

How Eclectic Can You Be?

Lendon H. Smith, MD

Paracelsus wanted doctors in the 17th century to learn from all the healing disciplines. We laugh now at what they did to "cure" their patients, but they were working in the dark. They had minimal knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry. But self-styled village folk healers were using empirical skills to help the ailing. Each area had its own health system: The Orientals were using acupuncture and herbs. Most of the world's population used their local plants, teas, extracts, and poultices, but it was pretty poorly organized.

Over the centuries these local efforts became codified into systems of healing. The locals were satisfied. The colonists brought the "wonders" of European medicine with them: blood letting, mercury salts, arsenic, and a few herbs. They learned a few things from the American Indians. Preiessnitz had discovered the value of hydrotherapy in Austria in the early 19th century. Sam Hahnemann founded the homeopathic method of like cures like. One hundred years ago 30 percent of medical doctors were using homeopathy in their practice. It was also about then that Palmer realized that the flow of nerve energy could be freed by spinal manipulation.

In the second decade of this century, the members of the American Medical Association decided that they alone were privy to the scientific basis of the practice of medicine. They wisely eliminated some of the diploma mills of the time and laid down a rigorous curricula aimed at teaching medical aspirants the "science" of medicine. Better microscopes, laboratory analyses, and x-ray diagnoses allowed the doctors to become better clinicians, but they still could not heal the really sick unless the infection localized itself to a boil with "laudable pus." It seemed a natural progression of logic to blame bacteria for disease; the "territory" was not important. It was the pathogen. They could now see the little bugs.

In the nick of time, antibiotics arrived in the 1930s and the 1940s. Then these allopaths knew they were on the real path of medical truth. But in the 50 years since then the dream of the final answer to infectious disease has become a nightmare. Modern medicine, based on the paradigm of find-the-germ-and-kill-it, put all its emphasis on this one battle, but they lost the war. They failed to address the problem of why the person (territory) got sick in the first place. But it was exciting to see near-death pneumonia patients come to life with intravenous penicillin.

If modern medicine saves lives, why are we as a nation so unhealthy? And for all the good that these drugs do, why are they so costly and dangerous? We do need the biotechnology, but we have to revive the almost forgotten, time-honored, natural, drugless methods of nutrition, botanical medicine, Chinese herbs, acupuncture, homeopathy, physical medicine, and even vibrational therapies, plus the approaches afforded by psychospiritual methods.

Along with the Hippocratic oath that we all took, we were told "primum, non-nocere."

I have found a source for these eight or so modalities right here in Portland, Oregon. It is called IBIS (a non-profit group -- the acronym for Interactive Bodymind Information system). As you might have suspected, it is a computer data-base program. One can reference almost 300 conditions, then go on to decide which treatment method or combination would be the most appropriate. Give them

a call at 1-800-484-4022 then dial 0569.

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