



Healing Candida and Parasites

Guest: Evan Brand

Alex Howard So welcome, everyone, to this session, where I am really happy to be talking with Evan Brands. Firstly, Evan, welcome and thank you for joining me today.

Evan Brand Hey, Alex, thanks for having me.

Alex Howard So in this conversation, we're going to be exploring the role of Candida and parasites in people's chronic health conditions, and one of the things that is important from the perspective of this conference is we're really looking at trauma from this broadest definition of trauma.

One of the biggest traumas we can have is physical health challenges, chronic health challenges that are really impacting upon our mind, our emotions. And they can be, as much as trauma can impact man, they can be their own traumas in their own way as well.

Just to give people a bit of Evan's background. Evan Brand is a highly successful podcast host, certified functional medicine practitioner and nutritional therapist. He's passionate about healing the chronic fatigue, obesity and depression epidemics after solving his own IBS and depression issues, uses at home lab testing and customized supplement programs to find and fix the root cause of a wide range of health symptoms. His Evan Brand podcast has over seven million downloads and counting. And he's the author of *Stress Solutions*, *REM Rehab* and *The Everything Guide to Tropics*.

So, Evan, if you don't mind, I think a good starting point would just be a little bit of some of your own personal background. I mentioned in the introduction that you had your own challenges with IBS and depression. I know that was part of the catalyst for your working in this field. Just say a little bit about how that journey happens for you.

Evan Brand Yeah, and I'm still on the journey. I thought there was a finish line. But it turns out there's just checkpoints instead. So I think that's an important message for people to learn, is that we have this idea of, when I get to this level, I'll be happier. When I get to 'here', I'll be happy. And it doesn't really work like that.

It's really more of just trying to take your health where it is today and elevate it so that you can increase it and increase it and increase it. But, you know, the whole IBS journey, that's really what got me into functional medicine because I went to the conventional doctors and they only wanted to prescribe drugs. It was antispasmodic drugs and acid blocking medications and antidepressants and all of that.

Many people aren't aware that 90 plus percent of your serotonin is made from the gut. So if you have a gut infection or gut symptoms, it's very likely that you would suffer with some kind of neuropsychiatric issue as well. Could be anxiety. Could be panic attacks. It could be, you know, PTSD, as you mentioned. And you said very eloquently in the beginning, even the trauma of illness is enough to be a trauma.

So it doesn't mean you had to get abused or it doesn't mean you had to go through a big divorce or, you know, a verbal fight with somebody or a physical fight, it doesn't have to be that. Just being sick is traumatic in itself because it affects your ability to think clearly. It affects your sleep, it affects your relationships, your sex drive, how well your brain functions. It can make you short fused. So then you're yelling at your kids when you know you shouldn't be doing that kind of thing.

So for me, every aspect of my life was affected. And the IBS and the Depression and all of that was really just the tip of the iceberg. You know, since I wrote that bio, a lot more developments have happened with my own health; being exposed to mold and mycotoxins, having numerous tick bites and getting testing positive for Lyme and co infections like Bartonella and Babesia.

That's all very traumatic in itself because these are infections that conventional medicine only does one thing for, which is prescribe antibiotics. And I've seen hundreds and hundreds of cases of people that have done that. And the results are not pretty. And these people, in some cases, they get completely poooh pooohed by the mainstream physicians, which is what happened to me as well, after my wife suffered many, many symptoms and we took her to a conventional doc just to see what would happen.

He laughed in her face and said, Oh, you don't have Lyme disease. Give me a break. That's rare. And it's like, OK, the Center for Disease Control in the U.S. estimates three hundred thousand new cases a year. And that's the official estimate. So the real number is probably much, much, much higher. So long story short, we had to just kind of go on the take the red pill, so to speak, and go down the other fork in the road.

Alex Howard That infamous scene in The Matrix, yeah.

Evan Brand Yeah, so we had to take the red pill and go down the other fork in the road, which is OK. How do we really get to the bottom of this stuff? Because we don't want drugs and we don't want surgery. So what do we do? And then that's kind of what led me into what I do in practice today clinically.

Alex Howard So for this interview, we're going to be... you mentioned a bunch of other pieces there as well in terms of mold, lyme infections and in a sense, often these clinical pictures are made up of a lot of different ingredients. And that's part of what I think can make people's healing journey so complex sometimes, but particularly for the context of this interview, we're going to, I know you've recently done the Candida Summit, and I know that also you've spoken of quite a bit around parasites.

I think these are two areas that would be helpful to unpack a little bit for the people watching. Do you want to just start off by saying a bit about what do we even mean? Some people have heard of Candida, or 'Candida' as we tend to say in the UK.

Just say a bit about what it is and then some of the symptoms we can sort of open that first piece up.

Evan Brand Sure. So Candida is an opportunistic yeast, and I always make sure to put the opportunistic word in front of it because it can be commensal, meaning it can coexist with other yeast and bacteria in our microbiome and not cause too many problems. But in the modern world, the standard American diet, which is similar to the standard European diet, which is similar to the standard Australian diet, it's processed foods, it's high sugar, it's refined carbohydrates, things that mess up our blood sugar, things that kill our beneficial bacteria, like glyphosate in parts per billion. So trace amounts of glyphosate in the food can kill beneficial bacteria in the gut.

When that balance gets thrown off, or let's say you go in for a routine dental procedure and the dentist prescribes antibiotics just in case, all that does is open up the gate for something like opportunistic Candida to take over. And Candida produces various toxins. One's called acetaldehyde which is very similar to an alcohol molecule.

And we call this phenomenon auto brewery syndrome, which is where you're literally manufacturing alcohol internally. So you'll have some of these clients that will slur their speech or they have a difficult time getting their words out. They're just constantly fumbling and they're forgetting where their keys are and they know that that's their best friend, but they forget their names still or they go into the pantry. Why am I in here? And that's because of this. It's like you're drunk basically. You're on this acetaldehyde molecule coming from the Candida.

And so many women are familiar with vaginal yeast infections, but Candida cannot... It can be vaginal but it can be systemic as well. And even the Center for Disease Control is really worried about this issue because the common medical intervention that doctors will prescribe is Diflucan, Nystatin, Fluconazol, Itraconazole, some of these antifungal drugs. The problem is just like antibiotic resistance, everyone in the health field says we are now in the post antibiotic era, meaning they don't work as good as they used to. We're in the same era with antifungal drugs.

So now you've got all these drug resistant fungi that are literally killing people. Specifically, there's a new strain, a tropical strain of Candida called aureus and the medical community's freaking out because the antifungal drugs don't work. Luckily, I've seen good success with using herbs.

So herbs are so unique with all the different alkaloids and polyphenols and antioxidants in them that nature is more complex and it can sort of circumnavigate the issues that happen with drugs. Drugs are just one drug. One molecule is all our weaponry is if you use an herbal complex against Candida, you could have hundreds of different active ingredients against that.

So I don't have much fear about it, but it is something that affects people cognitively and that can be traumatic in itself. How, I always want to tie this back to trauma, How? Well, because when you forget your best friend's name and you forget where your keys are and you lose your cell phone in your wallet or your purse every single day, or you bump into the wall, you start to think that you have dementia or you have Alzheimer's or you have Parkinson's disease. And these people freak out.

They go to the conventional doctors and some have actually gotten diagnosed with things like that. Yeah. It seems like you have early Parkinson's. That's traumatic. You know, the outcome of that's not good if it's true. But luckily, once we do the proper testing and create protocols to fix it, these diagnoses disappear. And I say, oh they were wrong. And of course, that trauma is then hopefully lifted from them.

Alex Howard I remember when I had chronic fatigue in the second half of my teens into my early 20s and Candida was part of that, healing Candida was part of that healing process. And you mentioned that brain fog symptom. For me, that was one of the most challenging symptoms. Obviously, the fatigue was very challenging, but this sense of constant like just not being able to get my brain to function like, you know.

And there were times when the brain fog was really bad and I'd be sitting down to do schoolwork or university work and something that I knew that I could do and I just couldn't get my brain to do it. And it's, I think what's so fascinating about it is that it's very much a kind of mind cognitive symptom. But the cause, the origin is in the gut.

And I think that that's why I think it's so confusing that people think it's a cognitive thing. Therefore, the problem must be in the brain and can go down all kinds of rabbit holes that just end up getting more confused in that process.

Evan Brand I've had people paranoid they've got brain tumors and you know, I'm gonna have a stroke and I mean, just crazy stuff, right. And they just get fear mongered by a lot of the doctors, a lot of doctors for some reason, at least here in the States, maybe it's different where you are, but at least in the States, they often use fear to try to motivate people.

Like, well, if you don't treat this, you know, you're going to end up like your mother who had dementia. Or if you don't do this, you're gonna have a stroke. And it's like fear doesn't really have a place in the medical field in my opinion, unless it is backed by an action step like, hey, I really don't want you to have high blood pressure because high blood pressure can lead to this. So we're going to be doing this to your diet and using these three herbs to lower and help regulate blood pressure so you don't end up in bad shape.

If you say it like that, it's fine. But it was like you're gonna die if you don't take this drug. That's traumatic. I don't want to hear that. And people don't want to be on drugs.

Alex Howard So we've opened up a little bit, Candida, but we'll come back to this in a little bit. Let's also open up the parasites piece. Again, people might have heard of a few extreme horror stories. I think what people often don't realize is, many people to some degree have, even if it's underlying or minor, or in fact chronic and significant, impactful issues that are parasites.

Evan Brand Yeah, my daughter had parasites when she was two years old and we treated her. God, it took us three rounds of herbs but we got rid of it. We ran stool testing to confirm. She had some issues with her skin. I was noticing her behavior was a little off. Now, of course, when she was two, it's like, what is a normal two year old with the terrible twos and what is not normal?

So that's difficult. Anybody with kids knows how hard that could be to tease apart. But, you know, based on what I know, I know too much in some category of health because I may look too into something like, oh she's grinding her teeth. That must mean parasites, which is a common symptom, but maybe it's not. But we tested her and sure enough, it was positive. And, you know, parasites can cause a lot of issues with behavior.

So how is that traumatic? Well, when you have your child who is biting other kids at school and the teachers are threatening, and this is not our case, but many cases I've seen clinically where the kids are getting a letter at home from the teacher, we're gonna kick this kid out of school or he's going to have to go to special education or whatever because his behavior is so out of control. That's traumatic because then the parent says, well, what am I going to do? I have to make money. I can't quit my job and stay at home with the kids. I need to work. I got to pay bills. But this kid's crazy. That's traumatic.

There's been studies done just on the mental health aspects of someone struggling with the health issue. And having a parent with dementia was rated as less stressful or traumatic than having a child with a chronic health disease. So, you know, people just think, oh kids are just kids. Kids are just crazy. No, you know, that can be extremely traumatic.

And so kids get a lot of parasites because they're playing in the soil. They're hopefully, they're off playing video games and they're outside playing in the creek and getting dirty and getting muddy. But most of the surface water, rivers, creeks, streams, tap water can be contaminated with Giardia and or cryptosporidium or blastocyst. These are a lot of parasites I see clinically and they can wreak havoc on your gut. And as soon as they create inflammation in the gut and create permeability, this whole leaky gut phenomena, then you open up the issue with the blood/brain barrier. So then you start getting the neuropsychiatric stuff so now you're anxious. Now you have heart palpitations. Now you're having nightmares at night. You have insomnia. You've got joint pain.

And so the parasite issue is something that sounds rare. It sounds exotic, but it's not at all. I would say I've probably seen... I've seen well over fifteen hundred cases. I would say at least 50 percent of them have had one parasite infection. Now, I may be biased, right? Because these are people, my population may be slanted towards more sick, because the people I see are people who've been to five or 10 or 15 practitioners and then they come to me.

So maybe these people have already addressed the low hanging fruit. And now it's some more of these deeper, complex issues. But still, I mean, look at the average person. They're eating like crap. They're drinking crappy stuff. They're not filtering their water. So I would estimate that percentage could be more widespread in the general population too.

Alex Howard So I think one of the things that can often be misunderstood, I think sometimes about Candida and parasites, and I think it's true of some of these other things

we touched on earlier as well, is people can get very focused on the external pathogen, as it were, coming into the system.

And it can get very easily into a sort of germ theory mentality that, oh, I have a problem with Candida because Candida... or because parasites got into me. And I think people often underestimate the importance of the terrain. And there's that famous Louis Pasteur, supposed Louis Pasteur quote on his deathbed where he said, to paraphrase, something like, the germ is nothing, the train is everything.

Despite being the guy that spent his entire career and doing some very important work in establishing, kind of a lot of our kind of current understanding even, around some of these things.

But maybe say a bit around why is the terrain so important? Why is the landscape of what's happening in the body, preexisting these things coming in, so important in affecting our ability, our body's ability to deal with them?

Evan Brand Yeah, we'll look at the whole Coronavirus thing that's basically shut down the globe for several months. I saw a cartoon artwork the other day, showing two different boxes or two different windows. On the left you had a line for people - of course, this is a cartoon, but it's a line for people to buy masks and gloves and hand sanitizer and toilet paper. And the line is packed.

And then you look right next to it and there's a window for how to boost your immune system, get better sleep, reduce inflammation in the diet, boost vitamin D levels, you know, increase nutrient density. And there's nobody in that line.

And so you can see that this theory is still what people go for, which is this whole idea of kill, kill, kill the bad guys. Now, there is a certain point where with an opportunistic yeast infection and parasites, you do have to come in and you do have to kill. You've got to use herbs to knock down the load. But it's never the goal to get rid of it completely. The goal is just, knock the load down low enough so that the immune system can do its job and handle the infection.

So there's this idea that we can co-exist with these bugs. But my argument is with how stressed everyone is and the soil's depleted of nutrients. Even if you're eating organic, you're still likely deficient in minerals and micronutrients. The load has to be reduced a lot more.

So you really do have to come in and kind of knock some of the bugs down. But at the same time, you're hoping to build up the immunity. You're hoping to increase that gut barrier, because if you're eating gluten and gluten is increasing a protein called Zonulin, think of Z, Zonulin; Z, zipper. Zonulin literally unzips those tight junctions, this one cell lining in the gut, it literally unzips it. And now your fingers, if people are listening on audio, they might not see my hands. But, the idea is that your fingers should be interlaced.

This would mean good mucosal protection, meaning your gut barrier is sealed and pathogens like parasites will just basically bounce off and they'll not get into the system. But

if you're eating gluten, for example, and you increase Zonulin, you've opened the gates and now the pathogens can enter into the system and create a systemic infection and inflammation and all of that.

So you have to do both. My argument is it's not that the germ theory is wrong, but it's that you can't just do that. If you come in with antibiotics, you just damage the good bacteria. And now you've damaged the mitochondria. I mean, I've seen a lot of people in the chronic fatigue world, they developed chronic fatigue after antibiotics. How? Well, because a lot of your gut microbes manufacture your nutrients, like your B vitamins, which help fuel the Krebs cycle, which is one of the ways that your mitochondria make cellular energy ATP.

So if you come in and just pound the gut with killers like antibiotics, you may have, it's like whack a mole. You may have knocked down the streptococcus infection, but now you've damaged mitochondria and you've damaged all the good guys. So if you can heal the terrain, you come in with gut soothing herbs like we do aloe and camomile and zinc carnosine and Slippery Elm, and we heal up the gut after knocking the bad guys down.

In theory, that person could go out to sushi again with their friends and because their gut barrier is in better shape, their friend might eat sushi with raw fish and they may get a parasite from it. Whereas they, who did the work on the terrain, they ate it and they had adequate levels of hydrochloric acid in their stomach. Maybe we were taking extra digestive enzymes and they were able to kill and neutralize that pathogen before it became a bigger problem.

Alex Howard So you touched on a few bits that I want to sort of break down and come into in a bit more detail. But I think firstly, let's just talk about the importance of the diet element.

So when it comes to healing and recovering from Candida and parasites, there's a lot that's been written and said about being sure, particularly with candida, not to give the fuel, which is in a sense, feeding that candida. And so part of that is, is eliminating certain foods from the diet. So say a bit about, you know, you've interviewed a lot of experts on Candida. Apart from just your own clinical experience, say a little bit around, where are you at with your sort of current understanding of how important you think that diet element is?

Evan Brand I think the idea of like a Candida diet specifically, is kind of a myth. But I believe you should always be eating a "Candida Diet", meaning just a low sugar... You don't want to have blood sugar spikes and crashes because that's a stress on the system.

Let's say you go and you eat a popsicle and that's just straight high fructose corn sirup and your blood sugar spikes up. In theory, sugar is going to feed the yeast. I mean, has somebody done that, where I don't know, they put Candida and pour some sugar on it and see it grow? I mean, I don't know. But you hear this idea of, oh Candida, the sugar feeds it, stay away from sugar.

I've had people on basically a zero sugar diet and they still have massive Candida problems. So the diet is not the cure. As the nutritionist would like you to think and I started my whole practice out as a nutritional therapist. I mean, it was using food as medicine. And so I could

tell you from firsthand experience, I've had people with their diets down, and for years they've been eating good meats, good fats, good veggies, fish, seafood and no processed crap.

But they still have a major Candida problem. So I don't want people to have a false sense of hope that if they just get their diet down and they follow this Candida diet they heard about on YouTube, they're going to be fine because that's not true.

Now, I think it could be helpful, but I don't think it's the smoking gun. I don't think diet is a smoking gun. But should you always be eating nutrient dense, low toxin, organic as much as possible, fresh and local, if possible, filtering your water? Yeah, you should always be doing those things.

So my kind of general template for people, whether it's like a paleo template or an autoimmune template or sometimes if their gut is in such a wreck, we've had good success going more Carnivore diet where we're just getting people good grass fed pastured meats and getting people off vegetables completely because Candida doesn't ever recur by itself. A lot of times it's Candida; it's bacterial overgrowth, which some refer to as SIBO, small intestinal bacterial overgrowth and parasites. And so if you have all these issues going on, you're gonna be fermenting your food and you're gonna be creating more belching more gas, that kind of thing. So we may say, hey, I'm not going to be mad at you if you don't eat a salad for a few months, just go more carnivore.

And by reducing the fermentable vegetables in their gut, the bloating gets better. The joint pain gets better. The headaches get better. The dark circles under the eyes get better. So I think there's a spectrum. But upon that dietary spectrum, there are some foundations that always apply: organic, if you could do local, do local. If you could do grass fed, do grass fed. If you could do wild caught fish instead of farm do wild caught. If you could do wild blueberries as opposed to the big giant fake blueberries, do the wild blueberries. You know, that's kind of the goal.

Alex Howard And I think one of the things that's often the case as well when it comes to diet, is people really listening to the feedback from their own body. And I think it's a danger when people go, well this is the plan that I've been told I have to eat. Despite the fact they feel worse on that vs. really listening to what their body is actually telling them, right. And that its own journey sometimes, having to experiment with different parts.

Evan Brand And that's hard to do if you don't keep a good journal or if you're changing your diet every day. So, yeah, it can be tough. I mean I try to tell people, hey, eat this food for a couple of days, so maybe do broccoli a few days in a row. Don't do broccoli one day, green beans the next, asparagus the next, because, you know, it can take 24 or 48 hours for a reaction to occur.

So if you're like, oh my God, I got super bloated. Well, you did three different vegetables in a 24 hour period. So which one was it? I have no clue. So, yeah, it does, it can be a little bit of work, but yeah, I tell people, I'm like, hey, I know you're paying me for the consult but you're the boss, so you need to listen to your body.

And they're like, what? I thought you were gonna tell me what to do. It's like, yeah, kind of. But if you know when you eat almonds, you get a headache or pistachios or walnuts, you get a headache and your tongue swells. Then you probably shouldn't touch those for right now.

But I think people have been so disempowered by the medical system, of going to seek a doctor, the all knowing God that I just need to bow down to, who's gonna give me the magic prescription to help my issues. They've been so conditioned into that, that people have lost touch with their own bodies and they've lost touch of being able to, let's just say self identify, meaning, is that food causing me a problem? I don't know. Let me ask the doctor.

Should I eat peppers, Doctor? You know, versus just feeling, you know what I'm going to write down on June 15th I had salsa and for the next two days, my left knee hurt. Oh, I may have an issue with peppers and nightshades. OK, I may need to cut those out temporarily, but people have been so disempowered that they just don't do that. So I would encourage people to do that.

Alex Howard So you touched a little bit earlier, that's come back into a bit more detail, the role of... So people need to work on some of the basic diet principles. But ultimately, often these things that are starting to be a little bit out of control in the digestive system, do also require intervention to start to work with that. And you mention herbs as being one of the ways of doing that. Say a bit about, so this is sort of the antifungal category; the anti-microbial has a lot of crossover in terms of that. Say a bit about the role that these can play and some of the kind of key principles of how to work with them.

Evan Brand Sure. Well, it's kind of an order of operations that we do things, so if we see something like an H. Pylori infection, which is a bacteria, it damages your parietal cells. These are cells that secrete stomach acid. Stomach acid is critically important to take your proteins and other food and break those down into raw amino acids. Those amino acids then help you build muscle tissue. They help with hormones. They help with brain chemistry and neurotransmitters.

So if we find something like that, that's a big domino effect that causes havoc downstream. So if someone has a Candida problem, but they also have H. Pylori, we're probably going to go for the H. Pylori first, and some of the microbial herbs we use for the bacteria, they may also have some antifungal properties. So oregano oil is probably the most widely known and easy to find.

Oregano can be an anti-microbial and an antifungal. So if you use something like that, we may be killing two birds with one stone, which is great. But generally, the protocol is get people off probiotics if their gut's a mess because you're not going to come in and fertilize the garden if you haven't pulled the weeds. So you don't want to do it in the wrong order.

You're not going to go, okay, there's tons of weeds in here, I'm just gonna go throw a bunch of fertilizer down and see what happens. No, not really a good idea, because you could potentially feed some of these bugs. And when I say feed them, what we are noticing is if we do probiotics too soon, people get a little more bloated, they have a little more problem.

So generally, the order is, number one, do the testing, figure out what you're up against.

Because if you don't test, you've guessed. And so I would encourage people not to do that. Once you get the data, then you look at the bugs and you kind of prioritize those based on number one, clinical symptoms. But number two, the lab.

So if you see that they have this parasite over here and it's not a huge load of parasite. But over here, we've got this massive bacterial overgrowth. Well, we may go after that first single parasite second. But either way, like you mentioned, there's a lot of crossover. And so I have blends that are called microbiome supports. And a lot of these microbiome supports are broad spectrum where we could throw in my number one and my number three together and we're gonna knock out pretty much all the fungus and all the bacteria.

And then if we see more parasites, we may go for number two instead. But that's kind of the general rule. And we often like to use synergistic effects. So I'm rarely going to use oregano oil by itself. I'm often going to go for Berberine, an Oregon grape root, and Pau d'arco and French tarragon and Horsetail and maybe some olive and some garlic. I mean, there's so many. And when you combine those, for lack of a better word, you kind of confuse the bugs.

Meaning, let's say that the bacteria had some defense against Burberry. Well, because you're also doing Olive Leaf and Pau d'Arco and French tarragon, where the Berberine loses its firepower, these other herbs are going to come in and pinch hit for it and knock it down.

So you can really, really do a lot of good with these things in combination.

Alex Howard And how important do you see the role of the probiotic side alongside the antifungal, anti-microbial sides, as much as your knocking out the bad guys, how important is also replenishing and supporting the good guys?

Evan Brand You'd be surprised, in many cases, maybe 20 percent of cases, I don't do any probiotics at all. Because if you just knock the load down of the bad guys, the good guys can come back up on their own. Now, if this is somebody who has major inflammation as identified on the stool testing or they've been suffering for a long time or they have an autoimmune disease or something like that, we kind of have less room less, maybe less time, I guess would be a better word, less time to work with these people.

Meaning if we don't fix them now, they're going to end up in a crisis. They've already got one auto immune disease. They may pick up a, you know, pile on another autoimmune disease. Then in those cases, we don't take any chances. We kill the bad guys and we re-inoculate with the good guys.

But if someone doesn't have that many complaints and like I had a guy who is a triathlete, you know, super tough guy, just top of the line athlete. But he's like, you know what, I don't really sleep that good. I'm up in the middle of the night peeing. My energy is not that good, but he's not like a major, major sick case. And that guy will kind of experiment. Let's just see what happens if we just knock the load down to this guy's bugs and then retest in three months and see how the gut looks and a lot of times the good bacteria come back up on their own.

So I think it's a case by case basis. But in regards to Candida and parasites and all that, the one thing I'm always doing, no matter what, is *Saccharomyces Boulardii* and *Saccharomyces Boulardii* is sort of sold and marketed as a probiotic, but it's technically a yeast and it kills other yeast.

So we use that as a preventative. Meaning if you, let's say you did go the conventional route like, hey, Evan, I'm on an antibiotic, but I want a different opinion. And they come to me, I'm going to say, well, while you're on that antibiotic, let's hurry up and get you on *Saccharomyces Boulardii* so that Candida doesn't come into the picture after you run out of that antibiotic.

So that's something that's kind of a non-negotiable. But regarding the multi stream probiotics, that kind of stuff you see on the market, prebiotics, those things surprisingly can be optional.

Alex Howard How important is the way you introduce these things, so I think a lot of people that have had, you know, ongoing issues with, kind of gut issues let's say, over the years, can be quite sensitive, can sometimes find that one product that's totally fine for most people, they have a massive reaction to and vice versa.

So that sort of process of supporting people through and how people introduce things. How do you sort of guide people to structure that?

Evan Brand Yeah, good point. And that's why I say if you don't test, you guess. Because if you're somebody who hears this and you're like, oh, probiotics are good, I'm going to go to the store and buy some probiotics and take them. Oh, I got bloated or I had major gas or I had a headache or, you know, I had a rash on my skin, like, what's going on? I thought probiotics are good. I keep hearing all these articles. Probiotics are so good for you.

Well, you may have done it in the wrong order. So, I guess I would repeat something I've said before, which is that typically we go for the bad guys first. So step one, do the testing, identify what you're up against, once you can lay the puzzle pieces out on the table, it makes a lot more sense, as opposed to do I buy the oregano or do I buy the probiotics?

Well, if you know what you're up against and the answer is easy. If you have bugs, you knock the bugs down and then step two, generally you come in with either gut healing herbs and or probiotics or maybe just gut healing herbs. So I think the answer to the question is, it depends. But in general, we knock down the bad guys, then heal the gut. If you start out with probiotics, are you going to hurt yourself? Not necessarily.

But like I said, if you've got a major bacterial overgrowth and you try to just start throwing some more fertilizer in the garden, you may just flare up. And I don't want people to go backwards because that's two more steps you got to dig yourself. You know what I mean? It's like I bought this at the store. I tried this, this random herbalist suggested this. I heard on this podcast to try this. I heard on this Summit to try that and on this other guy's Summit, he said this.

And here they are taking 20 different things. They have no clue what they're doing. They're not working with the practitioner. They're not getting any proper lab testing done. They've spent thousands of dollars, which is traumatic alone, is the money invested in all this crap. And they're no better off. So I encourage people, don't build up the supplement graveyard trying to fix yourself.

Alex Howard Supplement graveyard, that's great!

Evan Brand You save a lot more money just hiring somebody. And I'm pretty stubborn. I'm kind of a do it yourself guy. And I have been my whole life. But at a certain point, you've got to know when to just say, hey, you know, I'm gonna throw my hands up. I mean, it'd be like going up Mount Everest without a guide. I mean, it's almost certain death if you try to hike that mountain without a Sherpa who's done it before and can take you up the path. I mean you're 20 thousand feet above sea level. You've got little to no oxygen. I mean, do you think you should do that on your own? I think that sounds crazy. I wouldn't.

So same thing with the gut. I mean, I would not come in and even though they're herbal and natural and a million times safer than drugs, I would not go and just take everything I found in the anti parasite section. You know, I'm going to Google top 10 herbs to kill parasites, and I'm just gonna go take all of them because I think I have parasites. I would never do that.

I would want somebody to guide me through the proper dosing. And what time of the day? Is it an empty stomach or is it with meals? What happens if you have a die off reaction? What do you do then? Is that a good thing? But I'm having a headache after I took that herb. Does that mean it's working or am I creating some kind of reaction?

So long story short, what we're trying to do is minimize the complaints, but get people better. And you could go all in and take 20 things and make people feel terrible and they'll probably survive.

Or you could just chip away at this thing. And I prefer the chipping method. We're going to do a little bit of this. Let's see how you do for six weeks. And then we may cycle through some other herbs for six weeks. And then we try this for six weeks and then it's been three months. Let's retest the stool and see how it looks.

Alex Howard You mentioned die off reactions, and I think that can sometimes be quite a difficult thing for people to navigate. Sometimes people can feel a lot worse before they feel better. So people can... I think they think they just have to abuse their body through that process.

What's your sort of wisdom about how people can identify that that's happening? And if it is, how to sort of navigate through that piece?

Evan Brand Yeah, great question. I would argue that die off reactions should be minimal to nonexistent. If your practitioner is designing a protocol correctly, what does correctly mean? Well, if you're killing bugs, that's a stress. So you often need to support the adrenal glands. All of the garbage that's piling up needs to be flushed out of the system. Typically with the biliary system or through the stool.

So if someone has gallbladder issues, they don't have a gallbladder. They have gallbladder stones. They have kidney issues. They're on dialysis. They have all sorts of colitis or they have diverticulitis. You know, if they have gut issues, they have colon issues, gallbladder, liver problems, kidney problems, adrenal problems. Those body systems have to be supported.

So never, ever, ever are we going to come in and just give an herb to kill bugs and that's the end of it. Maybe in a child who is otherwise healthy but has got bugs. Maybe their system is strong enough to handle it, but it's all the complementary pieces that come into this protocol.

So it may be digestive enzymes and herbal anti-inflammatories for the pain and Omegas to help reduce inflammation and boosting vitamin D to help with the immune system and help with hormones. It could be then the anti parasitic herbs, right.

So it's the liver support. It's the milk thistle and the methionine and the taurine and the cysteine and the glutathione. It's all these other pieces that really make the magic happen. So if someone tells you, you know, don't be a sissy, pain is weakness leaving the body, just keep pushing forward, they're wrong. Your body's smart. If you're having a reaction, you probably need to lower the dose or throw in some extra support because you shouldn't feel worse before you feel better. And there's rarely a case where I encourage people that that's a good thing.

There's a few cases where I'm like, yeah, when you start killing off Lyme Borrelia, it can cause some weird stuff, but you shouldn't be miserable to get better. It shouldn't be that way.

Alex Howard You sort of have to find that, kind of, working edge where you're challenging the body and you're making progress, but it's not causing misery at the same time.

Evan Brand Yeah and the problem is, too. I mean, if people can't tolerate the treatment, then you can't get them better because let's say you encourage them to push, push, push.

It's an eight week protocol and they only get through the first week before they just stop. And then they're emailing your office or they're calling into your office, I feel bad. I feel bad. I'm stopping. I want my money back. What are you doing? This protocol is terrible.

That could have been prevented. You could have told them to lower the dose. You could have given them some extra liver support. So it becomes a compliance issue as well. If you're encouraging people to push, push, push, that's really not the way to go.

Alex Howard So I'm mindful of time, but where should people start? So someone's listening to this now identifying, going, wow, this really sounds like my symptoms. Candida, parasites. We also mentioned SIBO. We talked about the importance of, kind of working with the terrain, the importance of diet, the importance of coming in with kind of the bug killers. The importance of, in some cases, probiotics.

I think you made a very important point that ultimately one needs to work with an experienced practitioner. And I think that that's true. And I think what you said, I love the thing about the supplement graveyard, because I think a lot of people who are into health education have tried a lot of things that end up, as you say, spending more money doing it that way than they do working with a skilled practitioner.

But for people that are watching that do want to start with some things that they can do at home. What would be some sort of sensible, basic starting points people can do?

Evan Brand I think the easiest thing is just get some testing done. You can order it to your house. I mean, it is at home. You can order comprehensive stool testing.

You can order, you know, it's a DNA genetic based stool test we love called G.I. Map. You can order that to your house. You can order organic acids testing, which is a urine sample. You can order that to your house. You pee in the cup and you ship it back to the lab. I mean, ultimately, if you've been alive for 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80 years, you haven't ever had a good functional medicine workup like this. So that would be the first step to me because you can't fix what you can't find.

So if you feel a little achy and you don't wake up rested and you wake up at 3:00 a.m. and you have trouble getting back to sleep and you're kind of tired, and you need that cup of coffee to get going, and you have a midday slump at three p.m. I mean, that's a lot of suboptimal performance that's affecting how you are as a husband or a wife or a mother or a father or a teacher or a CEO or a business owner.

That affects your everyday life and that affects society. You know, people always talk about, well, we need to do this and do that to fix society. My argument is, if you fix yourself, you're going to be a better person. You're going to put out that positive energy into the world that rubs off on somebody. And then we can really change the world.

So I would say getting the data is number one. And because of the Internet and accessibility, you can get these labs run everywhere. So rather than going to your doctor to get the standard blood, that doesn't show much of anything at all unless you're in a very, very diseased state, get these more functional tests where you're gonna see subclinical numbers, meaning you're not dying, but you've got a lot of candida. You've got a lot of clostridia. You've got a lot of parasites. You've got a lot of inflammation. If you don't address these issues now, it's going to turn into something else.

So I work with people in the U.K. all the time, Australia all the time. So, I mean, it's very easy for us to order. There's various distributors that we use throughout the world that literally send the labs to your door. You pee in the cup or you poop in the tray and scoop it into the tube and you send it back. And within a few weeks, you've got an incredible deep dive into your biochemistry, into your microbiome, into your neurotransmitters. And then once you do that, then you could really start to have some fun. And if you're not working with a practitioner, there are some basic sort of cookie cutter templates that come with these labs, meaning if it shows number seven is high, it may suggest you have a fungal overgrowth. Therefore, try high dose probiotics or try this or that.

And so there are some generic cookie cutter things that come with the labs where you don't have to work with a practitioner. But of course, I'm a practitioner, so I'm biased. I'm going to tell you to hire me because I'm going to save you money in time by guiding you through it and giving you the exact protocol based on doing it a thousand times. How to get you off the merry go round of health. What do I mean by the merry go round? The merry go round is, well, let's try this, let's try that. And you're still stuck.

My job, which is kind of sad when it happens, but that should be all practitioners' job, is to eventually, "fire the client", meaning I don't need to see you anymore. You're good. You're healthy. You're great. You don't have to come in anymore. You're done. Of course, I'd love to see you in six months or a year and do some maintenance optimization stuff.

But the goal of health should be getting people well. Not, okay here's the next drug. Let's try this drug. Nope, didn't work. Try this drug. Or with mental health: oh, this antidepressant didn't work, let's add the antipsychotic onto it and let's add this SNRI. Oh that didn't work, let's try the SSRI. You know, it's just, it's a merry go round and it's just, it's not the way it should be.

Alex Howard Evan, for people that want to find out more about you and your work, we're pretty much out of time, but yes, say a bit about where people can do that.

Evan Brand I would just encourage people to check out the podcast. I like educated clients because educated clients are easier for me.

But more importantly, I don't have to waste my breath. Meaning they're already going to have the diet all day and they're already going to be working on their sleep. They're going to do all the low hanging fruit stuff, because the last thing I want somebody to do is to pay me for my time to educate them on the basic stuff. So that being said, I'm happy to do it, but my podcast is free and I have... The podcast is free, so I would just encourage people to start there because I've probably covered in great detail what type of concern or health symptom you have. And I've been putting out an episode every week for the last eight years, so I would encourage you to go there.

Now, if you need help clinically, I am available. If you just look at my site, EvanBrand.com I do have a functional medicine practitioner on staff with me and we talk with people every day, all day for 15 minutes at no charge. You can let us know what's going on and we'll either point you in the right direction or if we can help you, we'll take you on and help you out.

Alex Howard Awesome. Evan, thank you so much for your time tonight. I really appreciate it.

Evan Brand Thanks for having me

Alex Howard Thanks, man.