have science to back it up, I feel like we should at least know about that. That's something that I feel like we should at least talk about, because it's got something that's been around for a while. And it's got the science to back up.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, that's what we do at LifeSpa.com. That's my thing. I feel like I finally found what I'm supposed to do for a living. And that's what I just love to do is dig in and make some of this ancient wisdom and translate it into English for our folks.

Jason Prall:

As on the receiving end of your work, I think you've definitely found your calling as well. And one of the things I love about Ayurveda is that it's so contextual. You mentioned soy is good, soy is bad, coffee is good, coffee is bad, weed is good, weed is bad, and it really is the context, right? That the body that's in front of you, the age of the person, the time that they're doing these things, or eating these things, the season.

Jason Prall:

There's so many things, and this is one of the things, one of the things that I so much love about Ayurveda, that really clicked for me, as soon as I started learning it. It's like, "Ah, they actually made sense of this stuff, where I still find in the West, even though our science is so profound, and we're able to see, so such small things." Sometimes, we still miss the forest and the trees, and we're not understanding context in which we're studying these things. Wouldn't you agree?

Dr. John Douillard:

Yeah, what's awesome, here we have it Jason is, I started writing and putting articles on the web back in 2010, or '11, or something like that, I think, and I can pull those articles out today, and they're still on my website. And I read them and they're still accurate. They still work. That's the neat thing about Ayurveda. Veda means truth. It means it doesn't change.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, I don't have to go back and go, "Oh, God, I said something that was grains, we're bad. And now, they're good again." And coffee was good, and now, it's bad again. I don't have to go back and do that because you're based on something that's thousands of years old. It's not going to change ever. Definitely, not in 10 years.

Dr. John Douillard:

And the world of natural medicine has changed so dramatically. That you can't go back 10 years, and say the same thing anymore because you would be inaccurate. And that's the neat thing to hold your hat on and go, "Wow, this is a pretty cool thing." That this isn't changing.

Jason Prall:

Yeah, I agree. I was going to say, when I started off in this field of health, and I was trying to help people. I mean, of course, you get into this to really make a difference and be of service. And I remember writing articles. And, of course, as any person, I have my belief that I'm setting out for. And rarely, it's hard to find somebody without any bias whatsoever, right?

Jason Prall:

So, I'm writing an article, and I had essentially a premise and a conclusion in my mind already, that I wanted to convey. And then, what I did was, I just go find research, that would back me up. And this is the funny thing about science is that, it doesn't agree, even though we think it agrees, you can go find research to back up any position that you might hold, in today's world.

Jason Prall:

So, this is the funny thing. And it was through that process that I recognized, "Man, this is not a good way to do this," because I can literally find anything that's going to support my thesis. And so, that really, it convinced me to find another way to form my own thesis and to challenge my own ideas. But I want to share with you how I've gotten to Ayurveda because it was a funny way.

Jason Prall:

And it was actually through modern science. It was through circadian biology. This is one of the hot topics in the last maybe 10, 15 years. They gave out a Nobel Prize recently for this, through our understanding of how the body is timed. And we have these clock genes, and all that. We've got an amazing scientific map for this idea that hormones and the liver, and all of our organs, and cells are guided by these daily. And it actually even larger and smaller rhythms. And, wow, this is amazing.

Jason Prall:

And then, I stumbled across Ayurveda. And they're talking about the same things, these cycles that are going on daily, seasonally, and even, of course, over our entire life. So, maybe that would be a cool place to start, because there's a million places we could start. And I do want to cover a lot of the basics here for people who are not familiar with Ayurveda, but maybe just introduce me to this concept of seasons and how Ayurveda approaches this because, it's a conceptual framework that is applied in many different ways. And I think it's so fascinating.

Dr. John Douillard:

Circadian medicine, as you said, is Nobel Prize winning science. From the Ayurvedic perspective, it's Ayurveda 101. And I did a course with Yoga Journal called, Ayurveda 101. It's all about circadian rhythms, daily cycle, seasonal cycles, light dark cycles, and how Ayurveda was all about. The science of life, how to live in sync, and go downstream with those natural cycles. Birds fly South, whales migrate, leaves turn red fall off trees, everything in nature is connected to those rhythms. So, are we.

Dr. John Douillard:

We just didn't get that memo. And the thing that I wrote a book back in 2000, called, The 3-Season Diet, which is all about eating with the seasons. There's four seasons, I know that. People think I don't know that, but there are four. But there are three growing seasons, a spring harvest, a summer harvest, and a fall harvest for winter eating. Nature takes, so it is dormant for a season takes a rest. Everything's based on cycles of rest and activity in nature. So, that's the rest of the cycle.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, that's the 3-season idea diet. And so, nobody really read that book. I mean, it did okay. But, the knowledge was just so compelling. So, then, I read this study, it was about deer, who eat bark in the winter, and they have certain bugs in their gut that help them digest bark in the winter. And they have different bugs in their gut to digest leaves in the summer.

Dr. John Douillard:

And then, when they actually gave the deer the bark in the summer would had the wrong bugs for digesting bark, that cause such a level of indigestion, it almost killed the deer. And I was like, "Are you kidding me? Deer, potentially die when they eat out of season?" And we have no idea what's the season. I mean, the same process foods, can stay on the shelf for a year. For decades now, we have no connection.

Dr. John Douillard:

And then, studies started. I dug in, and started finding studies to show that first the bugs in the soil change from season to season. There's a massive microbial surge every spring. And then, those bugs attached to certain roots of the certain plants. And then, there were a hunter-gatherer, the Hadza tribe studies that show that their bugs changed from one season to the next. And that the humans gut microbiome should change from winter to summer to spring.

Dr. John Douillard:

And then, a new study came out a month, three or four months ago, probably now, a Stanford study that showed that the bugs in the soil that attached to ginseng root in this study, actually, had the same benefits as the ginseng root. And there was a synergy between the bugs affecting the quality of the function of the herbs, which means that it's not just the plant. It's not just the biochemistry of the plant.

Dr. John Douillard:

It's a synergy between the microbiology and the plant just like it's a synergy between our microbiome, which makes us think and act and do a bunch of stuff. We probably don't want to do, like eat and crave Snickers bars or whatever. But it's the same kind of a relationship.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, when you take a plant out of the ground, and you spray it with pesticides, you kill half the intelligence and benefited that plant. In the same way, when you take an urban, you take an extract that use alcohol to create a sterile extract, which is basically sterile, you're getting potent biochemistry, but you lose a part of the intelligence, which is why at LifeSpa, I'm all about using the whole plant, organic, or plant grinded up, put in a capsule and take it in this whole natural, FDA certified, organic, tested, heavy metal tested form.

Dr. John Douillard:

But the point is, is it has to be... We have to have the bugs in it, to make it alive, to help mate, restore, and inoculate your gut with the right bugs in the right season. So, you can dissipate heat better every summer and boost immunity better every winter, and decongest you every spring. And that's what these bugs do in our gut. And that's why, it's so important for us to eat seasonally, because part of the circadian rhythms, because as we think about ancient people, they had no choice but to eat seasonally. This is how you had to do it.

Dr. John Douillard:

And we were constantly changing our microbial guard, the inoculating, our gut with new bugs for every season. And we had huge amount of diversity of study. I just touched on a minute ago, for a minute. We came out of... It just published a couple weeks ago, came out of Utah and New Mexico. And they had some ancient poop samples that were in a museum for 100 years.

Jason Prall:

Oh, wow.

Dr. John Douillard:

And they finally figured out a way to measure the microbiome of this ancient poop in some museum in New Mexico. And they did it and they found that the diversity of the bugs in the poop of these ancient humans, 1,000 years old, was dramatically different. Numerous species that they had in their gut were just missing in the modern humans gut.

Dr. John Douillard:

And the diversity, which means more different kinds of bugs in the gut was dramatically less than the modern human, than in the ancient human. And it was so dramatic that the Stanford researcher said, "This is a extinction event, that this is showing that in the last 1,000 years, we've lost such microbial diversity, we're actually losing our resiliency, our immune response." Think of things like COVID, and how vulnerable we are now, where once we were seemed to be way more resilient.

Dr. John Douillard:

That's probably a debatable fact, because the Native Americans got clobbered when the white people came in everything. But it is what they're saying is an extinction event. So, it's just really interesting how important it is for us to inoculate the gut in a seasonal circadian manner with the right seasons, with the right bugs at the right season. But also, it all boils down also to the day and night cycles, and how critical they are for our optimal health as well.

Jason Prall:

Yeah, I love that. And maybe, we can dive into that because these are three traits that we would think about in Ayurveda, right? The Vata, the Pitta, and the Kapha. When you're being introduced to Ayurveda, these are very foreign terms. But they're really easy to understand, because they work on an archetypal level right?

Jason Prall:

Now, getting drilling down into how they work in the body, and how it all functions at these deep scales, I mean, it's a science that we can study for your entire life, and really continue to learn. But the premise,

the basic idea is very simple. So, maybe, you can walk us through Vata, Pitta and Kapha, and how that relates to maybe some of the seasons and the daily cycles.

Dr. John Douillard:

Yeah, I think everybody experiences it every day of their life. Sometimes, if you have a partner and you sleep in the same bed, one of you is pulling the covers on and one of you is kicking the covers off. Sometimes, in the summertime, people are constantly wearing jackets or not wearing jackets in the winter or the summer. Some people are generally cold. This means they have a lot of air.

Dr. John Douillard:

The word for air at Ayurveda is, Vata. Basically, it means winter. You have a lot of winter qualities in your body type. So, if your body type has a lot of winter in it, or Vata in it, you're going to be winter. You're going to be cold and dry. Now, nature knew that if you're a cold and dry person, living in a cold and dry place like Vermont in January, eating ice cream in cold ice smoothies every morning for breakfast, you're going to get extra cold and dry because you stacked a whole bunch of cold.

Dr. John Douillard:

But nature had a plan for that, which was the harvest, which is why the squirrels eat nuts and seeds which are warmer, heavier protein, higher fat that insulate you from the cold in the dry. So, that's one body type is the cold body type that's always wanting to put a jacket or a hat on. And then, come springtime, which is beautifully, the response to cold and dry is wet, rainy, muddy season.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, nature had a plan for winter, which was called spring. And that spring is called, Kapha, which means to cough or to congest. So, that's what happens in the spring. It's rainy, muddy, congested. Go for a hike in the spring and you're going to get muddy feet, guaranteed, right? Pretty much anywhere, because the earth holds on to more water.

Dr. John Douillard:

Well, Kapha is the quality of holding on to more water. So, if you're a body type that's more Kapha, more spring like, you're going to be a heavier, easier going, calmer, gain more weight, maybe more congested mucus producing asthma, breathing issues, things like that. Maybe, you will lethargic, maybe even depressed, if you get overly Kapha or out of balance.

Dr. John Douillard:

Compared to the Vata, the air which is going 90 miles an hour thinking really fast, go, go, go. This is the other side of the coin, calm, easygoing, heavier set, thick. They're the linemen in the football players and the half backs of the courtyard, or the little Vata running backs, going really fast. And then, there's summer, which is the antidote for spring, when it gets really wet and rainy, and muddy, and congested, nature gives us summer which dries it all out, which is perfect.

Dr. John Douillard:

And the harvest for I should say, the harvest for the spring to antidote the rainy and muddy mucus making qualities of spring or Kapha is the harvest. Dandelion roots and burdock roots, and berries, and

leafy greens, and spring greens. The deer are digging holes in everybody's lawn in the spring to dig up those roots, which are bitter and astringent to dry out the mucus, right?

Dr. John Douillard:

So, nature's just got this plan for everything. And that's Ayurveda, the study of that. And then, summer is hot, and the antidote to the heat is cool fruits and vegetables. So, nature had a plan for that, which is just to give us these foods that are cooling. In fact, I said it having to cook those foods, the foods are cooked on the vine during the summer months.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, when you put them in your mouth, you don't have to cook them inside of you to heat you up on a hot summer, because if you're a hot body type in a hot season, eating hot spicy food, and fermented foods, which are used lactic acid fermentation, which increases the acidity in your body, which makes you even hotter.

Dr. John Douillard:

You're eating like 20 ounce bottles of Kombucha, or lots of fermented foods, or beer, or wine, or alcohol or margaritas, or barbecue, or coffee, which is very acidic. All these things, you have a hot body type in a hot season, eating hot spicy food, and fermented foods, you're going to overheat and become inflamed and irritable and angry. And maybe skin rashes and things like that.

Dr. John Douillard:

And then, nature says, "Hey, I got a plan. Just eat the stuff I grow, and you're going to be good." And now, we have all this amazing science to back that up. So, it's pretty neat.

Jason Prall:

I love that. And you basically just described my whole journey. I mean, I'm very Pitta, right? Very firebase like you mentioned. And in our culture, I mean, alcohol is not only okay, it's celebrated. It's a part for Western culture. So, there's alcohol, there was coffee, which I love the bitterness and the taste of coffee. But that caffeine and coffee as a whole not to break my system. And then, there's a lot of other things like peppers. I love spicy things.

Jason Prall:

And ginger, even though a little bit of ginger can be okay, I would love ginger. There's all these things that were driving up, my Pitta. And so, I was becoming out of balance. And I had no idea why. Because, look, again, going back to the science, a little bit of red wine is really good for you, they say. A little bit of coffee every day is really good for you, they say. And this is not false. It's just for me.

Jason Prall:

They were driving me further and further out of balance, especially because I didn't have an understanding of how to flush some of this Pitta, how to bring on some more Kapha, and bring balance to my system. And so, I was dry and hot and skin was a little dry. So, I had this Vata imbalance, I had this Pitta imbalance. And so, I was stuck. And this is where Ayurveda has really given me a map for how to think about, how do I eat to balance out some of these qualities that I run hot in.

Jason Prall:

And I love that you mentioned it's not just these physical symptoms, it's also the mental and emotional side of things. You think of the hothead, or the dragon spitting fire. This is what would happen, anger and the frustration, the irritability would increase. And when Vata, my air quality would be out of balance, I wouldn't sleep as well. I'd be going a million miles an hour. And those are the exact things that what we celebrate that in our society. Go hard, go fast, work harder, do more.

Jason Prall:

And so, basically, I was needed to do everything opposite to what I was doing in my life. And there wasn't a lot of Western science that could help me understand that. That's what Ayurveda just really drilled into me. And it made sense when I finally read this stuff, and got these concepts, I thought, "Oh, my gosh, makes so much sense that I've been having these symptoms and these traits, that I've been wanting to balance out. I've been doing it all wrong.

Jason Prall:

So, there's a part of this to this Vata, Pitta, Kapha that... So, let me actually back up. So, you mentioned that we have a body type or a constitution. And we primarily run one of those. But we have composed of all three, correct? So, if you can walk me through how that works, and then how you work as a practitioner, when you see people out of balance.

Dr. John Douillard:

Your body type, in Ayurveda, it's all based on the fundamental, elemental components like air and fire, and earth, and water, and ether. And we all get a little bit of all those space on your genetics. Some people are naturally bigger, easier going, and heavier sets. Some people are hot and fetal firing, competitive and driven.

Dr. John Douillard:

I was thinking the caveman people, the Vata body type. They're the artistic, highly sensitive, lot of radar, feel everything. They're the seers, the shamans. But they're also writing beautiful art on the walls of the cave. The Kapha cave, people are sitting by the campfire, communicating, and connecting, and singing songs, and just talking, and just chilling with each other. And they're really about community. The Kapha because they're easy going, they love people.

Dr. John Douillard:

And the Pitta types are the ones that are banging through a wall, putting a deck on the cave, overlooking the valley, making all this racket. And the Kapha types are going like, were you stuck with the old cave expansion thing and just come here and sit down and drink and eat and have a party. And the Vata were still busy, drawing the stars on the wall.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, it gives you an idea of how they all go. Now, we all have a little bit of all those, but we end up oftentimes with the predominance. So, if you're predominantly Pitta, fire, competitive and driven, then what season do you have to be a little bit careful of? Summer, because if you're a hot person in a hot season, eating hot, spicy food, very competitive and driven, exercising in the middle of the hot day, whatever, you're going to overheat. And then, aggravate, and that can cause inflammation, has the word flame in it, right?

Dr. John Douillard:

If you're a Kapha body type, easygoing, calm, and you love eating and communicating, chilling, you don't really like exercising that much, because you're just like easy going and calm. My daughter was very Kapha. I was like you, Jason, Pitta. And I would ask or I say, "Hey, you want to go for a run?" And she would look at me and go, "Why? Why would you do that?" And I'm going, "You know, running is good for you." But she didn't want to do that.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, that's Kapha, you got to give them a ball to play, and then they'll run. We got to give them a reason. And so, they're easy going and they're calm. But if you're a Kapha body type, easygoing, calm, congested, and you give them mac and cheese and pizza, which are congestive mucus producing foods, right? And they're not exercising, they can come easily congested and have asthma breathing problems or gain more weight, things like that.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, we had to notice what nature would harvest in that season, which is the leafy greens, and the sprouts, and the berries, and the root vegetables. The bitter roots. And come Vata, same kind of thing. Vata is a body type that is cold and dry. And so, that cold and dry body type got more of that cold, dry air quality to it.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, you have to be careful, if you're a Vata body type. You're more sensitive, you have a lot of radar. You feel everything. And therefore, your nervous system because it's air, if you're over stimulating it, which our culture does really easily, we become easily overstimulated and deplete our reserves. You need energy to be calm.. You need energy reserve to sleep at night.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, if you are a highly, aware, lots of radar, which means you feel everything, you could easily burn your fuel and exhaust yourself and not have the energy to be calm, therefore, you get anxious, and I have the energy to go to sleep because you don't have that sedating quality anymore. And you can find yourself having difficulty to sleep.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, that's why nature provided the antidote, which was the soups and the stews, and the warm cooked foods, and the nuts, and the seeds of winter to help give you that antidote for that extreme. So, if you are a Vata body type predominates, you need to eat really more, more aggressively, or consciously the winter grocery list foods. The stuff that's harvested in the winter.

Dr. John Douillard:

And in the summer, if you're Pitta, that's your season. In the spring, if you're Kapha, that's your season to be on the straight and narrow. Everybody should eat according to the season. But your body type is like the owner's manual of the car and says, "You should change your oil every so often. And they rotate the tires every so often," because this is the prescription for keeping that body type in balance, as opposed to doesn't mean that because you're a Pitta, you should only Pitta pacifying foods, because that's only one season's worth of food. And nature has a nutritional cycle that takes a year to eat.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, everybody would change, but based on your type you would say, "I'm Pitta, you're Pitta, Jason, so during the season this summer now, where we need to be eating the cooler, bitter, astringent, sweeter foods that are harvested this time of the year." And how we can still have some spicy food. We can still have some more acidic foods, but that shouldn't be the predominant food you eat.

Dr. John Douillard:

Otherwise, you can pay the price of inflammation. Kaphas get congestion, because too much Kapha mucus production. And Vatas get anxious and worried. And that's the risk they take.

Jason Prall:

Yeah, and I love that. We can think about it in terms of diet, that's a really predominant way that we can address this. And there's also the other aspects, right? The actions that we take, and you mentioned exercise, as well as the mindsets that we get caught in. The mind loop set that we might run, the patterns that we might not become aware of.

Jason Prall:

So, we can become aware of how we're walking into the world, the types of thoughts and emotions that we're having. And we can work on that end too. This is something that I've really brought more awareness into my life, in terms of exercise. I love exercise, and as an athlete, just enjoy moving my body. And for me, it is a really good thing to do on a regular basis.

Jason Prall:

But now that we're in the summer, going for a run, as you mentioned outside of my shirt off, getting all this extra sun, going for a 5-mile runs, probably not the greatest thing to do on a regular basis. So, this is where I can bring in some more of the Yin Yogas. We can do soft movements, the Tai Chi, the Qi Gongs, or even just a regular yoga. But maybe not the hot yoga, where I'm going to be running the temperature up to 100 degrees and doing yoga in a sweaty room.

Jason Prall:

These are small shifts in behavior that for me made a huge difference over time, and I don't drink coffee anymore. If I do, it'll be a little bit of really high quality decaf coffee. So, I'm not no going high with the caffeine. The peppers and the spices, I put a Kielbasa on those a little bit, even though I'd love them, it'll be for special occasions. The fermented drinks, the champagnes, and the wines, and the beers, I can't do those as often.

Jason Prall:

And to some degree, it's been a little restrictive, because I had to change my patterns. But the benefits after the patterns become shifted, benefits are so far outweigh, the costs that I was paying. And ultimately, I just fall into new patterns that are a little bit more healthy, that bring in a little bit more balance.

Jason Prall:

So, aside from some of those things, what does Ayurveda show us that we can do as ways, as their maintenance cycles? Taking the car into to get an oil change every season. There's ways that I know you

have this through your Colorado Cleanse, which gives you some of these simple tools to shift some of this stuff, but what are some of those ways that we can shift some of these as we change seasons?

Dr. John Douillard:

It's an interesting point, Ayurveda says that the disease starts at the changeover between the seasons. So, it's an important transition that we celebrate that with Equinox solstices and things like that. And it's really an important time of year to be aware of what's really happening. You're going from a very dry cold season to a very wet season.

Dr. John Douillard:

And if you don't transition properly, you can either become overly dry, and that can cause to the extent you get dry in the cold winter. If you don't do it right, to the extent you can make extra reactive mucus because you're testing your sinuses and respiratory and intestinal tract are made of mucus, making membranes, that's what they do. They make mucus. And if you make too much mucus because you irritate the lining, that creates indigestion. It creates a boggy intestinal tract and your first line of defense is the skin that lines your intestinal tract.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, Ayurveda is all about making sure that the skin of your intestinal tract stays healthy. And that happens if you just do what we said a minute ago, which is to eat seasonally because they're automatically takes care of you. The warm, heavy, oily foods of winter unctuate your intestinal tract in a dry season.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, you never get too dry. The fiber that we harvest in this fall for the winter are soluble fibers, slimy fibers, oatmeal, flax, chia, all the seeds are harvest in the fall. Put them in water, they become slippery and slimy. You put them in your gut, that'll antidote your gut from ever getting dried out during the wintertime, which we know are outside skin gets dried out.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, nature had a plan for all this. And then, in the spring, when it's really, and you have all this more mucus and you're creating more mucus, nature says, "I'm going to clean up your gut with all the bitter, dandelion, burdock roots, Oregon grape, and clean all the little villi, so your intestine tracks, little scrub is clean. And then, of course, the summer keeps you from being flaming again. And if you get off summer, it's interesting because it's hot and dry, right?

Jason Prall:

Yeah.

Dr. John Douillard:

And winter is cold and dry. So, nature's response to summer of hot and dry is cold. But it's also dry. So, it accumulates this, the dryness. And as we know as we age, what do we do? We dry out. So, you could say that what you're really protecting is as we age to antidote the aging process, would be to not let yourself dry out. And that means, don't let yourself get dehydrated, don't let yourself get dried out. Like you said, go for hot runs in a hot season with your shirt off, if you're a high body type, you know.

Dr. John Douillard:

Think twice about doing stuff like that. That was actually my first book, Body Mind Sport. It was all about saying, purely about the body type, should you be doing real, aggressive, hardcore, vigorous, endurance athletics because it's just pushing this Vata very sensitive body type, which is also thinner and less dense by nature. Can you push it too hard? There are also really, really good at yoga because they're flexible, because they're air based, versus fire base or earth based.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, what's really interesting is that, the Vata types are really good at yoga. So, they do yoga all day long, and they're really good at it. And then, they get injured because they're taking their already flexible body and making it super more, super flexible, where their husbands or whatever, spouse, partner, whatever, are the more Kapha, let's just say, and they're the ones in the gym pumping iron, trying to get bigger muscles. But their bigger muscles are stiff and rigid, and what they really should be doing is the yoga.

Dr. John Douillard:

And the Vata types were thin and frail, who are super flexible, should be actually lifting some iron to antidote the weak link that they have. But we don't do that. We do what we think we're better at you. You're a Pitta, so you're good at running with your shirt off, I'm just kidding, in the summer and pushing and being competitive and drive, I can push harder, I can do it. That own flames and burns you out. If Vata types are really flexible, so they get super good at yoga, and then they get injured because they've overstretched their already flexible system. They need muscle and stretch, structural strength.

Dr. John Douillard:

And the Kapha types, the heavysset ones, they're not very flexible by nature. And what they actually probably should be doing is going to yoga class, you know what I mean? So, it's just really interesting. But it's interesting to know when you know what your body type is, you go, "Okay, how do I keep this thing in balance?" Because you only get one car. When you get one in the beginning, and that's it. You don't get to trade it every three years. This is it. So, we got to keep it in balance and have it run for a whole lifetime.

Jason Prall:

And the thing I love about Ayurveda too and I've talked to Dr. Vasant Lad about this, because he's in the same camp as you are, which is kind of like this educating the Western mind, and how to think about Ayurveda. And there's these crossover ideas that we need to make happen. But Ayurveda works with functional medicine. It can work alongside, any integrative naturopathic medicine, chiropractic care. Even traditional medicine, right?

Jason Prall:

If you'll just tell me that really, it tends to lean on the pharmaceutical side of things. Ayurveda can still support that as well. It's not an opposition to any of these things.

Dr. John Douillard:

I know.

Jason Prall:

It is in full support. And it can offer ideas and solutions that can complement any of these other practices. And I'm sure you've seen that with some of your clients where you're working alongside, perhaps another approach.

Dr. John Douillard:

All the time. I think that when you're looking at somebody that's just simply a study of nature, how could it conflict with anything? It's like Ayurveda is about helping the body do the job for itself. I don't think any medical discipline would argue that point. Naturopathic medicine is like, let's help the body do the job in a natural way using natural supplements, but do the job for the body naturally.

Dr. John Douillard:

In Western medicine is, "Hey, we're going to save your life and we're going to do the job for you at any costs." I look at that as a buffet. And we need to eat off of that buffet as needed depending on the situation and the condition, and not rule out any one of those tables on the buffet, because you really want something like Ayurveda say, "Hey, this is the body type you were given. This is the car, you were at 1960s Chevy, this is it. And you got to keep it in balance, and here's how." That's a really smart understanding.

Dr. John Douillard:

And then, how to eat, sleep, live, exercise, and sync with those natural rhythms, so you go downstream with your car for a lifetime. You brake it, it doesn't really work that well. Ayurveda has a plan for that. But also, Western natural medicine does too using bioidentical herbs, or bioidentical hormones, or extracts of herbs that are more potent, biochemically. But you lose the intelligence that Ayurveda with the microbes we talked about.

Dr. John Douillard:

And in Western medicine, be drugs to do it for you at any cost. And a lot of times, we need that as well. So, I just think it's about really understanding that all these systems really need to work together. And they really do, and that's how I practice. I have medical doctor I work with all the time. And constantly, working in conjunction with other practitioners to make a team to support their goals, and their desires in health.

Jason Prall:

Ayurveda is so, so vast, in its wisdom, in its knowledge, and which is probably why you have 1000s and 1000s of articles on your site. I mean, there's touch points, like Marma. There's all kinds of herbs and remedies that can be used there. There's medicated Ghees, and types of massages and tongue scraping, and you cover a lot of this.

Jason Prall:

So, I just want to give at least an overview of just some of the things that Ayurveda touches upon breathing, types of breathing that can cool or heat. I mean, it's amazing what Ayurveda has unleashed. It's overwhelming at first, but I think as you get the concepts down, it just starts to make so much sense. And of course, with sites like yours, you can start to pick and choose what you're going to learn about.

Jason Prall:

There's a couple of questions, I want to hear as we wrap up. One, what is... So, for me, as a Pitta person, I really fall in love with neem. Neem is not something that was taken before, I only got introduced to it through Ayurveda, and how amazingly beneficial it is for me, topically, internally. Neem is fantastic solution for that heat.

Jason Prall:

I'm curious if there's some other things like just herbs like Triphala is another great example that many people can benefit from. I'd love for you to just maybe, chat about some herbs or remedies that are generally used by pretty much anybody that can be beneficial.

Dr. John Douillard:

Yeah, I think you're right. I mean, I am a big fan of using herbs seasonally. Neem is a seasonal summer herb, very cooling, so refrigerant. It works by... They call it the village pharmacy, where you just go to the doctor, and they give you a neem for pretty much anything, because it works on so many different things. And I was like, "How is it that this leaf of a tree, it's not anything fancy, how could it be so incredibly effective?" Then, I found studies that show that it actually works on biofilm, which is the plaque on your teeth, little pockets of bad bacteria...

Jason Prall:

I didn't know this.

Dr. John Douillard:

... and it's really can become problematic and become real problems. They mess with your microbiome. And that's why they call neem, the queen of the skin, because it heals the skin inside and outside. It's antiseptic for the bad bugs, breaks up biofilm. So, it gives all the bugs an equal playing field. So, you don't have these one pocket of these really not great bugs taking advantage.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, that's how it works, which is really cool. My other favorite herb in the summer is an herb called, Brahmi or Centella asiatica or Gotu Kola. I grow that in my garden every year. It's just beautiful leaf. It's sweet. And it's a cooling agent for the skin. We put it in our skincare product because it's so good for the inner skin and outer skin. You eat it for the inner skin. And it's also as a lymphatic mover.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, it helps. Andalso, Brahmi, means we have something called, Brahmi brain which is where for the brain. Brahmi is the classic herb for brain function, mental clarity, and focus and making sure your brain doesn't get inflamed. Your brain dumps three pounds of plaque and trash out of your head every year, while you sleep. And it dumps it out through these brain lymphatics that are newly discovered in Western medicine. Ayurveda knew about them a long time ago, 1000s of years ago.

Dr. John Douillard:

But the Brahmi actually helps move those brain lymphatics out and helps you sleep at night. So, if you take a couple of Brahmi capsules or a couple of Brahmi tea before you go to bed at night, you sleep like a baby because you get the benefit of the brain lymphatic drainage support, which is critically important

because now we know that that one, those brain lymphs get congested, you get a lot of brain fog, cognitive decline, inflammation, infection, anxiety, depression.

Dr. John Douillard:

And even autoimmune concerns are a mechanism for how the lymphs in the brain can actually cause autoimmunity, which is pretty interesting. That's literally buried in the medical journals. But when you put the two together, each was a minor in Ayurveda, you go, "Wow." This is what they knew 1000s of years ago, and we're just beginning to discover that now.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, those are the two really good summer herbs. Winter herbs that have the right bugs for the right season. Again, Ashwagandha, everybody's probably heard of that. Herb, it's a warm, heavy, sweet root that's harvested in the fall for a winter eating. If people would put up their soups and their stews and ancient times, and really, really great herb to build the nervous system up and strengthen nervous system.

Dr. John Douillard:

You mentioned Triphala, which is a greater for the winter, because the winter is when it's dry, and our intestinal tract gets dry, our skin gets dry. And Triphala is a great tonifying agent for the intestinal skin and heals and repairs and supports the environment of your intestinal skin. You have a good bowel movements, but also more importantly, better intestinal function.

Dr. John Douillard:

And then, of course, in the spring, there's the bitter roots, and dandelion is a great herb. Like I said, Oregon great, all the bitter roots are harvested. There's one called, Kutki in Ayurveda, which is the classic Ayurveda herb, for spring to clean out your liver, decongest your bile ducts. Spring is liver cleaning time, you got to get the liver to clean out and that's the garbage can for the body.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, you really have to make sure you get that cleaned with the right herbs like dandelion, Guduchi, all the leafy greens are really good in the springtime, as well. Bile-movers, things that are called, cholagogue, to help the bile flow better, because all the bad food we've eaten over the years creates something called, bile sludge. And artichokes are a bile-mover, fenugreek is a bile-mover.

Dr. John Douillard:

Fenugreek tea with your food increases the contract ability of your gallbladder by 150%. Tumeric is also a cholagogue or biomover increases, it contract with your gallbladder by 100%. So, those are the things you take, tumeric root, phenomenal in the spring. Fenugreek tea, phenomenal in the spring. So, these are the things you do. You just start tuning into.

Dr. John Douillard:

And we have a grocery list that I publish every month, and a recipe list, super food lists for every month of the year called, The 3-Season Diet Eating Guide. And you get it for free, and you get a list of all the herbs and foods and grocery lists for each month of every year. And you also get recipes. And you can

just go through the grocery list of spring and ago, "Oh, I like this, I like this." Circle the foods you like in the season that you're in, and give yourself permission to eat more of those foods.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, start thinking about, how can I eat more of what's in season? And you make a list of them. And then, when you go to the grocery, you just buy more of them. And now, you're doing it very effortlessly, you're hooking yourself up with the right bugs in the right season for your right gut, which supports pretty much everything in Ayurveda.

Dr. John Douillard:

The Golden Rule of Ayurveda is that, the more subtle something is, the more powerful it is. We can't see the microbiome. We can't see those little bugs, but they govern all of your thoughts and cravings and desires. We can see the circadian rhythms that the birds fly south and migrate with. But those circadian rhythms are now Nobel Prize winning science. They're connected to every cell of our body, which has a biological clock, as you said. And if we're out of sync or out of rhythm with them, we're going to pay a major price for that.

Dr. John Douillard:

And that's I think the big news was, we started is, you got to get yourself back into circadian rhythm. You really do because that's your body waking up at the right time, being hungry at those high time, having energy at the right time, be ready to think and be focused at the right time, as opposed to feeling you're completely out of whack and out of sync with the natural cycles.

Jason Prall:

Yeah, I love that. And again, it's just about making these shifts, right? I mean, I think so often in the West, we're conditioned to find a problem, find some magic pill to solve that problem, or some magic trick or hack. I mean, that's a big one these days, to hack your way through things.

Jason Prall:

And Ayurveda is the opposite. It's finding what's out of balance. It's not a problem. It's just out of balance. It's preventing things that we don't like, right? We tend to not like these things, but it's just out of balance. And then, the answer is, how do we bring this back into balance? And what I find is that, it's just doing these things on a consistent basis in rhythm, in alignment with the natural world in our bodies and our own constitution.

Jason Prall:

And all of a sudden, we can find ourselves back into alignment. And really, that's the way I've used Ayurveda. And then, there's the deeper aspects to work with a practitioner, to find your constitution, and where you're out of balance, and how to find what that is.

Jason Prall:

So, I'm just curious with your site, how can people go about figuring out, am I Pitta? Am I Kapha? Am I Vata? And then, consequently, doing something about that, and learning to use the herbs that you might sell on your site or elsewhere to bring them back into balance.

Dr. John Douillard:

Absolutely. I mean, if they go to LifeSpa.com, right on the homepage, there's a body type questionnaire. And you can take it, it's a free interactive quiz, take it with your husband, spouse, wife, partner, kids. It's really great to know who your kids are, before it's too late. And then, it will print you out a report of what your body type is. But also, guide you through, it's all for free. Guide you through information about your type, like what to do with dieting, what your qualities are, what your likes and dislikes are, what your predispositions are, how you're going to get out of whack, if you did get out of whack, and how to bring it back into balance.

Dr. John Douillard:

So, there's a lot of information there, it's all for free. Just say just go to my website, I can't find it, just type in body type quiz. And it'll pop right up on the search bar, and you can get right into that whole thing. And it's a great place to start. It's exciting. It's really fun to see the differences, particularly if you... Sometimes, it's fun to have your spouse or partner take the quiz for you who know... They know you're really well. And you're like, "No." You think you're one way. But they might think that you're not quite the same as you think you are. It's fun to see how people perceive us versus how we perceive ourselves. It's going to be interesting.

Jason Prall:

Absolutely. Yeah, it's funny. These qualities show up in our personality, they show up in our physical characteristics. I mean, the shape of our eyes and the whites of our teeth, and the tongue, and the skin tone, and the body shape. I mean, it's truly amazing. And this, to me, is how we know that Ayurveda is connected to the whole system.

Jason Prall:

It understands the connection between these fundamental energies and our elements, and how our body, mind, is coordinated. I mean, it's truly, truly amazing. And again, the deeper I go into Ayurveda, the more amazed I become. And the more respect and honor I have for a long, long history, and that it seems like it's making a little bit of a resurgence. I mean, maybe not even a little bit. I mean, the last 30 or 40 years, as you mentioned, things have changed drastically.

Jason Prall:

I mean, we're now having deeper conversations more people have heard of Ayurveda in the West and sites like yours are becoming ever more popular. And I think part of it is because not only the truth that it holds in the wisdom that's there, but also because some of the stuff we're doing here in the West just isn't working. We're trying a lot of things, and we get some success sometimes, but not other times.

Jason Prall:

And so, we're left still questioning what's real, what's true. And eventually, we land on things like Ayurveda and many of the other practices from the Eastern traditions, and we go, "Ahh, there's something here." So, if you haven't explored Ayurveda, if you're curious about it, I can say, its well-worth the time to invest in just a little bit of learning that comes from the beginning of this new way of thinking, and some of the new terminology.

Jason Prall:

But ultimately, it's very fundamental. It's very simple. And hopefully, Dr. John has illustrated that today. So, Dr. John, thank you so much for coming on and sharing your wisdom, and in giving us a brief but very thorough introduction to Ayurveda.

Dr. John Douillard:

Thanks for having me, Jason. I really appreciate it.

Jason Prall:

All right. And thank you all for joining us on Awaken the Healer Within. I'll see you next time.

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