

Thousands of years ago, a man named Hippocrates wrote: *"The natural force within each one of us is the greatest healer of disease."* He wrote a lot of other things, too, among which is the modern-day Hippocratic Oath to which all physicians swear. It includes the phrase "first, do no harm."

Western, or *allopathic*, medicine seems to have come a long way from those sentiments with "germs" and money sharing the bottom line. The holistic viewpoint attempts to recognize the validity of diverse causality and treatments rather than singularity. Perhaps a facile definition of "holistic" is "balanced diversity." Another definition we have heard is: *"A philosophical theory according to which a fundamental feature of nature is the existence of wholes which are more than the composite assembly of the parts and which always tend to become more highly developed and complex."* In other words, a *synergy* is referred to: something greater than the sum of its parts. It is that effort to return to the concept that living creatures are far more than a collection of parts like an automobile. Personal responsibility and diverse support systems are the driving forces in holistic thought.

Holistic thought recognizes that nature has developed a synergy within itself. When we interfere by attempting to eradicate that which offends us, rather like plucking out an offending eye, we may have dealt with the offender but it has left us depleted and crippled. In holistic thought, the individual differences of genetic structure, temperament, blood type, psychological type, spiritual orientation, etc., are fully acknowledged rather than attempting to force each person to fit the square hole of an insurance code number. Even fledgling physicians find this diversity in gross anatomy labs with "misplaced" hearts, stomachs, appendices, bowels, and such.

Holistic thought perceives that our bodies are connected within themselves physically, emotionally, energetically and spiritually. There is an inherent balance, or homeostasis, which we must strive to maintain within the natural realm. Rather than, somewhat arrogantly, imposing a "cure" from without via chemicals, holism, more humbly, at-

tempts to support the natural healing resources of bodies from within. Holism also recognizes that individual bodies are connected to each other via our planet. And ultimately, if the mama ain't healthy, ain't no-one healthy!

Observations of the workings of not only human bodies but also other mammalian species have been the background of various methods of healing from the beginning of true human nature. It was through observation that western science and the scientific method evolved into our current allopathic model which has proven incredibly effective for trauma care and incredibly ineffective for general long-term health.

Diverse forms of observation have resulted in diverse forms of healing which really work. Too often in this culture, many of these forms are summarily dismissed as invalid just because they vary from a single viewpoint. Allopathy has said "My way or the highway." And yet more and more brave physician pioneers are breaching the dam of medical intransigence and pharmaceutical company support of medical schools and research projects to bring us invaluable knowledge and insight. Many have bucked their associations to become certified in acupuncture based on energy meridian systems discovered centuries ago in China.

Recently western researchers have shown the histological reality of acupuncture/acupressure points. Tissues around these points have more free nerve endings, vascular spirals, thickening of the epidermis and more linear alignment of collagen fibers than tissue more distant from the points. Researchers are finding many points are directly over peripheral nerves running in the subcutaneous tissue or in the muscle, or where a peripheral nerve enters or leaves a muscle, the "trigger points" as per the monumental and seminal work, *MYOFASCIAL PAIN AND DYSFUNCTION* by Janet Travell, M.D. and David G. Simons, M.D.

More and more health professionals, body therapists, doctors and vets are now observing and noting the relationship between seemingly opposite ends of a body but, when the correct meridian is traced, there, very clearly, lies the reason that someone with a toxic liver may also have eye or

hip challenges, etc. There are numerous books and charts available now for any interested individual to start tracing their own or their animals' meridians and start "connecting the dots" or actually stimulating "ting" points in their own hands and feet (or hooves or paws, as the case may be) in order to effect better energy movement which can lead to "spontaneous remissions."

Observations on living bodies in India resulted in Aryurveda derived from the chakra concept as well as a very sophisticated understanding of individual metabolic realities which we here in the west are just now beginning to acknowledge. Modern science has recently located these mystical chakras and equates them to nerve plexi and organ systems in the body while modern blood work and cellular testing have validated a myriad of more subtle bodily differences including those of metabolism.

Observations in centuries past showed clearly the inseparability of the emotional body from that of the physical. In a very derogatory tone, many have spoken of the "placebo" effect but researchers are just now beginning to acknowledge that validation of mind-body interaction; psychosomatic is the correct term although it has taken on a negative aspect. Unfortunately, many of those who treat the mind, our psychologists and psychiatrists, have woefully forgotten that sometimes simple caring is the most potent healer. Valid, certified, hands-on massage therapy and chiropractic can frequently do far more than "fix" sore muscles, vertebral subluxations and nerve impingement.

Observations over the years have led to a plethora of vibrational healing modalities. For example, seasonally depressed persons with SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) no longer are considered malingerers, but rather individuals who require more light, or light with certain vibratory frequencies, when it is unavailable at certain times of year or at certain latitudes. This particular light need is actually required by both the eyes and the pineal gland which affects the brain and hormone levels. There are other sorts of lights, far different than the old heat lamps or newer tanning lamps, which seem to activate actual healing within tissues. Low-intensity lasers, for example, have proven invaluable in tissue healing following trauma or surgery, which is, in actuality, controlled trauma. This works on both humans and animals quite admirably.

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On the negative side of light, other studies have shown standard fluorescent fixtures can initiate migraines while anything less than full-spectrum lighting inhibits normal hormonal function to which all female office/line workers should take especial note. And while an appropriate amount of natural sunlight is absolutely vital for health, we are all aware of the dangers of over-tanning although truly healthy, well mineralized bodies appear to be able to tolerate far more sunlight than those only marginally balanced.

Another version of vibratory healing is the use of sound. The old ultra-sound is giving way to modern machines, one of which can actually mimic the infrasonic frequency given off by Chi Qung masters of China. The tones of tuning forks placed on various acupuncture points can, in many instances, act as effectively as needles and chanting and music has long been known, even in western culture, to "soothe the savage beast." Certain drum beats mimic healthy heart rates which can encourage consistency in inconsistent rhythms while the vibratory frequency of chanting can actually change brain wave patterns. Even humming can physically open clogged sinuses!

Perhaps the oldest and newest observations are in the area of diet and herbs. Why does it seem so surprising that diet can effect health? "Junk food," an oxymoron if there ever was one, is so deleterious to all parts of humans and animals we have to wonder why there is no warning label on all of it. Individuals who would not dream of putting poor or bad gas into their precious and expensive automobiles, load their precious and irreplaceable bodies with the edible equivalent.

On the opposite side, wholesome, natural, unadulterated food has been used for eons to strengthen bodies. Modern scientific literature is coming up with more and more proof that a really good diet is not only essential for good health, but that it can actually effect healing on an almost miraculous level. And while the absolute definition of a "good diet" is somewhat under debate due to the enormous diversity of needs, we think that everyone is aware that the more variety of organic produce and whole foods included, the more sound and balanced the diet. We have witnessed some amazing changes time after time when we have encouraged individuals to part with their old eating

or animal feeding concepts, which include the ingestion of numerous toxins, to accept the truly old, clean way of eating. Suddenly many bodies recover from all manner of chronic ailments. In fact, diet is one area which each of us can control relatively easily and should most definitely be the *first* area of holistic activation rather than just trying to fix individual problems without having seen to the overall structure through diet. We believe that nutrition should always be addressed first, unless a critical situation presents, before anything else.

Unfortunately there has been a backlash on ancient herbs, long considered “just” folk remedies but more recently accepted as valid healing helpers and even medicines in themselves. Too many individuals today inhale them with no understanding of their potency or, more importantly, their contraindications and thus can nullify their beneficial properties or even cause some harm or imbalances in themselves. This now has the FDA on full alert attempting to limit our access although, from our reading, we find more people harm themselves, or are harmed, seriously or fatally from prescription or OTC drugs like antihistamines and even aspirin than have ever been harmed by herbs, but those manufacturers have a lot more money in their war chests than tiny herbal companies. We have heard so often: “But they are *natural*, aren’t they?” Yes they are, but so are death-cap mushrooms lurking in forests for the unwary, the unschooled, or the foolish!

A marriage of herbal or botanical science and an understanding of vibrational effects in the body led to the discovery of homeopathic medicine. Little understood by most medical personnel who exorcise its existence as expensive water, it is instead a very powerful healing modality which apparently threatens entrenched modes of thought because it actually works! Most importantly, it works without the nasty side-effects of so many popular drugs of today. There are various “patent” remedies available at health food stores, but to have a workup done by a homeopathic physician is to really understand the concept of holism to its fullest degree. Also, in order to acquire homeopathic nosodes, a proven alternative to many vaccines, one usually must go through a homeopathic physician or veterinarian.

Besides the foods we ingest, we must also and al-

ways remember both the air we breathe (and taste!), the water we drink and the soil from which our foods are produced. See, more holistic thought!

Too many people forget that air and water quality are of as much importance as food or any other element and the quality of these affect every living thing on this planet. We certainly cannot live very long holding our breaths; most of us are unable to stop breathing for much longer than a minute at a time while certain athletes or chi masters can do so for many minutes or a bit longer. In fact, one yogi we heard of was credited with being buried head first in sand for six hours; by slowing down his autonomic nervous system (in spite of medical insistence that this is impossible although many yogis and chi masters have proven differently), he survived in fine fettle. But even that yogi had to take a breath eventually and if our air turns into the equal of the Los Angeles or Denver basins’ air at high alert, it is frequently all but unbreathable without a gas mask.

There is a limited amount of water on this planet of ours and only 1% of that is drinkable. It is unfathomable to us that we knowingly continue to pour toxic chemicals into the earth’s arterial systems, her waterways. Even her skin itself, the very ground we require to stand upon and to grow the food necessary for our existence is apparently viewed as extraneous by agri-business with its mono-agronomy and “fertilization” by toxic sludge and manufacturing by-products.

We appear to be one of the few species who continuously fouls its own den. Apparently we equate the word dominion with rape and have forgotten that animal and land husbandry means the nurturing of that which allows us to live. When did we forget that concept? When will we realize that short term monetary largesse, can, in the long run, present an untenable living for our descendents?

While we are asking questions, when did we forget the concept that for every thing there is a purpose? That there is a time to live and a time to die? It seems very ironic that we are constantly trying to “kill off” that which bothers us whether it is illness within our bodies or germs on our kitchen counters without understanding that our death, too, has a place within this existence. There are those who seem to want to actually kill death in order to live forever. The holistic viewpoint considers death to

be a normal part, the end part, of life. Living should be balanced in and of itself as gently and non-invasively as possible with death being the final balancer of all.

Conversely, the allopathic approach has been to search and destroy with whatever weapons of mass destruction are necessary and to keep individuals alive at all cost. Granted, this is not happening in a vacuum. The M.D.'s and D.V.M.'s are being driven by the societal norms of which they, naturally, are a part.

But there are those times when it is the body's time to release its vital energy and return to the "dust" from whence it came and the wise physicians among us recognize this. Granted there are times when it is appropriate to do everything possible, but more often than not, there seems to be an inability on so many physicians' parts, and frequently on the family's part, to be able to accept the reality of death. Death is considered the "winner" in a battle rather than not only inevitable but actually welcome in numerous cases.

This feeling can, of course, stem from a personal and early encounter with death taking a loved one away in an apparently untimely manner; but if there were no death, there could obviously be no birth or regeneration of the species. Rather than attempting to live forever or at least well beyond our individually allotted time (although according to some, that lifespan should naturally be longer), it would be far better to make the life we do have as vital and meaningful as each of us can and if longevity results, so be it. If we live life to the fullest, for whatever time we are given, even the short time of some infants which our family has personally experienced, we should not have to be carried away kicking and screaming but should rather go "softly into that dark night." Death can most certainly be the final and most welcome of all healers to a holistic frame of mind.

There is an uncountable diversity around the globe of healing modalities from ancient to relatively modern, some of which, as we have seen, are becoming known and validated here in the west. We would be foolish indeed to throw out a whole culture of thought simply because it developed along different lines of perception from ours just as it would be equally foolish to dispose of allopathic

or Western-style medicine solely in favor of the exotic. Our family has modern technology to thank for the continued existence of one of us; to our knowledge, there is no ability to make a congenitally defective aortic valve function adequately in any healing modality (aside from a miracle, and they, too, have happened) other than replacement surgery.

Obviously we think that *all* modalities should be carefully studied for their healing capabilities within the holistic framework but with the understanding that there are both geniuses and incompetents in *every* discipline. This grand diversity can be truly complimentary rather than antagonistic and, with a more energetically and dietetically balanced individual, healing will take place so much more thoroughly and quickly as we have witnessed dozens of times. There are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of western M.D.'s today who are at the forefront of bringing some of these ideas and valid methodologies to us for the betterment of all and who question the emphasis on force which has seemed to lead western healing thought.

As a nation we have abrogated personal responsibility either for ourselves or our animals and have come to believe that Western medicine with its "miraculous" and very expensive modern medical technology can solve all of our major health problems rather than act as the band-aids they truly are. Even its band-aid value is coming under close scrutiny as our mortality rates drop well below many European standards and more and more hospital and physician errors are being brought to light. It is up to we individuals to choose for ourselves the modalities which best suit our individuality in all ways.

Of vital importance then, is achieving both individual harmony within ourselves and then into community, national and world harmony with Hippocrates' dictum "First, do no harm" as our anthem. We might also take to heart the saying of John Donne, that truly, "no man is an island."

In order to accomplish this, we must first understand that we are far more than molecules of matter or a simplistic collection of mechanical "parts" and find within ourselves our individual spiritual natures so we may, each of us, resonate on a higher frequency. ■