

Staying sane with SS-L

How does a world-renowned pioneer in functional gastroenterology stay healthy? RACHEL BARTHOLOMEW, BA (Hons), Dip ION, puts the questions.

RB: Ever since reading Hal Elrod's *The Miracle Morning*, I've been much more aware of the value of a morning routine, especially for setting the tone of your work day. What's your typical morning routine?

SS-L: On waking, I drink filtered water that is not stored in plastic and then most days I start with one of the following:

- Practise yoga for 20 minutes followed by a brief meditation or
- Swim laps and walk against the current in water up to my waist for 45 minutes or
- Drink non-dairy chai or coffee while writing and researching on PubMed.

After that I shower, finishing with 15 seconds of cold rinse, and eat breakfast if I am seeing patients that day. I have a brief mindfulness practice of diaphragmatic breathing while thinking of two things for which I am grateful before I eat.

On the four days a week when I do not work with patients I will start eating at noon or 1pm.

RB: Could you name a single person who has had the biggest influence on your career?

SS-L: Lawrence Kaufman, LMT – My Structural Integration teacher and student of Ida Rolf, PhD.

RB: What's the most important healthcare book on your bookshelf?

SS-L: Roger Morrison's *Guide*

to Keynotes and Confirmatory Symptoms.

RB: What tools do you use in clinic to measure client progress? Testing? Questionnaires?

SS-L:

Lab work –

Stool calprotectin
Serum transaminases, Fasting insulin, HbA1c, Complete blood count, Neutrophilic hypersegmentation index, Salivary cortisol and DHEA

Physical exam –

Gait cycle
Tone of palatal rise with and without pronation
Digital (fingertip) temperature and palmar moisture
General appearance and vitality

Functional markers –

Organ specific muscle testing
Hiatal hernia syndrome testing
Respiratory diaphragm testing
Ileocecal valve testing

RB: How do you support patients with dietary recommendations that are often very challenging for them to implement?

SS-L: Most of my patients are extremely motivated, having been ill for some time and having consulted many other practitioners without getting well. They generally follow the diets well, as long as I choose the right one for them and their individual needs. The most common diets I use for vegans and vegetarians



are the Monash FODMAP diet, the Bi-Phasic Diet or the Cedars-Sinai low fermentation diet. For omnivores I usually recommend the Specific Carbohydrate Diet, the SIBO Foodguide, the Fast Tract Diet or either of the ones mentioned above for vegan/vegetarians.

RB: What strategies do you use/recommend to support stress reduction in practice?

SS-L: Heal the brain with neurofeedback and other psychophysiology modalities; Breath training; Sleep hygiene; Mindfulness, especially prior to meals; Walking, yoga, water walking and other types of movement; Hormone balancing, including cortisol/DHEA.

RB: What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

SS-L: Writing, walking, biking, swimming, doing things with my spouse of 41 years.

RB: What are your hopes for the future of the way gastrointestinal health is supported in the conventional healthcare system?

SS-L: Although I appreciate co-managing patients with certain standard medicine

gastroenterologists, I have little hope for the current system except that more will adopt and study what we are doing or choose to co-manage patients with nutritionists, naturopathic physicians and functional medicine practitioners.

RB: What advice would you give to a newly-qualified practitioner just learning about SIBO (Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth) for the first time and perhaps feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of it?

SS-L: Take a bite at a time. There are many 45-60-minute interviews with multiple SIBO practitioners on the SIBO SOS series <https://sibosos.com/>. This is marketed for the intellectually curious patient, so it is technical but couched in less technical language and is a nice way to slowly build your network of knowledge. Chapter 6 of my textbook, *Functional Gastroenterology* (<https://www.amazon.com/Functional-Gastroenterology-Assessing-Addressing-Gastrointestinal/dp/0692864660>) is a thorough overview of the subject co-written by Dr Allison Siebecker, ND. You can read that a bit at a time so as not to feel overwhelmed.