

## **BioBites: The Four Quadrants of Health & Being Truly Holistic**

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### **Presentation**

**How is holistic defined?** One definition is “the art and science of healing that addresses the whole person”. Mind, body, spirit is a good start but can be expanded further. From psychology, we can look at the biopsychosocial model, which encompasses our biology, our psychology, and social aspects of self. But in all these, we’re still missing something. We can address the whole body, but we need to address the whole person.

**Mind, Body, and Spirit.** What does that mean to the practitioner? What does that mean to the patient? Does positive thinking cover the mind? Does supplementation address the body? Are these really holistic, or are we still missing pieces?

**Ken Wilber and Integral Theory.** Ken Wilber is an American philosopher who developed a “theory of everything” that includes physics, biology, psychology, neurology, cosmology, and looking at religious or spiritual aspects of life. One of the ways that he organized his Integral Theory is the Four Quadrants. The Four Quadrants are a great way to understand your experience in life/ life’s experiences through ‘you’.

**The Four Quadrants.** The upper two quadrants reflect individual elements of our experience. The bottom quadrants represent our collective or shared elements. Quadrants to the left encapsulate aspects of our experience that are internal or reflect our interior. Quadrants to the right speak to aspects of our experience that are external in nature.

**Quadrant I: “I-Subjective”.** With respect to patients, these are things that the patient must tell a practitioner - they cannot be observed. This is our inner world of thoughts, feelings, memories, and personal experiences. It layers in personal, psychological, and emotional development. It includes spiritual aspects of self. In holistic medicine, this might be addressed by looking at therapeutic counseling, life coaching, looking at values and goals, processing emotional issues, trauma work, etc. Assessed through case history, interviewing, questionnaires (ACES scores, etc.), observation, counseling, neuro-emotional techniques or similar psychological techniques.

**Quadrant II: “IT-Objective”.** This is the body’s physiology, its neurology; all the things that can be studied and measured. It also includes the subtle energy systems of the body. Your physical structure and function. Assessed through case history; traditional and CAM methods (Complementary Alternative Methods, for example methods familiar to Chinese medicine); labs, imaging, and physical exam; bio-feedback (examples include kinesiology or muscle testing, etc.); frequency-based assessments; pattern recognition.

**Quadrant III: “WE-Intersubjective”.** These are our relationships, our culture, society, the institutions we take part in. We often miss how much our relationships affect us; this aspect is heavily overlooked. Doctors must know the signs of relational stress and be ready with resources for patients. These could stem from toxic work situations, personal relationships, or dysfunctional family relationships. Assessed through case history, patient reporting, questionnaires,

observation; also underscores the importance of building rapport, trust, and a safe environment so that the patient-doctor relationship is therapeutic and effective.

**Quadrant IV: “ITS-Interobjective”.** This is the physical environment around us. It includes the air, buildings, EMFs, mold, pollution, sunshine, and water sources. Also goes deeper into things like sustainable agriculture, soil health, and environmental factors. We can support sustainable, renewable, and regenerative agriculture to support our environmental health and, in turn, our own health. Environmental health becomes more than healing ourselves and involves healing our planet, our environment - a mutual relationship. Assessed through case history, mold testing in home/work environment, EMF testing (tri-field, acoustimeter, gaussmeter), testing water and water equipment, toxicity testing (blood, urine, hair, stool sample) - test for the presence of heavy metals, mols, herbicides, pesticides, etc..

**Case History.** Traditional homeopaths had to take a very detailed case history to match up patients with a precise remedy. The best homeopaths were expert interviewers. For the practitioner, a good case history can give you many facts a blood test might miss, especially low-level things. Looking through the Four Quadrant lens, you can ask questions about each - the environment, toxicity, relationships, spiritual health, childhood, etc. - which can be predictive of disease and health outcomes. As a practitioner, you have to build trust and identify patterns and key facts. For patients, it's important to take the time to create a detailed health timeline. You might see patterns yourself; and, more importantly, now you have something you can share with a health practitioner.

**Redefine Holistic Medicine.** Holistic medicine is seeing and treating the whole person through the view of all Four Quadrants of Integral Theory. All four quadrants inform, influence, and form a whole with each other. They cannot be separated. Our psychology influences and changes our neurology and vice versa, which affects our relationships and how we show up, etc. If you have an illness or an injury, that will affect everything, all four quadrants. Therefore, we must look at all aspects when we're striving toward healing and health.

### **Q&A Synopsis**

**Have you considered the role of myth and the imagination of holistic healing?** Joseph Campbell talks about the hero's journey where we get a call to action and are brought down into the underworld. In health, when we experience chronic illness, we're brought down into the underworld. The patient is still the hero, and this framework of thinking can be applied to address some of the aspects of the first quadrant - psychological, memory components; and this can also help the practitioner appreciate and guide the patient through that experience. Symptoms and the symbolism of each symptom is important. Should pain and tension, for example, can be related to feeling the weight of the world on the shoulders. Using myths and symbolism can be an enriching way of viewing health and medicine.

**Are insurance companies covering holistic practitioners more frequently?** It does seem to be improving. In Oregon, for instance, more is being covered. There are more insurance coops these days and coverage for things like acupuncture and chiropractic care.

**Ayurveda uses different methods but also deals with the whole body. What are some of the tools you use in your practice?** I use physical exam from a functional medicine, Chinese medicine, chiropractic, and orthopedic standpoint. We use standard lab testing and

computer-regulated thermography, which is big in the Biological Medicine world. I also incorporate Chinese tongue diagnosis, pulse testing, kinesiological muscle testing, and more.

**Woman, 56yo has a family history of high cholesterol; avoids high cholesterol foods and maintains a healthy weight. Are there holistic treatments that can help with high cholesterol and what else might we think about, in light of the Four Quadrants?** When someone is in an environment of constant stress, stress hormones and inflammatory markers will all go up. High cholesterol itself will not necessarily lead to heart disease. When we get inflamed, the body will start sticking cholesterol to the walls to try to help heal it and prevent damage to the arteries. Therefore, stress can be a factor. Studies on populations that eat a high fat diet or have high cholesterol but who have rich relationships show a lower incidence of heart disease; this shows a correlation. There are supplements like fish oil, berberine, and other enzymes that can help break cholesterol down. Even if it is familial, you want to get your diet right. It is beneficial to individualize with a metabolic typing diet that responds to your individual body's needs. Environmental factors like mold will strongly affect cholesterol ratios, your ability to process fatty acids, and your gallbladder. If you have mold toxicity, stressors on the liver, or stress in general, you may end up with high cholesterol. There is always the question of why, even in the context of family history.

**Any recommendations, especially with regard to nutrition or supplementation, for neurodegenerative disease involving gastroparesis?** Is the neurodegeneration causing gastroparesis, or is it the other way around? Gastroparesis is when the stomach doesn't empty fast enough, so stuff sits in there. We have to look at that differently because a patient with gastroparesis may not be able to take many supplements or things like that. With neurodegeneration, we need to nourish and protect the brain. Coconut oil and MCT oil are great options because these are easy on the digestive tract, easy to get down, the brain can use it right away, and it doesn't take a lot to be absorbed. Something that is neuroprotective is Copaiba oil. It is very anti-inflammatory, very neuroprotective. It's very well tolerated orally and can be taken with coconut oil. It's also used aromatically or even sometimes dabbed on the inside of the nose. You want to look at what's driving the gastroparesis. Maybe there is an infection that infects the nervous system or an autonomic dysfunction that's driving the problem.

**Are there any suggestions, dietary or other, that you have for women going through menopause?** Women stop relying on their ovaries for hormone production during menopause. Now the adrenal glands will be the primary center of hormone production. Making sure adrenal health is on-point is thus important. Getting good sleep, managing stress, keeping blood sugar steady, getting adequate Vitamin C - these are all things that can be very helpful for the adrenal glands. If these are in balance, we might look at other hormones, like estrogen, progesterone, or testosterone support and find ways to support those naturally, as well.

**What are some of the most concerning trends that are collective in nature?** Right now, stress and fear are concerning. How much dependence on outside authorities fits in with stress and fear, as well. There is a growing pushback to this; but we spent so long collectively shifting authority of our bodies to people and systems outside of ourselves. We need to ask what we can do to support the incredible potential of this body and look inward and not abdicate our own authority. Health trends with respect to agriculture and foods are also majorly concerning. We know that RoundUp contributes to cancer and leaky gut and brain inflammation; this needs to be addressed collectively. Junk food is also contributing negatively to health outcomes; the

availability and accessibility of health-promoting foods is also an issue for many people. We need to talk about what we are allowing in our environment and think about how these elements are affecting us.

**Which quadrant is among the most difficult to address when it comes to patient health?** If you're addressing quadrant one, you want to ensure the patient doesn't feel like they're 'crazy' - how often do patients go to the ER with symptoms and are made to feel it's all in their head? But that's not usually the hardest. One of the hardest is helping a patient address a relationship issue. As a practitioner, I am powerless to do anything; that is a step the patient has to take. The physical environment is also challenging because it can be so stressful. There are circumstances, such as toxic mold that contribute majorly to a patient's poor health. In these circumstances, one of the most obvious solutions may be to move; but this can be challenging and emotional for patients, and some may find it too difficult a step to take.

**Can you give an example of a patient who has experienced positive outcomes as a result of taking a holistic approach?** I recently had a long-term patient who was able to recognize her wellness as a result of a long-term holistic process. She began debilitated, having had to drop out of high school and quit work. She spent a lot of time in bed with neurological and POTS-like symptoms. Now, she is working full-time, helping run her family's farm, and is enrolled in University. Some of the things we had to do were physical; but there were two decisive factors that we addressed that were not physical. Being ill in adolescence, she had missed out of a number of developmental milestones that are critical to learning how to be an independent adult. We spent a lot of time working on those emotional blocks. She is also from a culture (internationally) that does not want people to step outside of the norm or 'the box'; she had to overcome some of this cultural and familial conditioning to embrace her wellness. In addition, we addressed mold and other things; but much work was done in quadrants one and three.

**A lot of people have concerns over EMFs and the proliferation of devices that can have significant impact. Do you have any advice that might help people address this in their everyday life?** There are some things you can control and some you can't. There are only so many things we can control when it comes to things like EMFs. Practically speaking, you can turn your WiFi off at night, that helps lower EMF load. If you can turn your whole circuit breaker off, that helps, too. I recommend people purchase meters so that they can determine if there are items in their home (outlets, etc.) that are producing disproportionately high EMFs. Grounding outlets can have a significant impact on EMFs in the home. There are devices that are helpful, hard-wiring is helpful. Getting your heavy metals balanced out internally is a big factor. EMFs strongly affect your glutamate and antioxidant pathways in the body, so having plenty of antioxidants and magnesium can help balance some of the effects of EMFs.

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