

‘Like Cures Like’

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Stephen Kottler HMC, holds homeopathic remedies; homeopathic resources in the Main Street office. Molly F. McGill photo.

It all started about 2,400 years ago on a Greek isle, where a physician named Hippocrates (yes, the author of the famous oath) discovered that a plant causing a certain set of symptoms in a healthy person (a sort of poisoning) would cure similar symptoms in an ill person who displayed them.

Nothing much came of this discovery until the 1790s, when a German physician named Samuel Hahnemann began to experiment with and develop an entire system of medicine based on the fact that “like cures like.” That is, a substance that causes a constellation of symptoms in a healthy person will cure a person who suffers from those same symptoms. Thus was born homeopathic medicine, to which Dr. Hahnemann devoted the final 50 years of his life expanding into a full system based upon Hippocrates’ interesting observation.

The word “homeopathy” derives from the Greek word *homoios* meaning “similar” and *pathos* meaning “suffering.” Homeopathy. You’re hearing more and more about it, but most of what you hear isn’t true, and doesn’t reflect what classical homeopathy (Dr. Hahnemann’s theories put into practice) really is. Most people know that it’s natural medicine, which is right. Many people think it’s vitamins or herbs or diet or exercise, but it’s not. It’s a very specific way to make people feel better, and not by suppressing an unpleasant symptom or two.

Homeopathic medicine prescribes specially prepared remedies on a completely individualized basis. It’s holistic, taking into account the whole person, not only the chief complaint of that person. So physical, mental, emotional and spiritual planes of each person are considered to find one remedy at a time to deal with the totality of that person’s disposition and pathology. It’s not assembly-line medicine. Because the remedies are energetic rather than material, they are safe, gentle, effective and lacking in side effects.

We’ve all seen someone stuck as the result of accident, trauma, grief, loss, illness or other causes. The right remedy can “unstick” a person, and not just on the plane that’s most obvious. It will cure more than the chief physical or emotional complaint. There’s no suppression or narrow antisymptomatic intent and

effects. It can facilitate the process of not only healing the mind and body but also returning a person to overall wellness, strength, function and happiness.



Remedies displayed in an antique box. Molly F. McGill photo

Homeopathy further differs from the dominant allopathic medical system by recognizing and using the power of the Vital Force (VF) that animates all living things. Homeopathy believes that when we (and our VF) are healthy, we heal ourselves of all manner of diseases, injuries and life traumas. When the VF is compromised, we can fall into a state of disease from which we cannot completely recover. The right remedy gives the VF a boost, enabling the person to heal the entire self, not just the migraines or panic attacks.

Allopathy is the name given to conventional, commonly practiced medicine. Allopathy treats diseases via agents producing effects different from the diseases. A person typically sees many allopathic physicians, each prescribing medications, each drug to deal with just one disease or organ or dysfunction. Unintended effects from each drug and from mixing drugs can occur in allopathic practice.

The theme of energy pervades homeopathy, an energy medicine. Making a remedy adds to and liberates energy from the single substance (animal, mineral, plant) in the remedy. First ground for an hour, the chosen substance is serially diluted and shaken (“succussed”) vigorously, often 3,000 times or more. The ultra-dilutions and succussions continue until nothing material remains of the original basis of the remedy – only the spectrum of energy of the underlying substance remains. Powerful substances can thus be safely used.

Classical homeopathy uses a minimum dose: One remedy at a time, each remedy made from only one substance, employing the fewest administrations of the remedy in the lowest potency matching the person’s needs. This allows the VF to work with the remedy and ensure a rapid and gentle overall cure. It also facilitates the job of the practitioner, who will be able to sort out the changes in the client and know their respective causes.

Many conditions improve with homeopathic treatment. The first category of conditions is acute care or first aid. Thus, colds, flu, coughs, bronchitis, broken bones, tendonitis, concussions, hemorrhoids, burns, surgical trauma

and a host of other conditions can be treated effectively. A kit of low-potency remedies and a book or two enable someone to treat self and family for a variety of such ailments. These deviations from a person's normal state of health often respond rapidly to the well-chosen remedy. People new to homeopathy are surprised how rapidly they feel better again and how much less affected they were by an illness that usually bothers more and for a longer time.



A collection of resource books. Molly F. McGill photo.

It's hard to grasp that homeopathy can cure the second category of problems, the chronic conditions that people live with, medicate and dream of curing. This category is safe only for professionals to treat. A remedy can help a person become overall healthier, feel more energetic, and get sick less. The list of ailments is long – anxiety, depression, digestive disorders, respiratory problems, skin conditions, long-held grief at a loss, IBS, ADD, PMS and more – yet striking change is possible.

Furthermore, the well-chosen remedy will do more than merely palliate or even cure the chief symptom. Over time all the effects spin out, as the VF is aided in gently reestablishing a healthy balance. But when the dust settles, the person is likely to feel very good: energetic, focused, happy and relieved of many of their original physical, mental and emotional symptoms. A sense of relaxed well-being and confidence pervades.

The person feels and functions better. Many wonder if homeopathy coexists with allopathic treatment. It does. A remedy will not interfere with a prescription drug; it may over time eliminate the need for it, or for such a large dose of it. Indeed, remedies can safely mitigate harsh effects of certain unavoidable conventional treatments.

Homeopathy can do so much for so many in so many ways; some of us think of it first when we or a family member needs a change or a boost. The most fortunate among us have relationships with both allopathic and homeopathic practitioners, getting the best of both worlds.

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