



Intrinsic Coach™

Interview

“What I want for people is the peace and satisfaction of being empowered by healthcare services as opposed to being frustrated by them. There’s nothing more paradoxical than being stressed by the process of healthcare that is designed to enhance our vitality.”

- Dr. Gary Bachman



Dr. Gary Bachman

is a licensed Naturopathic Physician in private practice at the Skagit Naturopathic Clinic in Mount Vernon, Washington, a small, rural county, just north of Seattle. With more than 25 years experience in healthcare, Dr. Bachman was first a social worker working in a psychiatric healthcare facility and, then, a registered nurse, specializing in oncology care, hospice care and psychiatric nursing. Dr. Bachman has been a licensed Naturopathic Physician for the past 15 years, seeing all types of patients from newborns, to pregnant women, children, teenagers, adults, and elders through all stages and cycles of their life. Dr. Bachman has also taught as faculty at Bastyr University, one of the best medical schools in the country for naturopaths, and, while spending most of his time at his clinic practicing integrated medicine as a primary care physician, he also teaches within the community on nutrition, stress management, lifestyle changes, preventive and alternative medicine.

Jodi Sivon, M.Ed.

in Community Health, BA in Exercise Physiology, CHES, and certified by ACSM, ACE, and through the Cooper Institute, is an Intrinsic Coach™ Mentor for Totally Coached, Inc. and Manager of Health & Wellness for Cuyahoga Community College's Metropolitan Campus. As Intrinsic Coach™ Mentor, Ms. Sivon trains new coaches in the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology. As Manager of H&W for Cuyahoga Community College, Ms. Sivon manages the campus H&W Center, designs, promotes, and implements all campus wellness programs, and serves as a resource and coach for healthy lifestyle choices for over 450 full-time employees and 6,000 students.



Q Hi, Gary! Thank you for taking the time to talk with us today! Let's start off by learning a little more about you.

A I live in Washington State, an hour north of Seattle and it's a wonderful place to live. Originally, I was born and raised in Pennsylvania. My ancestors are people who came over, settled and are known now as Amish & Mennonite. As I sought out different experiences in life, I wound up focusing a lot on healthcare. And so I've pretty much been involved in healthcare my whole adult life in some way or another. I worked as a social worker at a psychiatric healthcare facility in Illinois. From there I went on to become a registered nurse, specializing in oncology care, hospice care and psychiatric nursing. During that time I moved to the state of Washington. When the opportunity arose to go to school and be trained as a naturopathic physician - there's only a few medical schools that do this type of training, I took advantage of that opportunity.

I've been a naturopathic physician for about 15 years. Because of my background in healthcare, I've also taught as faculty at Bastyr University in Kenmore, Washington,

a suburb of Seattle. It's one of the best medical schools for naturopaths in the country. Now I'm in private practice within a very busy clinic in Mt. Vernon, WA which is north of Seattle. It's a single practitioner clinic in a small rural county. I see all types of patients from newborns, to pregnant women, children, teenagers, adults, and elders through all stages and cycles of their life. I really enjoy that type of care. I continue to teach within the community, although I don't teach at the university anymore because most of my time is at my clinic practicing integrated medicine as a primary care physician. I focus on nutrition, stress management, lifestyle changes, preventive and alternative medicine. I will pretty much treat any condition that my patients have, work with more conventional physicians by making referrals back and forth, and also make referrals to other types of physicians such as physical therapy, chiropractic care, massage, acupuncture—so I do a lot of networking just as general practice. That's where I am right now.

There are a few distinctions I would like to make about naturopathic medicine. The naturopathic training I have is modeled similar to a conventional medical doctor's training. It's a four year medical program with a degree

which requires pre-requisites. Upon completion you have to take very rigorous boards and be licensed by the state. There's a national association, the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians and one must complete continuing education credits.

There are a few distinctions I would like to make about naturopathic medicine. The naturopathic training I have is modeled similar to a conventional medical doctor's training. It's a four year medical program with a degree...Upon completion you have to take very rigorous boards and be licensed by the state.

Not all states have licensure, so there are people who use the term naturopathic in a more general way. Actually at the turn of the 19th century, most states had naturopathic medicine and it fell out of favor as conventional medicine developed. Some people have had non-formal training, which can be very good training, but maybe without the clinical experience. So it's not quite the same and as a result there is some confusion around the term naturopathic medicine. People will say, "Oh yeah, I know someone who is a naturopath," because they've had informal training, but they aren't licensed. So that is one of the distinctions. Actually, when you look at the hours, licensed naturopaths have more training in nutrition than any other health professional. It's exciting to have those kinds of resources to bring to the table. What's even more exciting is that in many states, including the state of Washington, insurance actually covers naturopathic care. Even though there are downsides to paperwork with insurance, people can now come see me with insurance reimbursement if they have coverage for their individual plan. I actually act as a primary care physician for some patients. I'm the one who directs their care if they need a referral for medical treatment or surgery—I'll refer them out for that.

Q Is that a recent change that health insurance providers are now covering naturopathic medicine?

A It's a state by state basis in terms of the legislation. Because licensed naturopaths are trained as primary care physicians, it's not that big of a leap to say that all health practitioners in this training should be required to have insurance coverage. That's what Washington State has done, Oregon State has done and other states are starting to do. When you use this type of preventive care, it's very effective in terms of cost savings. We're very broad in what we do because one of the basic tenants of naturopathic

medicine is to recognize the inherent self-healing process in a person who is ordered and intelligent. Our goal is to facilitate and support that process that we recognize in everybody. Intrinsic Coaching™ fits very well into that. To me that resonates very well with the concept that people are capable, creative, and complete. People, without knowing anything about Intrinsic Coaching™, will come to me and say, "I truly desire to be supported in a way that I can get the health goals that I want and I'm not getting that through conventional medicine." I don't want to make this sound like I'm creating a line between what I practice and a conventional healthcare practitioner. Having worked as a nurse and a social worker in conventional healthcare, I think there is a lot of value to what is there and they are making some major changes in how they approach patients, but some of the challenges are the interactions with patients.

So the exciting thing for me as a naturopathic physician is we have been trained to acknowledge and recognize the self-healing process and so it fits very well to be using the Intrinsic Coaching™ concepts to support our patients. Naturopathic physicians also have a lot of training in natural and alternative medicine, so when people want that information and support they can come to us and are able to have the space to do that. We typically have appointments long enough to have those interactions since we're not focused as much on writing a prescription; however we also prescribe things that are natural, antibiotics, hormones, order tests, and do diagnoses. Integrating this approach and treating the whole person - taking into account aspects that wouldn't be considered a health related issue - is very exciting.

The exciting thing for me as a naturopathic physician is we have been trained to acknowledge and recognize the self-healing process and so it fits very well to be using the Intrinsic Coaching™ concepts to support our patients.

Q That is very exciting, knowing that you are working with the whole person and acknowledging the self-healing process! You're bringing a value-add to your practice.

At what point in your career and how did you become interested in the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology itself?

A Well, my interest in the concept of coaching started not too long after I graduated from naturopathic medical school. There was a movement, even back then, that some people acknowledged the concept that we're not healers; we're

just supporting our patients and the healing comes from within. I had the opportunity to study with a naturopath and chiropractor from Canada, Mark Percival, who pioneered something he developed in his practice called 'health coach systems.' He felt very strongly that physicians are there to support our patients' process in whatever way works best for them. It's not identical to Intrinsic Coaching™, but there's a similar concept and I really got excited about that. It gave me a way in which I can interact with my patients and at the end of the day not feel burnt out, not feel like I was the responsible person for making all of that happen. I'd been using that in my practice. It had gaps and holes and wasn't as fine tuned as I felt I could make it.

About a year ago something came across my email regarding a one-hour session focused on healthcare and Intrinsic Coaching™ which caught my attention. I participated and it resonated completely with my philosophy that I was attempting to bring into the space I created in my clinic in order to help people get the results they wanted. In fact, a common comment I make when people come in is, "Are you willing to do what it takes to get the results that you are asking me for?" So obviously in that process you have to be willing to consider what their results/goals are and not necessarily what they tell you the first time, but seek out what they want at a deeper level. Shortly after participating in the one-hour session, I participated in the Intrinsic Coach™ Development Series and immediately found it very useful and felt a sense of connection with the people I was working with. I knew I wanted to continue with that. Now I am in my second level of training.

"Are you willing to do what it takes to get the results that you are asking me for?"

Q I like that question you ask, "Are you willing to do what it takes to get the results that you want?" The commitment and work comes from the patient. Now that you are an Intrinsic Coach™ and it matches the philosophy that you've always believed in, what does Intrinsic Coaching™ mean to you?

A To me, Intrinsic Coaching™ means I get permission to do what I do best and, at the same time, engage in a conversation with my patients to help them get what they want. I'm a believer over the years that patients who can manage themselves in healthcare to move themselves forward are much more successful than patients who say 'tell me what

to do.' That even happens with alternative healthcare. Instead of wanting a magic pill with a prescription, they want the magic herb or the most popular supplement of the day. For me, Intrinsic Coaching™ means that I can focus on being successful for me while supporting and engaging my patients in a process that is successful for them. It's a win-win process.

I'm a believer over the years that patients who can manage themselves in healthcare to move themselves forward are much more successful than patients who say 'tell me what to do.'

At the end of the day when I leave my clinic I don't feel drained because I have failed someone. There is no failure in this process—only an opportunity to learn and move in a different direction or reevaluate what needs to happen next. I also get the full benefit of having been engaged in the process. I find it very beneficial for my own health at a personal level. I've observed that people who provide healthcare who neither practice what they preach or wind up ill at any level (mental, physical, emotional), not only is it not a good role model but it gets in their way of doing high quality work.

At the end of the day when I leave my clinic I don't feel drained.... There is no failure in this process—only an opportunity to learn and move in a different direction or reevaluate what needs to happen next.

Q It's interesting that you said that - you're less exhausted and it's beneficial to your own health and well-being. Again, it shows that integrating Intrinsic Coaching™ is a win-win for everyone. Gary, you talked about engaging your patients in conversation. Is that something new for people and how do they react to that?

A Well, if I use some of the terminology it's probably a new concept, but I'm surprised how many people fairly early into the conversation acknowledge what they are truly looking for. They may not have known what they really wanted when they walked through the door and the questions I ask may be a little different than what they've heard before, but I've never had anyone decline a conversation once I've shared with them what I'd like to do or give them the opportunity to be engaged.

Q Being engaged in healthcare decisions and having a physician who acts as a partner with you is empowering. When people go to a physician they aren't used to people listening and engaging them. They're used to being told what to do. What a powerful approach you are bringing to your patients!

A I try to approach it compassionately, meaning there are some people that are fairly locked into the 'tell me what to do' model, even in alternative integrated medicine, and that the doctor knows best and is going to fix them. I view it as a compassionate conversation and if they're not ready for that shift, the coaching I do may be a parallel conversation where I'm giving them opportunities to be engaged, but they can be in more of a casual informed place than actually having something specific where for the next 10 minutes they're going to be engaging strictly in this coaching experience. What I've found is if I give people the opportunity to at least explain what is possible, they've never said no to being engaged in the conversation. But sometimes if they don't move in that direction, I don't push it either. I allow it to be an opportunity and then go back to what it is they want. And if they just want to sit down and review their blood work and find out what their cholesterol level is then I let that be.

What I've found is if I give people the opportunity to at least explain what is possible, they've never said no to being engaged in the conversation.

Q It sounds like you're really respecting that person and meeting him or her where he or she is at. Going back to the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology, what is it that stands out for you?

A The thing that stands out for me is that it is simultaneously very practical and doable and is cast into something that is a basic human process of interaction. Again, once initiated it's very simple, powerful and practical. It's not something that requires years of training and intense study. Of all the methods that I went through to get the training I have, Intrinsic Coaching™ is so immediately practical. And the ripple effect is so exciting. I've had people come back and share with me that they've had casual and effective conversations with people in their lives that I've recognized is in line with the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology. They would inquire with the people

around them about what they wanted and found it worked much better than pushing their own agenda. That was a surprising discovery for me to see that people take this approach with them and share it with others.

Of all the methods that I went through to get the training I have, Intrinsic Coaching™ is so immediately practical. And the ripple effect is so exciting.

Q Isn't that something about the ripple effect? The results stay and multiply from person to person. Gary, you've talked a little bit about how you integrate Intrinsic Coaching™ in your work. How is this different from the way you used to interact with people before you were an Intrinsic Coach™?

A The most dramatic example of how Intrinsic Coaching™ has changed what I do is I used to assume what I thought patients wanted is what they really wanted. And so, if the appointment had to do with lab testing, I would immediately start discussing that. In my clinic, we have a process that I've always used. When people come in they fill out a couple of surveys that ask what their successes, challenges and goals for the appointment are. If they fill it out, I pretty much know when I walk in the room what their goals are and I have a list of symptoms so I can focus on that. What I found after I started Intrinsic Coaching™ was there were more instances of people telling me what they really wanted that I would never have figured out had I continued with the process I developed (in terms of what was written on the paper), was most comfortable with and what my patients really like. I've always talked to my patients directly, explained to them very thoroughly what their test results are, and automatically give them a copy of it. And all my patients from the very first get a little notebook. I say, "This is your chart. I want you to know as much about your health as I do. It doesn't make sense for me to keep all your health information locked away in a cabinet somewhere you can't access it anytime you want. I'm going to share this with you and give you information." People really liked that and I was feeling very pleased with that approach and didn't think it was necessary to have the conversation of what do you want, when I had set up that full process and had people write down on paper when they walked into the room. Intrinsic Coaching™ has allowed me to tap into where they're coming from and what they want more directly. More consistently I'm seeing people get better results and sticking to those results more effectively by asking that simple question of what do you want.

The most dramatic example of how Intrinsic Coaching™ has changed what I do is I used to assume that what I thought patients wanted is what they really wanted. And so, if the appointment had to do with lab testing, I would immediately start discussing that.

Q What you're talking about reminds me of the concept of working with what's not merely apparent. How has the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology enhanced your work professionally as a licensed naturopath?

A Because it's a process that has measurable results, it has also allowed me as a professional practitioner to be confident in what I'm doing. I am a confident person, but there is a challenge sometimes when you're not seeing the results you're hoping for, your client is hoping for. Even with a number of years of experience you sometimes wonder if you are doing the right thing. With the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology, where the coachee is responsible in the process and does the work, I'm always confident that the interaction is moving him or her forward and supporting him. There's no doubt in my mind. If the doubts do come up, I pay attention to it and notice it. It allows me to be much more effective in what I do.

With the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology, where the coachee is responsible in the process and does the work, I'm always confident that the interaction is moving him or her forward and supporting him.

Q What you just touched on there - being confident that the interaction is moving your patient forward - is that what you would attribute to feeling less exhausted at the end of the day?

A I suppose so. I've never been burnt out or felt horribly drained, but if at the end of the day I had five great experiences and one not so great experience, I'd probably focus on the not so great experience. Now I look at it from the perspective of whatever happens in that process as an opportunity for them to be ready for the next thing as opposed to they failed, I failed, we failed, etc.

Q With Intrinsic Coaching™ there's no failure, always learning.

A Yes, and I really like that Intrinsic Coaching™ is non-judgmental. If you make any assumptions about people or there is any space of judging, typically the connection between you and that person really narrows or shuts down. And when that happens you can't do much. It's a really good reminder that when people are bringing forth what they want, it's not a matter of good, bad, right or wrong. It's a matter of this is what they really want.

Q Again, you're demonstrating how you work with the whole person. Gary, you've talked about engaging people in conversation. When someone comes to you and says, "Just tell me what to do," how do you respond?

A It doesn't happen a whole lot these days, but I try to turn the table and say, "That would be hard for me to do if I'm not sure what you want." And again, I have yet to have someone say I'm not going to tell you when asked what they want. If someone says tell me what to do, one of the ways I've found effective of turning that around is to offer them formally or informally the conversation of what do you want. That typically cracks the door for the patient enabling him to look at it more intrinsically. If I'm in a space where I view them as capable, creative and complete and then I stop taking that position and get into the expert role or advice role, it very quickly roles back to them wanting me to tell them what to do. I try to be very careful of the parameters of that and engage them as much as I can. People do want to know what their lab tests show and they do know I have expertise, but as Intrinsic Coaching™ teaches us, when people aren't successful it's typically not because of a lack of information. I help them bridge the gap between the information and what they want.

People do want to know what their lab tests show and they do know I have expertise but, as Intrinsic Coaching™ teaches us, when people aren't successful it's typically not because of a lack of information.

Q It sounds like you're able to set those parameters, balance that and integrate your expertise in a coach like way.

A I had a situation a couple of weeks ago with a man I see a couple of times per year. He's very interested in lifestyle changes to keep his blood pressure and cholesterol levels down. He also has gout and his uric acid levels are up a little. I'm very good at reviewing his lab work and giving suggestions.

I'm the kind of doctor who will prepare ahead of time for each visit, so when someone walks through the door that's not the first time I've looked at their lab work. I've done a review, looked at their charts and know what it was before. By doing so, I can focus on being present with my patients during their appointment.

I'm the kind of doctor who will prepare ahead of time for each visit, so when someone walks through the door that's not the first time I've looked at their lab work. I've done a review, looked at their charts and know what it was before. By doing so, I can focus on being present with my patients during their appointment.

Anyways, this was the first I'd seen this man since I started integrating Intrinsic Coaching™. When he came in I said, "We can talk about your lab work, I have it all here. Or we could do something a little different today. Maybe you could take the next 10 minutes and tell me what you really want." He looked at me with a look of 'that's different.' He said okay and started talking about his job—he works in a group home where one of his roles is preparing food for people. He spoke of how several days before as he was preparing the food he had this awareness. There was this chunk of cabbage and he took a bite from it and had an awareness that he wanted to nurture himself with his food choices. It wasn't about good choices for lowering cholesterol, but he wanted to feel nurtured. That is what came up during our conversation because we explored what he wanted. He touched on how he would like to have that feeling of being nurtured to support him with better food choices at home. At the end of our appointment I asked him what he wanted to take away from the conversation. As a result he thought of a way he could stay in touch with that experience to support better choices. When this patient walked out of the room he said, "Wow, you never know what you're going to get into. I thought I was coming here just to talk about my lab work, but instead I feel more empowered and excited about this process and my health."

When this patient walked out of the room he said, "Wow, you never know what you're going to get into. I thought I was coming here just to talk about my lab work..."

Q What a great example of letting your patient be the active one in the conversation and enabling him to take control of his health. I bet you could have never predicted the outcome of that conversation. Has Intrinsic Coaching™

expanded your vision of what is possible for people and for the field of naturopathy?

A Well, as I said at the start, naturopathic medicine was very attractive to me after being in the conventional setting because of the fact it acknowledged this self-healing process. That's all good terminology but it's not easy to bring that forth in an actual practice. It's hard to learn and hard to teach. As I mentioned before, I was on faculty at Bastyr University and taught a class, Physician Heal Myself, to first year students. It taught them how to get in touch with the healing process and that it is not a bubble outside of you. You're part of it and how you acknowledge your own healing will probably predictably influence those people that you also want to help, support and be of service to. And so, Intrinsic Coaching™ has expanded my ability to get in touch with the self-healing process because I now have a way to very quickly and practically tap into people's self-healing potential - something that I knew I wanted to enhance before and wasn't as able to do until now.

Intrinsic Coaching™ has expanded my ability to get in touch with the self-healing process because I now have a way to very quickly and practically tap into people's self-healing potential - something that I knew I wanted to enhance before and wasn't as able to do until now.

For the field of naturopathy, Intrinsic Coaching™ is not being taught as part of the curriculum. There is such potential if it became a part of naturopathic training because it is completely in alignment with that process. It would allow us (naturopaths) to support our patients in ways that they truly want. There's an incredible demand for naturopaths right now. If you want to be in a cutting edge profession, this is the field. When I went to school to become a naturopath, the typical class was 30-40 people. Now it's probably quadrupled. There are probably more naturopaths in training now than there are in practice. People want to interact in healthcare in a different way and so I think Intrinsic Coaching™ has incredible potential for the field of naturopathic medicine. If practitioners could get even a tenth of what I've seen in the short time that I've been using it, I think it would be an awesome win.

People want to interact in healthcare in a different way and so I think Intrinsic Coaching™ has incredible potential for the field of naturopathic medicine. If practitioners could get even a tenth of what I've seen in the short time that I've been using it, I think it would be an awesome win.

Q

What is most rewarding for you being an Intrinsic Coach™ Naturopath?

A

Well, it's very satisfying. It meets my need for success. It's very relaxing and energy-producing, rather than energy-draining. This meets my needs for balance and harmony and good health. As a naturopath, I see a lot of challenging patients, meaning they've seen multiple medical doctors and other naturopaths. Even though I'm in a small town (our county has 100,000 people), I have patients all over the United States. I guess because of my background and experience once patients have connected with me and moved they want to stay in touch and receive the same support. The rewarding thing in that regard is I'm no longer challenged in a negative way by those experiences because I allow them to challenge themselves. It's very rewarding to take someone who had given up hope of success and opportunity to be well and healthy and support them in a process where they can find new ways of looking at their health—new ways of thinking, making better choices, increasing their capacity for learning. It's that whole asset approach versus the deficit approach, which was the precursor to Intrinsic Coaching™ and still very much a part of it. It's much more rewarding for me to acknowledge the assets and support people's assets instead of looking for what's not there or what's missing.

It's very rewarding to take someone who had given up hope of success and opportunity to be well and healthy and support them in a process where they can find new ways of looking at their health—new ways of thinking, making better choices, increasing their capacity for learning.

Q

Your response brought me a sense of peace. You talked earlier that you got into healthcare because you wanted to be in service with people. What do you want for people?

A

What I want for people is to have the peace and satisfaction of being empowered by the healthcare services that are there as opposed to being frustrated by them. People report to me that they're frustrated and stressed with the system. There's nothing more paradoxical than being stressed by the process of healthcare that is designed to enhance our vitality. So what I want for other people is that peace and satisfaction of being empowered by the healthcare system.

What I want for people is to have the peace and satisfaction of being empowered by the healthcare services that are there as opposed to being frustrated by them....There's nothing more paradoxical than being stressed by the process of healthcare that is designed to enhance our vitality.

Q

This conversation has brought me peace and satisfaction. You sound like a physician I would trust and like to work with. Do you have any final thoughts about Intrinsic Coaching™ or even the field of naturopathy that you would like to share?

A

It's exciting for me to share my experience through this interview. I've certainly touched on my personal sense of excitement about Intrinsic Coaching™ more deeply. When you say it out loud it's like, 'Oh yeah!' So thank you for giving me that opportunity. It makes me feel satisfied and comforted knowing my needs as a successful practitioner are being met by sharing this.

Who is Totally Coached, Inc.?

Totally Coached, Inc. is a Scottsdale, AZ based company that founded the proprietary and uniquely effective Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology. Reaching internationally, the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology enables “Thinking better. Together.™” for benefits that extend across the workplace and beyond the organization’s walls to create healthier lives, healthier organizations, and a healthier world.

To be an Intrinsic Coach™ like Dr. Gary Bachman, contact 480-515-5220
or totallycoached@totallycoached.com.

Make a better life.
Live a better world.™