

My Doctor Ben
Website Usability and Design Consultation
<https://mydoctorben.com/>

Introduction

Dr. Benjamin Kaplan-Singer is a holistic doctor based in Southern California, although he does provide concierge services and is available to travel to different locations. Holistic medicine is a complex art and science, blending conventional medicines with innovative new treatments and lifestyle improvement. In our own words, “Functional Medicine is a comprehensive, science-based framework changing the way patients and physicians work together to reverse complex medical conditions and optimize preventative health. Functional Medicine is by definition holistic, integrative, and systems oriented.” In his private practice, he offers a range of services and packages. Most of his clients have come to him via word-of-mouth, but to expand his market he needs to have an online presence. I have been working with Dr. Kaplan-Singer, or as he prefers to be called, Dr. Ben to help him expand his business with a special focus on his website. While the refinement process is ongoing as we receive feedback from test and actual users, this report will detail my consultation process from a human centric and customer oriented perspective with the end goal of attracting more of the right patients. Because this is a professional project, the website referenced may be updated dynamically as our iterative process continues.

Phase I: Conception

I scheduled several sessions with Dr. Ben to understand his background, business, concerns, and needs. From these, we created requirements for the site. His primary concerns were:

- Overall look and feel of the site
- Helping clients learn more about his services
- Obtaining contact information for potential clients
- Receiving data about problems potential clients want him to help solve
- Booking and scheduling clients for initial consults

Other concerns that emerged as we continued the discussion arose:

- Letting clients know when he could meet them in person based on travel schedule
- Boosting observability via search engine optimization (SEO)
- Clearly communicating limitations to his services
- Setting further expectations by crafting a narrative for doctor-patient relationships
- Covering legal bases

Out of Dr. Ben's concerns, we distilled these requirements.

1. Positive user experience
 - 1.a Soothing/Frustration-free
 - 1.b Balance of professional and personal touches
2. Building user understanding (client mental model)
 - 2.a Clear boundaries
 - 2.b Realistic expectations
3. Easy/inviting to take the next step for care
 - 3.a Simple contact form
 - 3.b Opportunity to present "intake" style information

The client needed to know the basics of stakeholders, human-computer interaction principles, and iterative thinking to understand the design process and what the deliverables would be. The process would be background research, creation of prototypes, and then testing. New iterations would follow based on client retention data.

Phase II: Research

Other functional medicine doctors already have websites which provided a good template and provided examples to present to the client and see what he liked. Some of these sites had errors that should be avoided; such observations are useful because they can help a new website stand out from competitors. Figures 1 and 2 show the website of a different Doctor Ben with a similar medical practice, but some issues with the website.

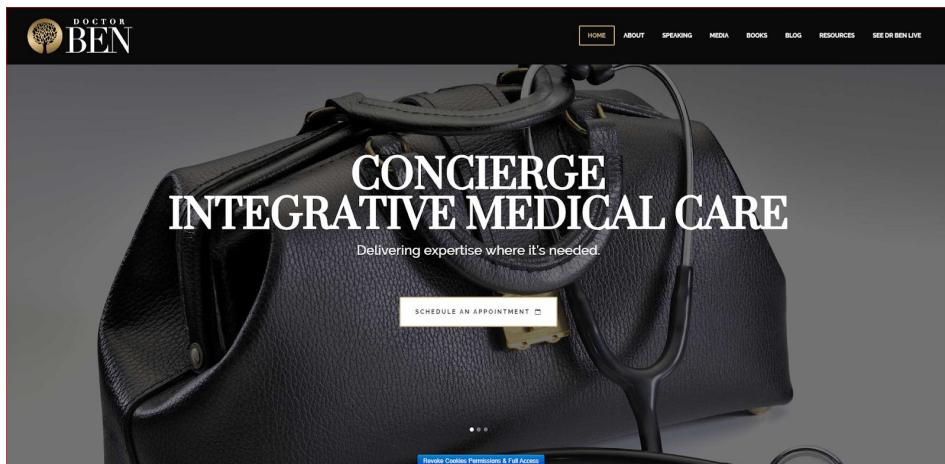


Figure 1. An example of another website (not the same Dr. Ben)

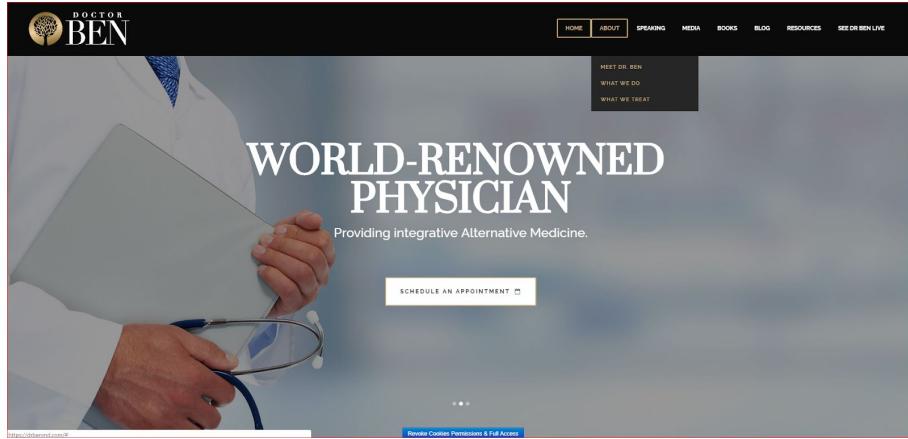


Figure 2. Inconsistent drop-down menus and frequently shifting pictures are distracting.

Most functional medicine websites are graphic heavy. Several have embedded podcasts and extensive reading material. They also have many links and multiple pages to navigate before a potential patient can schedule any intake or care. Figure 3 shows Dr. Kara Fitzgerald's page, which has two options - consumers or professionals. Which one might be for a patient is unclear. There are 18 other possible places to click.



Figure 3. Functional medicine website with 18 possible links and no schedule care option.

Some functional medicine sites, as well as many others that are seeking to sell services, have email sign up boxes on their front page. After review, Dr. Ben decided against going this route. It does not fit a personalized service to sign up for mass emails. It is a possibility in the future, but it gave potential clients a “colder” feeling towards the site, and Dr. Ben does not want to lose authenticity. Figure 4 shows a well-known functional medicine doctor’s homepage with such a sign up form. It also lacks a “schedule care” option. Interestingly, it includes a common feature with other functional medicine sites - recipes. This might drive some traffic, but it is distracting from the ultimate goal - getting visitors to become clients.

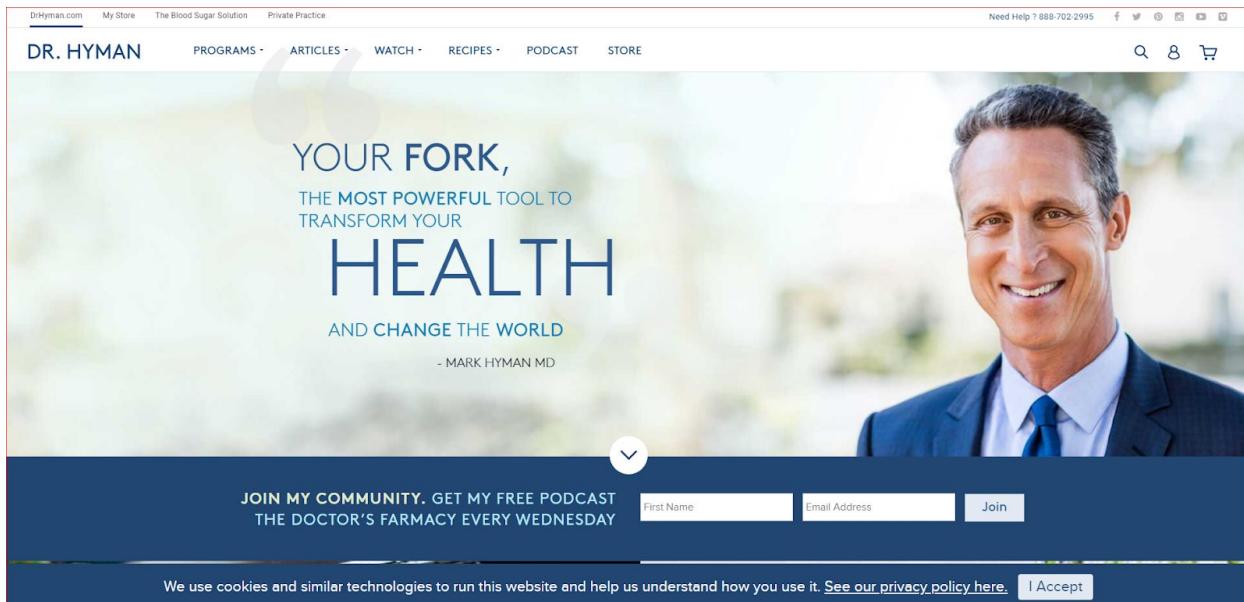


Figure 4. Well-known functional medicine doctor’s homepage with sign up form.

The research on existing models and other doctors - including noting the mistakes the other websites were making - provided insights to provide suggestions and point out to the client pitfalls that might occur on his personal site. Providing examples of both the good and the bad let us discuss ideas and concepts in a more concrete manner. When consulting on the phone, it can be very difficult to paint a picture of what can be. Ensuring both parties have access to a

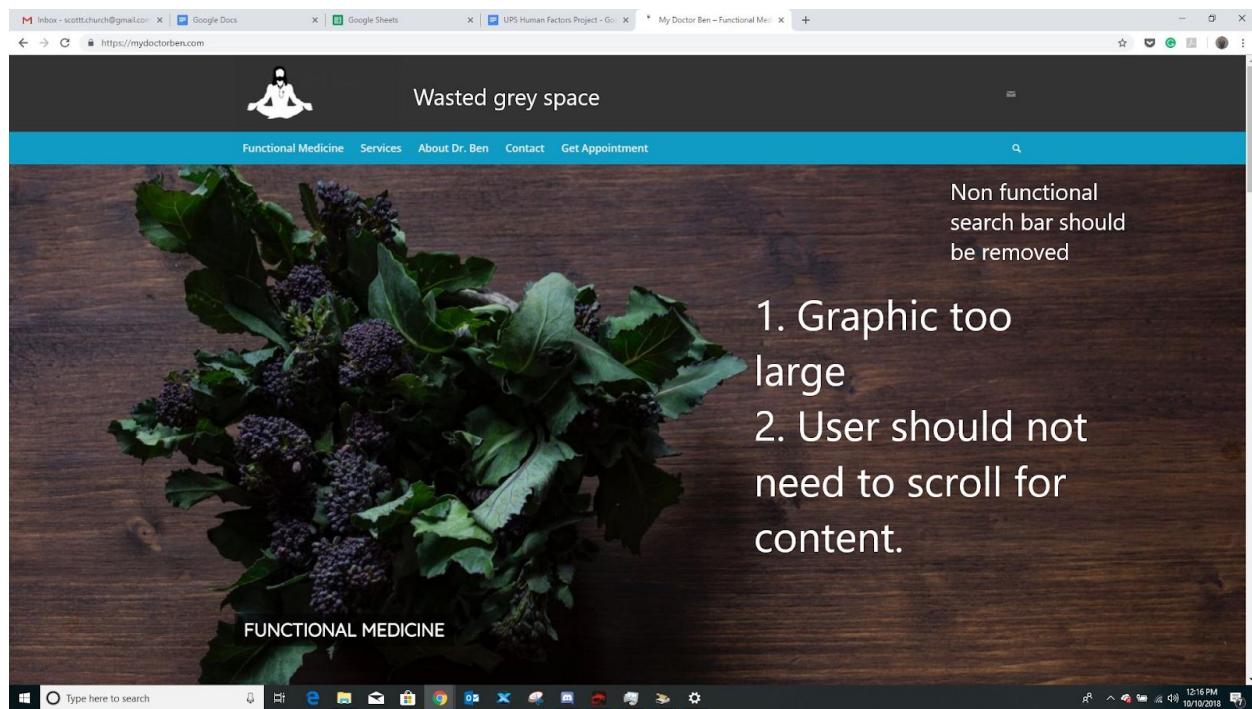
website as it actively updates works for personal websites, but it is best to run a private server to host the page while revisions are going on.

This research phase also required digging deeper on who the clients were. Other functional medicine websites had testimonial pages that provided insightful information on past patients, helping build conceptual personas for desirable clients for Dr. Ben. Disconcertingly, a large amount of interest in holistic medicine came from people searching for something more akin to witchcraft than serious medical care with a focus on their entire body and mind. This meant that differentiating Dr. Ben's professional qualifications without losing potential clients was going to require special consideration. As a medical doctor, Dr. Ben cannot be confused with energy healers, for example, who can get into hot water when providing vitamin, intravenous infusions. Dr. Ben is qualified to administer these, and his website should clearly identify his legality and ability to do so. Some of the services he offers, however, are new practices and cutting-edge procedures such as nitrogen gas supplemented meditation. A laundry list page approach would also degrade the overall feel and appeal of the site, especially considering he is adding new talents as needed on a regular basis. Instead of trying to put an exhaustive list, we decided to keep the site classy and focus on testimonials that would highlight some of Dr. Ben's expertise, support search-engine-optimization with keywords, and avoid the tackiness of listing services.

Phase III: Review of the existing prototype

Just before our initial consultations, he had asked a web developer create a mock-up (which was already posted to the internet at the time) so I had a rough draft to work with. To get the process in motion, I spent a day on the website checking every link, each available page, and the “random” indices that could be found on the pages for details and workability, taking screenshots and making notes directly on them that I could send to the web developer for rapid improvement. I focused on basic usability, but also used my understanding of Dr. Ben’s goals to provide input on aesthetic and marketing factors.

Some of our correspondence with my comments is documented below (Figures not labeled)



Comments written on page, I can highlight if necessary

Questions look like they should link to something

EMERGING PARADIGMS AND LIMITS OF THE OLD GUARD

Some continuity of the picture - continued background, or at least similar colors would indicate to user that they are still on the right page. See underline above for second option

Functional Medicine is the leading-edge paradigm changing the way scientifically-trained physicians practice medicine. By focusing on **root causes**, **systems biology**, and **personalized treatment**, functional medicine physicians can help patients achieve the highest levels wellness or reverse chronic diseases considered too complicated to cure by mainstream medicine.

Mainstream medicine continues to have its benefits (albeit limited in scope), but increasingly Americans are waking up and seeing clearly the brokenness of "medicine as usual."

I'm not going to dive into the abyss of America's healthcare problems as these are numerous and politically dicey. Instead, I'm going to focus on the problems that are deteriorating the doctor-patient relationship, because this is the most important relationship in healthcare and the one seemingly least valued by insurance companies and government payers.

When I was a primary care physician I witnessed firsthand day-in, day-out the limitations of mainstream medicine both as a delivery system and as a way of thinking about and treating disease. Often, I knew I could help someone make a radical shift in their life, changes so big it could add decades to their life or save them hundreds of thousands of dollars on future healthcare costs...

The problem was, I almost never had enough time to give each patient the listening space they needed to feel safe, open up, and commit to some serious life overhaul. It pains me to think how many people could be changing the direction of their health everyday if only they had **more 1-on-1 time with a physician** who had the time to patiently listen (pun intended).

This brings us to one of the **biggest problems with mainstream medicine: rushed appointment times**. After waiting in the lobby, you're ushered into an exam room where you

TESTIMONIALS

"8 months ago I was spiraling out of control... I just never thought I'd be able to feel this well again. I believe it's really with your direction and your medical approach. My hat is off to you and I am very grateful."

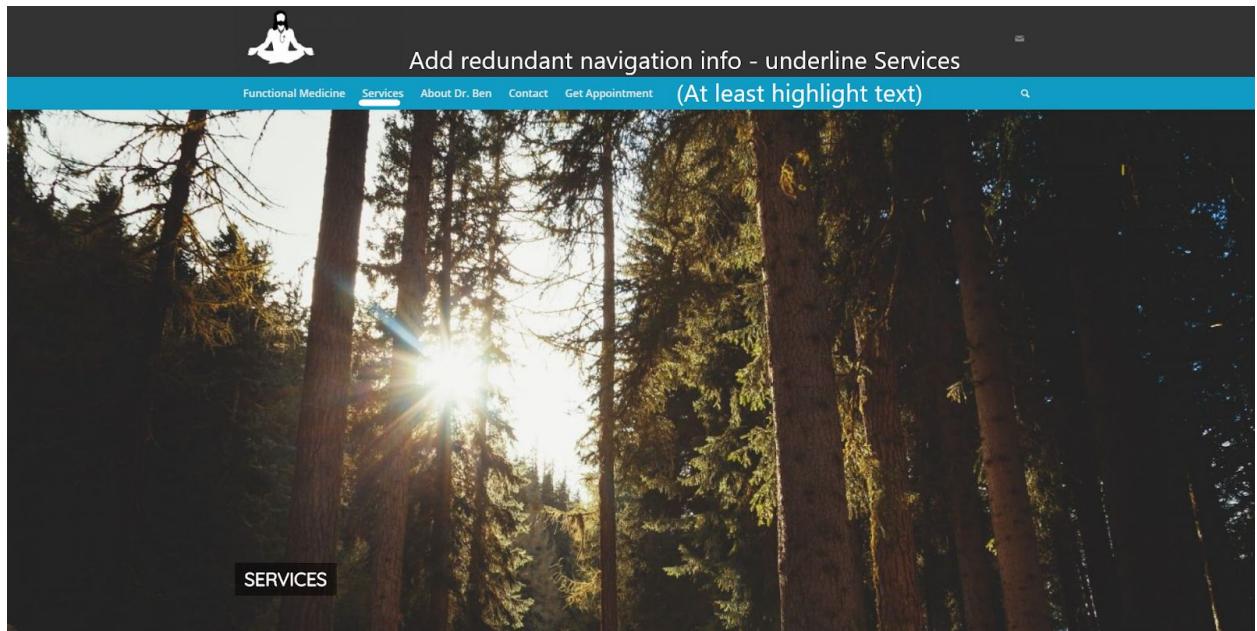
VP (69) - Seen for **Mast Cell Activation Syndrome**

"Went for help with fatigue levels and diet questions. Truly restored my faith in doctors. He is **VERY** passionate about

Above 2 screenshots are both on Functional Medicine page, but seem to share no continuity. A user scrolling down has no indication what page they are viewing.

Consider: why is functional medicine first? Landing page should channel searchers directly to booking or about Ben; most likely people searching for "Functional medicine" already know what it is and want to know if Ben is the right doctor, or if they have already decided, how quickly they

can get on the calendar. Reducing clicks also reduces the opportunity for a visitor to change their mind.



Packages	Services
Introductory	Records review and phone consult
Basic	Records review and phone consult, blood tests and lifestyle examination
Health Coaching	Records review and phone consult, blood tests and lifestyle examination, monthly check ins
Full Workup	Etc etc etc
House Visit	Concierge services

— ♡ —

Your relations are your health.

Everything you give. Everything you take.

Every choice you make.

Will touch everyone and everything.

Everything is a part of you.

This is why your health matters.

Care for yourself in order to care for each other.

What is good health?

When you brighten the luminosity of all beings.

— ♡ —

So I dig what you're saying, Dr. Ben...

What do you actually do?

I am a functional medicine doctor and I work with clients who need health advice and patients who want clinical assessment and care.

You'll find my approach to medicine uses quite a bit of functional medicine testing: salivary hormones, gut microbiome, and biomarkers of your nutritional status, oxidative stress levels, inflammation, and other treatable, preventable risk factor analyses.

I use a whole person approach and this means I invest time with every consult and patient appointment. Therefore, I see a much lower volume of people than a conventional doctor and this allows us to build a truly therapeutic relationship.

All new patients are required to make a minimum commitment of working with me for 3 months.

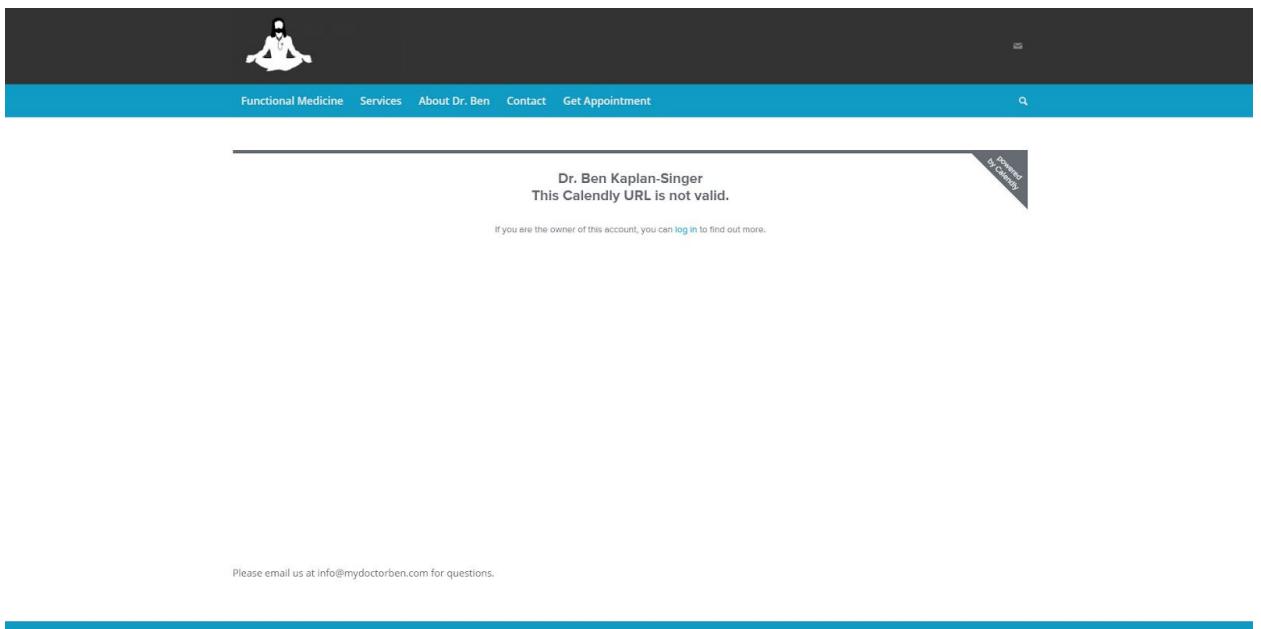
I do not accept insurances of any kind.



Services page should include visualized offerings to minimize frustration and maximize efficiency in conveying information.



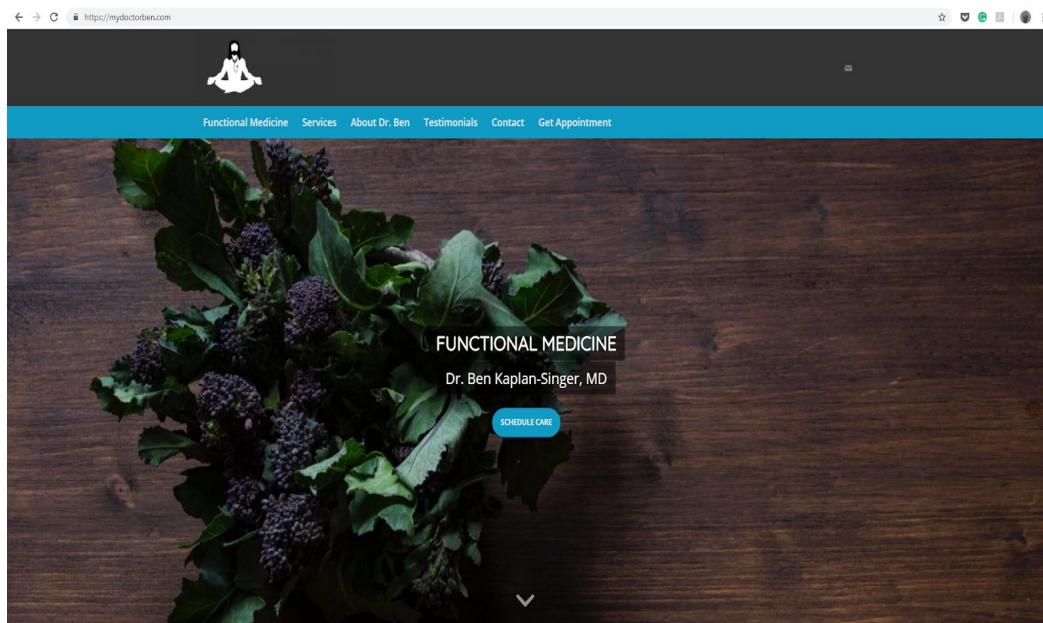
Using search function returned this non-related page with Ben's logo still at top



Needs to be removed and replaced with “Under construction” ASAP. Makes ben look unprofessional.

V2 Notes

Landing Page



Addition of slide-in title bar gains a user's attention well, and the new downward arrow draws user below for more information. It disappears when clicked once, though the website viewed on a 17" screen does not show the entire page, all the way to the bottom. If the down arrow could be maintained throughout the page, it might be less frustrating for users who prefer that method of scrolling. The large grey bar still exists, and the tiny email logo looks out of place - even distracting. A user might not know which one to click, but the redundancy is ok - as long as it is consistent. Regarding the background, the image seems to be some sort of purple broccoli. While attractive, it may distract a curious user who could click on the picture looking for more information. The users who are seeking functional medicine help most likely know what functional medicine is, and that it involves food, but several testers said that they did not know what it was. A small caption below could be useful if it did not clutter the screen.

HI, I'M DR. BEN:

Whole human being *and* functional medicine physician. I believe everybody holds limitless potential for self-transformation. I provide **guidance, education, and concierge medical services** to people seeking complete health change from within. Feel free to be in touch with me [here](#).

If you're wondering how I got here and what **my personal health discovery journey** looks like, you can [learn more about me](#).

WHAT IS FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE?

Functional Medicine is a comprehensive, science-based framework changing the way patients and physicians work together to **reverse complex medical conditions and optimize preventative health**. Functional Medicine is by definition holistic, integrative, and systems oriented.

Your individual health is "your responsibility" but it's intimately connected to a vast network of effects and inputs such as natural ecologies, physical environments, social relationships, belief structures, imprints, behavioral choices, biochemical individuality, genomic interactions... just to name a few.

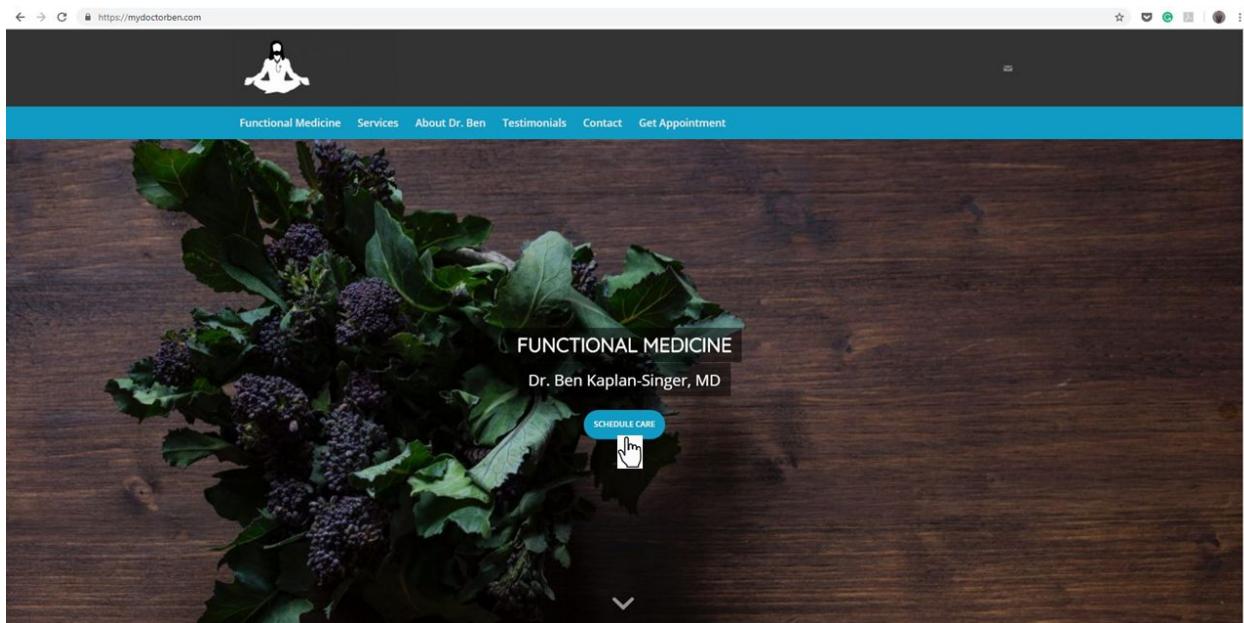
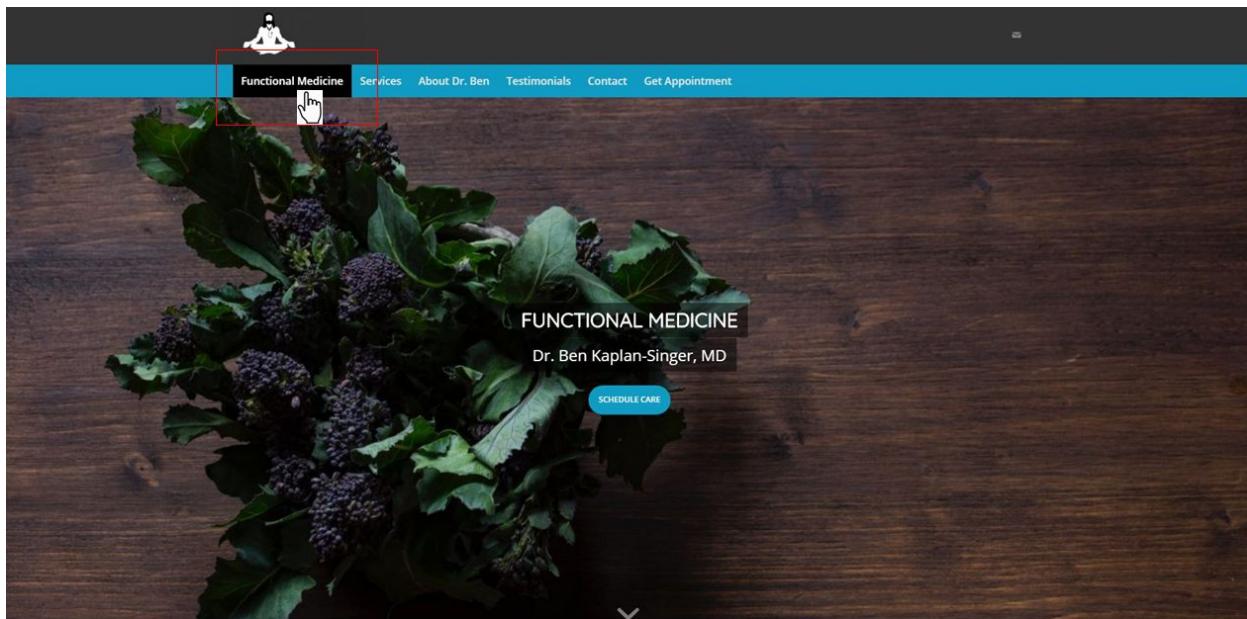
Creating a detailed map with this level of personalized understanding requires a listening first approach. This means being fully present and investing quality time with every patient I treat. Accurate observation is the first step to answering any and all medical questions.

By necessity, this is a different model than conventional medical practice and treatment.

Here are some of the major, **important differences** between the kind of functional medicine I practice and what you've likely come to experience from conventional medicine:

Some of the blue on white or white on blue text on this page is hyperlinked, but other text is not. Differentiating these links could be achieved by using the bolded black text format from below "HI, I'M DR. BEN:" rather than the bolded blue text. Currently, some linked text or boxes change subtly to a darker shade of blue when the cursor hovers over them, but the change is barely perceptible. This effect could be enhanced by increasing the hue difference, like in the title bar. Changing the color of links to completely differentiate them from regular text would be the best choice here to decrease user confusion and frustration while enhancing the

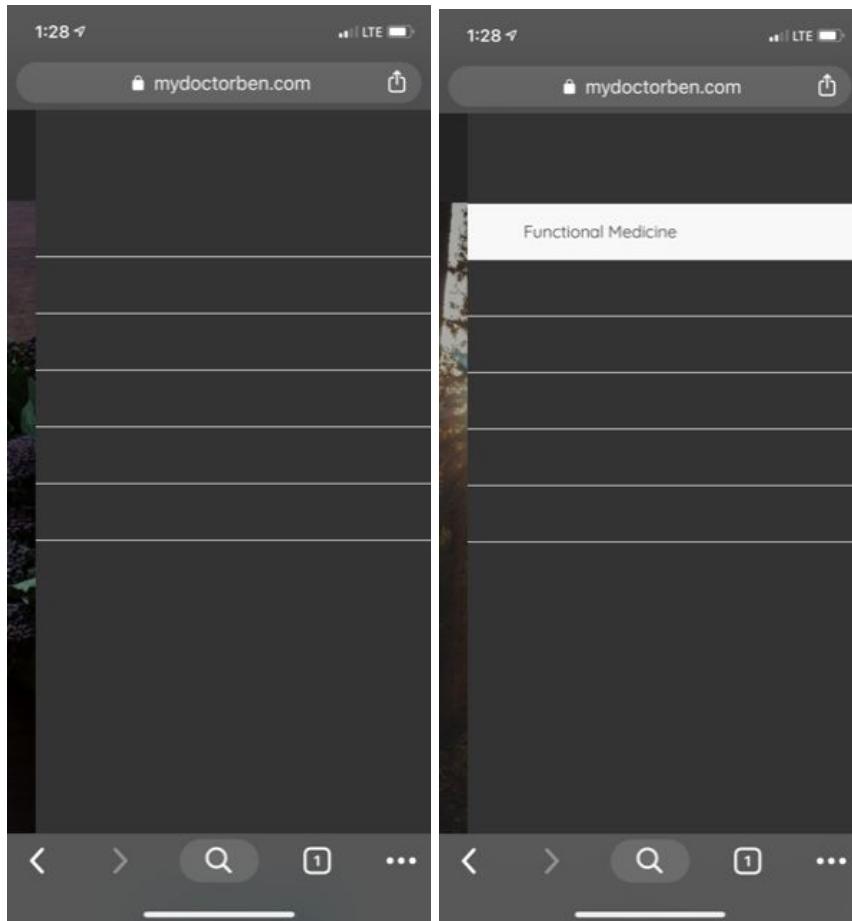
professional look of the site.



Highlighted title bar vs highlighted link bubble.

While a minor issue, the consistency of the site could be improved if all white-on-blue text buttons changed to the same degree when the cursor hovered. Both buttons turn the cursor to a hand, but the menu at the top darkens to black, while the schedule care button darkens the

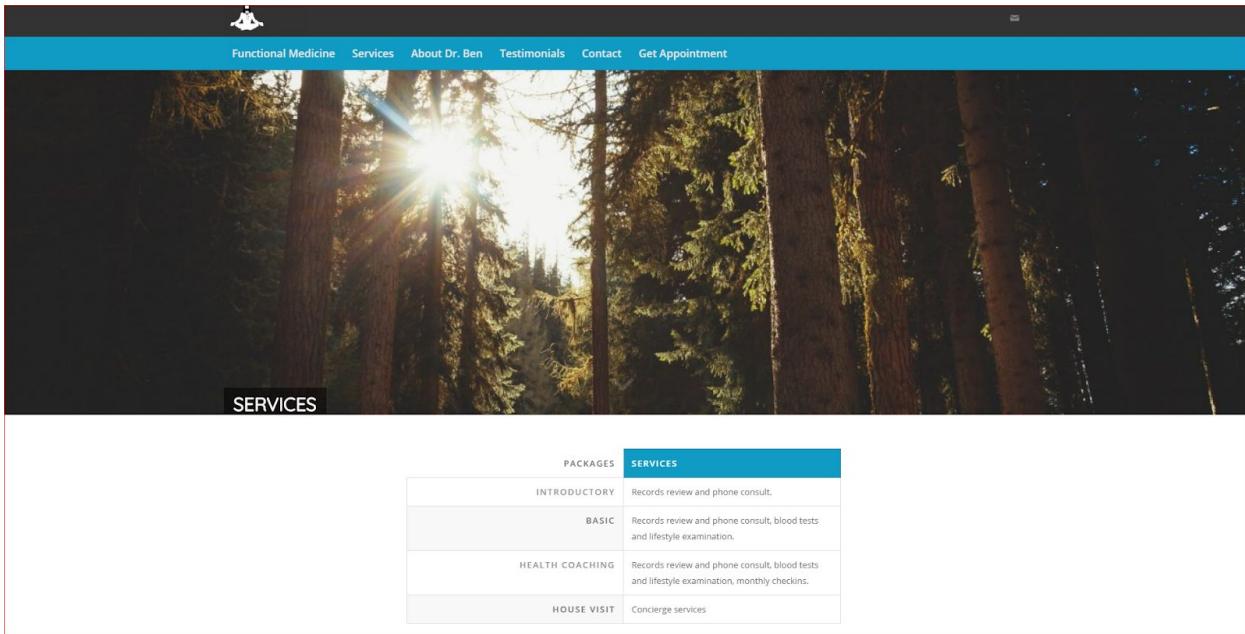
shade of blue only slightly. It stands to reason that if patients are looking for functional medicine, many of them may be extremely detail-oriented, and even small inconsistencies could be off-putting. No test users reported confusion on this issue so it is only a cosmetic design fix.



Mobile site navigation menu

Checking the mobile site: some major usability issues on both Edge and Chrome browsers in iOS. Navigation options do not appear unless pressed, and then may disappear as

the selected page loads. This should be fixed immediately.

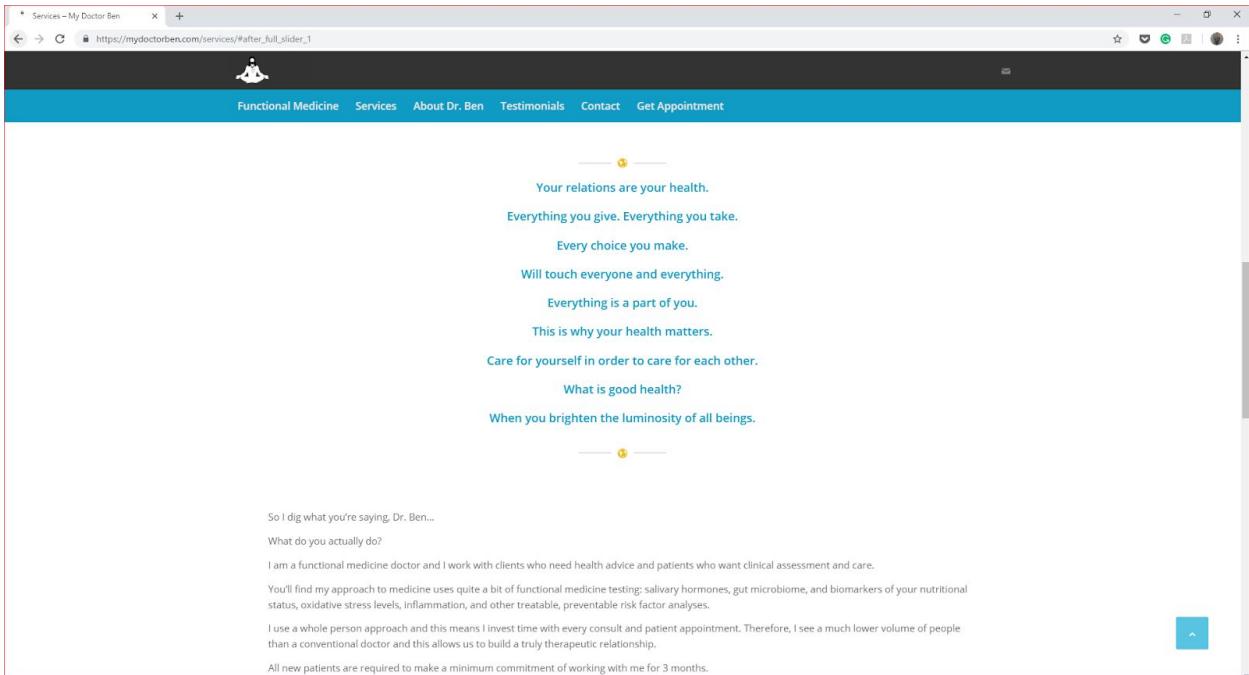


The screenshot shows a website's services page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: Functional Medicine, Services, About Dr. Ben, Testimonials, Contact, and Get Appointment. Below the navigation is a large, dark image of a forest with sunlight filtering through the trees. In the bottom left corner of this image, there is a small white box containing the word "SERVICES". Below the image is a table with a light gray background. The table has two columns: "PACKAGES" and "SERVICES". The "PACKAGES" column contains four rows: "INTRODUCTORY", "BASIC", "HEALTH COACHING", and "HOUSE VISIT". The "SERVICES" column contains four corresponding descriptions. The table is enclosed in a thin red border.

PACKAGES	SERVICES
INTRODUCTORY	Records review and phone consult.
BASIC	Records review and phone consult, blood tests and lifestyle examination.
HEALTH COACHING	Records review and phone consult, blood tests and lifestyle examination, monthly checkins.
HOUSE VISIT	Concierge services

Services Page with new Table

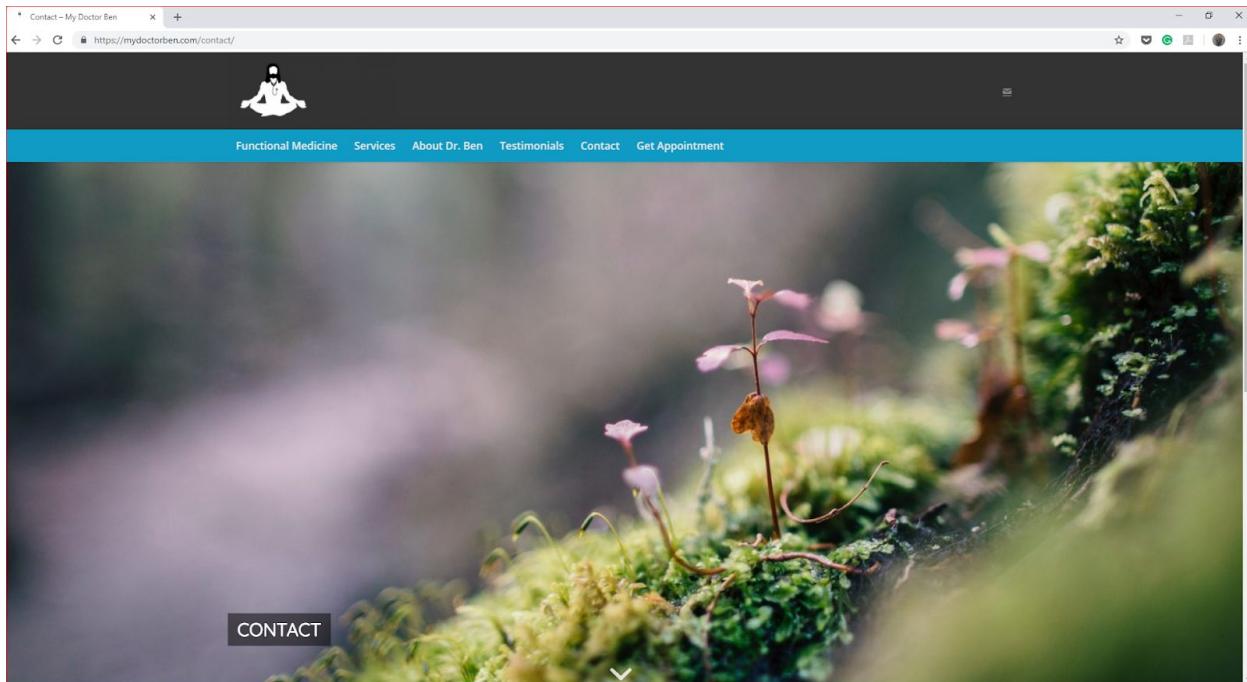
The addition of the table is a concise way to convey information about the packages offered, but the descriptions are sparse - it needs to be explained better, even if each package receives its own section for a full description. Test users expressed confusion, not knowing how to learn more about each one, and some expressed uncertainty about the varying colors on the table - light or dark text in each box seems to differentiate the packages into patterns. That is, the grey boxes may make users believe that there are false similarities between the similarly colored packages.



This page also has blue text that could trick users into clicking, believing these are links, when in fact they are just content.

Contact Pages

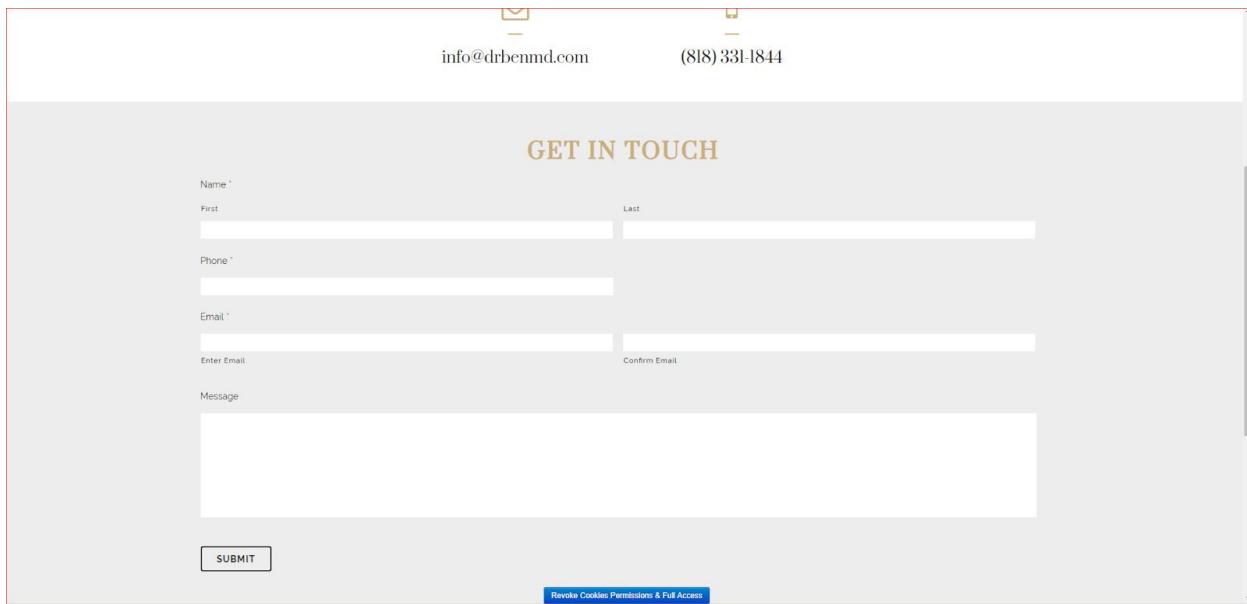
These pages are meant to facilitate potential client inquiries about service.



A screenshot of the contact page content area. It begins with a section about becoming a patient, mentioning email contact and specific service areas like house calls. Below this is a list of metropolitan areas served, including San Diego, CA; Los Angeles, CA; San Francisco, CA; Denver, CO; Boulder, CO; Salt Lake City, UT; Alexandria, VA; and Washington, D.C. Further down, there's a section about travel and home visits, followed by a note about medical licensure for home visits. At the bottom, there are two calls-to-action: "CONTACT" and "GET APPOINTMENT", each with a corresponding link.

Contact Page top and bottom

When selecting Contact, the potential client should be brought instantly to a form for contacting Dr. Ben, not to another page with information to read. The delay in finding a way to reach out might be enough to lose a potential customer. Most websites that solicit contact from users also utilize forms that can be filled out directly on the website without navigating to an email app, website, or program. An example of such a form, excerpted from another functional medicine doctor, is below.

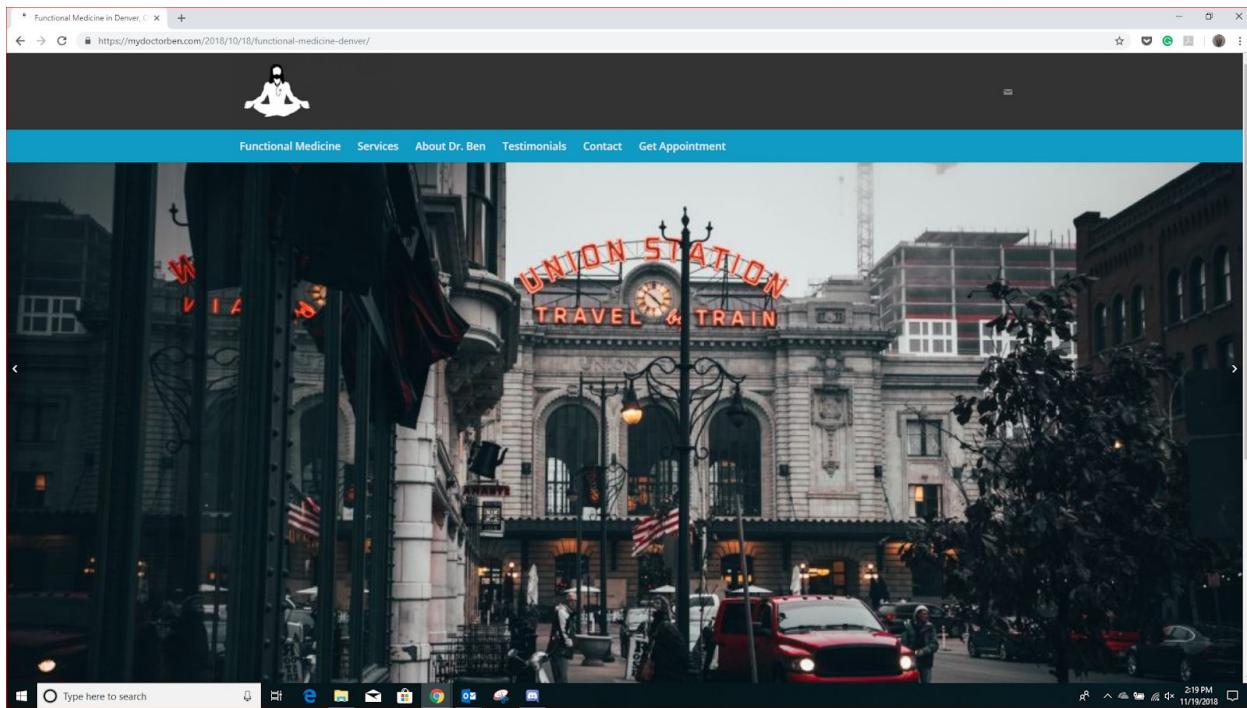


The image shows a contact form with a red border. At the top, there are two small icons: an envelope and a phone. Below them are the email address info@drbenmd.com and the phone number (818) 331-1844. The main title of the form is "GET IN TOUCH" in a gold-colored font. The form fields are as follows: "Name" with "First" and "Last" sub-fields; "Phone"; "Email" with "Enter Email" and "Confirm Email" sub-fields; and a large "Message" text area. At the bottom is a "SUBMIT" button. A small link "Revoke Cookies Permissions & Full Access" is visible at the very bottom.

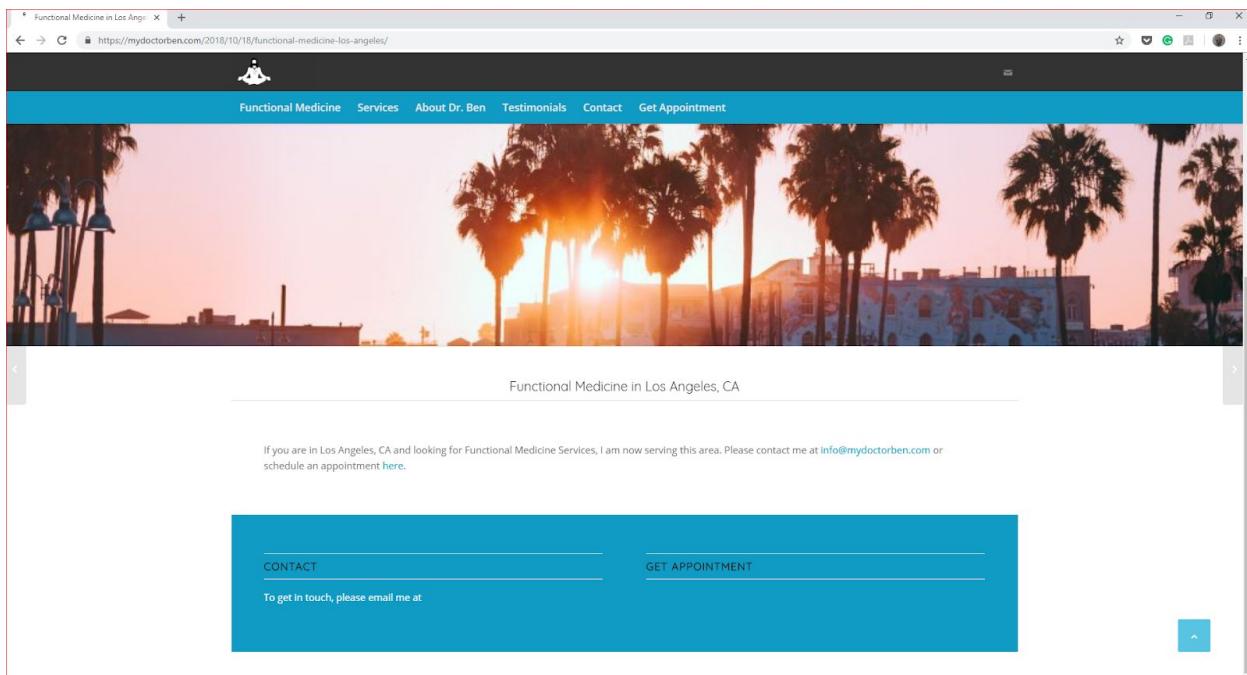
Example of potential contact form on Dr. Ben MD

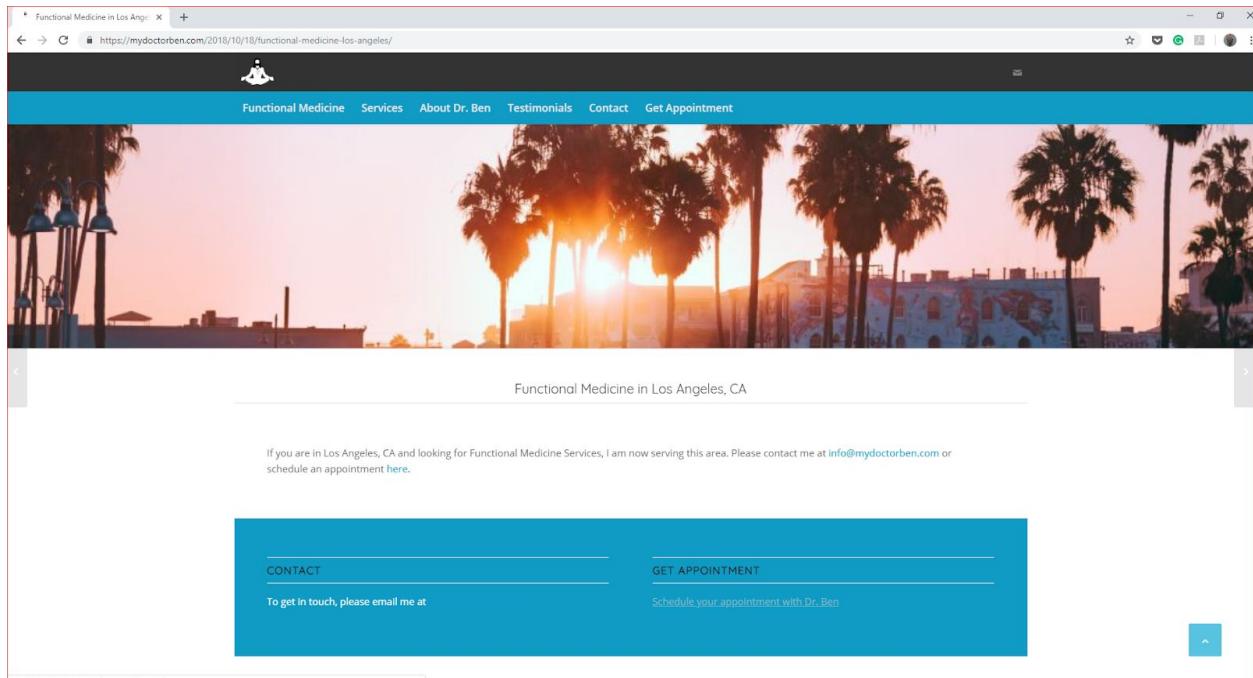
The linking of cities to their own pages is also problematic. One tester wondered if they were having a problem loading the page because all that the page displayed was a picture of the city, without any down arrow like the ones utilized on other pages for more information at the bottom. On an aesthetic note, the pictures appear grainy and some of them have people in the pictures looking directly at the camera, leaving some testers to wonder if a professional took the

picture of it was a quick snap with somebody's camera phone.



Link to Functional Medicine in Denver with pedestrians looking at camera.





Bottom of Location Pages with invisible links

The blue box for Contact and Get Appointment obscures links to email, unless the user's cursor hovers over the exact spot where the hyperlinked text is. In addition, the truncated sides of the blue contact box depart from the style of the rest of the site.

Aesthetically, for the city contact pages, many of the pictures are cropped when viewed on mobile browsers. This results in San Francisco, Boulder, and Alexandria pictures having prominent buildings seemingly sliced in half.

Overall, the contact pages for cities are probably unnecessary. In the future, it is possible that calendars could show when Dr. Ben will be present in each town, improving the ability of potential customers to schedule time and reducing frustration with back-and-forth scheduling conversations via email. When offices are established in each city, these pages could also contain addresses, but without that, they seem to be an unuseful distraction. My recommendation is to remove the pages until they become more integrated and purposeful to the website and booking process.

Overall assessment of prototype by concerns:

-Overall look and feel of the site

Attractive facade needs noted refinements (potentially more) to appear more professional

-Helping clients learn more about his services

Will need additional copy and testimonials

-Obtaining contact information for potential clients

Must be easier and faster. Info from Ben needed to restrict spam.

-Receiving data about problems potential clients want him to help solve

Possible fixes: pull down menu for concern-specific data entry boxes

-Booking and scheduling clients for initial consults

Must be integrated with calendar scheduling app, allow ben to show availability via geographic location and time (easily). Basically, let Dr. Ben pick times he will be free and add those only (or assistant)

The latest improvements to the site as demanded by the requirements

Concern by requirement	Solution
Look and Feel Requirement 1a	Fix small details described - consistent appearance
Client Education - expectations	Use SEO and keywords via testimonials to set “fuzzy” expectations, and timeline chart for more specific expectations

Obtaining client information Requirement 1a, 3a	Must be quick and easy, must avoid spam
Opening communication channels Requirement 1b, 2b	FAQ
Booking/scheduling services Requirement 1a, 3a, 3b	Integration with calendly app
Coordinating in-person consultations Requirement 3a, 3b	Allow Ben easy access to tools
Search Engine Optimization Requirement 2a, 2b	Key words - targeted ads to less woo-woo clients and dissuade those looking solely for spiritual guidance
Setting boundaries Requirement 2a, b	Probably shouldn't be done online - risk of alienating already sensitive potential clients. Weed through contact information using filters and keyword flags for potential trouble-patients

The developer immediately implemented some of these changes. Other ones have taken longer or are too far outside the expertise of the developer. Dr. Ben became very busy with a different project as we progressed, and the website's importance decreased, as different kinds of business were coming in.

The website consult has not concluded, but is an ongoing endeavor, even as Dr. Ben stands up his next effort, which I have also consulted on, for a very specific audience to receive special services. This new website can be viewed at <https://enzocenter.com/>