

# ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE



**A  
MIND  
BLOWING  
MAGICAL  
MYSTERY TOUR**  
STEVEN RANSOM



# **Alternative Medicine**

*A Mind-blowing Magical Mystery Tour*

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*“The universe is full of magical things patiently waiting  
for our wits to grow sharper.”* **Eden Philpotts**

## About The Author

I've always been interested in how things work and from an early age, I was always taking things apart. Clocks, watches, scalextric motors, action man voice boxes, toy bulldozers, you name it, by the age of ten, I'd have probably dismantled it. Moving on a couple of decades and a little more orderly minded, my interest in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) was sparked around 1990 after a discussion on how homoeopathy was supposed to work. The mechanics of the therapy just didn't seem to add up. Here was another intriguing 'box' I had to take apart and from that moment, I was hooked.

And so, between husbandhood, fatherhood, full time work, three house moves and two career changes (from mental health support worker for 10 years to running my own electronics business since 2004), I spent the next eighteen years on and off disassembling not only homoeopathy but also just about every other CAM therapy under the umbrella of holism. And boy! How my eyes were opened! And not just to alternative medicine but to medicine in general.

Finally, in mid-2011, with teetering piles of paperwork everywhere - page upon page of case study notes, files on each of the therapies, personal correspondence, newspaper and magazine articles almost touching the ceiling, I spent another six months planning the layout of the book and started writing. After the usual additions, footnote updates, chapter rewrites and regular 4am starts so I could fit in everything else going on in my life, I finally finished the book in December 2013. Today, as I update this intro, it's October 2018, and some readers might suggest that some of the footnotes and references could also do with updating. But I can assure you my friend, nothing has changed as far as CAM and modern conventional medicine is concerned. The principles at work across the conventional as well as the non-conventional health and wellbeing industry health are exactly the same as they've always been, as you'll find out as you read.

It's been a long and fascinating journey and whether you are a devoted fan or critic of alternative medicine or yours is a passing interest only, I hope you enjoy the end result. I'm 58, married to my lovely wife for 33 years. We have three grown up children and live in good old Sussex by the sea.

## The Ultimate Tempress?

*“I’m intrigued by the way physical appearance can often direct a person’s life. Things happen differently for a beautiful woman than for a plain one.”* **Penelope Lively**

Thanks largely to the internet, many more people are now aware that conventional medicine has a toxic, even lethal side to it. As a result, millions of us are spending billions of pounds, euros and dollars on all manner of complementary and alternative medicines (CAM) for our physical, mental, emotional and even spiritual dis-eases.<sup>1, 2</sup> Chilblains, schizophrenia, sciatica, emotional trauma, rheumatism, feelings of emptiness and abandonment, sickness and headaches, stress and anxiety, coughs and colds, eczema, asthma, diabetes, you name it, even cancer, there’s a holistic treatment out there somewhere claiming remarkable healing success.<sup>3</sup> But despite their popularity, do these therapies actually work? And at a deeper level, is holism, with its marked accent on mental and spiritual care, as wholesome for the mind and spirit as CAM literature tells us?

*Magical Mystery Tour* looks at a number of leading therapies and at some of the more popular ‘new age’ self-help packs and shows how 21<sup>st</sup> century holism is perhaps the most bewitching health consumer swindle of the modern day. With the exception of a few over-the-counter herbal remedies, this book shows how today’s leading therapies contain no inherent healing or diagnostic powers and how instead they rely 100% upon instinctive appeal and a marked lack of consumer awareness to maintain their glowing reputations.

It’s important I clarify from the start my use of the term ‘swindle’. It would be wrong, defamatory even, to describe holism as a deliberately fraudulent enterprise. That would be to imply some kind of orchestrated intent. In my experience, most people who choose CAM either as a profession or as their preferred treatment option do so for all the right reasons. There’s no visible ‘godfather’ of holistic health as such, no avaricious board of directors rejoicing at the latest worldwide homeopathy sales figures, no devious plans behind closed doors to bring a billion fake flower remedy pills to market. Of course, as in any walk of life, there are the CAM scoundrels and we’ll meet a few in this book ‘doing very nicely thank you’. In the main though, the kindly lady managing the local health food shop is *not* a wolf in sheep’s clothing and your local homeopath, acupuncturist or flower remedy practitioner will be the very opposite of ‘scheming trickster’.

So, with so many millions of CAM consumers and upwards of 30,000 therapists here in the UK, can so many people really be so wrong about CAM? Here are thoughtful, intelligent people who surely wouldn’t continue to use the therapies if they didn’t think they were working? Where exactly is the swindle here? Shouldn’t it be me going back to the drawing board on this one?

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<sup>1</sup> UK spending has always been hard to estimate as no-one has yet successfully calculated the split between over-the-counter (OTC) sales, NHS-funded treatments and buying privately. A 2008 Daily Telegraph article put the total UK spend on alternative health products at approximately £4.5b. *Seeking out alternatives*, Daily Telegraph, 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2008 at [www.telegraph.co.uk/health/alternativemedicine/3355120/Complementary-medicine-seeking-out-alternatives.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/health/alternativemedicine/3355120/Complementary-medicine-seeking-out-alternatives.html)  
The market for homeopathy across Europe is estimated at £1.5b per annum, according to Robert Wilson, chairman of the British Association of Homeopathic Manufacturers at [www.guardian.co.uk/science/blog/2009/nov/24/homeopathy-science-technology-committee](http://www.guardian.co.uk/science/blog/2009/nov/24/homeopathy-science-technology-committee)

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<sup>3</sup> As far back as 1987, it was reported that 160 therapies were in existence. Just under the letter A for instance, we find acupuncture and acupressure, Alaskan Flower Remedies, the Alexander technique, allergy testing, Anthroposophical medicine, apitherapy (honey therapy), applied kinesiology, aromatherapy, astro-healing, aura imagery, aura soma (colour healing) auric candle therapy, Australian flower essences, autogenics, Avalonian alignment, awakening therapy, Ayurvedic medicine and probably a few more I’ve missed out, each with book titles, training courses and certificates behind them.

I liken the proliferation of CAM to the spread of 'hard-to-spot' fake £20 notes. Few of us would know if we were carrying the better quality forgeries. And if unwittingly we did pass them on, that doesn't make us deceitful or unintelligent. Yes, we're complicit in keeping the sham currency in circulation but it's not really our fault. We just don't know how to spot the fake notes yet.

It's the same with CAM. *Magical Mystery Tour* reveals the secrets behind CAM's illusory healing powers. A former alternative therapist with a paying practice in London at the time read this book at manuscript stage and kindly wrote the following:

*"I have been dedicated to studying, promoting and practicing alternative medicine for 13 years, and I have been stopped in my tracks by Steven's work. If you too are dedicated to searching for the truth and don't mind being challenged, then this book is for you. To all you therapists and consumers out there, I say read this book and judge for yourselves the claims contained in it."*  
**Gina L., DipAc DipCHM DipAroma DipHFR, London - ex-acupuncturist, ex-aromatherapist.**

Not every aspect of CAM is crooked as we'll read, but most of it is, and to varying degrees, all of us in our own little ways have been helping to perpetuate the glorious CAM illusion.

CAM is certainly an emotionally charged debate and to understand what's really going on in this industry requires a certain emotional detachment. From the outset, before any therapies have even been discussed, there are a number deceptive swirls and eddies that could pull us right under if we're not careful.

Firstly, there's the name of the movement itself - the holistic health movement - and all the 'wholesome goodness' such a name embodies. Like Elton John's World AIDS Day or the Mother Teresa Mercy Outreach or the X Factor 'Help for Heroes' Christmas single, holism is bathed in irreproachable light. She is beyond criticism, so worthy is her mission.

And what exactly is her mission? Why, nothing less than to impart deep, inner healing, in body, mind and spirit - and not just to the individual but to the whole earth! Criticise that if you dare. It's a mission statement to die for. Stretched out across a million magazines, all wholesome and inviting, *Mme Holism* is the ad agency's dream account.

And woe betide anyone who publicly disagrees with her on any of her ideas on health and healing. Any dissent and you are immediately marked down as a supporter of toxic pharmaceuticals, against nature, against the healing of the planet and almost certainly in league with shadowy orthodox forces. All of this and more has been levelled at me over the years. You bet the CAM debate is emotive.

And then there's the passion of it all. History tells us how passion can cloud our critical faculties if we're not careful. *Magical Mystery Tour* shows how our passionate (although quite understandable) mistrust of conventional medicine combined with an equally passionate desire for 'a new way forward' in healthcare has been a quite heady mix. And in all the hullabaloo surrounding '*foul big pharma!*', I believe we have uncritically succumbed to CAM's dazzling array of alternatives.

So, what's my motive for writing this book? Who's side am I *really* on? I assure you I have no shadowy links to big business and I have no conventional 'corner' to protect. In fact, I've been told on more than one occasion I haven't a conventional bone in my body! And I'm not dependent on any medically related income either. I design and sell commercial vehicle electronics. As I said earlier, I'm writing about this because I have found it such a fascinating subject to explore, and with conclusions that cannot just be ignored.

I am aware of the conventional bias in many CAM critiques and the general unwillingness to discuss any unhealthy aspects of conventional medicine in any detail, particularly 'the supply end' of the business. I've yet to read a CAM 'corrective' that humbly acknowledges the corruption within 'big pharma' or how that corruption has shaped so much conventional medical theory and practice over the years. Any adverse comments that are made on these sprawling conglomerates are at best fleeting and rarely draw attention to any serious breach of ethics. In the main, CAM critiques come

across as bristling, unassailable fortresses, firing their fiery arrows down upon all who dare question the orthodox party line.

And that's where I hope this book will be different. I want CAM users and therapists to read this book and to read it to the end. It contains none of the usual vitriol I promise you. Interspersed throughout are some little-publicized facts on conventional medicine that are both shocking and deserving of an airing. Their inclusion will, I hope, go some way to allaying any fears I am some sort of orthodox 'mole'.

## No Stone Unturned

*"Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em and then tell 'em."* **Anon**

I do like the above aphorism and given that CAM is such a large subject with so many headings and sub-headings, there's the potential for us quite easily to get side-tracked, so it's important you are given a rough idea beforehand of the key areas we'll be covering. You as the reader also need to feel confident right from the start that I know my subject matter and that all the contentious issues are going to be tackled, and that this book is not going to be just another one of those very one-sided affairs. Frustratingly, many of the books I've read on CAM over the years, both for and against the therapies, do leave hugely important stones unturned. So, let's summarise the main topics we'll be covering.

Originally, this book was going to be called *Charisma and a Horse*. I borrowed the phrase from web-based alternative health critic Dr Bob. His site on rogue medicine includes the following text:



*"Anyone with charisma and a horse could travel from town to town hawking his wares. Medicine shows would be interrupted by the pitchman who would extol the virtues of a certain nostrum; a stooge in the audience would buy a bottle, sample it and proclaim himself cured, demanding another bottle. The quacks working the audience would carry only one or two bottles so they could frequently cry out, "All sold out!" thus stimulating frenzied buying, then rush to the stage for more provisions."*<sup>4</sup>

Dr Bob's text shows how easy it is to bamboozle a crowd.<sup>5</sup> As long as you had that certain spark about you and as long as your 'miracle cures' didn't cause anyone to keel over during your performance, you could be flogging any old powder and you'd be guaranteed a pile of cash, wherever you pitched your tent.

But it's not just the vagabond healer who holds us spellbound. Our frenzied buying of all things medicinal has given enviable job security to conventional and alternative practitioners alike. 19<sup>th</sup> century physician Sir William Osler said, *"Our desire to take medicine is perhaps the greatest feature that distinguishes us from the animals."* In our bid to guard against or treat our physical and mental ills, to halt the next media-inspired 'terrifying pandemic', to combat the ageing process or to dissipate the fat and the blues, we'll swallow the weirdest theories and even weirder pills and potions. We'll be looking at what it is about doctors and medicine that lulls us into such wide-eyed submission.

Conventional medicine has many benefits of course and there have been some incredible advances in recent years, particularly in keyhole, reconstruction and tumour surgery, in joint, limb and organ repair and replacement along with some quite breathtaking A & E interventions and procedures. Unfortunately, these positive aspects are set against a backdrop of serious pharmacotoxicity, the over-prescription of ineffective drugs for profit, unwarranted and inaccurate testing procedures, needless 'false positive' diagnoses, leading to yet more unnecessary, invasive and often fatal orthodox intervention - all adding to the phenomenon known as iatrogenic (doctor-induced) illness and death.<sup>6</sup> As one rankled contributor to Ben Goldacre's blog against homoeopathy wrote:

*"A question to ponder for you doctors. Do you actually understand the makeup and effects of the drugs you are prescribing and the cross toxicology when prescribed alongside sometimes several drugs in one patient. No? What you do is then give another drug for whatever side effect presents itself, thus compounding longer term problems and feel your methods are working. Good*

<sup>4</sup> Dr Bob at <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:TGrWbwk5zicJ:www.quackmedicine.com/+quackmedicine.com&hl=en&gl=uk&strip=0>

<sup>5</sup> Bamboozle: to deceive; to get the better of someone by trickery, flattery or the like.

<sup>6</sup> The story carried in the *Independent on Sunday* on the 21<sup>st</sup> Oct 2007 is one of many that show how thousands of people are dying each year as a result of side effects from pills prescribed by GPs and hospital doctors. The report also shows that doctors are issuing 51 per cent more drugs than they did 10 years earlier.

*luck to you if that's how superficial you think true healing is but it's not for me and many more like me."*<sup>7</sup>

So what exactly does the CAM enthusiast believe? In simplistic terms, the conventional medical view of the body, says the CAM therapist, is that of a mechanical system (the heart a pump, the kidneys a filter etc., etc.) and that most disorders need to be 'fought' with an array of combating chemicals. Supporting this idea, just think how many conventional treatments are prefixed with the word anti (anti - against): inflammatory, acid, viral, fungal and others, even biotic (bio - life). Against life? We look at the role of some of today's so-called 'magic bullets' and assess their validity.

While critics refer to CAM as 'Big Sugar', a middle-class fad, empty remedies for the worried well etc., etc., CAM followers look upon the therapies as a '*kinder, gentler, more wholesome*' way of treating illness and dis-ease. Holistic health they say embraces the whole person, promotes dis-ease prevention, self-healing, self-responsibility, self-education and self-discovery, making these therapies a welcome alternative to the 'toxic and invasive conventional medical machine'.

So, what's so different about alternative medicines and how are they supposed to work? Again, in simplistic terms, CAM theory holds the body as a suffused network of invisible channels that carry a subtle form of life energy or vital force and that various blockages along these channels cause physical, mental and spiritual imbalance and our subsequent dis-eases. Counseling against the more warring conventional treatments which, says the CAM therapist, attack the body and only compound our health problems, the therapist will instead prescribe what he describes as 'time-honoured, natural, gentle and non-toxic' treatments which work *with* the body to unblock these energy channels and restore 'the flow' along these invisible lines, thus restoring harmony and balance to the individual in body, mind and spirit. Here's a typical CAM text, in this instance describing the benefits and effects of reiki massage:

*"Reiki is a safe, gentle, non-intrusive hands on healing and enlightenment system, used to heal and energize the body, mind, emotions and spirit, offering the experience of deep relaxation, balancing, healing and harmonizing... reiki, (ray-key) can be defined as 'spiritually guided universal life force energy'... reiki can be used for relaxation, relieving tension, stress and pain, boosting energy levels, self-esteem and confidence... through reiki, emotional and mental blockages can be released and deeper causes of disharmony, depression and unhappiness are often brought to the surface, allowing in depth healing to take place... reiki has proved beneficial in post major surgery and can help to reduce the recovery process by increasing the healing effects of conventional medicine and can also reduce the use of pain medications by diminishing the pain itself... reiki is known to accelerate the healing of cuts, burns, allergies, broken bones, and can greatly assist in helping to cope with chronic illness like, cancer, fibromyalgia, MS and ME... reiki is an ancient system of natural healing that is both beneficial and safe to use on adults and children. Animals and plants also respond well to reiki... the client is not healed by the practitioner; the healing comes from the 'spiritually guided universal life force energy' which flows through the practitioner's hands, benefiting both client and practitioner."*<sup>8</sup>

Rarely foot-noted or referenced but *always* patient-friendly, this style of writing contains no grating conventional terminology and is a style that's been adopted across the board by CAM authors. 'Reiki is known to accelerate the healing of cuts, burns, allergies and broken bones.' Is that really the case? 'Reiki can greatly assist in helping to cope with chronic illness like cancer, fibromyalgia, MS and ME.' Is that really so? Both claims are wildly inaccurate as we'll discover.

CAM therapists will also promote their medicines as possessing nil pharmacological content. Consisting mostly of water and various inert 'essences', these remedies, say the therapists, work at a *subtle, spiritual, energetic* level and are beyond conventional scientific means of verification. We look at the supposedly mystical processes used to make these 'new age' medicines and discover it's very easy to make a basic water solution and simple 'hands on' therapy sound '*mystical, powerful, gentle and effective*'. And just because a therapist is dedicated and caring and has the utmost faith

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<sup>7</sup> Podcast to Government response to SciTech report on homoeopathy at <http://www.badscience.net/2010/07/podcast-on-government-response-to-scitech-nhs-homeopathy-report/>

<sup>8</sup> Usuri Reiki Healing at [www.pinnaclehealing.com/reiki.htm](http://www.pinnaclehealing.com/reiki.htm)

in his therapy and has spent the last twenty years practicing it, this does *not* make said therapy or therapist the *bona-fide* article.

In Helios homoeopathic pharmacy in Tunbridge Wells for instance, a remedy is available for those suffering from insomnia, consisting of sugar, water and moonlight. To make this moonlight ‘medicine’, a beaker of natural spring water is exposed over a six-hour period to the light of a full harvest moon. A few drops of this ‘moonlight-impregnated’ water are then added to a test tube filled with distilled water which is then diluted a few times further. A few drops of this now highly diluted moonlight preparation are then sprinkled into a little brown glass bottle filled with tiny sugar pills. The bottle is shaken a few times to ‘spread the moon energy’ through the contents and is then authoritatively labeled *Luna 6c* and promoted as a medicine for those who find it hard to sleep.

The fact the dedicated, caring and no doubt highly-qualified staff at Helios believe diluted moonlight creates any kind of medicine, let alone a sleeping pill, is one thing; the fact we’re also buying this mixture at approximately £7.50 a bottle, no questions asked, is a clear indication of the demise of critical thinking. We shall see though that diluted moonlight is just the tip of the iceberg. *Magical Mystery Tour* details the most unbelievably weird and wacky therapies being practiced today and gives readers an ‘access all areas’ pass into the extraordinary ‘science’ and mind of CAM.

Therapists will also point out their treatments are ‘ancient’ and ‘time-honoured’. Whilst there are a number of centuries’ old plants, herbs and natural extracts of proven medicinal benefit, we will see that antiquity doesn’t always equate to efficacy.

We look at the role of self-limiting illness in today’s CAM healing statistics. Millions of consumers are buying expensive remedies for conditions that were going to go away anyway.<sup>9</sup> And yes, the same is also true for many conventional medicines, the multi-million pound cold and flu remedy market a case in point, again tapping into that deep human desire to be ‘treated’.

*‘If it feels right, it is right!’* is another popular CAM phrase. *Magical Mystery Tour* reveals a number of subtle, psychological mechanisms at work in the CAM setting that make it easy for both therapist and patient to believe their mutual participation in a particular therapy/ritual was instrumental in the recovery process. This book shows how even the sharpest of minds are being easily fooled into ‘feeling’, ‘experiencing’ and then ‘believing’ in their own CAM healings (and many orthodox ‘healings’ for that matter) when other factors entirely are responsible for feeling and getting better.

Which leads neatly on to the pivotal role of placebo in the CAM healing setting. Placebo is probably best described as a treatment containing no active constituent but administered for its psychological effect on the patient. *‘Ah yes, but hang on a minute,’* says the therapist. If the success of a treatment is solely down to placebo, then what about the amazing healings seen in children and animals - a patient group surely not susceptible to the placebo effect? *A Mind-blowing Magical Mystery Tour* shows how today’s widely reported veterinary and paediatric ‘holistic healings’ are no more than common sense recoveries, wrapped in convincing, wow-factor terminology.

In a roundabout way, the fact so many CAM remedies are devoid of substance has led to their begrudging support from some conventional quarters. If there’s nil toxicity reason the doctors, and if consumers believe therapy *x, y, z* is helping them and if GP waiting rooms are less full as a result, then where’s the real harm? All well and good, providing you’re happy that intellect and common sense are necessarily excluded from any health care plan. In calling for caution over the therapies, Donald Gould, former editor of *The New Scientist* raises an exceedingly good point.

*“Why not make the most of what the non-conformists have to offer and to hell with uncharitable logic? There is, I suggest, a powerful reason for rejecting this superficially attractive option. Truth is a fundamental value. If we accept uncritical thinking in one area of our lives for the sake of convenience or because of the popular appeal of a seductive myth, then we are all the more likely to adopt the same strategy in other situations. The result is likely to be unhappy and stands a decent*

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<sup>9</sup> *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 7<sup>th</sup> February, 1991.: “90% of patients who visit doctors have conditions that will either improve on their own or are out of reach of modern medicine’s ability to solve.”

*chance of proving a disaster. Irrational beliefs are always dangerously corrupting, even when they only relate to the cause and cure of piles.”*<sup>10</sup>

OK, so countless *New Scientist* editorials will be laden with the usual conventional slant. But none of that detracts from what Gould is emphasizing here. When it comes to our health and looking after ourselves and dealing with life in general, critical thinking is paramount.

At a deeper level, *Magical Mystery Tour* looks at the more damaging aspects of holism, particularly the philosophical teaching that we can be healed in mind and spirit. Over the years, I've met many people who've bought all the usual new age cd/dvd box sets and Arizona retreat packages looking for a deeper and more spiritual healing. But I've yet to meet anybody who's actually 'got there'. It seems this 'three in one' mind, body, spirit 'perfect state' - the holistic holy grail if you like, is just a mirage - an expensive CAM dream that vaporises in the face of real life experience. As one ex-therapist and contributor to the DCImprobable Science web page notes:

*“The temptation to spin the woo is great. In my work as a therapist I was constantly aware of the complete readiness, not to say eagerness, of many of my clients to believe every single word I said. It would be very easy to just step over the boundary and they would willingly follow. It's not just stupidity or gullibility; it's the desperate longing for AN ANSWER. When it is so easy to give an answer, it is not surprising that many people make a killing out of peddling them. As for shame, those who feel it find a way to justify what they are doing to themselves, and those who don't feel it just don't feel it, and there is not much we can do about that. We can educate people about evidence and not being gullible as much as we like (and we should), but I doubt we will get even near eradicating that longing for AN ANSWER.”*<sup>11</sup>

We'll be looking at a few of these charlatans - the calculating rogues in this new age healing business - those who have stepped way over the boundary, peddling lies as truth, who don't 'feel it' and are knowingly making a fat killing in the process.

We'll also discuss the best way forward for the health seeker in all of this sorry mess. Because, despite the avarice and quackery on both sides, I'd like to think there is a sensible path we can navigate through the CAM jungle. I like the analogy of the straight stick used by the speaker D L Moody, who said: *“The best way to decide whether a stick is crooked or not, is not to spend time arguing over the matter, but simply to lay a straight stick beside it.”* I don't pretend to have all the answers but I hope this book will serve as some kind of straight stick.

And that is as succinct a summary of our journey plan as I could muster. Thanks to my wife Kathy for her love, patience and support over the last two decades of research and writing; to Donald Gould for his unfashionable reminder that truth is a fundamental value; to Manchester Central Library - everyone should visit this magnificent treasure trove at least once in their lives; to all the people I have met and interviewed over the years and to Michael Legat, author of *How to Write Non-Fiction*, in which he most helpfully suggests never to title the opening chapter *Introduction*. After all, who reads them?

And so, to our first therapy, homoeopathy.

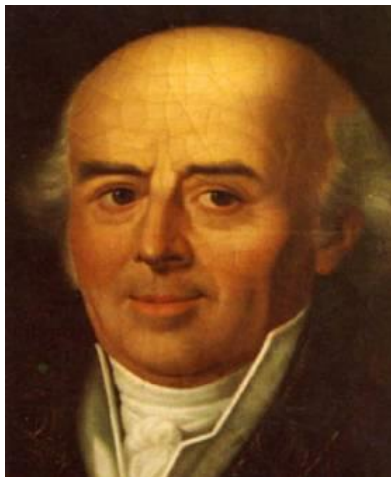
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<sup>10</sup> Gould, Donald, *The Black and White Medicine Show*, Hamilton Books 1985

<sup>11</sup> Colquhoun, David, *The new 'College of Medicine' is fraud and delusion*, at [dcscience.net/?p=3632](http://dcscience.net/?p=3632)

## Homoeopathy: The Formative Years

*“Mr. Lely, I desire you would use all your skill to paint my picture truly like me, and to flatter me not at all. Remark all these roughnesses, pimples, warts and everything as you see me, otherwise I will never pay a farthing for it.”* **Oliver Cromwell**



We begin this study of CAM by looking at the history, theory and practice of homoeopathy, arguably the most popular and also most controversial of the therapies today. The following texts illustrate the general picture we are given of the founder of homoeopathy Samuel Hahnemann and of the history of the therapy he presented to the world. The *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* states:

*“Hahnemann was a man of passion, a scientist of meticulous diligence and a healer with immense compassion. He was prolific in his work and rigorous in all his endeavors and experiments.”*<sup>12</sup>

Peter Finigan, author of *Natural Therapies A-Z*, writes the following:

*“Samuel Hahnemann not only discovered a new approach to the healing of the sick, which he called homoeopathy, but he also gave humanity a method of curing illness which since the end of his life, has grown slowly, gently and permanently to every continent on earth and in its time has given back to millions of people the health and well-being which they sought. It is my belief homoeopathy will find its true place at the forefront of medicine in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”*<sup>13</sup>

These texts serve as flattering portraits of the founder of homoeopathy, but they don't capture a true likeness of the subject by any means.

Samuel Hahnemann (above left) was born in Meissen, Germany in 1755. At aged twelve, Hahnemann could read and write Greek and had begun to teach the subject at his local school. Recognising Hahnemann's exceptional intelligence, the school offered him a place free of charge on the understanding he continued to teach alongside his studies. At aged twenty, Hahnemann left the school, fluent in five languages and with a strong desire to become a doctor. With little money, young Hahnemann left home for Leipzig University to study medicine. He was now on his own and apart from the odd letter to his mother, there is no record in any biographies that indicate that Hahnemann ever returned home.

Hahnemann stayed at Leipzig for two years and then moved to Vienna, continuing his medical studies at a local hospital. In order to fund his studies, Hahnemann carried out some translation work but found it very difficult to make ends meet. Almost at starvation point, he was introduced to an exceedingly wealthy man, Samuel Brukenthal, the governor of Transylvania (now Romania). Impressed with Hahnemann's keen mind, Brukenthal invited him to become his personal librarian.

Aside from being extremely rich, Brukenthal also held the position of Master of the Chair at the Madgeburg Freemasons' Lodge and he opened the door for Hahnemann to join the Lodge St Andreas zu den drei Seeblattern in Hermannstadt. Hahnemann's admittance into the Lodge took place in October 1777. Few of Hahnemann's biographers pay any attention to this particular period in his life but it is a period that must not be overlooked. In order to gain insight into this extraordinary movement and its vital influence on the young Hahnemann, the following brief history of European Freemasonry is included.

<sup>12</sup> The *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, Volume 11, Number 5, 2005

<sup>13</sup> **Finigan, Peter** *The Natural Therapies A-Z*, Thorsons 1994

The beginnings of European Masonic activity can be traced back to the late 1720s, with fledgling lodges appearing across France under the direct control of what became known as the English Mother Lodge system. Aside from the opportunity for networking and conviviality, the purpose of the lodge meeting was to impart knowledge, supposedly hidden from the masses but considered necessary for the advancement of mankind. Through secret ritual and instruction, lodge members were 'enlightened' by degrees, and when instructed with sufficient secret knowledge, it was believed the now 'illuminated' brethren could begin the process of transforming society, operating from within their own particular sphere of influence.

Supporters of Freemasonry described lodge meetings as a means of conveying to the individual the upright principles of brotherly love, equality and truth. Opposition to Freemasonry stemmed from the fact that Masonic rituals and teachings demonstrated occult influence and that meetings were always conducted behind closed doors, inviting the very reasonable question - why should knowledge considered beneficial to mankind be kept secret from the great majority of mankind?



As more and more lodges appeared across Europe, so too did numerous men of mystery. Considered to be custodians of secret doctrines, these 'adepts' travelled the length and breadth of Europe, instructing lodges in such matters as alchemy, spiritual chemistry, magical sciences, spiritism and cabalistic knowledge. Cagliostro was one such mystery man whose particular ritual is described as follows:

*“After an elaborate preamble - which included invocations of the planetary spirits - the ‘Dove of the Rite’ - a young boy or girl was hypnotized and put into a state of alleged clairvoyance, in which she would prophesy, see visions and pronounce upon the candidate’s fitness. All this while Cagliostro carried out ceremonies of ritual magic.”*

The desire to commune with the higher realms paved the way for many charlatans, dubious adventurers and masters of illusion, skilled in the art of recreating ghostly apparitions and ethereal shimmerings. Quite regularly, mirrors and other such optical instruments were used to great effect. These methods were by no means new. The Aesculapian healing temples of some two thousand years earlier were noted for their 'piped' angelic choirs and the very earthly looking white-robed 'gods' who hovered mysteriously at the bedside of the fee-paying sick.<sup>14</sup> Of particular interest to this study of Hahnemann's Masonic years is the influence of Johann Starck. A fervent alchemist and teacher of *the magical arts*, Starck was heralded as the master in the art of spiritual transmutation - the regeneration of man! The following extract gives some idea of Starck's rites, which again proved very popular and were performed right across Europe:

*“The initiate was instructed that in order to attain wisdom, art and virtue, it was necessary to honour the Supreme Being, to love Brethren and all Mankind; to be temperate, courageous, steadfast in misfortune, humble and not to fear death. An oath was taken, his eyes were unbandaged and his gaze directed towards a star of eighty-one lamps, flaming over the head of the presiding master. The knight was then allowed to have a glimpse of light through a half-opened door leading to ‘The Temple of Secret Doctrine.’”*

Throughout the rite, much reference is made to alchemic symbolism and hidden meaning in numbers. Progressing onwards, thanks is given to The Architect of the Universe, The Supreme Being, The Almighty, The Wise and all the while various doctrines were imparted:

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<sup>14</sup> A patient at one such temple at the time describes how these 'gods' in residence would quietly resort to more worldly activities when they thought it safe to do so. *“Soon the temple servitor put out the lights and bade us fall asleep, nor stir, nor speak, whatever noise we heard. So down we lay in orderly repose. And I could catch no slumber, not one wink, struck by a nice tureen of broth which stood a little distance from an old wife's head, whereto I marvellously longed to creep. Then, glancing upwards, I beheld the priest whipping the cheese-cakes and figs from off the holy table; thence he coasted round to every altar spying what was left. And everything he found he consecrated into a sort of sack.”* excerpted from **Rogers, B, Aristophanes: a translation**, London, Bell & Sons, 1907 at [www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/tech/medicine/TheEvolutionofModernMedicine/chap9.html](http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/tech/medicine/TheEvolutionofModernMedicine/chap9.html)

*“We alone possess the knowledge, how to prepare from the four powers contained in Creation, the Primary Matter and then the Great Medicine for health and riches.”*

Of necessity, this is a very condensed account of 18<sup>th</sup> century Freemasonry but it affords some insight into the nature of the lodge and brings greater understanding to the fleeting passages in those biographies that mention Hahnemann’s Masonic connections. Hahnemann’s biographer Thomas Bradford’s account of Hahnemann’s time in the service of the Master of the Chair now becomes much clearer:

*“He carefully catalogued Baron Brukenthal’s immense library of books and rare manuscripts. It was in these quiet, scholarly days that Hahnemann acquired that extensive and diverse knowledge of ancient literature and of occult sciences, of which he afterwards proved himself to be a master and with which he astonished the scientific world.”*

Starck’s instructions on seeking out ‘the Great Medicine for health and riches’ had planted a seed in young Hahnemann’s mind and he was convinced the secrets to health lay hidden deep in earth’s matter. These occult ideas would prove vital to the shaping of homoeopathy, despite all efforts by today’s homoeopathic authors to distance themselves from such influences. Hahnemann stayed in Hermannstadt for two years, immersing himself in these strange teachings and then, with enough money saved to continue his medical studies, he left Transylvania and returned to Germany to finish his medical degree, finally granted him in 1779, aged twenty-four.

But what did a doctor’s degree actually equate to in those days? We will now spend a few minutes looking more closely at health care in Hahnemann’s era. Doing so will help us appreciate his understandable and much-publicised revulsion towards the medical practice of the day.

# Death by Doctoring

*“Cured of my disease, last night  
I died of my physician.” Anon*

Germany was no different to any other country in Europe regarding medicine and health in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Living conditions were appalling. There was no town planning and people were crammed together, often six, seven, eight or more to a room and with no adequate sewerage facilities. In many residential areas, pulling the flush meant shouting a warning from the upstairs window and throwing the contents of the slop bucket into the street below. It wasn't unusual for these unhygienic streets to be busy with townsfolk buying local produce on open display. In poorer sections of the community, children would often be stitched into their clothes for the winter. Infant mortality was understandably high.



If you were rich, you could afford the services of the physician. His medical bag consisted of sharp knives for the letting of blood, leeches to suck blood, various instruments for the removal of limbs, one or two powerful crude opiates for reducing pain, mercury, sulphur and other poisons to induce sickness, abrasives to raise blisters, nil cleanliness and even less by way of bedside manner. For these services the hapless patient was charged. It is no exaggeration to say that patients regularly died of their physician. Some shrewd doctors would endeavour to keep relatives in the operating room and those who fainted at the sight of the doctor at work would incur a modest fee for 'being revived'.

Then there was the quack, the rogue and the vagabond healer claiming to have potions to 'cure' anything. Quack remedies included crab-claw, grease from a hanged man's scalp, live toads, earthworms, goose dung, powdered bones, boiled fox; in fact anything that could be boiled, crunched up, powdered and swallowed was available as a medicine from someone, somewhere. These extravagant remedies were matched only by the extravagant claims that supported them.

One ingenious gentleman travelled extensively, promoting a cure for diseases '*as yet unknown to mankind but lethal*' including Moonfall, Hockogrockle, the Wambling Trots, Marthambles and the Strong Fives. Remarkably, those who took his *preventatives* never contracted any of these diseases, the old fraudster making a tidy sum in the process. Gustavus Katterfelto was another wandering *physick* who toured Europe with many quite useless remedies including several that claimed victory over flu. Little change today, except now of course, it's gone all corporate. Before his arrival in town, Katterfelto would arrange for a prominent advertisement in the local paper with the simple heading "*Wonders! Wonders! Wonders!*" He also understood the value of the sound byte, claiming '*expertise in the Philosophical, Mathematical, Optical, Magnetical, Electrical, Physical, Chemical, Pneumatic, Hydraulic, Hydrostatic, Proetic, Stenographic and Caprimatic Arts*'.

There will always be long queues at the doors of those who claim to be able to preserve beauty and cease ageing. At aged sixty, but looking twenty-five years younger, the Count de St Germaine, had a roguish flash of inspiration. Inventing his own *elixir of life* (another to add to history's long list), the Count hired a horse and carriage and an accomplice in the guise of a man-servant. Dressing himself in the finest clothes, the Count travelled Europe with his wondrous elixirs claiming to be two thousand years old.

Throughout his lucrative itinerary, jewel-encrusted audiences would sit enthralled as he relived conversations he'd had with the rich and famous down through history, such as Hannibal, Alfred the Great and Nero. His fanciful narrative would be interrupted only as he paused to take one or two sips from an ornate hip-flask containing his sparkling elixir, available at five shillings a bottle. There was of course a rush to the 'product' tables at the end of his show.

In the UK, a Dr Ebenezer Sibley had a thriving business selling his *Reanimating Solar Tincture* - a product he guaranteed would 'restore life in the event of sudden death'. Dr Robert Brodum was renowned for his *Social Happiness Cordial* and other dubious cures for 'inactive' married couples.

**DR GRAHAM'S**  
**CELESTIAL BED**  
AT THE TEMPLE OF HYMEN, PALL MALL, ANNO DOMINI 1782.

**DR GRAHAM INSTALLED HIS TWELVE FOOT BY NINE FOOT CELESTIAL BED AS A TEST OF TREATMENT. THE BED WAS IN ONE OF HIS LECTURES DESCRIBED IN A DETAILED MANNER. THIS IS THE BASIS OF THE DRAWING.**

**ELECTRICITY** is the most powerful engine on influence its nature to remain those several objects: it gives a solid and redorative firmness to the relaxed fibres: it corrects the weakness of joints, strengthens and enjoys the generative powers and effectively removes obstructions.

IN THE TROTH ELECTRICITY WAS REGARDERD AS COMPLETELY USELESS. DR GRAHAM THOUGHT THAT THE EFFECT OF STATIC ELECTRICITY MIGHT HAVE STOOD ON HIS SIDE. THAT IT HAD THE POWER TO HOLD ANY PART OF THE BODY. THIS HE HAD CLAIMED THAT FLAME WAS MORE VIOLENTLY FORMED FROM CHARGE.

TWO REAL TURTLE DOWNS ON A BED OF ROSE PETALS.

THE INNER FRAME which moves on a pivot can be raised at the bottom of the bed in a manner to be covered by the gentleman into such an inclined plane that the car can follow his body upwards as it is called, which is certainly the most remarkable posture for the generation of conception in difficult cases, especially in cases of copulation on where the want of copulation is the principle cause of barrenness.

MATRESS MANUFACTURED WITH HORSEREN PROCURED AT LAST EXPENSE FROM THE TAILS OF ENGLISH STALLIONS.

THE BED WAS SUPPORTED ON 40 IRON PILLARS. THESE WERE ALL INHIBITED, ALLOWING THE BED TO BECOME ELECTRICALLY CHARGED.

GRAHAM CLAIMED THE 'CELESTIAL FIRE' WORKED IN ALL WENTHERS. THIS SEEM UNBELIEVABLE AS MOST STATIC ELECTRIC EFFECTS ONLY WORK IN DRY WEATHER AND IN DRY AIR. THE ELECTROSTATIC GENERATORS OF THE BED WERE NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH TO BE DISTRIBUTED OVER THE ENTIRE BED. PRESIDENT MANY POINTS FOR THE COCON DISCHARGE TO DISPERSE FROM.

ALTHOUGH GRAHAM REFERED TO MANY MEDICAL INSTRUMENTS WHICH BY THE MOST EXQUISITE AND EARLY PROGRESSIVE MECHANISMS ARE MADE TO DO THE LENGTH COURSE. THESE WAS PROBABLY A PERSON HIDDEN AWAY TO CREATE A MORE FUNDAMENTAL EFFECT, PARTICULARLY AS GRAHAM REFERED TO THE COCON STARTING AS THE COUPLE FIRST MARRIAGE.

THE CELESTIAL BED being very highly electric the persons residing therein had in a general arrangement the use of the celestial fire. Combined with the powerful influence of magnets, music and balmy odours... they cannot fail in the future of things of consequence to the production of a strong marriage and most beautiful offspring.

THE CELESTIAL FIRE PRESUMABLY REFERED TO COCON DISCHARGE IN A FANT GREEN GLOW, JUST VISIBLE IN COMPLETE DARKNESS. THIS IS CREATED AROUND ANY ELECTRICALLY CHARGED OBJECT CONCENTRATED AROUND ANY POINT.

BEING ELECTRICALLY CHARGED UP DOES NOT ONLY VIBRATE BUT WILL HAIR TRICKLE AND SMELL THE COCON DISCHARGE.

AUTOMATIC RULE INTO REDDORDED SHOWS A FACTOR PROCESSION ENTERING THE TEMPLE OF HYMEN.

GRAHAM CHARGED 40S PER NIGHT FOR THE USE OF THE BED. DR GRAHAM DIED AT THE TIME HE ADVISED COUGLES TO BOOK A FEW DAYS AFTER THE WOMAN'S MONTHLY CYCLE.

It is designed for the use of married people only and every precaution is taken to exclude the lascivious and impure in order to give the necessary increase, the more numerous of diseases from polluting the TEMPLE OF HYMEN. The following lines are written in golden capitals over the grand entrance PROCLAIMER.

THE BED WAS SPRUNG ON ENORMOUS MAGNETS ESSENTIAL LONESTONES.

THOSE MAGNETS WERE PREPARED TO GIVE THAT CHARMING SPRINGNESS - THAT SWEET UNSTAINING SENSATION, VIBRATORY AND DIZZLING, NARROW CRITICAL AND IMPORTANT OCCASION IS AT ONCE TO CONVINCE AND TO PLEASE THE MAGNETS OF THE PERIOD VERY VERY WORK COMPARED TO OTHERS. MAGNETS IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THEIR REVULSIVE FORCE WOULD HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENT TO REMOVE FROM THESE OWN ENORMOUS VESSEL - EITHER FROM THE SURFACE OF THE BED AND ITS OCCUPANTS.

AROMATIC OILS HEATED TO CREATE 'BALMY OBENTAL' ODOURS.

Neither myself nor any of my assistants ever were upon the part are in repose in this SANCTUARY SACRIFICIUM. And it is never shown with the other parts of my apparatus.

ALTHOUGH GRAHAM CLAIMED THAT COMPLETE PRIVACY, THE WORLD HAD BEEN UNLIKELY TO SEE ANY WOULD HAVE HAD TO CONSTANTLY AND UNWITTINGLY BE THE WITNESSES OF THE ELECTROSTATIC GENERATOR ANOTHER WOULD HAVE HAD TO HOLD UP THE CLOTHES. HOWEVER, AT REGULAR INTERVALS KEEP THE STOVE STOKED, AND BEHOLD THE 'BALMY ODOURS'.

DEBITE GRAHAM'S PRESENT ENGERATION, THE TOTAL EFFECT MUST STILL HAVE BEEN QUITE EXTRAORDINARY IN CASES WHERE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEM. THE BED MIGHT WELL HAVE DONE THE TRICK.

DR THE HUNTER, APRIL 1800, SUPPORTED BY MRS.

Do this case of apparatus of which I can give little data in words, has been fitted up at great expense. They are the result of a long and intense study.

In 1775, the well-spoken and charming James Graham came to London and began delivering jolts of electricity to the rich and famous via an assortment of electrical crowns and thrones. The centre-piece of Graham's health spa was *The Celestial Bed* (left). For a fee of anything up to £50.00, the childless and the impotent could lie upon this bed and through its 'special powers', supposedly 'be blessed with progeny'. The bed rested upon twenty-eight crystal pillars and amazingly, the whole structure could tilt in different directions, thus aiding conception, apparently. The headboard was inscribed 'Be fruitful, multiply and replenish the earth'.

As the lovers dallied, music would rise up from the musicians' pit directly under the bed (some gig, that!) and a strange electricity would crackle across the headboard, charging the chamber with Graham's secret magnetic fluid.<sup>15</sup> Had the bed worked, the *Temple of Health* would have flourished. But of course, it didn't work and as business declined, Graham lowered the admission fee to one shilling and in one last desperate bid to revive flagging attendances, advertised his establishment as being 'near the Royal Palace'.<sup>16</sup>

Quack medicine was just as popular in the United States. Elisha Perkins (1741-1799) invented 'traction' a process by which certain illnesses were said to be cured by stroking the patient's body with a metallic rod. Claiming to cure pains in the head, face, teeth breast, stomach, back and all other joints, Perkins advertised in the local press and sat back to await results. His strap line ran as follows: 'Pointed metals, blessed with power to appease the ruthless rage of merciless disease'.

To his astonishment, the orders came pouring in and the testimonials that followed made more fantastic claims than he would have ever dared to imagine. Increasing his advertising and doubling the price of his 'Metallic Tractors' and including some of the amazing testimonials in the editorial, Perkins went on to net a small fortune. Upon his death, his son Elisha Perkins Jr. took the product to the UK and before long, had convinced the British Medical Association to open *The Perkins Institute*, its purpose to supply tractors free of charge to those who could not afford them. This proved to be the undoing of traction.

It is a basic principle of the successful quack that faith in his useless appliances, pills and potions is in direct proportion to the amount paid for them by the punter. Once the tractors were available free of charge, there were immediate complaints they did not work. A Dr John Haygarth of Bath also contributed to the downfall of traction. Painting several pieces of wood the colour of steel,

<sup>15</sup> The 'therapeutic electric field' for Graham's 'apparatus' emanated from a device first developed by Francis Hauksbee in 1706. He called it the *Influence Machine*, and it worked by cranking a large drive wheel that spun a glass vacuum globe which created a mysterious 'luminosity'. It crackled like lightning when touched and attracted metal flakes and threads, etc., etc.. *The Temple of Health* at [www.eoearth.org/article/Hauksbee\\_the\\_Elder\\_Francis](http://www.eoearth.org/article/Hauksbee_the_Elder_Francis)

<sup>16</sup> See also **Boese, Alex**, *The Museum of Hoaxes*, Penguin 2003

Haygarth found he could obtain equally marvelous results - a sort of double-blind trial if you like. Perkins Jr. retired from the tractoration business soon after, but still netted a handsome £15,000 during his brief stay in London.

In short, there was very little good medicine to brighten the dark backdrop of chicanery, fraud, inadvertent poisoning, bloody maiming and not a little death - all in the name of doctoring. It was into these blood-soaked, quack-infested and gloriously opportunistic conditions that Dr Samuel Hahnemann was “...*let loose on suffering humanity to win experience, knowledge and skill for himself.*” As much as the prevailing medical conditions appalled him, we shall see that Hahnemann too was not immune from the temptation to elicit money by fraudulent means.

## Hahnemann's 'Secret' Powders

*"I am incapable of wilfully deceiving. I may however, like other men, be unintentionally mistaken."* **S. Hahnemann**

Scarlet fever was a scourge in many towns and cities across Europe at the time and many people, especially children, were dying as a result. Hahnemann wrote a book containing a number of helpful secrets including "...one of the most beneficial discoveries ever made, an infallible remedy for the prevention and cure of scarlet fever."<sup>17</sup> Medical authorities at the time were aghast that Hahnemann might be in possession of a cure for this ravaging disease and was purposely withholding it for financial gain. Hahnemann retorted:

*"It is making an appeal to my conscience that scarlet fever is raging and many hundreds of children are carried away by it, but I cannot for the present publish my book without financial embarrassment. However, everyone who deposits a Freidrich D'or, as a subscription to my book, will receive a little powder free of charge, which contains enough to render several thousand people immune from scarlet fever."*<sup>18</sup>

Hahnemann's powders were found to be useless. Belladonna (deadly nightshade) in any dilution plays no part in the prevention or cure of scarlet fever and in fact, there is still no cure for scarlet fever, although outbreaks of this disease have been greatly reduced by much healthier and less crowded living conditions. The resulting furore forced Hahnemann to leave town. Soon after the scarlet fever episode, Hahnemann 'discovered' a new alkaline salt which he sold for £15.00 per lb. When it came to light this new alkaline salt was in fact common salt costing 5p for the equivalent amount, Hahnemann replied, *"I am incapable of wilfully deceiving. I may however, like other men, be unintentionally mistaken."*

It seems almost blasphemous to suggest the revered Hahnemann was bagging up common salt and selling it for three hundred times what it was worth. But that is exactly what he was doing. After one incident in which Hahnemann grossly overcharged an epileptic for yet another course of useless treatment, the court physician of Brunswick, where Hahnemann was temporarily residing, was moved to write the following:

*"I have now been fifty-seven years a medical practitioner in Brunswick but never have I known a local physician who was so avaricious and who practised so much charlatanism as Dr Hahnemann. But because this kind of practice did not succeed in our country and also because the physicians were not allowed to dispense their own medicines or to extract money out of patients' pockets by so called Arkana or secret remedies, Hahnemann took up his staff and wandered on, and I do not know where he went to."*

And from the same source, the idea that Hahnemann was a kindly, generous gent is given somewhat of a dent when, later on in his life, we read his approach to the collection of fees. Said Hahnemann to a colleague:

*"It is your own fault that you have not demanded payment from your patients at each consultation as I happily do. After this, do as I do and you will become a rich man without any trouble. I would have remained a poor man had I left it to the patient's own inclination to pay. No-one enters my house without the money to pay me at the time or else monthly in advance. The whole world will cheat us if we let it."*<sup>19</sup>

Hahnemann's desire to improve the lot of the mentally ill is also documented. Through a contact at a local newspaper, Hahnemann had an essay published proposing 'a range of external and internal medical treatments of the most select type known only to myself to restore the sick person to complete health.' Hahnemann was offered the use of a hunting castle by fellow Mason Duke Ernst of Gotha, a property offering ample room for the bed spaces anticipated. *"There, I shall be able to*

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<sup>17</sup> **Haehl, Richard**, Samuel Hahnemann: His Life And Work, 2 Vols., Jain 1922

<sup>18</sup> Haehl, Richard, *ibid*

<sup>19</sup> Haehl, Richard, *ibid*

*found a small institute for the cure of the wealthy insane.”* With a stated fee of 1,000 gold pieces up front for the intended cure plus living expenses, Hahnemann received only one reply to his advertisement. And so, with an enormous castle to fill but only one patient to fill it, Hahnemann was obliged to cut costs and begin treatment at home.

After nine months recuperation *chez* Hahnemann, the patient, a Herr Klockenbring, a rich author from Hanover, was pronounced cured of his considerable delusions. Hahnemann received plaudits from several professional quarters for his ‘sensational cure’. Unfortunately though, soon after being sent home, Klockenbring suffered a severe mental setback and died a little while later after another severe bout of depression, interspersed with violent outbursts against all who dared come near to him. Hahnemann’s second and last recorded live-in mental patient was a violent schizophrenic who threatened to murder Hahnemann and his family and set his house on fire. Hahnemann was saved only by the intervention of a neighbour and the police. Thus ended Hahnemann’s brief spell as a mental health practitioner.

There has been no need to resort to unfair character assassination to realise the rosy glow in which Hahnemann is so often portrayed is misleading. And whilst none of these activities make Hahnemann the absolute rogue of the century, we need to drop the syrupy sentimentality surrounding this ‘compassionate and benevolent master’ and acknowledge he had his failings, just like all the rest of us.

With his reputation once again in tatters, Hahnemann was forced to move on. In fact, in the twenty-four year period following his becoming a doctor, Hahnemann was forced to move no less than eighteen times. Google search was still a long way off and there was always another unsuspecting town further up the road that would welcome him. It was during these chaotic years that Hahnemann had been mulling over a whole new range of ideas that would go on to become the therapy we know today as homoeopathy. Let’s now look at the route Hahnemann took to formulate the system of medicine he believed had been revealed to him by God.

## Like Cures Like?

*“Please don’t lie to me unless you’re absolutely sure I’ll never find out the truth.”* **Ashleigh Brilliant**

In 1790, a publishing house sent Hahnemann a manuscript for translation on the medicinal effects of cinchona bark, a remedy that was being used successfully in powdered form to combat malaria. In this manuscript, a Dr William Cullen theorised somewhat vaguely that cinchona cured malaria because of its astringent effects on the stomach. Hahnemann got to this paragraph and rightly remarked that there were much more powerful astringents than cinchona which, when taken, had no effect at all on fever. Hahnemann concluded cinchona must cure fever some other way. He decided to investigate for himself and he conducted a simple experiment.

*“I took for several days as an experiment, four drams of good cinchona twice daily. My feet and fingertips, etc., at first became cold. I became languid and drowsy, then my heart began to palpitate; my pulse became hard and quick, an intolerable anxiety and trembling but without a rigor; prostration in all the limbs; then pulsation in the head; redness in the cheeks; thirst. To sum up, all the symptoms typical of fever made their appearance.”*

Hahnemann came to the conclusion that cinchona cured fever because it appeared to produce in him the symptoms of fever. As an introduction to the first edition of his book on homoeopathy, Hahnemann wrote:

*“To obtain a quick and lasting cure, choose for every attack of illness a medicine which can produce a similar malady to the one it is to cure... ‘simila similibus curentur’... like cures like.”*<sup>20</sup>

Hahnemann believed he had stumbled on something unique. As a result of this single experiment, Hahnemann announced that *like cures like* was the new way forward for health and healing and those three little words remain an accepted truism in holistic health circles today. But Hahnemann’s ‘discovery’ wasn’t new at all. The idea, belief, call it what you will, that like cures like has a long and colourful history. Before looking in more detail at Hahnemann’s claims, a few minutes will now be spent looking at the history of *like cures like*, to assess what contribution, if any, this theory has made to the progress of sensible medicine.

Earliest medical records contain numerous accounts of tribes using animals and birds of various colours in *like cures like* healing rituals. Diseased individuals with jaundice or yellow fever would have incantations said over them, the disease would be commanded to leave and at the same time a yellow bird would be released to fly off with the similarly coloured symptoms and presumably the disease. Bouts of fever with angry, red bodily rashes etc., etc., would require a bird of red plumage. In this instance, the belief that *like cures like* (the *doctrine of similars*) is closely associated with the *doctrine of transference* - the belief the disease has transferred from one subject to another. This doctrine has many derivatives.

Abscesses would be wiped with certain herbs and at the same time, various incantations would be recited. Then, with sometimes extravagant ritual, these newly ‘infected’ herbs would be buried under the footpath leading to the nearest enemy village. The first person along the path would then walk over this ‘highly charged concoction’ and immediately contract the vile condition (or so it was believed) and carry it back to infect the rest of his village. In times of warfare, warriors would thrust their spears into the fire in the belief that all wounds inflicted by the spears that day would become searingly painful and inflamed. In countries where belief in voodoo is strong, there is often still a great reluctance to be photographed - the possibility of having one’s image stuck with pins or held over a fire a real fear.

One of the earliest written medical records, the Ebers Papyrus (circa 1500 BC), contains many remedies of a quite revolting nature. It was widely believed the repulsiveness of the medication would forcefully evict the equally revolting disease-causing *spirit* from the suffering individual.

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<sup>20</sup> **Hahnemann, Christian Samuel**, Organon of Medicine, Gollancz 1986

Excrement of ibex and alligator were highly favoured cure-alls. The belief that revolting remedies cured revolting diseases survived for many centuries and is graphically encapsulated in this delightful little remedy used to 'immunize' oneself against the ravages of the great plague of London. Taken from the book *A short history of social life in England* by MB Synge (pub 1930), the recipe runs as follows :

*“Take the brain of a young man that hath died a violent death, together with its membranes, arteries, veins and nerves and all the pith from the backbone. Bruise these in a stone mortar until it becomes a kind of pap, then put in as much spirits of wine as will cover three fingers breadth, digest for half a year in horse dung and take a drop or two in water, once a day.”*

Frequent reference is made in CAM literature to Hippocrates, famed for stating: *“Where there is illness there also is the cure.”* Whilst easy on the ear, the phrase contains no information of any actual value. Therapists and herbalists will always quote nettles and nearby dock leaves as an example. But even then, this example does not always hold true. Nettles are often found growing with not a dock leaf in sight and the alkali in the dock leaf that neutralises the acidic nettle sting is also found in many other types of plant.



15<sup>th</sup> century alchemist and physician Paracelsus (left) instituted another derivative of *like cures like* - the *doctrine of signatures*. This is the mistaken belief that plants, flowers and leaves of a certain shape are medicinally beneficial for human organs of a similar shape, hence the names of plants such as heartsease, eyebright, lungwort (wort), spleenwort, liverwort, etc., etc.. Again, references to this intuitively compelling but errant belief are found in earliest recorded medical history but it was Paracelsus who gathered all the strands together to present what he claimed to be his own doctrine. Surviving records also credit Paracelsus as being the first physician to propose the idea of a minute healing dose according to *like cures like* and he was reputed to have cured a town of dysentery by administering to each sufferer a pilule of bread containing a tiny amount of that person's excreta.

Flower remedy dispenser Robert T Cooper [1844-1903] was an admirer of the work of Paracelsus and Hahnemann and had his own ideas on the *doctrine of signatures*. Cooper would lie next to plants and mentally 'tune in' to the plant's supposed 'innate wisdom'. This approach, Cooper felt, would give him a deeper understanding of the plant and its healing properties. Included in Cooper's medicinal repertoire was the hydrangea for the treatment of diabetes, due to the plant's excessive thirst for water; the leaves from *Ledum Palustre* (wild rosemary) which are spear-shaped and therefore supposedly useful to treat bee and wasp stings and various other penetrative wounds; and bluebells for earache because they shelter from the wind.<sup>21</sup> Cooper could have lain there for twice the hours, drawing on all these supposed healing emanations but again, none of these remedies or 'research methods' bear any relation to sensible fact. Derivatives of the *like cures like* fallacy can be found in many of today's leading therapies. Sheila MacNamara, author of *Traditional Chinese Medicine*, quite irresponsibly notes the following:

*“Some mental illness is attributed to a heart-spirit problem. Schizophrenia is regarded as a problem of too much heat in the heart, so that the spirit is burnt, making the sufferer restless and violent. The patient would be given medication to calm the heart. Lotus seed sprouts are effective and cooling because the seeds come from the heart of the plant and the lotus grows in water.”*

Bach Flower Remedy practitioner Julian Scott recommends walnut essence for children suffering mental anxiety, the resemblance between the fruit of the walnut and the human brain making this an obvious *like cures like* candidate for treating mental health problems. Scott believes that further help is derived from this walnut essence due to the hard shell of the walnut (resembling

<sup>21</sup> Cooper, R T *Arborivital Medicine, The Doctrine of Signatures*, Homeopathic World, June 1898 also at [www.homeoint.org/morrell/articles/bach.htm](http://www.homeoint.org/morrell/articles/bach.htm)

the skull) which he says acts as a trusted protection against unwanted and intrusive thoughts.<sup>22</sup> Whilst Scott and Macnamara's remedies may well cause no physical side-effects, they're surely corrosive to the intellect. Natural health consultant Martin Bulgerin has a number of *like cures like* 'flower essences for the boudoir' and suggests the following: "A good remedy for males who feel uncomfortable with physical contact and emotional intimacy is Flannel Flower - the soft, fuzzy covering on the plant says it begs to be touched."<sup>23</sup> Both Scott and Bulgerin express deep admiration for the founder of Bach Flower remedies, Edward Bach. We shall be looking at the extraordinary thinking and methods of this man a little later.

It is easy to see though how Hahnemann's ideas on treating disease according to *like cures like* are simply derivatives of an idea that has been in existence for millennia. Nevertheless, Hahnemann's claim that he could cure fever with cinchona and without the gruesome bloodletting was welcome news, at least to those who had not yet caught wind of his reputation. As we shall read in more detail in the next chapter, Hahnemann also claimed he had experienced one hundred and twenty two different side-effects from ingesting a single, small dose of cinchona. One hundred and twenty two! Could Hahnemann's experiment and extraordinary claims be independently validated? Regarding the validation of scientific claims, Geoff Watts, author of *Pleasing the Patient*, makes this very good point:

*"Researchers are required not only to publish their findings, but also to describe their method in sufficient detail to allow others to repeat the work. Indeed the repeatability of an experiment is one of the criteria by which scientists judge the claims of their peers."*

And inevitably, when Hahnemann's peers attempted to replicate his findings, not one of them experienced a single one of the side-effects Hahnemann had reported. Incredibly, to this day, no properly constructed trial has ever been able to replicate any of Hahnemann's claims for cinchona. Suffice to say, the principle golden scientific rule had been broken. Yet, frustratingly for Hahnemann's peers, cinchona still cured fever. The only question was, how? The answer did not become known for another thirty years.

In 1820, French chemist Joseph Pelletier isolated the active curing principle in cinchona which is quinine. The clinical efficacy of quinine has demonstrated itself very well over the last century in the fight against malaria. Information from the Hospital of Tropical Diseases in London tells us that quinine works by directly attacking the parasite injected into the red blood cells by the malaria-carrying mosquito. A more scientific description of the action of quinine is as follows: "It affects the parasite's intra-erthrocytic mobility and leads to a cessation of haemozoin pigment formation as a result of disturbed or arrested protein metabolism."<sup>24</sup>

Cinchona has a proper mechanism of cure that has nothing at all to do with *like cures like*. At the very first hurdle, homoeopathy's founding principle was already fatally flawed. And to reiterate, the 122 symptoms Hahnemann experienced as a result of taking cinchona - the redness in cheeks, thirst, shiverings, shakings, quickened pulse, prostration in all the limbs, trembling, intolerable anxiety etc., etc., none of these symptoms have ever been repeated in a properly controlled environment. Hahnemann's symptoms from cinchona drew this comment from a representative of the Department of Tropical Medicine:

*"This amount of quinine in an otherwise healthy adult would not be expected to produce any noticeable symptoms as a single dose. There is no good evidence that quinine affects body temperature one way or the other, unless you have malaria, in which case the effects presumably result indirectly from the destruction of the malarial parasite."*<sup>25</sup>

These inconvenient facts on homoeopathy's foundational years don't seem to trouble pro-homoeopathic authors though. Take this from *The Science of Homoeopathy* by George Vithoulkas: "Samuel Hahnemann, the remarkable genius who discovered, developed and systematised the

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<sup>22</sup> **Scott, Julian** *Natural Medicine for Children*, William Morrow 1990

<sup>23</sup> **Bulgerin, Martin**, About Flower Essences, *Putting Life Back into the Bedroom* September 1999 at [www.essences.com/vibration/febo2/sexuality.html](http://www.essences.com/vibration/febo2/sexuality.html)

<sup>24</sup> **Taylor, A E R** *Chemotherapeutic Agents and the Study of Parasites*, Blackwell Publication 1975

<sup>25</sup> Personal correspondence, April 16<sup>th</sup> 1999

*fundamental laws of cure that are producing such revolutionary changes in thinking about health and disease.*"<sup>26</sup>

Vithoukaskas' use of the word law is interesting. Cassels Dictionary defines the word law as, 'The orderly recurrence of natural phenomena, an invariable sequence of events.' Similarly, the Oxford English Dictionary defines the word law as: "A factual statement of what always happens in certain circumstances." Hahnemann's experiments were devoid of orderliness, certainty, accuracy, repeatability or fact. Folklore maybe, but certainly not law.

Biographer Richard Haehl discusses a feud between Hahnemann and a Professor Dzondi. According to Dzondi, cold water or cold water compresses should be applied immediately to a burn to effect the best cure. Hahnemann disagreed and applying his law of *like cures like*, insisted that only the heat from burning coals, hot water or heated spirits of wine and turpentine should be applied to the burnt area. In a dramatic gesture, Dzondi challenged Hahnemann to a public 'branding' duel and wagered 500 gold pieces that his cold water cure was the better. Not surprisingly, Hahnemann declined to have his theory tested in public.<sup>27</sup>

In a telephone conversation with the specialist burns unit at the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead, a senior spokesperson told me that under no circumstances would Hahnemann's treatment ever be administered to anyone under their care. "Cooling the area of any burn is an absolute priority. Applying any kind of oil will only attract dirt and help retain the heat in the wound where one should aim to cool the site of injury as soon as possible."<sup>28</sup> Summarising Hahnemann's thinking on *like cures like*, one doctor in the July 4<sup>th</sup> 2005 edition of *Hospital Doctor* acidly commented: "Perhaps any homoeopaths out there needing treatment for gunshot wounds would like me to test that particular theory."

Hahnemann's glowing coals for burns, MacNamara's lotus seeds for schizophrenia, Scott's walnuts for mental distress, Cooper's hydrangeas for diabetes and Bulgerin's flannel flower for sexually dysfunctional males are all excellent illustrations of the paucity of the theory of *like cures like*. Professor of Plant Medicine Varro Tyler advises his pharmacognosy students that an awareness of medical myths such as *like cures like* "...will assist interested persons in distinguishing fact from fiction in a field where the former is scarce and the latter is abundant." And whilst Varro's training and conventional theories will have their own particular flaws, this does not excuse or legitimise any of the dysfunctional homoeopathic theories outlined so far.

Let this sink in. The preceding paragraphs accurately describe the beginnings of homoeopathy, and for the practicing homoeopath reading this right now, I do not want to cause effrontery but it is inescapable that Hahnemann's foundational thinking is devoid of all sensibility.

Hahnemann continued to build on his *like cures like* fantasies, falsely reasoning if cinchona produced symptoms of fever and it also cured fever, then there were hundreds of substances out there that surely would have the capacity to produce symptoms similar to the symptoms of every single ache, pain and dis-ease afflicting mankind. And surely, those substances would be the cure! This was Hahnemann's "Eureka!" moment. Let like be cured by like! Hahnemann would need to test every substance he could lay hands on for its *like cures like* properties. Be it animal, vegetable or mineral, the earth and all that was in it was one vast medical cabinet just waiting to be discovered and he alone had the key to unlocking it! There was much work to do. The birth of homoeopathy proper was just around the corner.

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<sup>26</sup> Vithoukaskas, George *The Science of Homoeopathy*, Grove Press Oct 2000

<sup>27</sup> Haehl, Richard *ibid*

<sup>28</sup> Telephone conversation with Queen Victoria hospital burns unit 15<sup>th</sup> March 2005

## Just My Imagination Running Away With Me

*“There are no rules of architecture for castles in the sky.” G. K. Chesterton*

Hahnemann began to experiment upon himself and his family with an incredible variety of substances, including most of the available poisons such as belladonna, lead, strychnine and mercury. Hahnemann carefully noted all reactions and symptoms which, in the case of the poisons, were understandably violent. These experiments began in 1790 and it is hardly surprising to note that in 1791 Hahnemann’s children all became very ill. The following observation was made by one of Hahnemann’s many critics at the time:

*“I fear that a destruction of Hahnemann’s whole body and especially of his brain will take place. Really, these kinds of experiments should be carried out on criminals deserving a death sentence. If all physicians were to make such experiments upon themselves or wished to make them, I would fear that they might all be crippled in body and soul.”*

It didn’t take long for Hahnemann to realise there were too many substances out there for him and his family to test personally and he gathered together a number of individuals who became known as his band of *provers*. These provers would gather at Hahnemann’s house to be given a diary and dispensed a particular substance to be taken at regular intervals over the next several days. The students would meticulously record all thoughts, feelings and symptoms they experienced that week and then return the diaries to Hahnemann who would then enter the information into his ever-growing compendium. The substance eliciting symptoms closest to the known symptoms of a particular disease was entered as ‘the assured cure’ for that disease.

Whilst many of the substances swallowed by Hahnemann and his colleagues were revolting as well as poisonous, there were also a great many substances ingested that were completely harmless and would not have produced any side-effects at all. Yet Hahnemann’s personal records show he was reporting just as many side-effects from the non-poisonous as the poisonous. As one searches through Hahnemann’s personal notes on these ‘proving’ evenings, what suddenly becomes clear is Hahnemann’s extraordinary ability to imagine symptoms where none existed. The following information found in Hahnemann’s book *Fragmenta de Viribus* confirms Hahnemann’s great ability to exaggerate and imagine symptoms.<sup>29</sup>

<b>Substance swallowed</b>	<b>Symptoms reported by Hahnemann</b>	<b>Symptoms reported by colleagues</b>
Acris tinctura	30	0
Arnica Montana	117	33
Sweet Green Pepper	174	3
Chamomile	272	3
Cocculus	156	6
Drosera	36	4
Ignatia	157	9
Pulsatilla	280	29

In this table, we see Hahnemann reporting 272 symptoms from a few drops of chamomile and his colleagues just 3! Hahnemann also experienced 174 symptoms from eating just one sliver of green pepper and again his colleagues just 3. If you have a green pepper in the house, bite off a little piece and wait for the side-effects to kick in. Sensible forecast none, except perhaps ‘crispy, green pepper taste in mouth’. Is it any wonder that no-one apart from Hahnemann was able to record 122

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<sup>29</sup> *Fragmenta de Viribus* at [www.homeoint.org/morrell/articles/pm\\_fragm.htm](http://www.homeoint.org/morrell/articles/pm_fragm.htm)

symptoms from swallowing just a small dose of cinchona - the first wayward experiment that launched homoeopathy?<sup>30</sup>

Very plainly, Hahnemann was manufacturing evidence to support his pet theory. *Fragmenta de Viribus* was Hahnemann's castle in the sky. But it wasn't just Hahnemann supplying unreliable data. The data supplied by his students must also be treated with suspicion. In the same *Fragmenta*, students reported 290 symptoms from hyoscyamus (henbane) and Hahnemann just 45. To illustrate the fickle nature of feelings and experience and the subtle sway the teacher has over his pupils, readers are asked to consider the fascinating work carried out in the late 1970s by university lecturer Charles Henderson. Although some two hundred years separate Henderson and Hahnemann, the parallels to their work are clear.



Well-read on many aspects of hysteria and hypnosis, Henderson was interested in the phenomenon of subliminal advertising. This is the theory that certain imagery, usually sexual in nature and artfully concealed in the main body of a photograph or canvas (such as this banned 1980s Coke advert, left) exerts a subtle influence on the mind and prompts a number of instinctive behaviours as well as a subconscious decision to purchase. Henderson wanted to establish if this was a genuine phenomenon at work and exactly what these instinctive behaviours might be. Henderson's simple yet ingenious experiment revealed a lot more about human nature than he had originally anticipated.

Henderson selected a large group of mature students from an average cross section of society. Choosing a hot, sunny day, he then divided the students into three sub-groups. Explaining the concept of subliminal imagery to the students and the purpose of the experiment, Henderson dipped a fine-tipped brush in sunscreen and set about painting various images and symbols onto the foreheads of all the students. He then instructed the students to face the sun for approximately 15-30 minutes in order to 'pink up the surrounding canvas'.<sup>31</sup>

With all of the students now believing that some kind of subliminal imagery was faintly visible on their foreheads, they were then asked to keep a diary and record any unusual personal interactions they encountered over the next seven days. But Henderson deliberately kept back vital information from the students. No-one in any of the three groups knew that:

- group A was the only group to have imagery of any kind painted onto their faces with the sunscreen solution
- group B had gibberish only painted onto their faces
- group C had their faces painted with only water, not sunscreen and thus, no sunning differential was ever evident on the skin

At the end of seven days' meticulous note-taking, three-quarters of the students across all three groups reported unusual interactions they firmly believed were the direct result of Henderson's

<sup>30</sup> The symptoms Hahnemann claimed he experienced from cinchona drew this comment from a senior representative of the Department of Tropical Medicine in Manchester: "This amount of quinine in an otherwise healthy adult would not be expected to produce any noticeable symptoms as a single dose." Personal correspondence, April 16th 1999

<sup>31</sup> Henderson, Charles, *Placebo Effects Prove the Value of Suggestion*, *Hypnotica*, August 2005

imagery on their foreheads, including those students painted with just gibberish and plain water. Furthermore, group A - the only group with any form of imagery at all - produced results no different to the other two groups, thus conforming to the opinion that still stands today, namely that the powers attributed to subliminal imagery remain unproven.<sup>32</sup> One woman with gibberish on her forehead claimed her husband had been far more attentive and sexually attracted to her than he had been in years. Others from group C - the 'water only' group - relayed stories of receiving more attention from sales assistants and others with whom they had interacted over the week.

And there were several stories from both males and females across all three groups reporting unusually high levels of sexual interest shown towards them by people whom they would normally have considered to be 'way out of their league'. Henderson's experiment had now become a platform from which to observe the power of human imagination, the only genuine power to reveal itself in the whole exercise. The key issues to consider in Henderson's experiment are as follows:

- the students' readiness to believe in Henderson and in his unproven 'product' - the subliminal image
- the students' unwavering trust in their own feelings and experiences
- the students were from a normal cross section of society

Henderson's approach to data gathering and his working relationship with his students bears a remarkable resemblance to Hahnemann's approach. Hahnemann distributes his 'products' amongst his students and suggests they might experience a number of unusual side-effects. Left to their own devices, the students monitor themselves and duly report a wide range of side-effects. Cocooned in their own little world, the students are at the mercy of their own fertile imaginations. The only difference between the two sets of experiments is data interpretation. Henderson was able to remain objective and could separate the fact from fantasy. Hahnemann was incapable of differentiating between the two.

Confronting Hahnemann with such arguments would have been a pointless exercise though. Objections to his methods had been raised numerous times before but had always fallen on deaf ears. Hahnemann believed he had been divinely called to heal mankind and he would now listen to no-one but himself. With his grandly-titled but meaningless *Organon of Medicine* now categorised into meticulous order, Hahnemann announced his new healing system to the world. It is this original work by Hahnemann - the *Organon of Medicine* and its many updates - that has remained the inspiration and guidance for all homoeopaths today. No rules for construction, no peer collaboration, no peer review process, just Hahnemann and his wild imaginings, a quill and ink and his firm belief that he had been called by God for a day such as this, describing his 'discovery' as "...the good which the Supreme Being permitted me to discover, or may I say, revealed to me, for the alleviation of the suffering of mankind."<sup>33</sup>

Convinced of his *like cures like* theory, Hahnemann began his consultations by asking his patient a laborious number of questions, building a sort of clinical picture of the condition based on how the patient looked and felt. If the patient's symptoms were '*a grey pallor with profuse sweating*' and through questioning, Hahnemann found the patient also suffered from abdominal cramps, he would open his enormous and detailed ledger and look up the various symptoms '*Hmmm, grey*

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<sup>32</sup> Subliminal advertising has existed for millennia in the form of subtle visual cues embedded in still pictures, but the technique first hit the big time in the 1950s, when marketer James Vicary invented a method for inserting subliminal messages into films. His technique would flash a simple text message for a single frame on a movie screen. 'Eat popcorn' or 'Drink Coke' would flit by on the screen too quickly for the conscious mind to see. The apparent success of the technique (which was never replicated in a controlled scientific setting) alarmed many and subliminal advertising was subsequently banned. "Embedded stimuli are difficult to characterize in terms of signal-detection theory or threshold-determination procedure because most of them remain unidentifiable even when focal attention is directed to them. Nevertheless, the use of the term subliminal is a *fait accompli*, and belief in such an influence is primarily the consequence of the writings and lectures of Wilson Bryan Key. In his books on the subject, Key offers no scientific evidence to support the existence of subliminal images; nor does he provide any empirical documentation of their imputed effects. Extravagant claims notwithstanding, advertising may affect us in subtle and indirect ways." Moore, Timothy E, *Subliminal Perception, Facts and Fallacies*, Dept Psychology, Glendon College, York University, Toronto at [http://www.sampsoncc.edu/staff/pwolf/sublimpercept\\_factsandfallacies.htm](http://www.sampsoncc.edu/staff/pwolf/sublimpercept_factsandfallacies.htm)

<sup>33</sup> Haehl, Richard, *ibid*

*looking, with sweating. Let's cross reference that with abdominal cramps ... Aha! Strychnine produces these very symptoms and is most certainly the cure for your condition, madam."*

Strychnine does indeed produce sweating and severe abdominal cramps and original patient records reveal that strychnine was one of many noxious substances regularly prescribed by Hahnemann according to his own pet theory. For stomach pains he prescribed one quarter-ounce doses of mercury. One poor soul was instructed to take half an ounce of sulphuric acid in the morning and another half-ounce the same evening! Once again, Hahnemann was the centre of attention and for all the wrong reasons. Here was a man whose patients were consistently being made worse by a system of medicine supposedly revealed to him by God. A bizarre conundrum indeed and with his system collapsing around him, along with many of his patients, a drastic rethink was in order. How could he reduce the toxicity of his beloved poisons? Biographer Richard Haehl tactfully notes the following:

*"Suddenly and without particular explanation, Hahnemann introduced very small and so-called infinitesimal doses. Most probably it is to be assumed that the unwelcome aggravations and secondary effects which followed upon remedies being prescribed according to 'the law of similars' induced this keen and careful observer to decrease the doses more and more."*<sup>34</sup>

It makes perfect sense. If you insist on prescribing strychnine, mercury and sulphuric acid as medicine but you don't want your patients keeling over as a result, simply dilute these substances till they are rendered non-existent but tell the patient your special dilution process has somehow made this watery mixture incredibly more powerful. And so, in an attempt to give an air of legitimacy to these sudden decreased doses, Hahnemann constructed another theory that to this day is arguably the most controversial theory in the whole of alternative medicine today - the theory of *less is more*. The alliance of *like cures like* and *less is more* heralded the birth of homoeopathy proper and these two principles remain unchanged to this day. So, what exactly is *less is more* and can less ever really be more?

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<sup>34</sup> Haehl, Richard, *ibid*

## Less is More?

*“He bridged inconsistencies by confusing, forgetting and making up names and by creating special realms where unrelated facts could co-exist without contradiction.”* **Pachter on Paracelsus**

The streaming eyes and running nose one suffers when chopping onions has made the onion a popular *like cures like* homoeopathic remedy for the common cold. But for the onion to become a homoeopathic remedy proper, the onion must first undergo the ritual of *potentisation* - Hahnemann’s special process by which the original onion formulae is diluted and diluted and somehow, becomes more powerful with every dilution.



“Wow, excellent turnout.”

The homoeopath first prepares the basic onion formula. The onion is chopped up and mixed with an equal amount of distilled water and left to stand in a stoppered jar from anywhere between one and six months. This solution then becomes what is known as *the mother tincture*. One drop of this mother tincture is then added to a test-tube containing ninety-nine drops of distilled water.

The test-tube is shaken vigorously for about one minute and then rapped sharply against a hard surface. The content of the test-tube is now considered to be *potentised* to the power of 1c. According to Julian Scott, author of *Natural Remedies for Women*, this simple shaking and rapping process “...spreads the remedy’s energy and vibrations through the preparation.”<sup>35</sup> One drop of this *potentised* 1c solution is then added to a second test-tube containing ninety-nine drops of distilled water. The shaking and rapping process takes place again, *potentising* the solution another centesimal to the power of 2c.

At this early stage of dilution, the original onion extract is already barely traceable in the solution, but according to the homoeopath, the onion’s *healing energies* are markedly increasing with each dilution. This process continues *ad-infinitum*, a test-tube marked 30c denoting the shaking, rapping and diluting ritual has taken place thirty times. The vast majority of OTC homoeopathic sales in high street chemists and health shops in the UK are 6c remedies. It is interesting to note how little of the original substance remains in a remedy diluted to 6c.

The mathematical theorem used to work out the number of times a substance can be divided before it is rendered non-existent was first proposed by 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian chemist Avogadro in his treatise on the divisibility of gases. To determine the amount of onion present in a 6c homoeopathic onion remedy (*Allium Cepa*), budding chemists might have no problem applying Avogadro’s formula of  $6.02 \times 10^{23}$ . For the less scientifically minded, fill the new Wembley Stadium to the roof with water. To this vast amount of water add one single drop of onion mother tincture. Stir thoroughly. Fill your test-tube with this mixture. Your test-tube now contains a measure of onion equivalent to 6c. A 12c dilution is equivalent to one drop of mother tincture added to the Atlantic Ocean. Literally nothing remains.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Scott, Julian *Natural Remedies for Women*, Gaia 1991

<sup>36</sup> Bambridge, A D *Homoeopathy - Results Beyond Reason* 1992

Finally, the homoeopath takes a pipette and squeezes two or three drops of the 6c solution into a tub containing thirty or forty inert sugar tablets, closes the lid and shakes the tub several times in the belief he is spreading the 'life force energy' from those two or three *potentised* onion drops throughout the entire contents. The remedy is now complete. But how can a substance that is being made weaker and weaker with each dilution become stronger and more powerful as the dilutions continue? Hahnemann's idea sparked the wit of many a critic. The following anecdote is found in the memoirs of Heine, a poet and writer of the time. Whilst on a train journey, Heine met the violinist Ernst who gave him a large Lyons sausage to give to his homoeopathic doctor in Paris. Heine and his wife had prepared no food for their long train journey and between them they ate most of the sausage. On reaching Paris, Heine cut off a minute amount from the remaining sliver of sausage, and posted it to the homoeopath with these words:

*"Mein Herr, your research maintains that a millionth part can have the greatest possible effect. Please receive a millionth part of a Lyons sausage which Herr Ernst asked me to give you. If there is any truth in homoeopathy, it will have the same effect on you as if I had sent you the whole sausage."*<sup>37</sup>

Concerning Hahnemann's mysterious shaking and rapping process, a Dr Mombert at the time stated:

*"An idea that yields nothing to the wildest freaks of the madhouse. The thought of this nonsense makes one giddy. In fact giddiness plays a very great part in the whole theory of homoeopathy. The idea is worthy of being recorded in the annals of the most notorious lunatic asylum."*<sup>38</sup>

How did the founder himself explain his special dilution process? Said Hahnemann:

*"Potentisation unlocks the natural substances. It uncovers and reveals the specific medicinal powers lying hidden in their soul."*<sup>39</sup>

In his book *The Natural Health Handbook*, CAM practitioner Anthony Campbell highlights the divide between homoeopaths who believe the remedies contain unearthly powers and those who try and explain their craft scientifically:

*"Hahnemann took the concept of the vital force and made it the cornerstone of his theory. Hahnemann often speaks of dynamisation [potentisation] as releasing spiritual forces in the medicines. Some of his successors found these references to the vital force, dynamisation and spiritual forces dangerous and undesirable, since they made homoeopathy into a kind of metaphysical system. To a considerable extent the subsequent development of homoeopathy is the story of the interplay and rivalry that occurred between these two schools."*

Whilst it could be argued that *less* pictures on the wall can have *more* of an impact upon the mind's eye, in the real world, there is not one practical experiment that shows that *less* is actually *more*. It is believed to be true only because those three fashionable little words '*less is more*' are repeated so often in today's popular press. So how do modern-day homoeopaths explain the theory of *less is more* with any sensibility?

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<sup>37</sup> Glasscheib, Dr H S *The March of Medicine*, McDonald & Co 1963

<sup>38</sup> Haehl, Richard, *ibid*

<sup>39</sup> Hahnemann, Christian Samuel, *ibid*

## The Memory of Water And other Fancies

*“Maybe the regression therapist can help water to recall its birth and other traumatic experiences. Could water also be psychotic or neurotic? Maybe psychotherapy is what’s needed. Can water have split or multiple personalities? We’re really getting in deep water here!” Paul Lee, **Homoeopathic Musings***

The fact is they don’t. They simply resort to waffle. Revered 20<sup>th</sup> century homoeopathic scientist George Adams offers the following quite outstanding example of woffleopathy as evidence for *less is more*:

*“For any given plane in space, the presence of a sphere evokes a point; for any given point a plane. I cannot stop to explain the comparatively simple means by which this happens. The mutual relation is literally one of expansion and contraction. To the laws of parallelism must be added those of the right angle and of angular measure generally. These too are determined from the infinite periphery inward. The way in which this happens would take too long to explain in the present context.”*

Readers baffled at this point should take comfort in the fact that the senior pharmacist at *Weleda* who sent me Adams’ essay wasn’t able to explain any of Adams’ reasoning either, stating, *“I’m afraid I can’t help you in this instance, I was never that good at geometry anyway.”* Homoeopathic author Dr Andrew Lockie pools together a few abstract ideas to present his own evidence for *less is more*:

*“For example, salmon can detect the scent of their home water in a dilution of one part in 1,000,000 and the human nose is capable of detecting mercaptan at concentrations of only one part in 500,000,000,000 parts of air.”*<sup>40</sup>

In a subsequent telephone conversation with Dr Lockie, he could offer no evidence or references for his claims and agreed his line of reasoning wasn’t actually relevant to the argument for *less is more*. Popular alternative author Brian Inglis (since deceased) defends the rationale of *less is more* as follows:

*“Orthodox medical and scientific literature abounds with examples of which the homoeopaths have gladly availed themselves - that thyroxin can influence the growth of tadpoles, that acetyl chloride can cause a fall in blood pressure when present in proportions of 1mg to 500,000 gallons of blood, that histamine in undetectable quantities provokes reactions in guinea-pigs, and so on. The homoeopaths themselves have evidence etc., etc..”*<sup>41</sup>

This from natural health author Dr Andrew Stanway:

*“By grinding and succussing (potentisation), more energy is built up in the molecules in rather the same way as people who are crammed into a railway compartment have more ‘burst-out’ energy when the train stops than a similar number of people sitting in a row of seats.”*<sup>42</sup>

Paracelsus’ indifference to sound methodology was much the same. His scientific approach is elegantly described by his biographer H. Pachter as follows: *“He bridged inconsistencies by confusing, forgetting, and making up names and by creating special realms where unrelated facts could co-exist without contradiction.”*<sup>43</sup> In a similar fashion, ‘salmon and mercaptan’, ‘histamine and guinea pigs’, ‘thyroxin and tadpoles’, ‘railway carriages and burst-out energy’, ‘infinite

<sup>40</sup> Lockie, Dr Andrew *Family Guide to Homoeopathy*, Hamish Hamilton 1990

<sup>41</sup> Inglis, Brian, *ibid*

<sup>42</sup> Stanway, Dr. Andrew, *Alternative Medicine a Guide to Natural Therapies*, London: Chancellor Press, 1986

<sup>43</sup> Pachter, H, *ibid*

peripherals' and 'expansion and contraction', '500 gallons of blood' and '500,000,000,000 parts of air' are just a few of the many unrelated and meaningless 'facts' and figures that comfortably co-exist in the special realm of homoeopathy. And Brian Inglis' use of the term '*scientific literature abounds*' is another of those well-worn phrases that actually mean nothing.

In their book *Opening Pandora's Box*, medical authors Gilbert and Mulkay draw attention to academic phrases that say one thing but mean quite another

- Correct within an order of magnitude ... *Wrong*
- It has long been known that ... *I haven't bothered to look up the references*
- It appears that... *I think*
- It is generally believed... *A couple of other guys think so too* <sup>44</sup>

Contrary to Inglis' statement, orthodox medical and scientific literature does *not* abound with evidence for the theory of *less is more*. But throw in a couple of meaningless homoeopathic 'facts and figures' and it all soon starts to look pretty convincing. Similarly, in their book *Laboratory Life*, Latour and Woolgar reveal how easily scientists can transform science fairytale into science 'fact'. Take professors Smith and Jones who desperately want their own pet theory accepted and published:

1. *The graph shows a series of peaks.*
2. *The patterns of peaks indicate that 'X' may be present in 'Y'*
3. *Smith and Jones studies make it likely that 'X' is present in 'Y'*
4. *'X' is present in 'Y'*
5. *Because 'X' is present in 'Y', we can deduce that ....*

*References: Smith, Jones* <sup>45</sup>

When pressed for a more detailed explanation of *less is more*, some authors choose simply to dodge the question altogether. Dr Lockie again: "*Many homoeopaths are not interested in providing proof. They know from their own experience that it works.*" <sup>46</sup>

In a similar fashion, homoeopath Chris Hammond states:

*"Here, again we begin to approach the deeper aspects of philosophy and I do not intend to say any more about it here. The method of preparing the remedies and how they act is not essential to the understanding of homoeopathy."*

Of course an understanding of the dilution process is essential to our understanding of homoeopathy. Can you imagine the fuss if Hammond's publisher suddenly decided to apply the theory of *less is more* to his royalty payments and offered up the same feeble excuses? "*Yes Mr Hammond, to all intents and purposes, your income does indeed appear to be lower. I do not intend to comment further here other than to reiterate that you are actually receiving more.*" I predict that within five seconds of such an explanation, we would witness a very different 'burst out energy' from Mr Hammond.

Dr Peter Fisher is the senior homoeopathic physician to the Queen and practices at the grandly titled Royal London Hospital for Integrated Medicine (formerly The London Homoeopathic Hospital). Woffling on just like George Adams, Fisher explains *less is more* as follows:

*"Other hypotheses which accept that there is something to be explained have emerged, most notably a group involving 'macroscopic quantum entanglement'. Voeikov suggests that peroxide species created by the succussion process may be significant. There may be homology here to the 'doping' of semiconductors. On a different theme, David Anick develops a mathematical model*

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<sup>44</sup> **Gilbert & Mulkay** *Opening Pandora's Box*, Cambridge University Press 1984

<sup>45</sup> **Latour & Woolgar** *Laboratory Life*, Princeton University Press 1986

<sup>46</sup> Lockie, Dr Andrew, *ibid.*

which elegantly accounts for the series ('octaves') of dilutions traditionally used in homoeopathic practice, independent of the underlying mechanism of information retention."<sup>47</sup>



The graph shows a series of octaves, elegantly accounts, maybe significant, X is present in Y, blah blah. References Voeikov, Anick, Fisher, Smith and Jones. Magnificent-sounding but meaningless all the same. More recently, Fisher quite shockingly defended the theory of less is more by marvelling at how such a small memory stick (left) can hold so much information. One of the most contentious theories being put forward by homoeopaths to support *less is more* is the memory of water. Fisher again:

*"The possibility that water has a memory is now being raised, that in some way it retains in its structure some trace of things it has previously been in contact with. There is now some fairly high-powered physics that says that this indeed may be a reality."*<sup>48</sup>

The 'memory of water' brings us to the clinical trial most frequently cited by homoeopaths as 'scientific proof' of *less is more*. This particular trial was carried out in the mid-1980s by non-conventional and now deceased scientist Jacques Benveniste who claimed that water was able to 'remember' a substance that had been in it, but wasn't in it anymore and that even the tiniest dilution leaves a 'memory imprint'. The memory of water, said Benveniste, was the long-awaited scientific explanation for Hahnemann's mysterious *potentisation*.

Benveniste's claims aroused the interest of a team of independent researchers comprising Dr John Maddox, the editor of *Nature* magazine, a government fraud investigator and James Randi, a psychic claims investigator and professional magician. They requested that Benveniste and colleagues repeat their experiments under independent supervision. If their methods and thinking were sound, their results should be easy to replicate. Benveniste agreed and unsurprisingly, the original results could not be replicated - a process that by rights, should have brought an immediate end to the theory of *the memory of water*. But it has not.

Despite Benveniste's failure to repeat a single one of his experiments, homoeopaths to this day are still arguing the case for the memory of water and protesting that having 'a magician' as part of the team of investigators was unprofessional. This is most unfair. Randi is a keen investigator with a keen mind and his organisation The James Randi Foundation has an ongoing offer of \$1M US for proof of various psychic and holistic claims, including demonstrable proof for homoeopathy. To date, this reward remains unclaimed.

Homoeopaths went on to accuse *Nature* of being just another conventional 'promo rag' that would naturally wish to discredit Benveniste. Whilst *Nature* has undoubtedly had a whole raft of conventional vested interests shaping its editorials over the years,<sup>49</sup> this should not cloud our judgment in this particular instance. Benveniste was asked to meet only the most basic of criteria and in each instance, his experiments failed miserably. As is often said in research circles, there's nothing like a little bit of follow-up research to dampen the initial 'positive results'.

That every single one of Benveniste's experiments failed has nothing to do with the fact that James Randi is a magician or that *Nature* carries slanted editorials. Benveniste's experiments came crashing down entirely of their own accord. This is the '*fairly high-powered physics*' referred to earlier by Dr Fisher. It is also interesting to note the silence within the homoeopathic community

<sup>47</sup> Bad Science, Memory of Water, 31.07.07 at [www.badscience.net/2007/08/490/](http://www.badscience.net/2007/08/490/)

<sup>48</sup> **Homoeopathy: A Realistic Alternative**, a video commentary by Materia Medica Comms. 1993

<sup>49</sup> **Barnett, Antony**, *Observer Newspapers*, December 7<sup>th</sup> 2003, few, if any, conventional medical journals are free from such bias. This *Observer* article is one of many reports showing how hundreds of articles appearing in conventional medical journals and claiming to be written by academics or doctors, have actually been penned by faceless 'ghost writers' in the pay of drug companies.

over the fact that Benveniste received a great deal of his research funding from France's largest manufacturer of homoeopathic medicines Boiron, a £multi-million public company at the time with 3,700 employees in more than 60 countries and with a clear vested interest in demonstrating some effect of ultra-dilute solutions and seeing to it that all experiments to that end were conducted by 'scientists' sympathetic to the cause.<sup>50</sup> The problem of vested interests is not just confined to conventional research circles it seems. More prosaically, comic Matt Kirshen tells his audience: "*The memory of water scares the hell out of me. I've done some weird things in the shower. I'm so glad water can't speak!*"

Let's remind ourselves once more of Hahnemann's more magical explanation of *less is more*. "*Potentisation unlocks the natural substances. It uncovers and reveals the specific medicinal powers lying hidden in their soul.*" There is no sensible physics or chemistry involved here. This is pure hubble-bubble alchemy. Hahnemann's methods and thinking mirrored those of travelling mystic and alchemist Johann Starck, whose occult teachings were most popular with Lodge members at that time. Hahnemann was simply following Starck's alchemic instructions and adding one or two slight variations to claim this new occult 'science' as his own. But Starck's teachings weren't new either. There is nothing new under the sun. The following text is from Paracelsus from some two hundred years earlier:



*"Doctors, I advise you to use alchemy in preparing magnaia, mysteria and arcana, and to separate the pure from the impure so that you may obtain a perfect medicine. God did not choose to give us the medicines prepared. He wants us to cook them ourselves."*

Since written records began, men have been 'down in the lab', mixing, scraping, cooking and purifying all manner of substances in their quest to discover the 'perfect medicine'. Separating this *essence* from earthly matter and bottling it was the alchemist's ultimate goal, above even that of turning base metal into gold. Whoever could isolate this magical essence would be in possession of *the elixir of life*, bringing untold riches to its discoverer and vibrant health and immortality to all. Hahnemann was just another alchemist on the same fervent trail, his life's purpose to isolate this *fifth essence* or *quintessence*, as Paracelsus called it. According to today's holistic thinking, it is this same vital force that permeates all matter, heals all diseases and holds the whole universe together.<sup>51</sup>

One can just picture Hahnemann working far into the night, shut away in his own little healing shed down at the bottom of the garden - a sort of Caractacus Potts feverishly mixing, scraping, diluting and diluting his concoctions to an infinitesimal degree. His diaries of the period contain a great deal of alchemic reference and symbolism. Hahnemann was convinced the diluting, shaking and rapping was making his watery mixtures incredibly more powerful with each shake and he soon had a vast array of empty liquids he believed had now been transformed into the most powerful medicines on earth! And, almost by way of confirmation of his divine discovery, Hahnemann's

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<sup>50</sup> Benveniste later claimed he had uncovered *the language of molecules*. Believing this language to be electromagnetic, Benveniste envisaged that drugs would soon be sent down the telephone and internet, enabling a whole pharmacy to be put on microchip. These claims led to Benveniste's complete scientific ostracism. A BBC2 programme *Heretics* ended with Benveniste wondering aloud whether he should have thrown away his original data.

<sup>51</sup> Similarly, in today's 'new physics', Stephen Hawkings' grand pronouncements on the chain of events he believes explains how we all got here are no different. Says Hawkings, "*It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going.*" Today, the hunt for this elixir of life takes many forms, such as the enormous funds granted to CERN and other physicists laboratories to determine our interstellar origins. Similar generous funding is also being granted to our DNA/gene/molecular science departments but we are not to enquire too closely into any of this higher wisdom, BUT WE MUST CONTINUE TO FUND! As medical historian James le Fanu notes in his pithy commentary on the world of the geneticist: "*Geneticists must insist that what they are doing is important to guarantee the continuous flow of research funds. They endorse the image of the 'blueprint' [of the gene] because their claim to holding the key to deciphering this blueprint elevates their role in society to that of the shaman - the possessor of arcane knowledge that no-one else can understand.*" **Le Fanu, James**, 'Stop all this Fuss about our Genes', *New Statesman*, 13<sup>th</sup> December 1999

patients suddenly began to get better. Hahnemann was becoming known as the doctor whose patients actually recovered - a rarity in those days.

To Hahnemann and his growing number of admirers, these recoveries could mean only one thing. His medicines truly did possess magical healing powers! As ever though with this therapy, there are other, much more down-to-earth reasons why homoeopathy appeared to work so effectively. Commenting again on the need for intellectual rigour when seeking to establish cause and effect in healing, Geoff Watts, presenter of BBC Radio 4 *Medicine Now* says:

*“Another trap for the unwary lies in the failure to distinguish between association and causation. The fact that two things, [A and B] repeatedly happen at the same time doesn’t mean that A is necessarily the consequence of B or vice-versa. Both may be the result of some third event [C], of which the observer is unaware.”*<sup>52</sup>

During one episode of *The Spa of Embarrassing Illnesses*, the therapist leading a session on inner healing asked the group how we can know if something is true. One group member immediately replied, *“Because we can feel it.”* Another member stated, *“Because of personal experience.”*<sup>53</sup> We have already seen in Charles Henderson’s subliminal message experiments how easily we can be led astray by feelings and experience. Here is another very good example of how we gravitate towards magical thinking unless we strive for intellectual consistency. Once again, its relevance to the debate on homoeopathy soon becomes clear. This is a true story by the way. Google it, if you like.

In a particular area of Italy, just north of Naples, there had been considerable fear among the locals for many centuries. A farmer had taken shelter in a cave during a storm with his pigs and overnight, all his pigs died, but not the farmer. Naturally curious, the townsfolk began taking various animals to the cave to try and solve the mystery. Horses and cattle remained untouched as did sheep and goats, but again the pigs died. So too did mice, rats and dogs. In no time at all, various theories were being bandied about, principally that the cave was inhabited by an evil and capricious mountain spirit. This ‘spirit’ soon attracted much wider attention and the *Grotto del Cane* (Cave of the Dogs) as it is now known was visited in fear and wonder by thousands.

The mystery of the dying animals was finally solved in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Belgian physician J. B. van Helmont (who first coined the term ‘gas’) discovered carbonic acid - a gaseous compound heavier than air. It was this poisonous, volcanic gas that was seeping through fissures in the cave and settling as a deadly, invisible carpet. As one guide book to the grotto noted: *“It remained suspended a little more than two palms from the ground; then to it was introduced a beast, which in three minutes died, obliged by its short stature to breathe this toxic substance.”*

Suffice to say, cause of death was not some capricious mountain spirit but people were free to carry on believing this magical explanation if they so wished, which many indeed did do so. *‘If it feels right, it is right!’* Not necessarily so.

Now, if you hadn’t already gathered, rationale and logic are not the sexiest of topics. Being logical is often perceived as being quite boring, nerdish even. Basically, we’d far rather have a little bit of magic in our lives. It is this wistful aspect to human nature that so muddies the debate on CAM. In a world seemingly starved of wonder, it is much more uplifting to believe in the magical rather than in the mundane. Many a stalwart cynic has been converted to magical thinking simply because they chose feelings and personal experience over rational observation. With this in mind, let’s now look at the rational and patently un-mysterious factors at work in Hahnemann’s supposedly ‘miraculous’ homeopathic healings.

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<sup>52</sup> Watts, Geoff *Pleasing The Patient*, Faber and Faber, 1992

<sup>53</sup> Spa of Embarrassing Illnesses UK TV Style, 22.01.08

# Our Wonderful Immune System

*“The universe is full of magical things patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper.”* **Eden Philpotts**

Frequent reference is made in natural healing books to our susceptibility to illness but rarely do these authors include anything in their writings that would give readers insight into just how wonderfully the human body is able to overcome the majority of these illnesses completely unaided. The following passage taken from *The March of Medicine* highlights what is possibly homoeopathy's one and only contribution to the advancement of medicine, albeit indirect:

*“However we may judge Hahnemann's theory, one thing must be admitted. It led to a decisive change in medical thought. Clear-headed doctors realised that a minimum dose of an ineffectual substance, such as homoeopaths used, was tantamount to giving no treatment. If the sick recovered all the same - and this could not be disputed - it must be a matter of self-healing. Homoeopathic treatment - in other words, no treatment - was often far better.”*

Fifty years ago, little was known about the human immune system. It was known there were cells in the blood that helped defend the body against disease, but what these cells did and how they did it was a mystery. Today, the whole realm of immunology still holds its students in awe and there is still much we do not understand in terms of intricacy of design and function. But knowledge of the human body's defence systems is growing all the time.

Along with the red cells carrying oxygen and larger white cells that fight any foreign germs they can find, the blood stream carries millions of little white cells called lymphocytes. T lymphocytes which originate in the thymus and B lymphocytes from the bone marrow are just two of the highly organised battalions of germ killers that make up the internal army defending us from bacteriological attack. Lennart Nilsson, author of *The Body Victorious* writes:

*“Suddenly the sight of injury, previously so peaceful is transformed into a battlefield on which the body's armed forces hurl themselves repeatedly at the encroaching micro-organisms, crushing and annihilating them. No one is pardoned, no prisoners are taken. All these events take place in a microscopic world where nothing, neither the body's cells nor the micro-organisms that assail them, measures more than a few thousandths of a millimetre across.”*

Dr. John Dwyer, clinical immunologist and author of *Body at War*, writes:

*“When nine-year-old Christine fell from her bike onto a thorny bush, she sustained minor abrasions to her hands and major bruises to her ego as her accident had resulted from her inability to keep up with her eleven-year-old brother. Her mother washed her hands, placed a kiss and a plaster over the small cut on the hand and life went on. Into that minor wound however had entered some bacteria picked up from the thorns and the next day they were making their presence felt. But numerous cells were dispatched to kill the organisms present and anywhere else for that matter.”*<sup>54</sup>

Mum did all the right things. She checked her daughter's cut was not too serious, washed it thoroughly, applied a plaster to it and gave her daughter a kiss. Mum's loving ministrations brought a smile back to her little girl's face and Christine's in-built army saw to the practical side of things. Christine's cut soon healed and with no need for any outside intervention.

But that's not what the homoeopath would have us believe. According to homoeopathic thinking, Christine's healing processes are stimulated into action by the administration of the appropriate homoeopathic remedy. The Homoeopathic Foundation tells us: *“Homoeopathic remedies assist the patient to regain health by stimulating the body's natural forces.”*<sup>55</sup> The homoeopath prescribes a remedy, genuinely convinced that he or she is assisting in 'kick-starting' the body's intricate healing

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<sup>54</sup> **Dwyer, Dr John** *Body at War*, Unwin Hyman 1988

<sup>55</sup> Homoeopathic Development Foundation Information leaflet 2004

mechanisms into action. For a cut such as Christine's, homoeopath Miranda Castro advises the following bizarre remedies:

- aconite - more commonly known as wolf bane, so called because hunters would dip their arrows in this poison before setting out on a wolf hunt
- belladonna - deadly nightshade
- lachesis - snake venom
- phosphoric acid - a poisonous rust proofing agent which Ms Castro recommends when blood is slow to clot
- ruta - an evergreen shrub, used centuries ago for coughs and colds and to ward off witches
- ledum - another evergreen shrub, native to Northern Europe and used to rid cattle of lice.<sup>56</sup>

None of the above substances, even in their natural state, play any part in the intricate process leading to the coagulation of blood or to the healing of a cut. These nonsense concoctions, mercifully diluted beyond existence beforehand, are the direct result of Castro *et al*, consulting and building upon Hahnemann's *Organon of Medicine*.

1<sup>st</sup> century writer and semi-physician Pliny has some wonderfully imaginative remedies recorded in his book *Encyclopaedia of the Natural World*. For a headache, Pliny recommends the genitals of a male fox be tied around the forehead and worn openly in the marketplace. 21<sup>st</sup> century homoeopathy lists over fifty types of headache and as many different remedies to cure them. Substances diluted beyond existence and considered efficacious for a headache include oyster shell, coffee, arsenic, squid ink, flint stone, rhododendron, and nitric acid. For corns, Pliny recommends we lay on our backs under the night sky, within hearing distance of a squeaky door hinge, whilst looking out for a shooting star. Pliny assures us that spotting said star will cause the corn to fall off within the month. For the same condition, Ms Castro recommends club moss and flint stone, again diluted beyond existence and to be taken at regular intervals. One is forced to ask whose remedies are the more bizarre?

Christine's cuts and bruises are just two of the many aches and ailments efficiently combated by a normally well-functioning immune system. Coughs, colds, flu, headaches, dizziness, temperatures, cuts and bruises, strains and sprains, stomach upsets and sicknesses are all conditions that in the main, are conquered without the need for any form of medical intervention.<sup>57</sup> These afflictions are known as 'self-limiting' and it is no coincidence homoeopathy majors on such conditions and subsequently records such 'excellent results!'

To the uninformed observer of course, the combination of taking a homoeopathic remedy (or any OTC conventional cough and cold remedies for that matter) and recovering soon after, confers upon these medicinally inert tablets considerable healing powers. The myriad CAM and conventional remedies available for the common cold are a case in point. There is actually no cure for the common cold. It runs its natural course and usually within three or four days, our immune system has gained the victory. But it is not uncommon for a pharmacist or homoeopath to recommend various remedies, saying: "*Within three to four days of taking this, your cold will very likely disappear completely!*" It was going to disappear within that time frame anyway.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> **Castro, Miranda** *Complete Homoeopathy*, MacMillan Press 1990

<sup>57</sup> If symptoms persist, advice should be sought from a qualified GP.

<sup>58</sup> "*Crucially, people who regularly purchase cold and flu remedies are usually ill when they make their purchases, and this phenomenon, known as the 'distress factor', is a real boon to manufacturers. Sick people don't think, they simply want relief - immediately. They don't care how it works and they don't usually care how much it costs. The distress factor, along with continuing government policy that encourages self-medication wherever possible, means that commercial cold and flu remedies are finding happy homes for increased sales not just in pharmacies but also in supermarkets, newsagents, petrol station forecourts and 24-hour convenience stores.*" *Behind the Label*, The Ecologist, 01.02.07 Were the general public to be given clear information on the nature of self-limiting illness etc., etc., the bottom would fall out of the minor ailments market tomorrow, conventional medicine included. £95,000,000 is spent on cough mixtures alone in the UK. The *BMJ*, however, has reported a recent trial involving 2,000 participants which found that, in most cases, the mixtures were no more effective than placebo. Cough Mixtures under scrutiny":

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/health/newsid\\_1807000/1807252.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/health/newsid_1807000/1807252.stm) The *New England Journal of Medicine* tells us: "*90% of patients who visit doctors have conditions that will either improve on their own or are out of reach of modern medicine's ability to solve.*" *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 7<sup>th</sup> February, 1991

The *Mail on Sunday* ran a pullout section entitled *Ultimate Health*. In part one, Michele B. was asked to try out homoeopathy over a period of a few weeks at the Wimbledon Clinic of Natural Medicine.

Week 1. *“He prescribed some homoeopathic drops for my cough and intestinal bug, slow-release vitamin C and bio-flavanoids to clear up the remains of infection and some helpful capsules, called ME1, to work on the immune system, circulation and energy production. He explained these are quite general remedies until he sees how my body reacts. The thought of finding out what is going on in my body is encouraging and I feel quite optimistic.”* £60

Week 2. *“No particular change. I still feel positive but I’m not sure I feel better, except I do have slightly more energy in the evenings. The stomach bug still has not disappeared, but I know homoeopathic remedies don’t work overnight and I certainly don’t feel worse.”* £35

Week 3. *“Amazing! I do feel better, definitely.”* £35<sup>59</sup>

But three weeks and £130.00 later, how much longer was Michele’s cough and intestinal complaint going to last anyway? There can be no doubt the Latin terminology on the labels also plays a vital role in bolstering the myth that homoeopathy is somehow a respectable medicine. *Natrum Muriaticum, Silica, Sepia, Baptisia Tinctoria* etc., etc., all sound most grand. Conversely, it is easy to see how the anglicising of homoeopathy’s some two thousand remedies would be disastrous in terms of customer appeal and subsequent sales. Who would seriously consider buying *nitric acid, mercury, plaster-of-Paris, gunpowder, conkers, squid ink, horsefly weed and strychnine* as medicine?

In my twenty years or so of researching and writing this book, not one CAM therapist of any persuasion has been willing to discuss self-limiting illness in any detail. They will either change the subject, terminate the interview or resort to their own special brand of holistic reasoning as per Dr Andrew Lockie’s earlier statement, *“Many homoeopaths are not interested in providing proof, because they know from their own experience that it works.”* No, homoeopathy does not work. It merely *appears* to work, either because taking the empty remedy coincides with the natural waning of the patient’s condition or because the remedy is being taken in conjunction with a rational, proven cure. We will see this phenomenon at work to glaring effect very shortly in the chapter dealing with veterinary homoeopathy. Homoeopathic critic Ben Goldacre wrote the following in the *Guardian*:

*“With alternative therapists, when you point out a problem with the evidence, people don’t engage with you about it, or read and reference your work. They get into a huff. They refuse to answer calls or email queries. They wave their hands and mutter sciency words such as ‘quantum’ and ‘nano’. They accuse you of being a paid plant from some big pharma conspiracy. They threaten to sue you. They shout, ‘What about thalidomide, science boy?’, they cry, they call you names, they hold lectures at their trade fairs about how you are a dangerous doctor, they contact and harass your employer, they try to dig up dirt from your personal life, or they actually threaten you with violence (this has all happened to me, and I’m compiling a great collection of stories for a nice documentary, so do keep it coming).”*<sup>60</sup>

Homoeopaths are also quick to point out instances in history where homoeopathy has been credited with the victory over certain major diseases such as cholera and typhoid. Homoeopath Dana Ullman tells his readers the following:

*“Homoeopathy became particularly popular in Europe and the United States in the 1800s because of its success in treating the epidemics that raged during that time, including cholera, typhoid, yellow fever and scarlet fever.”*<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> *Ultimate Health Magazine*, Mail on Sunday, Feb 1996

<sup>60</sup> Goldacre, Ben, *A Kind Of Magic*, Guardian Newspapers, 16.11.2007

<sup>61</sup> Ullmann, Dana, *ibid*

Ullman probably has no idea that Hahnemann's 'successes' with scarlet fever and smallpox were entirely fraudulent (as evidenced in a previous chapter). He is merely regurgitating the same old 'homoeopathisms' found in spades down at the local library. On the subject of typhoid, when Hahnemann announced he had discovered the cure for this disease, one sceptical enquirer asked Hahnemann whether putting a cupful of the appropriate remedy in Lake Geneva would provide a cure for the whole of Europe. Hahnemann replied, *"If I could shake the lake, then I would do exactly this."*<sup>62</sup> Regarding homoeopathy's success with cholera, homoeopathic author Andrew Lockie tells his readers,

*"A mortality rate of 16.4% was recorded in the homoeopathic hospitals, while the mortality rate was 51.8% in orthodox hospitals. The Board of Health at the time attempted to suppress the damning figures."*

At first glance, homoeopathy appears much the superior treatment. But nowhere in his book does Mr Lockie include any information which might help to set homoeopathy's 'success' into its proper context. Conventional treatment for cholera at that time included some nightmarish medicaments, including herbal enemas, sulphuric and nitric acid fumigations, vein-cutting, leeches, transfusions of bullock's blood and the ingestion of large amounts of either opium, mercury or turpentine. A certain Dr. Needham treated thirty cholera patients by injecting them with carbonate of soda. Only twenty-six of them died! For these sufferers, death was often a merciful relief.<sup>63</sup>

Homoeopathic treatment for the same condition involved no blood-letting, purgatives, Anenemas, turpentine or poisonous fumigations. Instead, the patient was regularly administered one or two drops of camphor diluted beyond existence. More importantly, this treatment was administered in a clean and hygienic environment. Of course the mortality rate was lower in the homoeopathic hospitals. But in no way should this fact be attributed to the clinical effects of homoeopathy, which are nil. As noted earlier in *The March of Medicine*, *"If the sick recovered all the same - and this could not be disputed - it must be a matter of self-healing. Homoeopathic treatment - in other words, no treatment - was often far better."*

In this instance, no treatment at all was the vital medicine. Cholera should not be viewed as just another self-limiting illness. It is a very serious bacterial condition and contracted most often where filth and squalor abounds. It is prevented primarily through the provision of clean drinking water, adequate housing and proper sanitation. And finally on the subject of homoeopathy and cholera, this letter dating from 1831, written by a Professor Hufeland to a practising homoeopath, discusses how certain test protocols were proposed to verify the healing powers of homoeopathy in cases of cholera cases but were rejected by the homoeopaths at the time.

*"I wish for nothing more than the truth to be proved in homoeopathy by strictly controlled experiments, including those for cholera. Therefore I wish the homoeopaths had not withdrawn from the supervision of the physicians detailed for that purpose, preventing the verification of their experiences. I now fear the results obtained will be thought one-sided, prejudiced and unreliable and as such will find very little credence."*

The next chapter in this book looks at another vital factor in the apparent success of homoeopathy and other CAM healings - the placebo effect.

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<sup>62</sup> Bambridge, A D, *ibid*

<sup>63</sup> Barnett, M, *The 1832 Cholera Epidemic, York*, Medical History Books, London 1972

## A Certain Charm

*“Thirty percent of medicine is showbiz.”* **Ronald Spark**

Derived from the Latin for *‘I will please’*, the term *placebo* has been adopted by modern medicine to describe the intangible healing mechanism inherent in the doctor/patient relationship. It is also the term given to any medication or intervention that contains no actual pharmacological agent but is prescribed to please the patient. The *Concise Medical Dictionary* defines placebo as: *‘A medicine that is ineffective but may help to relieve a condition because the patient has faith in its powers.’* The power of the placebo has been known since the beginning of medical history. Socrates wrote:

*“I said the cure itself is a certain leaf, but in addition to the leaf there is a certain charm which, if someone chants when he makes use of it, the medicine altogether restores him to health, but without the charm, there is no profit from the leaf.”*<sup>64</sup>

Socrates wrote these words around 420BC. Medical historian S J McMillan tells us that in that same period,

*“... we would be reading prescriptions such as the heel of an Abyssinian greyhound, the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey, not to mention the drugs the leading physicians were compounding out of the bacteria-laden dung of dogs, cats and flies.”*

Considering the all-round lack of medical knowledge and the havoc these revolting prescriptions must have caused, it is amazing the system of patient care known as ‘medicine’ did not completely collapse, along with the recipients of these nightmarish medications. In fact the opposite was the case - the system positively thrived! In his book, *Pleasing the Patient*, Geoff Watts says:

*“It’s a testament to the power of the placebo that all societies have been prepared to support and even honour men whose medicaments were simply useless if not actually dangerous.”*

There have been many books written on the diverse applications of the placebo in the modern therapeutic setting. Dr. Samuel Pfeiffer has this to say on the subject:

*“Approximately thirty to forty percent of all patients respond to placebos very well, while another third do not experience any improvement at all. People who respond well to fake medications are called ‘placebo responders’. It is more than coincidence that about the same percentage of patients, one third, show excellent results with acupuncture, homoeopathy, herbal remedies and other unconventional treatments.”*

Physiotherapist Dr A. Kohlrausch says this of reflexology:

*“The fact they are regularly treated over a prolonged period of time is of great significance to many patients. The therapist’s active attention gives the patient the comforting feeling that something is actually being done for him. As the therapy has to be applied individually, it undoubtedly has positive aspects, due to the eminently important contact between patient and therapist achieved through the laying on of hands.”*<sup>65</sup>

Dr Pfeiffer cites the following example of two ladies who were separately prescribed the same inert sugar tablet for the same minor condition by the same doctor. The only difference was the manner in which the doctor prescribed each tablet.

*“The first lady was told the tablet would alleviate her headache and give her new vigour. The second lady was warned the tablet was still in its experimental phase, and could possibly cause some unpleasant side effects but it was worth trying anyway. By the next day both patients*

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<sup>64</sup> **Buckman, Rob & Karl Sabbagh**, *Magic or Medicine*, Pan Books 1994

<sup>65</sup> **Kohlrausch, A** *Handbuch der physikalischen Therapie*, Vol II/I, Stuttgart 1971

experienced the symptoms that had been predicted. The first patient felt much better, the other complained of a tingling sensation in the fingertips and slight heartburn.”<sup>66</sup>

The differing reactions of the two ladies demonstrate the attitude of the practitioner and expectations of the patient both play a vital part in the process of feeling and getting better. The condensed table below, taken from Dr Rob Buckman’s book, *Magic or Medicine*, illustrates the extent to which the ‘practitioner as placebo’ is given room to exert its influence in the CAM consultation.

<b>Quality</b>	<b>Conventional Doctor</b>	<b>CAM Practitioner</b>
<b>Time</b>	Usually rushed, 6 minutes per patient. consultation – 20 for follow-up.	Unrushed, average 90 minutes for first consultation
<b>Emotion</b>	Empathetic abilities are often poor	Empathetic abilities are central to the practitioner’s skill.
<b>Symptom Handling</b>	Doctors trained to interpret patient’s symptoms in the light of knowledge of under-lying disease. May disbelieve or contradict patient’s view.	Accepts patient’s symptoms at face value.
<b>Appearance</b>	May appear uncertain. Obligated to express both sides of a controversy	Usually certain and confident.

While the British Medical Association acknowledges that doctors’ interpersonal skills are in need of improvement in some areas, these weaknesses should not be taken as evidence for the efficacy of homoeopathy. Homoeopathy is being asked to stand as a valid form of medicine in its own right, which clearly it cannot. I would also take issue with Dr Buckmann’s statement that doctors are ‘obliged to express both sides of a controversy.’ Such are the time pressures on the average GP, that many are not even aware of the controversies that may exist over a particular test or treatment or its levels of toxicity.<sup>67</sup> Writing in the UK *Independent*, Professor Edzard Ernst stated:

*“Essentially this line of argument implies that, regardless of the negative scientific verdict, homoeopathy is good for you. For a whole host of reasons, I disagree with this line of argument. Honesty is one of them. If the remedy is a placebo, we cannot truthfully pretend it isn’t. Such lies may be benign, but they are also unethical... Good medicine should always employ specific therapeutic effects (which homoeopathic remedies do not possess), as well as the non-specific effects of the therapeutic encounter, i.e. time, understanding, empathy and human warmth, which homoeopaths have lots of. Using only one or the other is quite simply not good medicine. So, when we celebrate Homoeopathy Awareness Week, we should honour Samuel Hahnemann - not for*

<sup>66</sup> Pfeiffer, Dr Samuel, *ibid*

<sup>67</sup> In a *British Medical Journal* article entitled ‘Shame: the elephant in the room’, Professor Frank Davidoff cites the case of Tolbutamide - a diabetes drug with known harmful side-effects. Why were doctors finding it difficult to listen to the evidence and change their prescribing habits, despite the dangers? “An important clue surfaced at the annual meeting of the American Diabetes Association soon after the study was published. During the discussion, a practitioner stood up and said he simply could not, and would not accept the findings, because admitting to his patients that he had been using an unsafe treatment would shame him in their eyes.” **Davidoff, Frank**, ‘Shame: the elephant in the room.’ *BMJ*, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2002

*inventing homoeopathy but for reminding us how important those non-specific elements of the therapeutic encounter really are.”*<sup>68</sup>

I think I know what Professor Ernst is getting at but I also think he’s being a tad over-generous in suggesting we honour Hahnemann for reminding us of the power of placebo. This was never Hahnemann’s claim about his ‘medicines’.

How one actually discerns between the power of placebo and the body’s natural ability to recover is always a good discussion point but is not the remit of this book. Most definitely though, it is a combination of these two processes plus those cyclical, waxing and waning illnesses that account for every single supposedly ‘amazing homoeopathic healing’ and for many other CAM recoveries also, as you may well now be realizing for yourself.

“*Ah yes, but wait a minute*”, says the therapist. “*If you’re suggesting homoeopathic success relies upon the power of placebo, then how do you explain our success with animals?*” A few minutes will now be spent looking at homoeopathy’s last remaining defence - a defence used by many other CAM therapists in their quest for legitimacy.

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<sup>68</sup> Ernst, E Homoeopathy; curing with kindness, *Independent Newspapers*, Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2010

## Veterinary Homoeopathy

*“Never accept your dog’s admiration as conclusive evidence that you are wonderful.” Ann Landers*

In his book *Alternative Medicine*, Dr Andrew Stanway states: *“Homoeopathic remedies have been used to excellent effect in animals. This is a good answer to those who feel there is a large placebo action in homoeopathy.”* Below is a typical example of a veterinary testimony on homoeopathy from natural health products magazine *Health Guardian*:

*“Homoeopathy is becoming a very popular therapy for animals of all kinds. A growing number of vets are turning to this gentle, safe and effective treatment. Virtually any condition can be treated with homoeopathic remedies - chronic problems unresponsive to conventional drugs - such as dermatitis, bronchitis and rheumatism - are especially well-suited to the deep-healing action of homoeopathy. Many pets pronounced incurable by conventional drugs have shown an amazing improvement with homoeopathy.”*



I contacted the author of the above to discuss in particular, ‘the amazing improvements’ mentioned in the article. Quite incredibly, Richard Allport, at the time the senior vice-president of The British Association of Homoeopathic Veterinary Surgeons (BAHVS) agreed there was actually no evidence to support any of his claims and graciously admitted the article was misleading, saying *“The successes referred to in the article are all anecdotal. You cannot really show that homoeopathy has actually had any effect.”* Allport’s article is more than just misleading, it breaks just about every ethical reporting code going. However, its inclusion in the widely-read *Health Guardian* will only have bolstered homoeopathy’s false reputation as an effective form of animal treatment.

Homoeopathic vet Tim Couzens who at the time of writing was the author of the ‘Help for Pets’ page in *Here’s Health*, would answer no questions on any aspect of his practice. He told me, *“It is a policy decision not to offer information. It makes my life much more simple if I don’t get involved.”* What sort of policy is that? The former honorary secretary of the BAHVS Christopher Day (above left) appeared in a stunningly uncritical video entitled *Homoeopathy - A Realistic Alternative*. In one scene, Mr Day was filmed administering a few drops of a homoeopathic remedy to a cow suffering from milk fever.

Shot of Mr Day in cow shed.

Narrator: *“From race horses to a dairy herd is all in a day’s work. The patient today is a cow with milk fever.”*

Mr. Day: *“We’re left with the fact there is a milk fever problem. She’s already had the calcium injections but it hasn’t completely worked. So what we’re going to do is see if homoeopathic remedies can restore the balance for her.”*

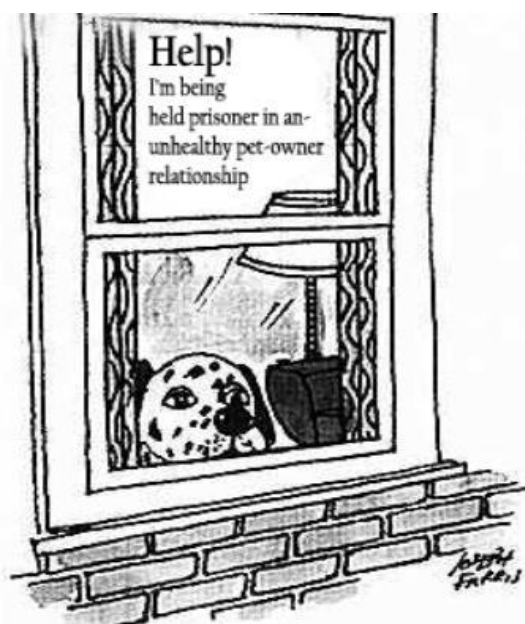
Mr. Day administers the drops.

Narrator: *“In less than an hour the cow showed a remarkable improvement. It soon became apparent why the farmer had entrusted his cows to Chris Day’s homoeopathic medicine.”*<sup>69</sup>

Closing shot of cow, looking sleek and healthy.

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<sup>69</sup> *Homoeopathy: A Realistic Alternative, ibid*



As ever, there is a good reason why all of this appears so convincing. Milk fever is caused by a fall in the level of blood calcium. The most common way to treat this condition is by the intravenous replacement of the calcium. With the deficiency rectified, the cow is soon back on its feet, usually between half an hour and six hours after the injection. With these facts in mind I wrote to Mr Day and noted the cow had first been given the necessary calcium injection. This was then followed by the homoeopathic treatment diluted to 6c - the equivalent of one drop of medicine mixed into the Atlantic Ocean. Moreover the homoeopathic treatment had been administered by Mr Day well within the time period expected for the conventional treatment to have its effect. Therefore, Mr Day's homoeopathic intervention did not actually confirm the efficacy of homoeopathy. The cow's recovery simply meant the calcium injection was doing the business but the coincidental homoeopathic treatment was getting all the credit.

Mr Day would answer none of these questions, replying only: *"Thank you for your facsimile message. I am not responsible for the video. I advise you to contact the company who made it. I trust they will be able to help you."* On speaking to *Materia Medica*, the company which produced the video, the producer pointed out quite rightly that explaining Mr Day's methods was not his responsibility, having been employed purely to film Mr Day's exploits. Repeated attempts to contact Mr. Day eventually resulted in a very brief conversation. He would offer no information on any of his treatments and when questioned over his milk fever remedy coinciding with the calcium injection, he replied: *"The cow needed balancing anyway."* This typifies the quality of evidence supporting veterinary homoeopathy. In short, there isn't any. Writing for a website devoted to the undoing of 'magical veterinary practices', the author makes the following comment:

*"We must keep an open mind!" is a cry frequently heard from veterinary surgeons who have little familiarity with homoeopathy and whose main concern seems to be to avoid offending anyone. This is usually followed by the assertion, 'We need more research!' An open mind is an admirable approach to a new idea. However, it is possible to have such an open mind that your brain falls out."*<sup>70</sup>

One orthodox vet who worked closely with a homoeopathic vet over a twelve-month period told me: *"In that time I did not see one instance that demonstrates that homoeopathy cured animals."* Just as in human homoeopathy, it is self-limiting illness and/or the coinciding of homoeopathic treatment with the necessary conventional treatment that accounts for the entire spectrum of homoeopathy's so-called 'success' with animals; that and a liberal dose of wildly inaccurate reporting. Veterinary homoeopathy is a dead parrot.<sup>71</sup>

We have seen over the last few chapters how *positive personal experience* is of little value when evaluating the worth of homoeopathy. We have also been given insight into the part played by self-limiting illness and the placebo effect. Just as there is lack of comment on self-limiting illnesses in CAM literature, Geoff Watts notes the same scarcity of comment on placebo.

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<sup>70</sup> **Keeping an open mind** at [www.vetpath.co.uk/voodoo/research.html](http://www.vetpath.co.uk/voodoo/research.html)

<sup>71</sup> We must also be aware that some 35% of conventional veterinary practice income is derived from annual boosters and other such 'preventatives'. But are they actually necessary? The following UK *Daily Express* article indicates the financial ties between the pharmaceutical industries and the UK veterinary establishment: *"Government advisers on the safety of animal medicines have financial ties with the drugs companies. More than half of UK's Veterinary Medicines Directorate experts - 26 out of 48 - are part-funded by drug companies. Many are paid for consultancy work, given research grants or hold shares. Richard Young, of the Soil Association, said, "There is a cosy, pro-industry culture running through the regulatory framework. Because of this, there is a tendency for committee members to look upon products in a non-critical way."*

*“A skim through the indexes of the collection on my own shelves reveals that references of any kind to placebos or the placebo effect are something of a rarity. Few of these books offer the reader even the slightest hint that there might be questions asked about how and why the methods they describe might actually work.”*<sup>72</sup>

The inclusion of such information would of course reduce the perceived benefits of homoeopathy to nil immediately. A little further on in his book on the power of placebo, Geoff Watts points out that, *“... a great deal of what passes between patients and [CAM] practitioners is, at best, mere pleasantry and, at worst, wastefully irrelevant to the problems that had prompted the patients to seek help.”*<sup>73</sup>

Let’s now look at the construct of the standard homoeopathic consultation. Hold on to your hats though. From here on in, it’s a steep descent into what can only be described as the madness of homoeopathy.

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<sup>72</sup> Watts, Geoff, *ibid*

<sup>73</sup> Watts, Geoff, *ibid*

## The Dance Of Homoeopathy

*“The most brilliant propagandist technique will yield no success unless one fundamental principle is borne in mind constantly - it must confine itself to a few points and repeat them over and over.” Joseph Goebbels*

Hahnemann listed over one hundred questions he believed were necessary to ask the patient in order to arrive at the best possible diagnosis and remedy. Following in the Master’s footsteps, this next extract is taken from a modern-day homoeopathic guide I picked up from a clinic in south Manchester, entitled *Instructions for Patients - How to Communicate Your Case to the Practitioner*. You decide how much of it is wastefully irrelevant.

*“To simply state ‘I have a headache,’ is too general, but when you add to that statement ‘sharp shooting pains in the left side of the head and temple’, you simplify the selection of the remedy very much. The following suggestions and questions will aid the patient in giving such a description that the homoeopath may prescribe intelligently.*

**What kind of cough have you?** - constant, croupy, crowing, deep, dry, explosive, fatiguing, forcible, frequent, gagging, hacking, jerking, laboured, loose, loud, moist, muffled, nervous, noisy, painful, racking, rapid, rattling, ringing, rough, scraping, screeching, shaking, sharp, short shrill in single coughs, spasmodic, sudden, suffocative, tearing, teasing, tackling, tight, spasmodic, sudden, suffocating, tearing, teasing tight, tormenting, violent, wheezing, whistling.

**What causes the cough?** - anger, anxiety, laughing, liver troubles, least motion, playing the piano, windy weather?

**Do you cough anything up?** - What does it taste like? Can you spit it out? Does it fly out of the mouth while coughing? Does it float in water or sink? Is it painful when you cough? What kind of pain is it? Boring, cutting, digging, drawing, dull, gnawing, jerking, labour-like, oppressive, paralytic, piercing, pinching, pressing, pricking, pulsative, stitching, shooting, tearing, violent? Sensations are also important and should be especially noted. It may be like a mouse or bug crawling, as if the heart was grasped by an iron hand, as if claws were grasping the bowels.

**Does anything cause the trouble to be worse or better?** It may be reading, writing, music, ascending or descending the stairs, breathing, looking up, down or sideways, excitement, fright, grief, sorrow, fasting, motion or quiet, when nose is discharging or dry, gratification of the passions, before or during a thunderstorm, talking, hearing others talking, singing, wet, dry, windy, or cloudy weather.

**When does the cough come on?** Early morning, mid-morning, before noon etc., etc..?”<sup>74</sup>

This ‘intelligent way’ of prescribing has been described by one critic as, *“the naivest collection of scurrilous, scientific rubbish compiled with ingenious good faith that ever appeared in the literature of medicine.”*<sup>75</sup> Who could disagree?

Back at Anytown Natural Health Centre, a patient (we’ll call her Jenny) is visiting a homoeopath for the first time and is suffering from an unusually heavy cold and occasional stomach cramps. Jenny has no idea of the true history or workings of homoeopathy. In fact, this is Jenny’s first brush with any sort of natural therapy at all. She’s visiting the centre on the recommendation of a friend. The waiting room is pleasingly laid out with deep, comfortable sofas and chairs and the lilting pan-pipe music and scented hearth candles are most relaxing. It’s a very different experience to the sparse and rather clinical waiting room down at the local surgery with its plastic-backed chairs, ‘scare ’em stupid’ flu jab posters and tattered pile of very dated Readers’ Digests.

<sup>74</sup> Levenshulme Homoeopathic Clinic, Manchester, waiting room information leaflet for the patient

<sup>75</sup> Glasscheib, Dr H S, *ibid*

Jenny sinks into a comfortable armchair with one of the many natural health magazines scattered around the room and begins reading an article on the latest successes with various natural treatments. The article includes a brief snippet on a homoeopathic treatment for stress and irritability, *Androctonus Amurreuxi* prescribed at 30C. Jenny's also been feeling a bit stressed and irritated recently. The article does not however reveal the fact that *Androctonus Amurreuxi* is actually a fat-tailed scorpion or that 30C denotes this scorpion - a medicinally useless creature to begin with, has through homoeopathy's weird processes, been crushed, shaken, stirred and diluted to infinity and beyond, making it an even more useless 'medicine' than it was in the first place, if that were possible.

Neither is there any background information on how the remedy was arrived at or on chief scorpion researcher Jeremy Sherr and his wacky 'research' methods: "*I hunted down a scorpion one morning. I'd read you could eject the poison by connecting it to twelve volts, so I connected the scorpion up to two car battery cables, revved up the engine and the scorpion ejected its poison.*"<sup>76</sup> Oh, to have been a fly on the wall for that experiment! It would also have been useful for Jenny to have known that just one or two drops of this 'crushed scorpion juice', diluted beyond existence elicited the following almost psychotic symptoms in one of Sherr's 'proving' students:

- *A friend commented I did not look like myself*
- *Did shopping in a very disorganised manner*
- *Pushed children out of bed with no compassion*
- *Felt I was driving slowly - could not judge speed of cars*
- *A desire to break things*
- *Just a black thunder within me, eyes staring full of hate, just looking at the children sends them frantic*
- *In the evening became manic, stalked the streets, believed my umbrella was a knife*
- *In a public place, jumped up and played antics, though many people watched, did not care*
- *Dreamed I was being chased by my husband. Awoke terrified. Hit him in the eye*<sup>77</sup>

Poor chap! And all these symptoms from consuming just a few drops of highly potent scorpion juice - to anybody else, just plain water. We should spare a thought for this man. His wife it seems has become totally swept up in her magical and evidently unhealthy homoeopathic thinking.

But none of this madness is apparent to Jenny as she sits and reads her magazine. Everything about the article and her surroundings seems natural, healthy and right. To Jenny, it's as if this is medicine being practiced as it should be.

Jenny's name is called and soon into her consultation, Jenny realises the practitioner is taking a genuine interest in her situation, is asking her lots of questions and is being a very attentive listener. The relaxed questioning continues, what type of stomach pain, sharp-shooting, dull aching, continuous, occasional, at night, during the day etc., etc.? And when Jenny confessed her children sometimes make her so cross that she felt like breaking things, even less will she be aware that her stress symptoms have now indeed brought Jeremy Sherr's crushed and electrocuted scorpion remedy into the clinical picture.

The homoeopath enters all this useless data into the computer. To Jenny, the consultation, although slightly unusual, has been most comprehensive. And most importantly, she feels she's been listened to. A reassuring smile from the homoeopath signals the appropriate remedies have been identified. But Jenny will have no idea her heavy cold, stomach cramps and stress symptoms have flagged up diluted onion, strychnine and crushed scorpion as the cure.

The forty-five minute session concludes and Jenny pays the £65.00 consultation fee (the average initial fee) and feels better just for having had the chance to talk. Jenny is duly supplied *Alium Cepa* (onion) for her cold, *Nux Vomica* (strychnine) for her stomach cramps and *Androctonus Amurreuxi* (fat-tailed scorpion) for stress - all remedies at 30c. In other words, one single drop of onion,

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<sup>76</sup> Whole Health Now, The Jeremy Sherr Interview at [www.wholehealthnow.com/homeopathy\\_pro/jeremy\\_sherr\\_6.html](http://www.wholehealthnow.com/homeopathy_pro/jeremy_sherr_6.html)

<sup>77</sup> **Sherr, Jeremy** *Homoeopathic Proving of Scorpion*, Helios 1990

strychnine and scorpion juice each diluted in an amount of water greater than the Atlantic Ocean - the resulting 3 x 10 millilitre mixtures charged to Jenny at £7.50 per bottle. Jenny is given strict instructions on how and at what time of day her little pills/drops should be taken. She mustn't drink alcohol or coffee or use toothpaste beforehand and she mustn't store the pills near sunlight or touch them with her fingers, lest their 'subtle energies' be weakened. The homoeopath also recommends that Jenny keeps a chart to plot her everyday health ups and downs and she should also make note of any further symptoms that put in an appearance during the day.



Jenny begins her course of homoeopathic tablets and dutifully diarises all her little aches and pains. In consenting to this regime, Jenny, an otherwise sensible mother of three and trained accountant, is now actively participating in the ritual and charm of homoeopathy. Little by little, Jenny is becoming more and more self- and homoeopathy-absorbed (left). This is the dance.

A few days later and Jenny's feeling much perkier and after a week, she has fully recovered. With all her own input over the last week, Jenny quite naturally feels she's been instrumental in the process of getting better. Jenny and homoeopathy make a great team! Jenny telephones her friend to thank her and tell her how remarkably well she feels and the next five minutes is spent chatting about what else homoeopathy might be useful for. The underlying common-sense reasons for Jenny's recovery, which have nothing at all to do with any of the empty liquids and pills she's been taking have not featured once in the conversation. Neither has the general insanity of it all. Instead, Jenny is recommended a few books to get her started in her new-found interest.

Down at the local library, the glowing introductions to the books she's been recommended all tell of an honourable genius who, despite the ridicule and mockery, discovered a safe, gentle and effective medicine for mankind. Jenny's single 'positive personal experience' of homoeopathy reinforces the clap-trap history she's now reading on its founder. Jenny isn't stupid by any means, she's just misinformed and as a result, she's now well on her way to becoming another loyal 'student' of homoeopathy.

We laughed at the gullibility of those handing over fistfuls of cash to the charismatic Count de St Germaine for his *elixir of life* and to Robert Bodrum for his *Social Happiness Cordial*, but in exactly the same manner, Jenny and millions like her are handing over their £65.00-plus to the same hocko-grogle vendors in exchange for equally bizarre elixirs labelled 'homoeopathic medicine'. And just like those Italian villagers from centuries before, holding fast to their belief in magical mountain spirits, Jenny's skewed interpretation of recent events is slowly leading her into equally irrational thinking patterns.

Jenny's step-by-step easy entry into the enticing new world of alternative health is typical of the way in which millions of people, deprived of the facts become stalwart followers of homoeopathy and other such therapies. How long before Jenny's senses have been so dulled that she sees nothing wrong in Master Sherr's wacky 'scorpion proving' methods? How long before Jenny herself volunteers for a few 'proving' evenings, only to find later that evening that she is now manically stalking the streets, believing her umbrella is a knife?

This is where the harm lies in homoeopathy and other CAM treatments. It's not the direct therapeutic effects of the therapies themselves which, in almost all instances, are nil.<sup>78</sup> It's the merry old dance our weakened thinking and self-absorption can lead us. One can only reiterate the words of Donald Gould who warns that by adopting such reasoning, we are, "*... all the more likely to adopt the same strategy in other situations, from dealing with the family, to managing the national economy and from chairing the parish council to handling arsenals of weapons. The result is likely to be unhappy and stands a decent chance of proving a disaster. Irrational beliefs are always dangerously corrupting, even when they only relate to the cause and cure of piles.*"

Where might Jenny's twisted thinking lead her in the long run? If you think stalking the streets at night believing your umbrellas is a knife is bizarre, the next chapter on CAM 'science and scientists' brings a whole new dimension to the weird and wacky.

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<sup>78</sup> Fort Lauderdale *Sun Sentinel* Oct 31<sup>st</sup> 1999 Psychic claims investigator James Randi downed an entire bottle of homoeopathic sleeping tablets - more than 20 times the recommended dose - before a Congressional House science and technology committee. "*When you buy these quack preparations, you are getting nothing. The point of this demonstration is not to prove that homoeopathic compounds are safe, but that they are useless.*" In reply, Monica Miller for the US National Centre for Homoeopathy said, "*Randi's stunt was an unfair test. For the sleeping potion to work on Randi, he probably needs to be diagnosed by a homoeopathic practitioner who would recommend the proper remedy.*" In answer to this, The *Sun Sentinel* editorial stated that if that were the only way homoeopathic remedies were designed to work, the system would surely collapse as most homoeopathic remedies are bought over the counter or off the shelf.

## Gimme The Moonlight!

*“The trouble with always trying to preserve the health of the body is that it is so difficult to do without destroying the health of the mind.” GK Chesterton*

Whilst *potentised* scorpion, flintstone, squid ink, sand, nitric acid and rhododendron must surely prompt concern over homoeopathy’s hijacking of the term medicine, these potions pale into insignificance alongside the more mystical chemistry taking place in the UK’s leading homoeopathic laboratories. Both Starck and Paracelsus would be delighted to learn that *Luna* and *Sol Britannic* have now been *transmuted* into medicines and are now regularly prescribed. Otherwise known as Moonlight and British Sunlight, these two remedies are available in *potentised* tablet form from the Helios Pharmacy, Royal Tunbridge Wells. Briefly touched upon in the opening chapter, homoeopaths Lesley King and Bob Lawrence explain here in more detail their preparation of *potentised* moonlight:

*“The Luna was prepared from the emanations of the full harvest moon on 7<sup>th</sup> October 1987. Ethyl alcohol solution was exposed directly to the moon’s rays with a mirror positioned behind the vial to reflect the emanations back through the solution to intensify the irradiation process. This mixture was potentised up to 30c and beyond.”<sup>79</sup>*

The full story of *potentised* moonlight is found in King and Lawrence’s handbook, *Luna - A Proving*. It is apparent from their writings the mixing, shaking, stirring and rapping process has not changed since Hahnemann’s day and neither has the method of proving. The following is a condensed list of symptoms recorded by one of King’s students after taking diluted moonlight water over a fourteen days period:

*“I took the remedy last thing at night. The first day I awoke after having had a vivid dream. I developed a mouth ulcer. As the day passed, my lips began to get very dry and my thirst more compelling. I ached all over and a tingling in my breast drove me frantic. By day seven, I was quite disoriented. Food felt strange and offensive in my mouth. I made many mistakes in speaking and confusing tenses. It was as if I was no longer connected up as an integrated human being. Day eight: found it hard to live according to the clock, structures are melting away. Day nine: I feel a silence between me and the outside world. Day fourteen: irritated by my children.”*

Scorpion murderer Jeremy Sherr’s experiments with chocolate diluted to 30C elicited the following symptoms: ‘a desire to cut my hair short, a fear of cockroaches, a heaviness at the base of the brain, I get lesions and the room starts flickering’<sup>80</sup> Mr Sherr devoted over one thousand hours to the ‘proving’ of chocolate and has since gone on to trial yew tree, eagle’s blood, salmon, diamond and plutonium! In his book, *Let's Talk About Homoeopathy*, Trevor Smith takes his own special brand of homoeopathic madness a step further. Here, he discusses ‘noises that make you sick’ and describes how he treats people disturbed by electrical hum:

*“Low frequency pollution or ‘hum’ is now recognised as a major health hazard for many. A woman of 60 came with a problem of generalised headaches and insomnia, since being exposed in her home to low frequency noise from a large industrial cold store about a quarter of a mile away. A homoeopath made a potency of low frequency noise by exposing a 50% ethanol and water mix to the vibrations in the area for forty-eight hours. It was then made up to 6c. The results were rapid and startling. The patient phoned after a fortnight to say how much better she felt.”*

More bizarre still, if that were possible, are the experiments of Charles Wansbrough at the Centre for Bioliminal Homoeopathy in London SW18. Here, he discusses the remedy Berlin Wall at 30c - for those who feel a sense of separation from the world, who feel like they want to escape from their circumstances but cannot. No, this is not an April 1<sup>st</sup> wind-up. Charles really did formulate this remedy.

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<sup>79</sup> Lawrence & King, *Luna - A Proving*, Helios Pharmacy Print 1993

<sup>80</sup> Sherr, Jeremy *Homoeopathic Proving of Chocolate*, Helios Pharmacy Print 1993

*“The remedy was made from a chunk of the original Berlin Wall after it was reduced to rubble. It was a composite piece of concrete and stone with pieces of painted blue cement. It was sent to Helios for potentiation to 30c... For those who suffer from family strife and oppression, often from childhood; for those brought up in the shadow of an oppressor; sense of being unable to escape; especially when personal and creative expression is suppressed... I have learnt to prescribe Berlin Wall successfully in over fifteen cases and each prescription has resulted in a dramatic shift in the health of the individual.”<sup>81</sup>*

Just when a homoeopath is given the chance to demonstrate there's actually something concrete in homoeopathy, he goes and dilutes it beyond existence! Homoeopath Mary English made up her remedy *Tempesta* by leaving an empty bottle out in a thunderstorm to catch the rain and the storm's pulsating energies.

*“Hooray! I ran into the garden with my bottle and laid it on the step, then sat in my veranda and watched the storm unfold. Thunder raged, lightning flashed, and rain beat heavily onto the ground; no wind, just pure energy wrapped around me. I wanted to capture the maximum amount of **whooooosh**. I ran into the deluge and rescued my bottle and skipped back inside. I sent the sample off to be potentised at Helios and then set about organising a proving, having learned about them from Jeremy Sherr. I was worried that this remedy would be rubbished by other homoeopaths, so I was at pains to ensure the proving I did was across a cross section of people: male, female, gay, straight and also an actual homoeopath. I managed to get all the elements from astrology; Earth, Air, Fire and Water; namely; Taurus x 2, Libra x 2, Gemini, Leo, Scorpio and Pisces. You can draw your own conclusions but please be kind enough to respect the fact this work took months to collate and was conducted in a professional, caring manner. I would appreciate you doing the same when you comment on it.”<sup>82</sup>*

Mary has also conducted homoeopathic experiments with a piece of wood from a shipwreck, some rubble from Old Wardour Castle, a few drops of Roman Bath Spa Water, a fragment of stone from Stanton Drew Circle in Somerset and another fragment from the Great Wall of China. Mary's work is summarised beautifully by W. Deutscher who says of this peculiar exactness:

*“We concentrate on consistency without much concern over what it is we are being consistent about, or whether we are consistently right or wrong. As a consequence, we have been learning a great deal about how to follow an incorrect course with the maximum of precision.”<sup>83</sup>*

There are homoeopathic 'scientists' who still vigorously defend Benveniste's experiments with the *memory of water*. Among those is Roger Coghill, author of *Electro Healing - Medicine for the Future*. Coghill asserts that Benveniste's experiments failed only because of various electrical interferences emanating from a photocopier, video camera and nearby strip lights. Mr Coghill recommends a laboratory lined entirely with copper which has a window fitted with a sliding gauze panel which can be raised or lowered by means of chains and pulleys. *“Had Benveniste insisted on the same conditions, the three investigators from Nature would have come back with quite a different story.”*

Other 'healing' instruments recommended by Mr Coghill include the 'Cosmotron' - a magnetic pendant about 4.5cm across, marketed in this country by a Mrs H. Pickles of Leeds: *‘It concentrates the vital forces of the cosmos within and beams them out to the wearer’*, and 'The Rayma Biomagnetic Regulator', a metallic bracelet of Spanish manufacture, made of a polarised electrolytic material, which has apparently *“...brought relief to millions in Europe”* and Mr Coghill's own invention which he promotes as 'The Coghill Supermagnet'. When applied to the top of the head for two minutes, this device is said to improve sexual performance. When applied to the side of the scalp, it allegedly improves co-ordination. Currently retailing at around £40 on numerous websites, the Coghill Supermagnet can also be used as an intestinal worm control for small mammals. *“Simply apply the magnet to the abdomen of the animal each night for two weeks.”<sup>84</sup>*

<sup>81</sup> Berlin Wall, a remedy of power at [www.biolumanetics.net/tantalus/Cases/BerlinWall.htm](http://www.biolumanetics.net/tantalus/Cases/BerlinWall.htm)

<sup>82</sup> Tempesta - storm remedy at <http://www.maryenglish.com/stormremedy1.html>

<sup>83</sup> Deutscher, W, *Research Methodology*, UMIST science course hand-out 1994

<sup>84</sup> Coghill, Roger, *ibid*

Homoeopathy's fascination for all things electro-magnetic manifests itself in the bizarre practice of radionics - electro-divination by any other name. Until recently, the use of radionics in the CAM setting had mostly been confined to naturopathy but is now increasingly being used to determine the correct *vibrational frequency* of homoeopathic and other essence-based 'remedies'.

Today's radionics apparatus is based loosely on Dr. Abrams' infamous 'Black Box' of the 1920s - a mysterious shoe box-sized machine supposedly able to detect physical and mental disharmonies in the patient by 'scanning' samples of hair, blood or saliva. Submitting your sample along with a fee of approximately £45.00, the practitioner feeds the sample into the machine, interprets the various signals emitting from a useless array of dials, gauges and winking lights and then returns the diagnosis along with the healing remedy - supposedly 'vibrating' at a corresponding frequency to the disease. The patient takes the remedy which cancels out the dis-ease, apparently. Not dissimilar thinking to Stephen Hawking's strange idea that should we be unlucky enough to bump into our doppelgänger (our exact twin), we would both instantly disappear.

Skeptics wishing to determine the sensibility of the electronics contained in these little boxes are told that removing the back of the box upsets the delicate nature of the instrument. Doing so, said Abrams, would destroy its diagnostic powers. One firm, South West Radionics Association, told me I would not understand the internal workings of the box without a complete grasp of radionics theory and a background in quantum mechanics. Interestingly, there have been many skeptics over the years who, unbeknownst to these practitioners, have submitted samples of blood, hair and saliva of *non-human* origin. In one instance, the saliva of a young cow returned the verdict of '*an inordinate interest in women*'. Another reading taken from the blood of a rooster prompted the practitioner to pronounce the root of the patient's problem as '*suffering from bad teeth and a recurring sinus infection.*'<sup>85</sup>

A few years later, Abrams announced his new, improved box - the Oscilloclast, claiming it could produce the healing frequency for every disease known to man. Simply identify the patient's condition, set the Oscilloclast to the correct healing vibrational level for that condition, apply the electrode to the patient and... "*Hey Presto!*", the patient receives a drug-free healing treatment. For an up-front payment of \$250 plus \$5.00 a month rental thereafter, the franchise operator also had to sign a contract agreeing never to open the hermetically sealed device. Oscilloclast sales literature boasted many glowing testimonials, including the following: "*We are swamped with work and our three cord Oscilloclast is working to full capacity. We are still astonishing the incredulous and keeping busy. We must have another Oscilloclast at once for there are so many here who demand treatment.*"

In 1942 and after only one year's study, US quack Dr Eugene Crum graduated at the College of Drugless Physicians with degrees in naturopathy, electro-therapeutics, chiropractic, and herbal materia medica. Crum patented his own version of Abrams' oscilloclast. The co-etherator consisted of a small wooden box with a slot in the top and 26 holes in the front. Each hole was covered with tissue paper printed with letters of the alphabet. Inside the box was a tangle of unconnected wires, a glass vial filled with water and a light bulb with a pull cord - the only piece of the apparatus that worked. Outside of the box was a raised pedal and a mysterious dial, neither of which were connected to the box. The patient moistened a piece of paper with saliva as a 'witness' and posted the slip into the box. A photograph or sample of handwriting was also sufficient. Crum would then rub the pedal with his thumb and talk to the machine, reciting the common diseases and the patient's symptoms. A light would then shine through one of the lettered holes, that letter representing the first letter of the patient's disease. It was then down to Crum's intuition to arrive at the final diagnosis.

Hauled before the courts over his fraudulent machine, the flamboyant Crum chose to defend himself, claiming he could treat cancer, blindness, arthritis, nervous disorders, haemorrhoids, abscesses, kidney ailments, stomach disorders, leakage of the heart, skin ailments, ovarian trouble and varicose veins. He also claimed he could cause teeth to revert to their original condition, could cause amputated digits to re-grow, could fertilize fields to a distance of 70 miles, could kill dandelions over any particular area, could restore golf greens to pristine condition and cause money

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<sup>85</sup> Pfeiffer, Samuel. *ibid*

to be put into people's hands from any distance. Crum's brash defence was sufficient for the judge to revoke Crum's license. On Crum's qualifications obtained at the School of Drugless Physicians, the judge commented, *"This institution is nothing more than a 'diploma mill!'"* His comment has not dated.

UK dowsing practitioner Arthur Bailey has written a book entitled *Anyone Can Douse For Better Health*. In his chapter *Dowsing for Homoeopathic Remedies*, Bailey confesses that a near absence of wiring within these radionics boxes leaves one slightly nonplussed as to their operation, but, *"...nevertheless, they do seem to work."* Mr Bailey cites the following example as validation of his dowsing 'gift'. Whilst out with a group of friends at a non-English speaking Italian restaurant, the party was having considerable difficulty deciding what to order from the menu. Tongue in cheek, one of Arthur's sceptical friends suggested he use his dowsing skills to determine the most flavoursome dish. Arthur rose to the challenge magnificently:

*"I got out my pendulum and dowsed down the incomprehensible list. One item in particular gave a very strong reaction. Taking courage in both hands, I ordered it. When it came, the skeptics were silenced. I had ordered by far the best item on the menu. It was delicious."*<sup>86</sup>

Mike Gusker is an avid dowser and his particular skill he claims is dowsing for gold. Gusker applied for the \$1M prize money offered by the James Randi Foundation for genuine proof for the power of dowsing. Gusker's attempts to locate the gold hidden in the test area and his reasons for his failure to find it make for interesting reading:

*"During the dowsing process, he kept up a running commentary on such matters as a rare 'Indian root' with which he was familiar and which was a sure cure for the flu, a special crystal he carried on his person to ensure his good health and a few 'free energy' machines he thought I should know about. When the dowsing test procedure was double-blinded, he obtained exactly what chance alone would call for: one out of ten correct."*

*Following the tests, Mike said that he'd found that all through the trials, his stick was being 'distracted' by the 'gold' lettering on a double set of Encyclopaedia Britannica on the shelves (actually containing no gold since the book lettering is done with a bronze-powder ink). As I've said before many times, I have found that dowsers are generally very honest folks and their firm convictions about the reality of their dowsing powers are examples of genuine self-delusion. On only two occasions, with the literally hundreds of dowsing claims I've examined over the last 56 years all around the world, have I found dowsers attempting to cheat - and both were caught out immediately, easily, and definitively."*<sup>87</sup>

Dowsers are of course welcome to apply for the \$1M cash prize. Perhaps the most striking illustration of dead-end homoeopathic reasoning is found in the following contribution from an unnamed homoeopath on the Hpathy blog site. Here, he explains what motivates him to continue practising, despite continued opposition and derision:

*"Once a small village got flooded with the rains. Many people from the village took shelter under a tree on higher ground. The place soon became surrounded with water and everyone prayed for their lives. Among these people there was a sage. He saw a scorpion drowning in water nearby. He picked up the scorpion with his hands. The scorpion bit him and it fell down again in water. The sage picked him up again and the scorpion bit him again. This happened many times. The people around the sage asked him, "Why are you picking that scorpion up when it is biting you?" The sage replied, "It's the scorpion's nature to bite anyone who touches it and it is my nature to save a drowning soul. It is doing what it knows best, and I am doing what I know best!"*<sup>88</sup>

This brief glimpse into the wisdom, 'science' and thinking behind homoeopathy brings fresh perspective to announcements such as *'Scientists and speakers from all over the world gathered for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Homoeopathic Convention.'* Will those scientists and speakers intent on

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<sup>86</sup> **Bailey, Arthur**, *Anyone Can Douse For Better Health*, Quantum Books, 1999

<sup>87</sup> **Randi, James**, *Another Failed Dowsing Test* at [www.randi.org/jr/032902.html](http://www.randi.org/jr/032902.html)

<sup>88</sup> A Dialogue with Hpathy - Dr. Manish Bhatia at [www.hpathy.com/ezine/2004Feb.htm](http://www.hpathy.com/ezine/2004Feb.htm)

homoeopathising the world include Mr Coghill with his electro-magnetic anti-baldness pendants? Perhaps the audience will hear from the eloquent Drs Lockie and Fisher who can make the most fantastic of fairytales sound feasible. Will Arthur Bailey be there with his trusted dowsing wands? Will Jeremy 'scorpion murderer' Sherr hold a teaching seminar? No doubt, there will be impassioned pleas for more time and money to test homoeopathy, given the 'exciting new breakthroughs' made over the last year, especially the 'Great Wall of China' at 30c. But just how much are these fruitless homoeopathic trials going to cost us as tax payers? And is this ongoing expenditure ethical? On this point, Stuart Pocock, author of *Clinical Trials*, writes:

*"One basic premise is that it is unethical to conduct research which is badly planned or poorly executed. That is, if a trial is of sufficiently poor quality that it cannot make a meaningful contribution to medical knowledge, then it should be declared unethical."*

An August 2005 UK *Lancet* report on a Swiss-UK review of 110 trials conducted into homoeopathy found no evidence that it worked. In reply, a spokeswoman from the Society of Homeopaths stated: *"It has been established beyond doubt and accepted by many researchers that the randomized controlled trial is not a fitting research tool with which to test homoeopathy."*<sup>89</sup> But then again, homoeopaths have an answer for every objection to their craft, provided we don't think too hard about the answer they give. As homoeopath Miranda Castro states quite magnificently:

*"The homoeopathic philosophy or doctrine is a set of rules for practice - one that hasn't changed since it was formulated 180 years ago. These rules and principles constitute a unified hypothesis whose validity is tested out empirically with cured patients confirming the hypothesis."*<sup>90</sup>

Phew! Masterful yet meaningless, in equal measure. Homoeopathy makes no positive contribution to medicine or health and those who solicit public funds in their efforts to prove its worth are draining the system of resources that could otherwise be put to much better and more ethical use.

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<sup>89</sup> **Homoeopathy's benefit questioned**, BBC News, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2005 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/4183916.stm>

<sup>90</sup> Castro, Miranda, *ibid*

## Hahnemann's Latter Years

*“Man has such a predilection for systems and abstract deductions that he is ready to distort the truth intentionally, he is ready to deny the evidence of his senses only to justify his logic.”* **Fyodor Dostoyevsky**

What of old man Hahnemann? Now in his mid-seventies, his years of poverty and hardship were at last over and he was revelling in his new-found success. He took this as a sign to go forth and preach his beloved homoeopathy, which he referred to as *‘the only true medicine’*. His almost biblical address to a gathering of medical students in Paris began as follows:

*“I am come into France for the propagation of homoeopathy. And to you, studious young Frenchmen, so that the old ways may not encompass you, come to me, for I will impart to you that truth much sought for. I am nothing but a feeble instrument of that Majesty before which all should humiliate themselves.”*

Assuming his role as the messiah of medicine, the ageing Hahnemann wrote unceasingly to his growing following of *‘true disciples’*, as he called them, instructing them on *‘the truths’* to be found in homoeopathy. Hahnemann settled in Paris and set up practice and it wasn't long before the rich and famous were queuing at the door of the miracle-working physician now residing at No.1, Rue de Milan. He had his portrait struck onto medallions, rings and pendants, which he enclosed in his letters and he commissioned sculptors to make busts of himself for his followers to display in their own homes.

Reaching the same dizzy levels of notoriety as our old friends the Count de St Germaine and James Graham with his Celestial Bed, hocko-groackle Hahnemann was now netting over two hundred thousand francs a year. However, his methods were becoming even more bizarre. Hahnemann suddenly announced that just smelling his remedies cured illnesses more effectively than swallowing them: *“Not only can I obtain mastery over the severest cases of chronic disease by letting the patient smell my medicines, but I can do so in an incredibly short space of time.”*

Hahnemann listed breast cancer, deafness, herpes, crooked spines, tuberculosis and suicidal tendencies amongst the illnesses he believed were curable by this method: *“A man whose one thought is suicide, even if he only inhales once from this small bottle, will abhor his intended purpose and will return to a calm state of mind, with a desire to live.”*<sup>91</sup> From *‘healing by smelling’*, Hahnemann moved on to mesmerism and animal magnetism. Said Hahnemann:

*“The most spectacular cures are brought about by men who, bursting with vital energy, use their strong and benevolent will to transmit human force to the entire organism and revive someone who has apparently been dead for some time. Especially if those men have only the slightest sexual desire or none at all. The subtle life energies used in the production of semen are available in them and ready to be communicated by strength of will through touch to others.”*

Ever the diplomat, it was this period in Hahnemann's life that prompted his biographer Richard Haehl politely to comment that Hahnemann's thinking, *“... had led him finally to courses which even in his lifetime divided him from a great number of his adherents, and which were largely abandoned by his later disciples as not belonging to the realms of science and pure therapy.”* A masterful understatement, if ever there was one. What of Hahnemann's family life? Right from the very beginning, Hahnemann had involved his whole family in his experiments. An acquaintance wrote:

*“A very peculiar mode of life prevailed in Hahnemann's house. The members of his family, the patients and students lived and moved in only one idea and that was homoeopathy. His daughters assisted in the preparation of his medicines and gladly took part in the provings. Patients enthusiastically celebrated the effects of homoeopathy and devoted themselves as apostles to*

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<sup>91</sup> Haehl, Richard, *ibid*

*spread the fame of the new doctrine among unbelievers. All who adhered to Hahnemann were the butt of ridicule or objects of hatred. But so much more did the homoeopaths hold together like members of a persecuted sect hanging with more exalted reverence and love upon their honoured head.”*<sup>92</sup>

Hahnemann's household bore all the hallmarks of a cult of which he was the leader, ruling with a rod of iron. As Hahnemann himself stated: *“If anyone deviates from my teachings by one hair's breadth, he is a traitor with whom I shall have nothing to do!”*<sup>93</sup> Hahnemann's family grew up in this rigid environment, serving their leader with unquestioning obedience. This fearful way of life exacted its toll. When Hahnemann moved to Paris, he left his house in Kothen, Germany to his two daughters. A visitor to their gloomy abode remarked:

*“The two sisters went to bed for a few hours in the day time while they passed the nights fully dressed in an armchair for fear that something evil might happen to them. In the room that had once been Hahnemann's consulting room, a bell-pull had been installed, and at night the two daughters rang the big harsh bell on the landing in turn, every hour to show they were still awake.”*

At aged eighty and a widower for some five years (a quite remarkable age, considering the amount of poisons Hahnemann and his wife had consumed over the years), Hahnemann met and married a woman forty-five years his junior, the eccentric Melanie d'Hervilly. Described in Thomas Bradford's biography as *‘the owner of many kinds of guns and knowing how to handle them in a genuine sports-like manner’*, Mme d'Hervilly preferred the company of men, believing no sensible conversation could be had with a woman. Mme d'Hervilly also provoked much tongue-wagging herself, not least because she would frequently dress up as a man, a most unusual sight at the time and, in fact, was dressed as such the first time Hahnemann set eyes on her.<sup>94</sup>

Of his eleven children, one died at birth, one died aged two, another aged thirty, two were murdered in mysterious circumstances, one went insane and disappeared, the others lost contact with their father, including the two daughters most loyal to him who had decided to stay behind in the old house in Kothen. Hahnemann died in 1843 aged eighty-eight. Before he died, he made arrangements for his tomb to be engraved with the words *‘Non Inutilis Vixi’* which translates *‘I have not lived in vain’*.

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<sup>92</sup> Bradford, Thomas, *ibid*

<sup>93</sup> Haehl, Richard, *ibid*

<sup>94</sup> Bradford, Thomas, *ibid*

## Homoeopathy Today

*“I always thought we should give state funding to homoeopathy. Specifically, we should give them 5p to share between the lot of them, and see if the tiny amount of money had an incredibly potent effect when it was massively diluted.”* **Anonymous homoeopathy blog**

It is estimated there are 1,500 registered homoeopathic practitioners in the UK and, according to some sources, as many again who are unregistered and currently doing business. The estimated NHS spending on homeopathic treatments is currently at the 4M mark with private spending approximately 10 x that amount. The typical cost of an initial private consultation is between £60-£80. As interest in homoeopathy continues to grow, the talk seems to focus only on bringing a professional sheen to the practice. Representing the homoeopathic industry, homoeopath Peter Fisher stated: *“Harmonisation of training and regulation of practitioners is the challenge of the future.”*<sup>95</sup> Michael Baum, professor of surgery at University College London likened this sort of approach to *“licensing a witches’ brew as a medicine so long as the bat wings are sterile.”*

The scant attention given to employing health editors or researchers with the depth of understanding to correct the steady drip of homoeopathic mis and dis-information has resulted in the mass media teaching us *what* to think but not *how* to think about this fairytale therapy. If you repeat a lie enough times - in this instance the lie that like cures like, that less is more and that homoeopathy has some kind of as yet unidentified scientific healing mechanism - those lies will eventually gain the status of truth and in fact, in the minds of millions, have already done so.

And what of all those trainee homoeopaths spending their hundreds, even thousands of pounds at the various colleges soaking up Hahnemann’s meticulously compiled nonsense theories? What worth do we now attach to those grand homoeopathic titles and qualifications such as L.C.H., M.C.H., R.S.Hom., Dip.Hom (Med), M.F.Hom. etc. etc.?

Armed with a more accurate understanding of the history, theory and practice of homoeopathy, of the remedies containing nothing, of the body’s amazing capacity to heal itself, of the phenomenon known as the placebo effect and of our capacity to be deceived by our own feelings and experience and by the popular press especially, we can see that homoeopathy is most definitely *not* the valid form of medicine we have been led to believe - and led to believe on such a massive scale. A scathing Dr Sue Blackmore has this to say:

*“Homoeopathy is bunkum; time and effort are not. And there’s the rub. Please, please let’s use NHS money to provide more time for doctors instead of treatments we know don’t work. If there is any money to spare on holistic practices and on caring for the whole patient, not just the symptoms, then let’s give it to real nurses and doctors who use real medicine that actually works. Then they too will be able to lavish time and effort on their individual patients and bring about better medicine and a better NHS.”*<sup>96</sup>

Of course, Dr Blackmore over the years will have administered her own fair share of ‘real medicines’ that plainly don’t work and even harm - treatments she would probably defend with as much passion as the homoeopath defends his own bizarre mixtures. Once again though, any weaknesses in the conventional paradigm must never be used as an argument to legitimize homoeopathy.

Early in 2009, the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee set a date in 2010 by which to have determined its stance on homoeopathy. And it wasn’t looking too good for homoeopathy. To muster support against the ‘evil intentions’ of the HCST, various pro-homoeopathy websites issued a trumpet call to homoeopaths worldwide, calling for set times of ‘universal intent’. The Homoeopathic World Community explains all:

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<sup>95</sup> *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 309, *ibid*

<sup>96</sup> **Blackmore, Sue**, *Homoeopathy is Bunkum*, Guardian Unlimited, May 2006 at [www.theskepticexpress.com/Homoeopathy\\_is\\_bunkum.php](http://www.theskepticexpress.com/Homoeopathy_is_bunkum.php)

*“Homoeopathy is taking a real bashing in the UK, and the ‘anti-brigade’ is achieving spectacular hits - they have already managed to shut down one homoeopathic hospital on the grounds that it is a waste of public money as it doesn’t work. [fair enough. ed] Now they’re homing in for the kill [the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee hearing]. Anyway, we’re not taking this laying down. We have decided to carry out an ‘intention’ experiment and we are doing this every day at 9 pm until 30<sup>th</sup> November, the day when the committee makes its final deliberations. This involves 15 minutes of focused, meditative, positive intention-making in order to support homoeopathy and try to confound our enemies. This technique has been shown to be very powerful when applied to other situations. PLEASE HELP IF YOU CAN. How to do an intention experiment:*

- *choose a place away from electronic interference, mobiles, phones, TV etc.*
- *add a plant, meditation music whatever helps you personally get into a meditative state*
- *sit either in an upright chair or cross legged or similar*
- *1st 5 minutes: slow your breathing - in through your nose and out through your mouth for 15 seconds each minute, then...*
- *from 9:05 - 9:15 pm, focus clearly on the statement below in whatever way suits you. See the committee accepting that homoeopathy works, or people being able to have homoeopathic treatment on the NHS, feel positive and joyful, really see, hear, smell, sense (whichever way you imagine/visualize) the reality of it.*

*The intention: We intend the outcome for the UK homoeopathy evidence check to be wholly and fully in favour of homoeopathy. We intend for the vast and thorough body of scientific data supporting the efficacy of homoeopathy to be seen, heard and recognized as valid, solid and scientific. This is so, and it is done.”<sup>97</sup>*

Unfortunately for homoeopathy, the mass intention experiment did not work. On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2010, the Science and Technology Committee concluded the NHS should cease funding homoeopathy. It also concluded the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) should not allow homoeopathic product labels to make medical claims without evidence of efficacy. And about time too. In response to the Homoeopathic World Community’s dark magic attempts to ‘clear the way’, the following celebratory post on the Gimpy blogsite notes:

*“There is something rather sweet about a bunch of homoeopaths sitting at home and using their imagined psychic powers to create compelling scientific data for their profession. It certainly nicely illustrates the supernatural beliefs of the profession. However, it is worth thinking about what they believe and what they want to achieve. They believe there is a conspiracy by parliament and by government to destroy their profession, they believe that the Science and Technology Committee has deliberately and actively conspired against them, and they want to use dark magics to craft a new reality in their favour.*

*Leaving aside the implausibility of the Intention Experiment, this is a clear demonstration of a paranoid mindset that believes that the world is set against them and will stop at little to destroy them, so should be stopped by any means available. It is this paranoid mindset that has driven their poisonous little campaigns and lacking the evidence to convince a rational observer they have turned to smears and harassment. The homoeopaths’ worst enemies are not the forces of reason ranged against them, but the dark and bitter prejudices against medicine that are fundamental to their theories.”<sup>98</sup>*

Of course, it must be said the ‘poisonous little campaign’ accusation cuts both ways. Tactical smear and harassment are big weapons down at pharma biz HQ for sure.

As an introduction to this first section on homoeopathy, we looked at a number of texts describing Hahnemann and his life’s work. We end as we began, with the quote from the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* which states:

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<sup>97</sup> Help For Homoeopathy in the UK posted by Sylvia Rose Hicks at <http://www.homeopathyworldcommunity.com/forum/topics/help-for-homeopathy-in-the-uk>

<sup>98</sup> <http://gimpyblog.wordpress.com/2009/11/19/homeopaths-use-witchcraft-to-influence-parliament/>

*“Hahnemann was a man of passion, a scientist of meticulous diligence and a healer with immense compassion. He was prolific in his work and rigorous in all his endeavours and experiments.”*<sup>99</sup>

Although passionate about his craft and certainly prolific in his output, we can now see the many glowing descriptions we’ve read of Hahnemann and homoeopathy bear nil resemblance to the subject at hand. They are the flattering portraits for which Cromwell said he wouldn’t pay a farthing. For the reasons laid out so far, homoeopathy is a complete con. A sword through the scheming floozy.

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<sup>99</sup> *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, Volume 11, Number 5, 2005

## Bach Flower Remedies

*“I’ve always been attracted to ‘weird’ hobbies. So when I started studying herbal medicine over 10 years ago, I naturally gravitated to working with flower essences.”* **Martin Bulgerin**

With the full story on homoeopathy now told, we need spend only a short time looking at Bach Flower Remedies. The same tell-tale features soon appear. The following texts offer a standard description of the philosophy underpinning today’s flower essence treatments:

*“Flower essences work on subtle, ‘unseen’ levels to gently re-establish balance and peace of mind within us. The essences cover many negative emotional and mental states that afflict humankind. Certain forms of vibrational-sensitive technology, such as radionics machines, can detect variations in energy patterns. Flower essences contain a vibrational energy which some have likened to the life-force of the flower.”*<sup>100</sup>

And this from flower remedy practitioner Isha Lerner:

*“Flower Essences are water-based solutions which contain the essential energies of flowers. They are made by floating flowers in water and allowing the light of the sun, or the moon or the stars, to help the water to absorb the particular energy signature of the flowers. The structure of water is such that it easily stores these vibrational signatures within itself.”*<sup>101</sup>



Already, the language has exactly the same feel as homoeopathy. Edward Bach, pronounced Batch (left) was born in 1886 in Moseley just outside Birmingham, England. The eldest of three children, Bach joined the army at sixteen and at aged nineteen entered Birmingham University to study medicine. He qualified six years later in 1912 and the following year married Gwendoline Caiger.

Bach’s first post after qualifying as a doctor lasted only a few months before being forced to rest due to ill health. At the outbreak of WW1, Bach applied to serve overseas but was denied the post due to his continued ill-health and instead, found himself at aged thirty in charge of a 400 bed war casualty ward at University College Hospital in London. During this time, Bach met another woman Kitty Light and had a child by her.

Bach’s wife died of diphtheria only a short time later in April 1917. One month after her death, Bach married Kitty. Three months later, Bach collapsed, bleeding heavily and was diagnosed with cancer and was given only three months to live. Bach’s terminal diagnosis was proved wrong however and he was back at work within six months. By anyone’s reckoning though, it had been a tumultuous few years for the man. The inclusion of this personal information on Bach and its relevance to the story of the flower remedies soon becomes clear.

Bach was clearly comfortable with magical thinking and professed a keen interest in the esoteric, particularly Hahnemann’s homoeopathy. In 1918, Bach joined the Freemasons and one year later began work at the London Homoeopathic Hospital. Although espousing many of Hahnemann’s ideas, Bach felt the concept of *like cures like* was not consistent with the observed world and pointed out quite rightly that if *like cures like* was a universal law, then hate should be cured with hate.

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<sup>100</sup> Hillenbrand, Candy, The Flower Essences at [www.aplaceinspace.net/Pages/Floweressences.html](http://www.aplaceinspace.net/Pages/Floweressences.html)

<sup>101</sup> Isha Lerner Services at <http://www.ishalerner.com/home/is1/page/516/77>

Whilst hate could indeed be overcome with greater hate said Bach, only love could actually cure the condition.<sup>102</sup>

Bach stayed at the homoeopathic hospital for three years before starting up his own practice in Harley Street. Now separated from his second wife and their daughter, Bach put all his efforts into his private practice, concentrating on the effects of diet upon chronic illness. He also manufactured a number of homoeopathically-derived oral vaccines for the treatment of various conditions. These remedies are referred to reverently by his followers as 'the seven nosodes'. But all this time, Bach was convinced there had to be a simpler way of treating disease and its causes.

By 1928, Bach was Senior Deacon at his local Wallingford masonic lodge and was experimenting with distance healing, radionics and other similar ideas. Bach believed negative emotions and thought processes were disease triggers and that somehow, these *imbalances* could be treated at a *vibrational* level through God's gift of flowers. However, the final construct of this 'new way' with flowers was still all a bit vague in his mind. It was whilst at a masonic banquet one evening that Bach had the flash of inspiration that finally clarified his own 'new way forward'. His devoted helper and biographer Nora Weeks describes Bach's 'Eureka!' moment:

*"He was idly watching the people around him when suddenly he realised the whole of humanity consisted of a number of definite groups of types; that every individual in that large hall belonged to one or other of these groups. He found this a most engrossing occupation and by the time the dinner was over he had worked out a number of groups."*<sup>103</sup>

In a nutshell, over the course of that evening, Bach came to the conclusion that humanity could be divided into twelve main emotional groups or 'world types' and he listed them as follows:

- Feelings of inner torture and restlessness
- Impatience with others Feelings of discouragement
- Known fears
- Extreme fear
- Highly-strung and unable to relax
- Desiring isolation
- Weak, easily dominated personality
- Lack of confidence in own judgment
- A possessive and selfish attitude
- Day-dreamers who have little interest in life
- Indecision and mood swings

Bach's spurious 12 point hypothesis was the turning point in his life. He gave up his London practice and spent the next four years wandering the countryside, searching out the special flowers and plants he believed would be the *positive correspondents* to these twelve *negative* emotional types. But the manner in which Bach carried out his 'field work' was far from orthodox and revealed the complete eccentricity, even madness of the man and his methods.

The process of identifying a 'healing' flower would begin with Bach first of all working himself into an absolute frenzy of whatever one of the twelve 'types' he was seeking to heal. In a state of *inner torture* or *extreme fear*, he would then wander the countryside, approaching various flowers and shrubs until he 'sensed' a particular plant was helping his frenzy to subside. Nora Weeks notes the following:

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<sup>102</sup> *"Here we come to the understanding that we no longer fight disease with disease: no longer oppose illness with the products of illness: no longer attempt to drive out maladies with such substances that can cause them: but, on the contrary, to bring down the opposing virtue which will eliminate the fault. True, hate may be conquered by greater hate, but it can only be cured by love."* Despite disagreeing with the principle of *like cures like*, Bach was always drawn to the arcane homoeopathic dilution process and had an article printed in *Homoeopathic World* entitled *New Remedies New Uses*, in which he described five new remedies diluted to the power of 7X (and beyond) that would add to *"that glorious temple of healing which will ultimately be the agent to drive disease from the face of the earth."* *New Remedies, New Uses, Homoeopathic World*, Feb 1930 at

<http://www.edwardbach.org/research/booksHome.asp?languagebox=5&section=All>

<sup>103</sup> **Weeks, Nora**, *The Medical Discoveries of Edward Bach Physician* CW Daniel Co 1973

*“Through his finely developed sense of touch he was able to feel the vibrations and power emitted by any plant he wished to test... Some would have a strengthening, vitalizing effect on mind and body; others would give him pains, vomitings, fevers, rashes and the like.”*<sup>104</sup>

That Bach could induce vomiting, fevers and rashes by merely touching the petals of the mimulus or marigold mirrors the extreme behaviour of Hahnemann who was able to record a staggering 174 physical and mental symptoms just through eating a single sliver of green pepper. And now, here was Bach building his own castle in the sky and doing so by the same, quite extraordinary powers of imagination.

Bach led a nomadic life during these years and he would often stay in different places across the UK for weeks at a time, returning to his lodgings quite late in the evening, dishevelled, muddled, bloodied and completely exhausted from the day’s manic ‘field experiments’. With twelve emotional states to heal, Bach eventually arrived at twelve different flowers known as the *twelve healers*. These flowers were agrimony, centaury, cerato, chicory, clematis, gentian, impatiens, mimulus, rockrose, scleranthus, vervain and water violet. Bach’s methods of preparing his *medicines* were equally bizarre. Nora Weeks again on her master’s next flash of inspiration:

*“The thought flashed into his mind that each dewdrop must contain some of the properties of the plant upon which it rested and that the heat of the sun would serve to draw out these properties until each drop was magnetised with power. The resulting remedies would contain the full, perfect and uncontaminated power of the plants.”*<sup>105</sup>

Bach’s attraction to dew was by no means unique. The glistening appeal of dew has inspired magical-thinking *chymistes* for millennia and still does today. Alchemist Paracelsus was an avid manufacturer of ‘dew medicine’ and conjured up many a remedy using flower petals and herbs soaked in dew and then *spiritualised* (or so he believed anyway) by the light of the sun and the moon. Bach experimented by floating various flower petals in a glass bowl filled with clear stream water, leaving these concoctions in direct sunlight.<sup>106</sup> The sun’s rays would ‘charge’ this flower-water mixture and after roughly four hours, the resulting potion was deemed to be “*impregnated with magnetic power.*”<sup>107</sup>

According to Bach, this preparation was now the mother tincture or base remedy. Following a vaguely homoeopathic construct, Bach would take three or four drops from one of these bottled ‘mother tinctures’ and add them to another small bottle containing an equal mixture of stream water and brandy, the alcohol acting as a preservative. Bach would then shake the bottle to spread the flower’s *vibrational* energy through the remedy. Drops of this preparation could now be added to a drink of water and sipped through the day as required.

Over the next four years, Bach added a further twenty six base remedies to his collection, making thirty eight remedies in all.<sup>108</sup> The majority of his remedies he prepared using the ‘sun-charging’

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<sup>104</sup> Weeks, Nora, *ibid*

<sup>105</sup> Weeks, Nora, *ibid*

<sup>106</sup> The source of this stream water, stated Bach, had to be as near as possible to the flower’s habitat. No reason was ever given for his sudden change from dew to stream water, but would have been expediency at a guess.

<sup>107</sup> Weeks, N, *ibid*

<sup>108</sup> The full list of Bach’s remedies and their supposed healing properties are as follows: **Agrimony** - mental torture behind a cheerful face, **Aspen** - fear of unknown things, **Beech** - intolerance, **Centaury** - the inability to say ‘no’, **Cerato** - lack of trust in one’s own decisions, **Cherry Plum** - fear of the mind giving way, **Chestnut Bud** - failure to learn from mistakes, **Chicory** - selfish, possessive love, **Clematis** - dreaming of the future without working in the present, **Crab Apple** - the cleansing remedy, also for self-hatred, **Elm** - overwhelmed by responsibility, **Gentian** - discouragement after a setback, **Horsetail** - hopelessness and despair, **Heather** - self-centredness and self-concern, **Holly** - hatred, envy and jealousy, **Honeysuckle** - living in the past, **Hornbeam** - procrastination, tiredness at the thought of doing something, **Impatiens** - impatience, **Larch** - lack of confidence, **Mimulus** - fear of known things, **Mustard** - deep gloom for no reason, **Oak** - the plodder who keeps going past the point of exhaustion, **Olive** - exhaustion following mental or physical effort, **Pine** - guilt, **Red Chestnut** - over-concern for the welfare of loved ones, **Rock Rose** - terror and fright, **Rock Water** - self-denial, rigidity and self-repression, **Scleranthus** - inability to choose between alternatives, **Star of Bethlehem** - shock, **Sweet Chestnut** - extreme mental anguish, when everything has been tried and there is no light left, **Vervain** - over-enthusiasm, **Vine** - dominance and inflexibility, **Walnut** - protection from change and unwanted influences, **Water Violet** - pride and aloofness, **White Chestnut** - unwanted thoughts and mental arguments, **Wild Oat** - uncertainty over one’s direction in life, **Wild Rose** - drifting, resignation, apathy, **Willow** - self-pity and resentment. There is a 39th remedy called **The Rescue Remedy**, a combination remedy made up of five different plants

method, but some preparations required boiling. Again, no clear reason was given for the differing methods but it wasn't for Bach's students to question the teachings of the 'divinely-inspired' master. This method of preparation has not changed to this day. Modern-day flower remedy practitioner Martin Bulgerin notes the following:

*"The exact number of drops [of mother tincture] is not too important, though some people love to argue about it. The bottle should be shaken in your hands for a minute or two (or until it 'feels' done) to potentize the stock bottle. This 'dilute and shake' technique is more or less the standard method in homoeopathy for potentizing a remedy."*<sup>109</sup>

Like Hahnemann, Bach believed his medicines were being powerfully *spiritualized* by these methods. At thirty eight remedies, Bach announced his medicine cabinet complete and stood before his fellow masons to deliver this stirring address:

*"I come to you tonight with a great message - a message that may almost be beyond your belief, and yet is true, and it should bring hope and comfort to many. The message is this: disease is curable! By means of the herbs of which I am speaking tonight, there is no ordinary disease known in this country which has not been cured. Hundreds of thousands of people who had ailments, who had complaints which they had expected would remain with them the rest of their lives, have been made well."*<sup>110</sup>

Bach's system was yet another intuitively compelling but ultimately futile system of medicine to add to history's long list, his remedies containing only stream water and brandy. Bach also believed he had the gift of 'distance diagnosis' and claimed he could 'get a feel' for patients as they made their way to see him at his surgery. Despite there being nil evidence for Bach's remedies or any of his extravagant claims, the remedies enjoy worldwide popularity today and have inspired many other magically-minded individuals to develop their own offshoot remedies - *Alaskan Flower Essences*, *Australian Bush Flower Essences*, *Californian Essences*, *Findhorn Flower Essences* and *Native Indian Essences* to name but a few.

Today's authors also suggest many different ways of exploring new ideas for flower remedies. Take this from [alchemy-works.com](http://alchemy-works.com):

*"When you decide what essence you want to make, ask the plant if you have permission to use it. You can do this by using your intuition (sit in front of the plant and let it talk to you) or by using a pendulum etc., etc.."*<sup>111</sup>

And this from *Cahoots Magazine*:

*"As for making new remedies, there are so many flowers out there and so many distinct human emotional states. One of the exciting things for me about flower remedies is that there is no objective criterion, no authority, no one who knows the right answer."*<sup>112</sup>

As we continue, we'll see that *no objective criterion* is the key to almost all of the therapies under the umbrella of CAM. As far as Bach Flower Remedies are concerned, we now have permission to think, feel, write and publish whatever we like and set up our PayPal, Nochex 'flower healing shop' accordingly. If people want to talk to flowers or be deceived into thinking that flowers are talking back to them, that's their choice. But please don't pass this off as real medicine and take people's money in the process. And again, just as in the story of homoeopathy, readers are told Bach was

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and described by Stefan Ball at Mount Vernon as: *"a mix of five remedies - Rock Rose for terror, Clematis for light-headedness, Impatiens for agitation, Cherry Plum for loss of self-control and Star of Bethlehem for shock. Dr Bach selected these five remedies because he felt there would be at least something in the mix that would help anyone going through a crisis. To take it you simply put four drops in a glass of water and sip as required - and in an emergency, if there is no water available, you can put the drops straight on the tongue or rub them on the pulse points."*

<sup>109</sup> Bulgerin, Martin, *ibid*

<sup>110</sup> Masonic lecture 1936, republished electronically by the Bach Flower Research Programme 2003

<sup>111</sup> [www.alchemy-works.com/flower\\_essences.html](http://www.alchemy-works.com/flower_essences.html)

<sup>112</sup> *Cahoots Magazine*. Spring '96 edition

inspired by some deep wisdom. Julian Barnard suggests we should follow in Bach's footsteps and 'wake up to life':

*"We should walk as Bach did, into the fields and then look again. There we may see that life IS. In the field the grass waits patiently in service, sheltering the earth and its inhabitants, thistles blow their seed, trees endure the spaces while the crows rattle noisily above the heads of the sheep. All are just being. It is the mind that always returns to theories. The heart works in practice. There is a gentleness like soft rain in this truth etc., etc.."*<sup>113</sup>

Rattling crows, enduring trees, patient grass, gentle rain etc., etc., is certainly poetic, but where is any of this going? And note again the subtle suggestion that we should stop thinking and just start *feeling*. In effect, what Barnard is saying is that anyone struggling with the illogical nature of Bach's medicines just needs to open up their minds a bit more. In other words, carry out some kind of intellectual bypass. The November 2005 edition of *Vibration* magazine (a quarterly journal dedicated to flower remedy research) contains what is probably my favourite piece of flower remedy research. Here, a Dr Masuru Emoto, describes how he went about proving that water is a living, feeling element that can be affected by our moods:

*"To test this, I put the water into two glass bottles. On one bottle, I pasted a label typed, 'Thank you' and on the other, 'You fool', in such a way that water would be able to 'read' them. I then froze the water in each bottle. The results were more than supportive of my theory; the water in the bottle with 'thank you' formed beautiful hexagonal crystals, while the one with 'you fool' had only fragments of crystals. Water formed beautiful crystals to all the words expressing gratitude all over the world, such as thank you (English), duoxie (Chinese), merci (French), danke (German), grazie (Italian), and kamusamunida (Korean).*

*Since then, we have talked to water with many kind words, showed it beautiful pictures and played wonderful healing music, but we have never again been able to take water-crystal pictures as beautiful as the one that resulted from showing water the words 'love' and 'gratitude'."*<sup>114</sup>

The bachflowers.com site offers the following as evidence for the efficacy of its remedies:

*"A baby bird, which was brought in by a cat, was in total shock and wasn't moving or saying anything. It was given Rescue Remedy through its beak over a period of half an hour. When freed it flew away happily."*

Meaningless testimonies such as this are posted across myriad internet flower essence sites. The Bach Centre in the UK admits it has never conducted any experiments to prove the worth of its remedies.

*"We don't see it as our role to 'prove' these remedies work. Instead, we simply demonstrate how to use them and let people prove the effect on themselves... Anyone is free to look for other ways to work with these remedies, or prepare new essences, or build up theoretical or religious constructs of their own."*<sup>115</sup>

Once again, there is the call to think and believe whatever we like and a two-fingered salute to common sense. This brand of magical thinking ultimately will never benefit the body, mind or spirit. We will look at the more damaging effects of CAM philosophy and 'religion' in more detail a little later. On Bach's own mental state during his latter years, Nora Weeks notes the following:

*"And not only did Bach pass through terrible mental agonies, but certain states of mind were accompanied by a physical malady in its most severe form. His body was completely covered by a virulent rash, his legs were ulcerated and raw from knee to ankle, his hair came out and his*

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<sup>113</sup> Barnard, Julian, *Patterns of Life Force*, Bach Educational Programme print 1987

<sup>114</sup> **Emoto, Masuru**, *Water and how it is influenced by positive and negative words*, *Vibration Magazine*, Nov 2005 at [www.floweressencemagazine.com/nov05/emotowater.html](http://www.floweressencemagazine.com/nov05/emotowater.html)

<sup>115</sup> *The Collected Writings of Edward Bach*, Ashgrove Publishing, 1999

*sight almost failed, a severe haemorrhage exhausted him and the bleeding did not cease until the remedy for the mental state he was passing through was found.* “<sup>116</sup>

The ranting, raving, sobbing of the man as he went about his ‘field experiments’ and his ability to bleed and ulcerate at will etc., etc., conjures up the image of a man completely unhinged. What passers-by must have thought as they witnessed Bach kneeling in the hedgerows in the early hours, muttering and wailing and collecting dew from various plants is anyone’s guess. Was Bach perhaps crying out for some kind of healing from his own demons?

When we consider his traumatic experiences in early adulthood, this idea is not too far-fetched. His constant nervous exhaustion, his adultery and all its attendant stresses, his first wife’s death, his rejection by King and country, his suspended death sentence in the form of a cancer diagnosis, his first-hand experiences of treating WW1 injuries, his short-lived second marriage and estrangement from his only daughter - all of these emotionally fraught life experiences in such a few short years would surely go some way to explaining how in later life, Bach was led to manufacture the following specific remedies: **Agrimony** - mental torture behind a cheerful face, **Chicory** - selfish, possessive love, **Crab Apple** - cleansing remedy for self-hatred, **Cherry Plum** - fear of the mind giving way and **Sweet Chestnut** - for extreme mental anguish and, to quote verbatim - *when everything has been tried and there is no light left.*

Not surprisingly, these darker aspects to Bach’s life are never discussed in any detail in the usual Bach biographies. Instead, we are treated to glossy summaries such as this from bachcentre.com “*Just as he had abandoned his old home, office and work, so now he abandoned the scientific methods he had used up until now. Instead he chose to rely on his natural gifts as a healer and use his intuition to guide him.*”

Sadly, the life Bach lived was in complete contrast to the message he preached. All Bach ever seemed to know was sadness, ill health and emotional turmoil. Bach died in his sleep in November 1936 aged just fifty. The last comment on Bach Flower Remedies is left to health store owner Lyn McCutcheon. Believing that Bach’s medicines are no more than pretty placebos, Ms McCutcheon had an article on the remedies printed in *The Skeptical Enquirer* and noted the following:

*“In summary, there seems to be no reliable, unambiguous evidence to support any of the multitude of claims made by Bach and his followers. The Bach Remedies I ‘inherited’ when I bought my health-food store are currently under the counter where they can’t be seen. If people come in and ask for them I will sell them, but I don’t intend to reorder and I have instructed my employees to make no claims whatsoever about their usefulness. Perhaps the time has come to wake up and stop smelling the flowers.”*<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Weeks, Nora, *ibid*

<sup>117</sup> **McCutcheon, Lyn**, *Skeptical Enquirer, Time to Stop Smelling the Flowers?* Vol. 19, No. 4, July/August 1995

# Acupuncture

*“It says here, ‘Most common conditions catered for’. But it’s not helping my pins and needles.” Anon*

Acupuncture is mentioned in the oldest book on Chinese medicine, the *Huang Ti Nei-Ching* circa 220 BC. Before looking at the practice itself, a quick overview of the philosophy would be helpful. The traditional acupuncturist believes the cosmos and everything in it is subject to unwavering universal laws and that these laws are governed by the interplay of two opposing forces, Yin and Yang. Yin represents negative: night, cold, dark, female and the interior of the body whilst Yang represents the positive, day, hot, light, male and the exterior of the body. Across the Heavens and the earth, the balanced interplay between Yin and Yang express themselves harmoniously in the rising and setting of the sun, the sprouting and ripening of crops and other natural cycles. Good health is also seen as an expression of Yin and Yang working in harmony. When out of balance, Yin and Yang are said to express themselves negatively in the form of earthquakes, storms, drought, other disasters and also in sickness and dis-ease.

Imbalance between Yin and Yang leads to an interruption in the flow of chi (Qi, Ki, the fifth essence, quintessence, Hahnemann’s vital force, etc., etc..) - the invisible force permeating the Heavens and the earth and supposedly man’s motivating energy. In good health, chi is said to flow uninterrupted through the body via twelve invisible channels that dissect all the organs. These channels are known as the meridians. Stress, anxiety, anger, fear, grief, infections, poisons, hereditary factors, poor nutrition, trauma and the weather, are all said to affect the free flow of chi along these meridians.

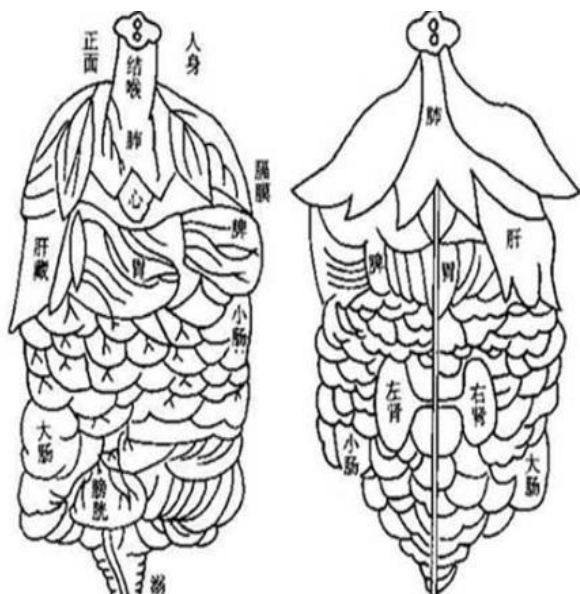
The acupuncturist restores the flow by inserting fine needles into the body at specific points along the meridians. These points are known as loci. Original acupuncture charts show 360 loci, corresponding to the number of days in the lunar calendar. However, more and more loci have been added over the years and some 2,000 loci points have since been assigned.

Before inserting any needles, the dis-ease must first be diagnosed. Both the acupuncturist and the TCM (traditional Chinese medicine) practitioner believe a diagnosis of the whole body can be achieved simply by studying just a small part of the body. This idea stems from the philosophical belief that ‘the whole is reflected in the part’ - that the human body is a miniature representation of the Copernican universe - ‘as in the macrocosm, so in the microcosm’.

A typical acupuncture/TCM diagnosis is carried out by examining the eye or the tongue, feeling for strength and regularity in the pulse, by listening to voice tone and even by smelling the patient. All these diagnostic routes, so the acupuncturist believes, give him a clinical picture of the rest of the body. Having arrived at his diagnosis, the acupuncturist then consults his loci charts, inserts the needles at the determined points, twiddles the needles for a few minutes, unblocks the blockages and restores the flow of chi, thus restoring the body to health. If the patient fails to respond, TCM is recommended.

Although appearing profound, neither acupuncture or TCM diagnoses and treatments are based on any sensible knowledge of modern physiology, biochemistry, nutrition, anatomy, or on any of the known mechanisms of healing. Neither is there any understanding of cell chemistry, blood circulation, nerve function, hormones or other biochemical actions. Both therapies have grown out of an archaic and inaccurate understanding of the body, formulated at a time when the Chinese, for religious reasons, were forbidden to dissect cadavers.

The prevailing Confucianist belief the body should return to the gods unblemished hindered the development of post-mortems in modern China and they were not carried out as standard until well into the 20th century. Today in rural China, there is still a resistance to cutting the dead.<sup>118</sup> Early physicians simply guessed at the position of many organs and created organs where none existed. The high level of ignorance regarding layout and internal workings of the human body is revealed in the anatomical charts the early Chinese physicians devised (left). Yet, it is these same charts that remain the acupuncturist's and TCM practitioner's guide to the human body to this day.



The Chinese Communist Party expressed considerable antipathy toward acupuncture in the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century, ridiculing it as superstitious, unscientific and backward.<sup>119</sup> This is not to say that science or the Chinese Communist Party have all the answers of course, but sensible observation over the years has given us a very detailed and accurate map of the human body. If you haven't seen any of these early anatomical charts (left), they are pretty nightmarish, to put it mildly. You can bet if such a chart were to be displayed on the wall in a conventional UK surgery, the anxiety in the room would be palpable. But would we dare question the doctor? Probably not. To do so would only draw attention to ourselves and anyway, the whole nasty business is bound to go away after a nice cup of tea. Three cheers for blind optimism and good old British reserve!

The chief boast of acupuncture is in the area of pain management. But how much of a part do the needles really play? Several theories suggest the insertion of the needles induces a hypnotic-like state in the patient, leading to a temporary alleviation of symptoms. There is also the 'gate' theory, which holds that stimulation of certain fibres in the sensory nerves by the acupuncturist's needle closes a 'gate' in the spinal cord, thus blocking pain. Other theories suggest the needles stimulate the body into producing narcotic-like substances called endorphins. Although many of today's acupuncturists claim endorphinism [*sic*] is the science that at last legitimizes acupuncture, the mechanism and even the existence of the endorphin is still in dispute.

Most telling of all though is the marked lack of information in these books on how pain relief can be achieved by many other types of sensory stimulation, not just needles. The analgesic effects of electricity, heat, cold and human touch applied almost anywhere across the body is well-documented. *"The effectiveness of all of these forms of stimulation indicates that acupuncture is not a magical procedure but only one of many ways to produce analgesia via intense sensory input."*<sup>120</sup> Putting it bluntly, no pun intended, you don't need acupuncture needles inserted into the body to bring about pain reduction.

Acupuncture is also easily mimicked. In the same way that Dr John Haygarth used painted wooden sticks to disprove the healing powers of Elisha Perkins' tractor rods, researchers investigating acupuncture under controlled conditions have achieved the same results in patients receiving 'sham' acupuncture, revealing the fallacy of those ancient and mysterious loci points. Skeptics.org explains:

<sup>118</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a physician Wang Qingren began to cut up bodies. He lived in an area that was struck by plague and frequently passed corpses that were piled in public places and half eaten by dogs. He began looking at these corpses and noticed their insides did not conform to what he had been taught. With an easy supply of corpses, he began systematic autopsies. His colleagues thought he was insane to do this but he published his work in 1830. A book detailing his work can be found at

[www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780553381184&view=excerpt](http://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780553381184&view=excerpt)

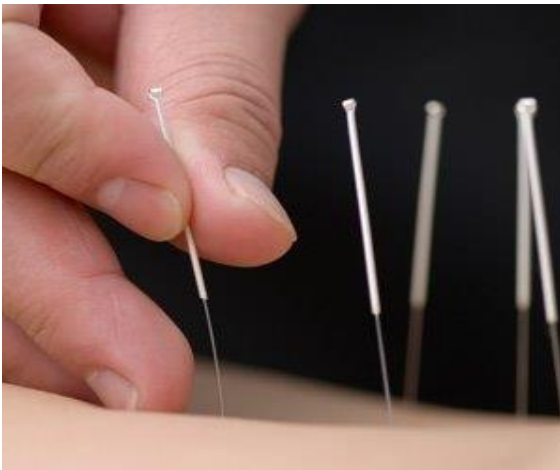
<sup>119</sup> Rosenthal, M, *Health Care in the People's Republic of China: Moving Toward Modernisation*, Westview Press, 1987

<sup>120</sup> Melzack, R, Katz, J. *Auriculotherapy fails to relieve chronic pain: A controlled cross-over study*. JAMA 251, 1984

“There are two basic methods by which sham acupuncture can be performed so that it can be compared to real acupuncture:

**1. Placing needles in non-acupuncture points.** This method tests the validity of using specific acupuncture points. If acupuncture is given but the needles are placed in non-acupuncture points (unknown to the patient) and the results are the same as when acupuncture points are used then this shows that specific, important acupuncture points do not exist. Many trials have been done using this method and the conclusion is that acupuncture gets the same results in patients no matter where the needles are placed.

**2. Using sham needles to mimic the effect of acupuncture.** Retractable acupuncture needles have been developed which look like the real thing; the only difference is that the point retracts rather than penetrating the skin. To people who have never had acupuncture before, they feel genuine. Using retractable needles tests whether needling itself, rather than acupuncture per se, has any effect. Again, it is found that people respond in the same way whether genuine needles or sham needles are being used. These two methods show that the theory of acupuncture involving Qi, meridians and acupuncture points, is not valid and that results can be obtained whether needling occurs or not. It's the belief that acupuncture is being performed that seems to make the difference.”<sup>121</sup>



The idea that some form of a *a priori* belief in acupuncture can help in the overall success of the treatment was understood by the earliest physicians. A text from the *Huang Ti Nei Ching* again:

“When dealing with a person who believes in ghosts and spirits, it is not much use to tell him about the effectiveness of [rational] medicine. When consulted by someone who cannot bear the thought of acupuncture, it will not help to expound on the successes and skills of those techniques. When a patient refuses a particular way of treatment, his illness will never be cured by it and in the end no success will be achieved.”<sup>122</sup>

Harvard researcher Ted Kaptchuk has conducted detailed research into acupuncture and the placebo effect. His findings, which are easily located in any Google search, suggest the whole ritual of acupuncture affects how the patient feels. Says Kaptchuk:

“Performing acupuncture is more elaborate than prescribing medicine. Other rituals that may make patients feel better include white coats, and stethoscopes that you don't necessarily use, pictures on the wall, the way you reassure a patient, and the secretaries that sign you in.”<sup>123</sup>

Careful manipulation of such rituals could make all types of treatment more effective, Kaptchuk suggests. An article in the *American Sunday Tribune* describes the doctor-patient relationship as:

“...one of the most unique and privileged relationships. The only relationship, to my mind, which stands above this, is the mother-child bond. Another relationship which might come near it is that between a teacher and disciple. A patient to a doctor is at once a dependent child, an eager student, a friend and a person needing advice, help, sympathy, understanding and hope.”<sup>124</sup>

Imagine a first-time acupuncture patient, we'll call him Eddie, laying there on the treatment table, surrounded by the acupuncturist's healing paraphernalia. The charts have been consulted, Eddie's been told his lower back pain is treatable, even curable. One by one, the *teacher* inserts his

<sup>121</sup> Jackson, John, Acupuncture at [www.skeptics.org.uk/article.php?dir=articles&article=acupuncture.php](http://www.skeptics.org.uk/article.php?dir=articles&article=acupuncture.php)

<sup>122</sup> Lu Gwei-djen, Needham, J, *Celestial Lancets*, C U Press; 1980

<sup>123</sup> Sham device versus inert pill at [www.discovermagazine.com/2006/apr/placebo-placebo](http://www.discovermagazine.com/2006/apr/placebo-placebo)

<sup>124</sup> Sharma, BK, *Trust is the basis of doctor-patient relationship*, Sunday Tribune, 7th October 2001

needles into his *disciple* in all sorts of places but strangely, nowhere near the source of his back pain. At first, Eddie is a bit tense. He's heard those needles are quite sharp! But the needles don't hurt at all. All Eddie can feel is a slight tingling sensation. Eddie begins to relax and as the acupuncturist goes about his business, he reassuringly tells Eddie exactly what to expect when the needles are inserted. The acupuncturist quotes almost verbatim from acupuncture author Peter Mole who suggests the following as evidence for the existence of chi and those invisible meridians:

*“When the needle reaches the required depth and touches the flow of chi, a remarkable thing happens - a distinct sensation is felt, often described as a dull ache or tingling sensation and can sometimes be felt along the pathway of the meridian. This sensation is known as De Qi and indicates to the practitioner and patient that the point has been accurately located.”*<sup>125</sup>

But what other sensation other than a dull ache or tingling sensation is Eddie going to feel when a fine needle is inserted into his skin? Lying there though, in the midst of this elaborate ceremony, Eddie's ability to maintain any form of critical judgment is considerably diminished. To Eddie, the unmistakable tingling sensation he felt just then was his first brush with the mysterious chi. The session over and having felt this life-force for himself, Eddie's next move is to go down to the local library and borrow a few books on the subject. It's a fair bet he'll find a copy of *'Acupuncture; cure for many diseases'* by Felix Mann - one of the most widely read books on acupuncture in the western world.

With editions in seven languages, Mann's book is bursting to the gills with mumbo-jumbo magical thinking. In this book, Mann tells his readers that depression is a disease of the liver, excessive joy is a disease of the heart, obsession is a disease of the spleen, anguish is a disease of the lungs and fear a disease of the kidneys.<sup>126</sup> Last week, this might all have been a bit strange to Eddie. But now that he's 'experienced' the amazing chi for himself, a whole new world is opening up for him.

Other books in Eddie's pile tell him that acupuncture is a 'proven treatment' for allergies, asthma, arthritis, bladder problems, bronchitis, colds, constipation, depression, diarrhoea, dizziness, fatigue, flu, gynaecological disorders, headaches, high blood pressure, kidney problems, migraines, paralysis, PMS, sciatica, sexual dysfunction, smoking, stress, stroke, tendonitis and vision problems.

It isn't really a cure for any of these conditions of course, but just like Jenny, whose thinking was transformed by her single 'experience' of homoeopathy, Eddie's world view is undergoing the same softly-softly, magical transformative process. Anything positive in the press about acupuncture will now instantly be believed by Eddie. Any critical comments are merely the snipings of 'dark, conventional forces' intent on undermining this 'proven, natural cure'.

And so it goes on. Acupuncture has built its entire reputation on 'evidence' such as this. Those defending acupuncture must first of all demonstrate to us that those ancient anatomy charts really are accurate and that depression really is a disease of the liver. Any healing success boasted by the acupuncturist, if success is what it can be called, dwindles to zero after taking into account self-limiting illness and the placebo response. Furthermore, any relief from longer-term pain is almost always short-lived and patients are usually urged to make follow up appointments for more fee-paying treatment.

Unfortunately for Eddie, his back pain, which stemmed from a rugby tackle several months earlier, doesn't appear to be a self-limiting condition and only a day after his first session, the twinges have started to return. Mind you, the acupuncturist did say that it would probably take between five and six sessions before he noticed any improvement. Eddie dutifully books himself in for five more sessions at a reduced rate of £45.00 a session. Acupuncture is also said to be an excellent preventative. The Aberdeen Acupuncture Clinic advises:

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<sup>125</sup> **Mole, Peter**, *Acupuncture*, Element Books 1995

<sup>126</sup> **Mann, Felix**, *Acupuncture: cure of many diseases*, Heinemann 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 1992



As the screen fed us dramatic images of the woman lying on the operating table, eyes wide open, bloody chest wall exposed and acupuncture needles sticking out at various points, it would have been easy amidst all the razzamatazz to miss the quiet, one line admission from Ms Sykes that the patient had also been given a sedative and that the area surrounding her heart had been numbed with anaesthetic. At no point later during the program did Ms Sykes ask viewers to bear in mind the effects the sedatives and anaesthetic would have had upon the patient during the surgery. Instead, the narrative gushed with praise for 'this ancient art'. But considering the doped up patient probably didn't feel a thing, just how astounding was acupuncture's contribution in this instance? An article a few days later in the *Daily Telegraph* noted the following:

*"In fact, in addition to acupuncture, the patient had a combination of three very powerful sedatives (midazolam, droperidol and fentanyl) and large volumes of local anaesthetic injected into the chest. With such a cocktail of chemicals, the needles were merely cosmetic. In short, this memorable bit of television was emotionally powerful, but scientifically meaningless in building a case for acupuncture."*<sup>129</sup>

The skeptics.org.uk website stated:

*"This entire section of the program was extremely poor and Kathy Sykes has done her reputation no good whatsoever (other than in the eyes of the credulous) by presenting such a load of pap. A bit of truth would have helped with this section: the acupuncture was entirely superfluous in this woman's operation."*<sup>130</sup>

Professor Edzard Ernst from the University of Exeter had been hired as a scientific advisor and qualified counter-balance to the series. In a telephone conversation with me shortly after the series was aired, he expressed his disgust at the predetermined manner in which the BBC had approached the whole subject, saying he had found himself constantly having to do battle with an editor and presenter who did not want trifling matters such as facts getting in the way of the romantic story they wanted to present to their viewers, later estimated at approximately 4 million. Professor Ernst's advice was largely ignored. He has since had people writing to him, believing acupuncture could be a realistic pain relief therapy during their own surgery.<sup>131</sup>

More than 25 years before Sykes' travesty of a 'science programme' was aired, two Chinese medical professors published an article in the Shanghai newspaper *Wenhuibao*, casting doubt on the demonstrations of acupuncture laid on for visiting westerners. The article described the enormous courage of victims who were forced to undergo various operations using only acupuncture but dared not cry out, despite the excruciating pain, for fear of what might happen to them. The authors also admitted that many such operations were performed on patients who were also under the influence of stupefying chemical agents.<sup>132</sup>

Far from ancient wisdom, the true history of Chinese medicine is probably one of the most ignorant across the continents but anyone suggesting otherwise is quickly rounded upon and accused of having little respect for the 'ancient traditions'. In my experience though, discussing these issues to any degree with TCM/acupuncture practitioners is futile. The one thing the all-embracing CAM movement seems loathe to embrace in any form is rational debate. Staying with the eastern influence, the next chapter looks at what is possibly the most fanciful fairytale in the whole of the CAM healing catalogue - feng shui.

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<sup>129</sup> **Singh, Simon**, *Did we really witness the 'amazing power' of acupuncture?* *Daily Telegraph* 14.02.06

<sup>130</sup> [www.skeptics.org.uk/commentary\\_display.php?d=01-06#acupuncture](http://www.skeptics.org.uk/commentary_display.php?d=01-06#acupuncture)

<sup>131</sup> The program was made in conjunction with an Open University alternative medicine course, prompting scientists to complain that a wave of 'anti-science' is affecting not only the BBC but many universities as well. "They are peddling quack science," said David Colquhoun, professor of pharmacology at University College London. This is no longer a fringe game played by new age people. It is beginning to erode intellectual standards at real universities." *Sunday Times, Science accuses BBC of medical quakery*, 26.03.2006

<sup>132</sup> Gould, Donald, *ibid*

# The Feng Shui Horrorscope

*“Astrology is Taurus!” FW Dederling*

Strapped for cash? Frequent family arguments? Business or work life troubling you? Constantly ill? Unlucky in relationships? Perhaps the energy flow in your house is restricted. You might just need to redesign your surroundings! Welcome to the crazy world of feng shui (pronounced fung shway - wind and water) - the therapy that harmonizes man and his environment to maximize his destiny, allegedly. As always, the reality is somewhat different. The feng shui business model mirrors that adopted by almost all medicine vendors down through the ages, conventional and CAM alike. Scare the populace half to death with all sorts of imaginary hob-goblins, promote a miraculous cure and sell into the demand. Today's feng shuist [sic] does exactly that.

The feng shuist's philosophy combines Chinese astrology, a few angry gods who require constant appeasement, some do's and don'ts depending on the day of the month, a constant carping on about the evil that lurks just around the corner and the blessings that will surely follow should we cough up and do exactly as the feng shuist says. The feng shuist begins his house call with a thorough inspection of the property. Detailed notes are taken, such as who sleeps where, what direction they face, who sits where at the dining table, where the computer work station is in relation to the rest of the living room etc., etc.. Feng shuist Sarah Shurety charges £200.00 for an initial consultation and notes:

*“Your best sleeping and working positions will be identified with the aim of achieving your ‘millionaire’s’ position - the best of all worlds; money, love and good health.”*

Furniture layout is also taken into account. A mis-aligned table, cupboard or chair can interrupt the free flow of energy around the house or office. All ‘negative’ arrangements are noted for realignment. The survey also takes into account the lay of the land surrounding the property. The following text from fengshuitips.co.uk is fairly representative of the alarmist patter.

*“Check to see if there are any menacing-looking structures, i.e., a sharp-pointed roof, a straight road, a fly-over, a dead tree etc., etc., directed at your property. These structures can transform a good combination of energies into a malignant one or can aggravate an already malevolent combination to a deadly one.”*

Having completed his detailed survey, the feng shuist then consults his astrological charts and summoning all his predictive powers, he foretells a number of potential crises looming on the horizon and spells out the dangers in no uncertain terms. Fengshuitips again:

*“Be careful in June if your main door, bedroom or office or any important room is located in the south, west or northwest this month... This [astrological/energy] combination not only signifies illnesses and accidents, which can sometimes be fatal, it also threatens break ups in relationships, divorces, backstabbing lawsuits and bankruptcy...”*

But all is not lost. The feng shuist then suggests a number of different ‘cures’ with proven ability to ward off these malevolent energies and avert the predicted dangers. Fengshuitips again:

*“If you want to avoid continued sickness, arguments, bankruptcy, legal problems loss of wealth, relationship problems, problems with the mouth, sore throat, chest problems, skin problems, car accidents, accidents involving metal and just overall bad luck, this cure and enhancer kit is essential.”*

Cure kits comprise all manner of trinkets including wind chimes, turquoise laughing buddhas, indoor and outdoor water features, coins on ribbons, assorted brass dragons three-legged toads, mirrors, crystal globes, miniature protection pouches, wealth pots, bamboo fronds, happy relationship charms, solar-powered rainbow makers, imitation cannons, all imbued with the power to ward off harmful ‘energies’. This from the Feng Shui Store:

*“For protection, wear some hermatite beads or amethyst. (£29.95) You should also have a key chain pendant of an ox with you at all times (£8.99). You can also place a little statue of an ox on your work desk for support (£8.99). If you want to enhance or attract new relationships, place a pair of mandarin ducks (£14.75) in the northeast part of your bedroom this month.”*

Alarmed at what August might bring, Mike and Jill pay the feng shuist for his cures and make the suggested changes to their living/working space. The consultant also advises on where best to place the cures around the house and garden. Almost overnight, Mike and Jill’s property has been turned into a sort of shrine to the gods. Mirrors everywhere, beds facing different directions, curtains drawn here, windows wide open there, an indoor water feature in the kitchen, beads, baubles and little china animals adorning the doorposts and shelves, a few outdoor wind chimes and a big green buddha in the flower bed. The feng shui dance has begun. Mike and Jill’s cheque clears and amazingly, August passes without a hitch. In fact, August turns out pretty well. A number of the feng shuist’s promises come good. New convert Kim writes in to fengshuiweb:

*“Hello Jo, it’s Kim. I asked you for advice on education. You sent me a piece of clear quartz and I placed it where you said. This morning I got a letter and it confirmed a place at the secondary school we wanted for our daughter through an appeal. I would like to thank you very much for your advice as it has worked. My husband did not believe in feng shui at first but now he does.”<sup>133</sup>*

Delighted with her crystal purchase and convinced of its powers, Kim’s email address is now on the infamous ‘feng shui mailing list’ - its primary function to warn of THE DANGERS that tomorrow might bring and make known the failsafe cure! Kim will no doubt be spending a lot more money with fengshuiweb to avoid an otherwise ‘hazardous’ few months ahead. If Kim’s careful though, she might well be able to save a bit of money here and there. Fengshuiweb gives a few useful tips:

*“Some sites will tell you to throw away or bury your old wind chimes, six coins, Pi Yao and Dragon Headed Tortoise etc from the previous year because they store so much negative energy, but this is not necessary as long as you cleanse the items before replacing them for Chinese new year. To cleanse them, ideally you should place them outside under a full moon overnight or in direct sunlight for at least 4 hours and sprinkle them with rock salt. Rinse under water in the morning and place them in the appropriate areas.”<sup>134</sup>*

As well as being ‘potent homoeopathic medicines’, moonlight and sunlight are now also powerful cleaning agents. Karen is another delighted feng shui punter. I don’t think I’d want to be one of her friends though:

*“I have bought your annual cures kits for the last five years and I have to say each year it gets better and better, if that were possible. I know you say you can keep them and just clean them but I feel I get so much power from them I would not want to risk it, so I donate the kit for the previous year to my friends. Thank you for all your help and support over the years and my husband also sends his thanks and that’s really saying something, as he was a complete cynic. Now he’s the one who keeps reminding me to check your web site each month for updates. Forever grateful, Karen and Philip.”*

And forever grateful to you too, Karen and Philip, for using us, your mates, as a dumping ground for all of last years’ negative energies! There’s certainly a living to be made from feng shui. Mike Chester Transformations in Aylesbury charges £600 to survey a four bedroom house and £800 for a small office block or factory. The Tracy Longdon Consultancy in Swindon charges businesses £500 a day for its services. The Jon Sandifer Consultancy offers a house-buying support package:

*“These short, mini surveys can prove invaluable. I can spot very quickly whether a property is suitable for you, your partner, or indeed your family. Fee £250. £50 for any other property within fifteen minutes drive of the initial one. At the end of the session we can collaborate and I will give you my feedback.”<sup>135</sup>*

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<sup>133</sup> [www.fengshuiweb.co.uk/advice/flyingstars2004.htm](http://www.fengshuiweb.co.uk/advice/flyingstars2004.htm)

<sup>134</sup> [www.fengshuiweb.co.uk](http://www.fengshuiweb.co.uk)

<sup>135</sup> Jon Sandifer Feng Shui Consultant at [www.fengshui.co.uk](http://www.fengshui.co.uk)

The fengshuiagency.com boasts a number of high society and corporate clients and offers advice on such matters as when to marry, when to invest and whether your friends help or hinder you. The site promotes its £245 horoscope as follows:

*“Each consultant has trained for at least 10 years and has passed the prestigious Horoscope Masters exam set and graded by Grand Master Chan Kun Wah himself. You couldn’t be in better hands. Beware cheaper online alternatives that offer software automated analysis. All our horoscope charts are constructed by hand and this allows the consultant to analyze the subtleties and special forms that most software will not detect.”*

Chan Kun Wah’s own website offers a six day teaching seminar on the secrets of Tsin Lon Ou Yu. The seminar is priced at £802 excluding food and accommodation, although a 10% early bird discount is available. For your £802, the master will,

*“... open up the world and secret meanings of feng shui poems. This information is top secret. These poems are the foundation stone of all feng shui. Their correct interpretation and consequent meanings are vital to the correct development of feng shui. Grand Master Chan and Master Seth are willing to unfold the true meanings of the poems and they will also explain why many popular interpretations are wrong! Using the Tsin Lon Ou Yu, Grand Master Chan will guide us in methods of placement for chi mouths, gates, doors, sites, Buddha and water features within a landform to maximize the energetic potential for specific purposes.”*

Would masters Seth and Wah please explain why a system supposedly so beneficial for mankind is being sold only to a select few and for the princely sum of £802? We’re right back where we started, with Samuel ‘Big Sugar’ Hahnemann and his secret masonic lodge meetings where all sorts of occult ‘truths’ were supposedly imparted to the select, privileged few. Ayurvedic (the science of life and longevity) medicine incorporates many elements of feng shui into its complicated rules for living.

*“When building a property, Vasthu Sastra [Indian feng shui] suggests that, if possible, the breadwinner should pick the direction in which it faces based on the direction that is favourable to his or her zodiac sign. Of course, this is easier to do if one is building on a fresh piece of land. When buying a ready-made property, it might not be possible to change the direction in which the property faces. This is not, however, a major problem because by staying in a property that is arranged internally according to Vasthu principles, a person will be able to ease any unfavourable astrological influences... Apart from human beings, even animals are affected by Vasthu defects. A dog will be healthy and alert if the kennel is located in the South, South East or in the North West corner of the house. The dogs will live longer if the kennel is located according to Vasthu.”<sup>136</sup>*

Planning a meal in the Ayurvedic household is just as arduous. To ensure physical, mental and spiritual harmony in the home, the cook must make sure that certain foods do not ‘clash’. And you must also be ‘mindful’ of the food (whatever that means) as you prepare it. This food can go with *this* food and with *that* food and perhaps with *that* food. But you don’t really want to mix *that* with *that* and definitely not that with *that*! Ayurvedic might just as well stand for obsessive compulsive!

Mind you, there are plenty of Ayurvedic counsellors out there quite willing to construct your own personal ‘eat right for your body-type’ menu at £50.00 per hour. All you have to deal with then is the stress of cooking it correctly. But you can’t start cooking your meal until you’ve made sure the oven is correctly positioned. And is the kitchen situated in the best possible place in the house etc., etc.? And so the whole ridiculous business continues. Chief proponent of the Vedic way is Deepak Chopra. We shall be hearing more from this showman later.

Feng shui is certainly popular in America. In February 2008, the McDonalds restaurant in Gale Avenue, Hacienda Heights, California was the first to receive a makeover from Grand Master Dr Chi-Jean Liu. The restaurant combines a water feature, with elements of fire and red accents throughout the dining area to symbolize good luck, laughter and light. Says restaurant operator

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<sup>136</sup> Vasthu Sastra Indian Feng Shui at [www.vasthusastra.com/vasthufavourabledir.asp](http://www.vasthusastra.com/vasthufavourabledir.asp)

Mark Brownstein, *"We are pleased to bring this unique experience to our customers in a one-of-a-kind feng shui decor while serving our quality meals."*<sup>137</sup> Ho-hum.

Feng shui is also a hit amongst the Hollywood business elite. Already convinced the feng shuist can create a more productive psychic environment, leading to better deals, better scripts, better performances and better movies etc., etc., the showbiz fraternity has realized that an enormous amount of deal-making is made on the mobile phone whilst navigating some of the worst traffic in North America. This has led to feng shui for the car, otherwise known as feng che. Executives are paying up to \$500 an hour for a sports car interior re-design and \$750 for SUVs. In his article *Beyond Feng Shui*, Joe Queenan writes:

*"Until recently, most were riding in vehicles that had the wrong colours, the wrong interiors, the wrong positioning of mirrors and, most calamitously, the wrong accessories. Worse than that, industry movers and shakers were driving to work without paying the slightest attention to the direction from which positive or negative chi was flowing into their Mercedes, BMW or Range Rover during their lengthy commutes."*<sup>138</sup>

Using a diagnostic device called the *denkon guagua* (an octagonal template on which are printed symbols for each of the eight areas that define human existence allegedly), the feng cheist 'diagnoses' the quantity and quality of negative chi in your Mercedes Benz. He then superimposes the *denkon guagua* over a scaled diagram of your car and decides on which cures and where to place them in order to maximize 'the positive flow'.

For the movie producer who believes he has enemies within his own workforce, one 'cure' is to reposition the rear-view mirror so that anyone looking into it would catch his own reflection and be pummeled into a stupor by the reflected malevolent 'energy'. However, these mirror adjustments do not go down too well with the local police. Doing so, says Lt. Teddy Carmody of the LAPD, *"makes it almost impossible to make the eastbound ramp exit onto Santa Monica Boulevard from the middle lane, because you can't see the dead spot behind you, especially if you've got a statue of the Three-Legged Toad God of Wealth in the back window. This is the downside of the feng che boom."*<sup>139</sup>

The Skeptic's Dictionary sums up the whole sorry situation:

*"Feng shui has become a kind of architectural acupuncture: wizards and magi insert themselves into buildings or landscapes and use their metaphysical sensors to detect the flow of good and bad 'energy'. It is another new age 'energy' scam with arrays of metaphysical products from paper cut-outs of half-moons and planets to octagonal mirrors to wooden flutes offered for sale to help you improve your health, maximize your potential, and guarantee fulfillment of some fortune cookie philosophy."*

A slightly different take on feng shui is the idea of geopathic stress or GS - a condition apparently caused by harmful energies rising up through the earth. As the health kinesiology [hk4health.co.uk](http://hk4health.co.uk) website describes: *"The effects are gradual, involving a slow deterioration in health in those who are most susceptible to GS. As a result, they often find it difficult to feel happy, energetic, emotionally stable and physically well."* The Geomancer website has all the usual worrying CAM 'facts and figures' thrown in to try and add credibility to its stress-cleansing services:

*"Geopathic stress has been found to be the common factor in 100% of people who get secondary cancer: 95% of people who get cancer (they were either sleeping or working in a GS place before or at the time the cancer was diagnosed): 95% of children who are hyperactive, who have learning disabilities or are difficult to control: 95% of people who get AIDS: 80% of parents/caregivers who abuse children etc., etc.."*<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> McDonalds opens first feng shui restaurant, PRNewswire.com 13<sup>th</sup> Feb 2008

<sup>138</sup> Queenan, Joe, *Beyond Feng Shui* at [http://www.csicop.org/sb/show/beyond\\_feng\\_shui/](http://www.csicop.org/sb/show/beyond_feng_shui/)

<sup>139</sup> *Beyond Feng Shui* ibid

<sup>140</sup> Geopathic stress at [www.thegeomancer.netfirms.com/geopathicstress.htm](http://www.thegeomancer.netfirms.com/geopathicstress.htm)

Thank Heavens for the actions of these heroic GS consultants, protecting us from all of these deadly rays! But how can I know if my house is affected? The Wholistic Research Company gives a few pointers:

*“There may be problems with mildew in the house; there is a lot of lichen or moss growing on the roof, walls or lawn as geopathic stress encourages the growth of these; there may be problems with ants, wasps or bees. Most animals avoid geopathic stress. Those that avoid it include dogs, cows and horses. Some are attracted to it, ants, wasps, bees and, oddly enough, cats; the presence of trees with cancer (i.e. large knobbly growths on the trunk) or trees whose trunks have split into two; gaps in hedges. These may indicate the position of a line of geopathic stress crossing the hedge.”<sup>141</sup>*



And again, like those endless feng shui cures, there are endless crystals, copper coils, ankhs and electrical gizmos all apparently charged with the power to neutralize the GS threat (left). Metal stakes can also be driven into the ground at strategic points around the property - a sort of civil engineer's acupuncture if you like, but without the hi-viz jackets or hard hats. These earth acupuncture points are intuitively 'divined' by the geomancer (earth diviner) using special dowsing rods.

Hammering the stakes into the ground at these points apparently unblocks and/or redirects the energy flow. Wilma Davidson specialises in GS clearance and is so confident of her powers, she offers a ten year guarantee on all her work. Trained in polarity balancing, spirit release, dowsing, feng shui, sick building syndrome and stress clearance, Wilma is also an accredited member of the Spiritual Release Foundation and claims a close connection to the spirit world:

*“When I moved to a new home a couple of years ago, I kept seeing the spirit of a gentleman sitting in my armchair. This man was the previous owner of the house and was concerned about my activities as I was converting an outbuilding into a healing sanctuary where he had once made golf clubs.”<sup>142</sup>*

Whilst at your property, Wilma might also check for any tell-tale evidence of the infamous Hartmann Grid. Named after the doctor who 'discovered' these invisible lines over 50 years ago, anyone living over them and especially directly above the intersect points, is at serious risk of health problems. This from thegeomancer.net

*“The entire earth is threaded with an invisible grid of Hartmann lines. They appear every 6-8 feet. They are named after the German medical doctor Ernst Hartmann. If your bedroom or work area lies over these lines, there is a good chance you have serious health problems. Heart attack victims often sleep on a Hartmann line. So do insomniacs! Dr. Hartmann had over 40 years of extensive medical documentation to back up his claims and has published three highly technical books on his work. ‘I once went to a man's home and warned him not to sleep in a certain spot. He said I was a fool. 12 years later, he died of cancer.’ Ernst Hartmann, M.D.”*

Ernst, I'm converted! Back to our genial dowser Arthur Bailey who has invented his own GS neutralizer called the Stress Buster - a nine inch high, pyramid-shaped electrical contraption with

<sup>141</sup> **Jacobs, Robert, Dr**, *Geopathic Stress*, The Wholistic Research Company at [www.wholisticresearch.com/info/artshow.php3?artid=211](http://www.wholisticresearch.com/info/artshow.php3?artid=211)

<sup>142</sup> [www.Karmictwist.com](http://www.Karmictwist.com)

a frequency-emitting crystal at its core. This pyramid can be placed anywhere in the house. Geopathicstressbuster.com states:

*“The Stress Buster combines four different complex electronic waveforms, magnetically coupled into a crystal of natural quartz, which is simultaneously optically pulsed with visible light. This activates the crystal’s harmonizing properties creating a subtle energy field, which neutralizes geopathic stress and other negative energies to approximately 50 feet in all directions - the equivalent of 4 floors up and 4 floors down, i.e., 9 floors.”*

But whatever you do, don’t tamper with it. Like Abrams’ infamous Oscilloclast, the two year guarantee on Arthur’s £250 pulsating prism is invalidated if the seal is broken. To complement the Stressbuster, Arthur also sells his own range of feng shui sprays. ‘A quick spray into all four corners and the centre of a room will clear negative energies and make both you and the whole room feel much lighter and brighter.’ A potent blend of Bailey Flower essences, vodka and natural spring water, the sprays are available from The Bailey Flower essence site for only £9.60 plus postage.

A while ago, I managed to catch the tail end of a BBC Radio Four programme featuring a visit to the London offices of a successful feng shui publisher. I laughed out loud as the interviewer with more than a touch of irony, described the ‘sacred work space’ that greeted him. Books and paperwork in teetering piles everywhere, typists crammed into various corners, little natural light and yet everyone working together on material promoting the ideal living and working space. The reporter told listeners that for a company promoting such ideals, he had not expected its offices to be so cluttered, cramped and higgledy-piggledy. It was yet another candid glimpse into the world of CAM therapies, showing once again just how divorced so many of these holistic ideals are from the real world

# Kirlian Photography

*"I should point out that I have a B.S. in Chemical Engineering, with a Minor in physics. Believe me, if it didn't follow scientific process, I wouldn't believe Kirlian Photography either."* **Scifi.com**

Named after its Russian inventor Semyon Kirlian in 1937, Kirlian claimed to be able to capture a person's aura on film, the aura being the supposed psychical qualities of a person, recognizable as a cloud of colours around the head and shoulders. Progen Ltd describes its \$9,698 Aura 6000 system as follows:

*"Throughout history, aura colours were seen by only a gifted few. Progen, through modern technology, has brought the ability to see auras to everyone through the use of our Aura Camera 6000 and digital real time Aura Imaging. We here at Progen want you to see your own aura in order to help you gain deeper personal insight into emotional and mental states as well as spiritual awareness."*<sup>143</sup>

And at nearly £5,000 per camera, what Progen salesman wouldn't want us to start seeing our own aura? At a natural health fair in Manchester, I had the dubious privilege of watching an aura photographer bamboozling the crowd with his Kirlian camera show. The punter sits in a chair opposite the camera and is instructed to place his right hand on a 'special surface' wired into the camera and supposedly a vital component in the process of tuning into the aura. The photographer takes the Polaroid snap and hands it to the punter who is then directed to a waiting team of aura 'consultants' who interpret the Jimi Hendrix-style psychedelic halo around the punter's top half.

Advice focuses on magnificence of character, future wealth, future successful relationships and other flattering nonsense. At this particular booth, advice was also being given on the punter's predisposition to psychic ill-health and what he could do to avoid falling prey to the 'negativities' that had shown up in the photo. And, just as our loveable rogue the Count de St Germaine would direct his audience to his impressive array of elixirs at the end of his show, so the aura practitioner's entourage wasted no time in guiding the crowd to tables laden with all manner of tonics claiming to increase psychic fortitude etc., etc..

I asked the Kirlian operator that wasn't it the case that our hands were resting on a basic heat sensor pad wired into the camera and that the whole process was merely a variation on thermal imaging? Non-plussed at first that anyone was even daring to ask such questions, I was then told to f\*\*\* off and stop giving him grief. Having noted the speed at which he was processing the long queue paying £10.00 a time, his response wasn't that surprising. I estimated his wheeze was fleecing the populace at a rate of £300 per hour, not including psychic 'medicines'. Nice work if you can get it. As famed US showman P.T. Barnum said, *"There may be a sucker born every minute, but every ten, there's one born to take advantage!"* Researcher and skeptic Joe Nickell recounts the following experience while investigating auras:

*"Once at a psychic workshop, I volunteered as the subject whose aura others were instructed to visualize. I stood in front of a blank wall while the instructor noted how my energy field expanded and contracted as I inhaled and exhaled. Actually, I held my breath for long periods, while raising and lowering my chest and shoulders to simulate breathing. Such is the power of suggestion that some imaginative initiates 'saw' the alleged effect despite the negating conditions."*<sup>144</sup>

Nickell then decided to have his aura photographed. The photo showed a white blaze around the top half of his body, apparently denoting Nickell's positive spiritual qualities. Nickell returned to the aura photo booth 20 minutes later to have another picture taken. After all, if the idea of the aura photograph is that it captures the person's inner psychic qualities, then the aura picture should be very similar the next time around. The second picture produced only blues and greens. Said Nickell,

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<sup>143</sup> [www.kirlian.org/aura.htm](http://www.kirlian.org/aura.htm)

<sup>144</sup> **Nickell, Joe**, Aura Photography - A Candid Shot at [www.csicop.org/si/2000-05/i-files.html](http://www.csicop.org/si/2000-05/i-files.html)

*“The radically different photos demonstrated a lack of any consistency that might justify people thinking of their aura as an expression of their inherent individuality.”*



Wendy Lambert has written a book called *How To See Auras*. Each book comes with a free pair of ‘specially tuned’ aura glasses (left). Says Ms Lambert:

*“Most people who try the glasses can immediately see light around objects, plants and people. Further practice brings the ability to see colours, guide energies, thought forms, healing energy and past life energy. Healing practitioners may find that wearing the aura glasses gives valuable information about the energy fields of their clients as they work with them. Feedback from the public via e-mail and letters has been most positive! I am pleased to be the author of a book that helps others develop abilities that might otherwise lie dormant.”<sup>145</sup>*

If homoeopaths believe moonlight, pylon ‘buzz’ and the Great Wall of China can be transmuted into medicines and if feng shuists believe a lump of quartz in your living room can affect a school governors’ meeting, then of course there’s room in the marketplace for aura glasses. How about the idea that unhealthy crystal deposits can gather in the sole of the foot? And how about a therapy to treat this debilitating condition?

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<sup>145</sup> [www.candisc.com/earthtopia/aura.htm](http://www.candisc.com/earthtopia/aura.htm)

## Reflexology, Iridology and other Intolerances

*“A group of us attending a monthly reflexology meeting nearly fell off our chairs when one of our members entered carrying a cage holding a magnificent bald-headed eagle.” Universalreflex.com*

Reflexology as we know it today was resurrected from colourful ancient Egyptian ritual and re-vamped in America in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by a Dr William Fitzgerald who proposed a system of 10 perpendicular zones running through the body, similar to the acupuncturist’s meridians. With nil evidence to support any of his ideas, Fitzgerald also proposed the hands, feet and tongue were somehow connected to other parts of the body and that ‘expert manipulation’ of these extremities would bring relief to all other ‘connected’ parts. A colleague at the time, Edwin Bowers, recommended that Fitzgerald’s system be called ‘Zone Therapy’. In the 1930s Eunice Ingham Stopfel (who had previously worked with Fitzgerald) developed the system further.

Taking a standard anatomical text book, Stopfel dispensed with Fitzgerald’s hands, feet and tongue hypothesis and attempted to draw all the human organs on the bottom of the foot. When Stopfel realised there wasn’t enough room to fit all the human body-parts onto the soles of the feet, she expanded her system to include both ankles. Thus it became possible to treat all organs and all parts of the body, from the brain to the liver and from wisdom teeth to the intestine. ‘Zone Therapy’ had now become ‘Foot Reflexology’.

Stopfel announced that massaging this area would allow her to feel for ‘blockages’ in the *vital force*, these blockages taking the form of crystals supposedly collecting in the sole of the foot. The *Holistic Health Handbook* states the following: “Once located, the reflexologist then crushes these crystals, which in turn unblocks the meridians, sending the Universal Life Force flowing throughout the body.”<sup>146</sup> No such crystals have ever been shown to exist. Taking reflexology’s wild claims a step further (no pun intended), a promotional mailing on behalf of modern-day reflexology guru Mildred Carter states the following:



*“Not only does ‘New Body Reflexology’ let you cure the worst illnesses safely and permanently, it can even work to reverse the ageing process, Carter says. Say goodbye to age lines, dry skin, brown spots, blemishes - with Body Reflexology you can actually give yourself an at-home facelift with no discomfort or disfiguring surgery.”<sup>147</sup>*

Hocko-groackle shoe inserts that massage the parts of the foot supposedly related to the bodily ache or pain are also selling well. Reflexology isn’t just for humans though. Pawspoint runs a reflexology class for animals. Pawspoint founder Yvette Eastman takes up the story.

*“Is your dog a fear-biter? Does your cat spray? Is your animal in physical or emotional pain? Is your friend a rescue animal with sad memories? Is epilepsy, arthritis, diabetes or hip dysplasia a problem? Does your dog cower and hide from firecrackers, thunder or loud noises? All of these common concerns can be alleviated by Yvette Eastman’s method of **Pawspoint Reflexology** [left]. Learn EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) for your animal. The very first hour of the class will bring a total change in your animal as he or she relaxes, even in the presence of other animals. One of our classes had 14 dogs, 2 cats, a mini and a maxi-horse. They were all social; there was a peaceful feeling about the entire class. Last year, cats, dogs and a rabbit shared the same room*

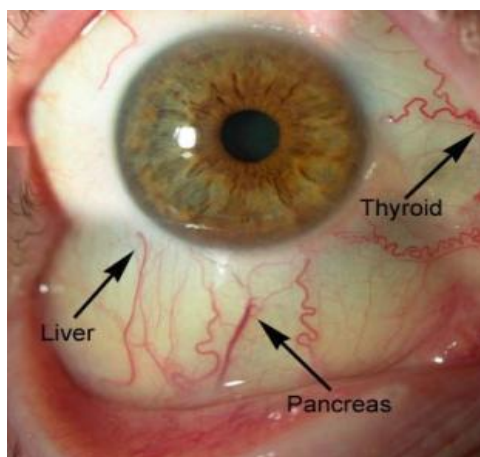
<sup>146</sup> **Baumann, Edward**, *The Holistic Health Handbook*, Green Publications 1984

<sup>147</sup> **Raso, J**, *Alternative Healthcare: A Comprehensive Guide*, Prometheus 1994

*happily and peacefully. The program is a two-day session. Day one will be training for the human in the Pawspoint technique. On the second day, bring your animal.” Tuition: \$395.00*

To test the validity of reflexology, a questionnaire was sent out to 70 people asking whether they had suffered health problems during the previous two years in any of 43 listed anatomical areas. Subjects responding yes to any of the named problem areas were invited in to be ‘diagnosed’ by a reflexologist. To prevent the reflexologist from asking leading questions or observing subtle clues, the subjects were asked to remain silent and a curtain was placed between them and the reflexologist so that only the patients’ feet were visible. The reflexologist’s findings did not differ from what would be expected by blind chance.<sup>148</sup> No-one is saying you can’t have your feet sensuously massaged. Just spare us the fairytale ‘ancient wisdom’ that goes along with it all. Finally, it is interesting to note that in the reflexologist’s treatment chart, the foot itself is not represented. As it stands at present, a pain in the foot is untreatable by reflexology.

If there is a quack diagnostic league table, then up there in contention for championship place is iridology, a CAM ‘discipline’ requiring no more than a paragraph to debunk its extravagant claims. Whilst treating a man for a broken leg, 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian physician Ignatz von Péczy noticed a dark streak in one of his patient’s eyes. It reminded him of a similar dark streak he had seen in the eyes of an owl whose leg he had accidentally broken years earlier.



In another flash of special, error-laden CAM inspiration, Péczy divined that any injury or dis-ease in any part of the anatomy will always create a telltale sign in the iris and surrounding area. With nil evidence to bolster his idea, all Péczy did then was to super-impose a map of the human body onto the eye and begin trading. Using Péczy’s map, a magnifying glass and a flashlight, today’s iridologist peers into the iris (left) and looks for anything from thyroid problems to dementia and from kidney disease to erectile dysfunction. Whilst there are conditions that have no relation to the eye that can be detected via an eye examination, the theory and methodology supporting Péczy’s craft is bunkum. Iridology is a complete con.

Perhaps the biggest uptake in quack diagnostics is in the allergy and food intolerance test market. Research into these tests conducted by British investigative journalist Nick Morgan proved most disconcerting. Nick’s journey took him to various allergy practitioners across London, each offering different advice, charging different fees and all drawing different conclusions. His diagnoses ranged from frail blood cells and fatigue to parasites that could only be detected by a ‘specialist machine’. Over the range of tests, Nick was found to be ‘intolerant’ to over two hundred different foods. Spending a total of £450 on muscle-testing, hair analysis, intuitive testing, electro-magnetic testing and other unproven procedures, Nick concluded that allergy testing was a complete scam, albeit carried out in the main by well-intentioned practitioners.<sup>149</sup>

The BBC Inside Out team carried out a similar investigation across a number of Holland and Barrett stores offering its customers the Vega food intolerance test at Newbury, Chichester and Farnborough. Reporter Chris Packham discovered he was sensitive to over 33 different foods, including staples like wheat, potatoes, milk, tomatoes, tea and coffee. But out of the 33 products, there was only two that all three testers agreed on - cheese and chocolate. Chris was also advised by Holland and Barrett staff to take a total of 20 different vitamins and minerals.

*“To give Holland and Barrett and the erratic Vega machine a fighting chance to get it right, we sent another member of the Inside Out team, this time to stores in Southampton, Brighton and*

<sup>148</sup> **Jarvis, W**, *Reflexology*, National Council Against Health Fraud at [www.ncahf.org/articles/o-r/reflexology.html](http://www.ncahf.org/articles/o-r/reflexology.html)

<sup>149</sup> **Morgan, Nick**, ‘The Scam of Food Intolerance Tests’ at [www.nickmorgan.net/html/food\\_tests.html](http://www.nickmorgan.net/html/food_tests.html)

*Dorchester. Once again the Vega machine showed different results in different stores. It seems your allergies may be determined not by food but by location.”*<sup>150</sup>



*Times Newspapers* carried out a similar investigation, sending out a healthy individual who underwent seven different tests and was told she had to give up more than 50 foods. In one test, a consultant held a phial of food to the young woman's stomach to test for allergies and then spoke to her leg. Ms Penny Povey, who was running one such clinic out of a London Ms Selfridges store at the time, told the reporter she wasn't too surprised at the differing results. *“We are moving energy and we are never static. So what one practitioner gets may be very different from another.”*<sup>151</sup>

In all of this of course, no-one is saying that allergies do not exist. There will always be certain animal, vegetable or mineral products that create a reaction in certain individuals and even more so with the mountains of unnatural and highly processed foodstuffs and toxic pharmaceuticals consumed today. And unfortunately, there will also always be those whose plight no medical team seems able to explain or successfully treat. And let's not forget the media. One minute, the red tops are giving us wild, unsubstantiated headlines on severe reactions to x, y, z, and the next they ridicule a local council's decision to ban pantomime dames from throwing Quality Street out to the kids for fear of an adverse reaction to hazelnuts. We take a closer look at allergies and at some potential causes a little later.

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<sup>150</sup> Food Sensitivity at [www.bbc.co.uk/insideout/south/series2/food\\_sensitivity\\_allergy\\_vega\\_tests.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/insideout/south/series2/food_sensitivity_allergy_vega_tests.shtml)

<sup>151</sup> 'Fake allergy fears', *Sunday Times*, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2002

# Naturopathy

*“Next contestant, Mrs. Sybil Fawlty from Torquay.  
Specialist subject - the bleeding obvious.” Basil Fawlty*

The great claim of the naturopathic doctor is that he treats the whole person and considers a variety of factors before he diagnoses an illness. The naturopathic doctor might look at your mental, emotional, and spiritual state; at your diet; your family history; your environment and your lifestyle before making a diagnosis.<sup>152</sup>



The cornerstones of naturopathic philosophy are prevention and responsibility for one's own health. The goal is to remove obstacles to the patient's own state of optimal health. This all sounds sensible and helpful until we begin to look at the history of naturopathy in a little more detail and at the diagnostic tools and 'natural cures' the naturopath uses in his practice today.

Benedict Lust 1872-1945 (left) was a German-born health fiend who is generally credited with making famous the naturopathic way of healing in the western world. After reading the works of Father Sebastian Kneipp and his 'water cure' which involved taking baths of alternating hot and cold temperatures, exercising, paying attention to diet and sensibly refusing the harsh conventional medicines of the day, Lust and his wife Louise took Kneipp's basic ideas and like so many other early health pioneers and adventurers, simply added to them. Naturopathy, said Lust:

*“is a distinct school of healing, employing the beneficent agency of Nature's forces of water, air, sunlight, earth power, electricity, magnetism, exercise, rest, proper diet, various kinds of mechanical treatment, and mental and moral science. As none of these agents of rejuvenation can cure every disease (alone), the naturopath rightly employs the combination that is best adapted to each individual case. The result of such ministration is wholly beneficent. The prophylactic power of Nature's finer forces, mechanical and occult, removes foreign or poisonous matter from the system, restores nerve and blood vitality, invigorates organs and tissue and regenerates the entire organism.”<sup>153</sup>*

On a positive note, Lust can be credited with introducing to the masses the principles of a healthy diet such as increasing fibre intake and reducing saturated fats etc., etc.. But as soon as Lust mentions electricity, magnetism, 'earth power' and various kinds of mechanical treatment as therapies, it's not too difficult to see how the fairytale element soon became very much interwoven into the naturopathic lexicon. It's also worth noting that Lust held homoeopathy in high esteem and graduated from the New York Homeopathic Medical College in 1901.

Lust had also been influenced by the works of Sidney Weltmer, the father of 'suggestive therapeutics'. This is the theory that whether it was the mind or the body that first lost its grip on health, the two were inseparably related. If the dis-ease originated in the body, the mind could also lose its ability and desire to overcome the disease because the patient 'felt' sick and consequently slid further into the dis-eased state. Alternatively, if the mind first lost its ability and desire to 'be healthy' and some physical infirmity followed, the patient was susceptible to being overcome by said dis-ease.<sup>154</sup> Not wildly off the mark but as always, a little bit of truth can help paint the bigger false picture.

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<sup>152</sup> **What is naturopathy?** at University of Maryland medical Centre at [www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/naturopathy-000356.htm](http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/naturopathy-000356.htm)

<sup>153</sup> Dr Steger World Leader in Naturopathy! at [www.drsteger.net/?19](http://www.drsteger.net/?19)

<sup>154</sup> The Philosophy of Naturopathic Medicine at [www.naturalmedicine1.wordpress.com/page/4/](http://www.naturalmedicine1.wordpress.com/page/4/)

The Lusts went on to establish the American School of Naturopathy in 1902 and also a series of YungBorn (fountain of youth) clinics which emphasized hygiene, proper bowel habits, exercise, nude sunbathing and all sorts of 'natural' cures as the ideal tools for health. Some of Lust's more outlandish healing ideas at the time included eating sand to cure indigestion and constipation; establishing an 'astroscopy department' to study the influence of astrology on dis-ease; rectal manipulation as a cure for chronic headaches; the Toxo-Absorbent Pack - a container of certain *potent* minerals that when 'applied externally, searches out the poisons from every organ of the body, draws them to the surface and neutralizes them, curing pneumonia, tuberculosis, cancer, appendicitis and typhoid fever'; the Golden Sunlight Radiator which 'relieves pains of every description almost instantly' and makes pimples 'fade away like flakes of snow under the hot sun' and the healing magnetism found in mud. Said Lust,

*"Children have so much fun making mud pies because the child feels within itself the need of the magnetic surge that sweeps from Nature through man, meets the electric wave that quivers from Ether through man and forms the complete circuit comprised in humanity - from Animal to God."*

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An interesting book entitled *Nature Doctors* by Freidhelm Kirchfield details the following:

*"Early as 1899, he (Lust) was arrested for the practice of medicine and surgery without a license, for giving a bath and massage to an agent of the County Medical Association. This secret agent, Mrs. Frances Benzecry was responsible for the arrests of over 800 naturopathic doctors during a twelve-year period. When Lust complained editorially in The Naturopath and called Mrs. Benzecry, 'a disgrace to American womanhood and to the free soil of America on which she treads', he was arrested, handcuffed and 'carried to the Tombs as if I had committed murder'.*

*When she retired as an undercover agent, Mrs. Benzecry stated that although she was variously vibrated, stretched, rubbed, steamed, and prayed over, she came to no harm. "I am unhurt." she wrote. "Nothing happened to me." As Lust pointed out, "What if she had gone around to all the regular doctors for 12 years and underwent their treatments? Would anything be left of her if she had submitted to their operations?"*<sup>156</sup>

Fair point Benedict. But none of this makes naturopathy any more sensible. US bodybuilder Bernarr MacFadden was another big influence in the spread of naturopathy. A shrewd and hard-working businessman, MacFadden built an enormous publishing empire spreading the word on various health techniques falling under the banner of 'naturopathic treatment'. Again, there was the sensible concentration on diet and exercise but also a tendency towards the inane even insane. One of MacFadden's later more crack-pot ideas was to freeze the unemployed and then thaw them out when the Depression was over.

By 1900, MacFadden had opened a publishing office in London. He had published many health books in the US, including the *'Encyclopaedia of Health Culture'* and established an English edition of his American *'Physical Culture'* magazine. His books were so well received in Britain that he came over in person around 1910 and toured the UK with his newly-wed 19 year old wife Mary, billing themselves as 'the world's healthiest man and woman'.

A MacFadden performance would typically include various feats of strength, rapid deep knee bends using only one leg, wrestling contests and as a grand finale, Mary would climb to the top of a near 7 feet high platform and after a drum roll, would jump directly onto MacFadden's stomach. When the UK tour finished, they opened a health resort in Brighton which closed at the advent of WW1, forcing the MacFaddens to return to the US.<sup>157</sup>

As always with CAM, modern day naturopathy presents itself very well in the literature. Take the naturopathic Medicine for Allergies web page as an example:

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<sup>155</sup> Benedict Lust, 'Editorial Drift', *Naturopath and Herald of Health* (1902) 3:296-9, p. 298.

<sup>156</sup> Kirchfeld, Freidhelm, Boyle, Wade, *Nature Doctors*, Buckeye Naturopathic Press, 1994 at [www.scribd.com/doc/7155868/Nature-DoctorsEntire-Book](http://www.scribd.com/doc/7155868/Nature-DoctorsEntire-Book)

<sup>157</sup> A fascinating history of Bernarr Macfadden at [www.bernarrmacfadden.com](http://www.bernarrmacfadden.com)

*“Central principles of naturopathy include using healing approaches that derive from nature, encouraging self-responsibility for health, using therapies that promote the body’s ability to return to a state of balance and heal itself, and treatment that takes into account the whole person. A naturopathic physician typically combines several types of therapies, including diet, lifestyle changes, vitamins, minerals, and herbal medicines to prevent illness, treat disease, and promote well-being.”*<sup>158</sup>

Yet the same site suggests stinging nettles, red clover, homoeopathy, acupuncture and water therapy as treatments for various allergies. The red clover is used by Chinese medical practitioners for its *like cures like* ‘redness’ properties. Similar sites offer Bach flower remedies and crystal healing for allergies. Diagnostic techniques also include TCM eye and tongue examination, radionics, pendulum diagnosis and iridology. The UK Holistic Health College in Grosvenor Square London describes iridology as one of the cornerstones of the college natural health courses:

*“The Naturopathic Iridology Diploma Course combines the diverse studies needed to master a truly holistic approach to diagnostics and the requisite treatments necessary to restore good health. Whatever your previous, or current, career, if your aim is to become a highly competent Complementary Medicine Consultant, you would benefit from this course.”*<sup>159</sup>

One of the most bamboozling explanations of naturopathic healing is offered by ‘quantum naturopath’ Paul Yanick Jr. Yanick’s article on ‘flexo- electric healing’ is quite mind-boggling. Here’s just a snippet:

*“DNA-guided bio-photon signals flow throughout the body with awe-inspiring speed as they encode and transfer information. Stately simply, the magnitude of DNA’s coherence determines how quickly the patient responds to naturopathic treatment. With quantum coherence, the magnitude of inner healing is so gigantic that it renders even the best of minds helpless for exploring the endless boundaries of its power. From the naturopathic perspective, one can gain profound insights into the nature of illness and ability to evoke self-healing and regeneration in treatment-resistant cases. The biophoton vibrations documented by physicists were echoed by the French scientist, Jacques Benveniste, M.D. who documented how the signature of these signals could effectively..etc., etc..”*

As with Paracelsus and the homoeopaths, Yanick Jr is ‘creating special realms where unrelated facts can co-exist without contradiction’. An article from web page *Naturopathic Medicine and Allergies* notes the following:

*“In the United States alone, more than 50 million people suffer from some sort of debilitating allergy. The American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology reports that allergies rank in sixth place of all chronic diseases. Fortunately, naturopathic medicine is a system of health care that can help alleviate allergy symptoms and improve overall health”.*<sup>160</sup>

Yes, agreed, providing the naturopath limits himself to prescribing the only two sensible medicines in the whole of his cabinet - diet and exercise. The rest of his practice is rammed to the gills with the usual hocus-pocus. Alternative therapists as well as conventional doctors are seeing more and more people visiting them with allergy-based ailments. Is there a common cause?

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<sup>158</sup> [www.altmd.com/Articles/Naturopathic-Medicine-for-Allergies](http://www.altmd.com/Articles/Naturopathic-Medicine-for-Allergies)

<sup>159</sup> [www.holistichealthcollege.com](http://www.holistichealthcollege.com)

<sup>160</sup> [www.altmd.com/Articles/Naturopathic-Medicine-for-Allergies](http://www.altmd.com/Articles/Naturopathic-Medicine-for-Allergies)

## There's Clean and There's Unhealthily Clean

*"There's nothing more toxic or deadly than a human child.  
A single touch could kill you."* **James Coburn**

A consideration when examining the cause of many illness and allergies today is our fear of dirt, dust and 'yucky germs!' and our subsequent attention to cleanliness or should I say over-cleanliness. In a book being sold on Amazon at present, the threat to our health from the germ is being taken very seriously:

**GERMS ARE EVERYWHERE** - *Those seconds on the elevator; those minutes on the checkout line; that evening at the cocktail party; they all bring you up close and personal with your fellow human beings... and with germs. Whatever you call them - bacteria, viruses, fungi, algae, or protozoa - these potent micro-organisms are on you, in you, and all around you by the trillions. And while many are vital to our very lives, others are dangerous, even deadly. NOW, FIND OUT HOW TO FIGHT THESE INVISIBLE FOES.*

*In this comprehensive, down-to-earth manual, a renowned microbiologist and authority on germs shows you how micro-organisms affect you in daily life and how you and your immune system can fight back. How to avoid catching infections in the hospital: How to kill the thousands of germs that live in your kitchen sponge: Which foods contain the most dangerous germs: When antibacterial soap should be used: How to stay healthy while travelling: What part of your body hides the most germs: Who should get flu shots and why. THIS IS A BOOK YOU CAN'T DO WITHOUT... **DON'T TOUCH THAT DOORKNOB!**<sup>161</sup>*

Conversely, in an article entitled, 'Allergies: Because We're Too Clean', the author states:

*"The way we're living is far removed from the day-to-day confrontation with nature the way our ancestors experienced it. We're out of touch with the Earth, too safe and protected. We don't have enough cuts and bruises or dirt under our fingernails."<sup>162</sup>*

So, what's fact and what's fiction in the story of the germ? Our fear of the germ, of 'contagion', of 'infection' is taking us to an increasingly cocooned place in our minds and in our homes. But should we be so anxious? Let's take brief look at the history of the germ.

Germ theory *per se* is not new. There is nothing new under the sun. The idea that disease-causing microscopic invaders are waiting to infiltrate our system and strike us down from within has existed for millennia. In 50 BC, Marcus Terentius Varro stated: "*In swampy places, minute creatures live that cannot be discerned with the eye and they enter the body through the mouth and nostrils and cause serious diseases.*"<sup>163</sup> Variations on this idea have been built upon since that time and most certainly, existed previous to Varro.

Forwards to today and in simplistic terms, germ theorist hold we are surrounded by microscopic invaders that can strike us at any time which in the main can only be defeated by pharmaceutical weaponry. Countering this position, 'hygiene' theorists agree that whilst microbes are present in our everyday lives and that harmful bacteria can also develop in bad food, bad drinking water and poor sewerage systems, they hold that sensible diet and exercise instituted from an early age plus exposure to dirt, common bacteria and microbes strengthens our immune system and allows it to learn and to function properly, with little or no need for manufactured chemicals to keep us healthy. Germ theory critics also point to the commercial opportunities being exploited by big pharma as a result of our 'fear of the germ' and further, that this fear, rather than evidence based, is the result of years of indoctrination from said corporations. In his 1995 book *Germ Theory: A Deliberate*

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<sup>161</sup> **Brown, Jack**, *Don't Touch That Door Knob!* Warner Books, 2001 at <http://www.twbookmark.com/books/22/0446676349/index.html>

<sup>162</sup> **Waffle, Van**, 'Allergies: Because We're Too Clean', *Living With Nature*, November 19th 2002 at [www.suite101.com/article.cfm/5536/96492](http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/5536/96492)

<sup>163</sup> The Germ Theory calendar at <http://germtheorycalendar.com/GridWithNotes.aspx>

*Aberration*, Howard Hencke stated that for the pharmaceutical model to maintain its dominance, it would be necessary:

*“...to indoctrinate the public in the western world with the belief that salvation from all, especially physical ailments, lays outside the individual’s system and responsibility and that chemical remedies will keep him free from disease, independent of his own vigilant responsibility.”*<sup>164</sup>

No-one is saying that germs and bacteria don’t exist, just that our fear of them has been magnified and cynically played upon by various vested interests. Bringing some balance to the subject, the September 2002 edition of *Parenting and Pregnancy* included a liberating report entitled ‘*Dirt May Be Good For Kids. Behind the on-going epidemic of allergy and autoimmune disease there’s a surprising culprit: cleanliness.*’ The report noted that one of the hallmarks of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was its all-out war on germs and that children who lived in cleaner homes apparently suffered fewer infections than their grandparents who had lived in much dirtier conditions. But were these early observations accurate?

*“Hygiene’ theory holds that a germ-free childhood warps the immune system. A report in the Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> issue of The New England Journal of Medicine now offers powerful support for this theory. The researchers carefully vacuumed up dust from the beds of 812 children from rural areas of Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. The dust was measured for a basic component of dirt - the outer cell wall of common bacteria, known to scientists as endotoxin. Also collected were the kids’ medical records.*

*The result: the kids who had the cleanest mattresses had the most hay fever, allergic asthma, an allergic reactions. The kids with the dirtiest beds - and least allergy and asthma - were most likely to live or play on farms. That’s no surprise, as earlier studies showed that children raised on farms have fewer allergies and less asthma than rural kids who don’t live on farms. Bacteria excreted by cows and other farm animals are the most common source of endotoxin.”*<sup>165</sup>

The whole process of ‘germ indoctrination’ really begins at home though with Mum and Dad who tend to keep their babies and young children far removed from dirt: *“Take that out of your mouth! Urgh! Yucky germs! Don’t touch that! You don’t know where it’s been!”* etc., etc.. However, a January 2009 article from *The New York Times* makes for interesting reading. Entitled ‘*Babies know: a little dirt is good for you*’, the relevant paragraphs have been condensed below:

*“Ask mothers why babies are constantly picking things up from the floor or ground and putting them in their mouths and the chances are they’ll say that it’s instinctive - that that’s how babies explore the world. But why the mouth, when sight, hearing, touch and even scent are far better at identifying things? In studies of what is called the hygiene hypothesis, researchers are concluding that organisms like the millions of bacteria, viruses and especially worms that enter the body along with ‘dirt’ spur the development of a healthy immune system. These studies, along with epidemiological observations, seem to explain why immune system disorders like multiple sclerosis, Type 1 diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, asthma and allergies have risen significantly in the United States and other developed countries.”*<sup>166</sup>

*“What a child is doing when he puts things in his mouth is allowing his immune response to explore his environment,” Mary Ruebush, a microbiology and immunology instructor, wrote in her new book, “Why Dirt Is Good” (Kaplan). “Not only does this allow for ‘practice’ of immune responses, which will be necessary for protection, but it also plays a critical role in teaching the immature immune response what is best ignored.”*

One leading researcher, Dr. Joel V. Weinstock, the director of gastro-enterology and hepatology at Tufts Medical Center in Boston, said in an interview that the immune system at

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<sup>164</sup> **Hencke, Howard**, ‘Germ Theory: A Deliberate Aberration’, as quoted in ‘The Post-Antibiotic Age’ at [http://www.thedoctorwithin.com/articles/post\\_antibiotic\\_age.html](http://www.thedoctorwithin.com/articles/post_antibiotic_age.html)

<sup>165</sup> ‘*Dirt May Be Good For Kids*’, *Pregnancy and Parenting*, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2002 at [www.content.health.msn.com/content/article/50/40423.htm?pagenumber=1](http://www.content.health.msn.com/content/article/50/40423.htm?pagenumber=1)

<sup>166</sup> **Brody, Jane**, *Babies know; a little dirt is good for you* at [www.nytimes.com/2009/01/27/health/27brod.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/27/health/27brod.html)

*birth “is like an un-programmed computer. It needs instruction. Children raised in an ultra-clean environment are not being exposed to organisms that help them develop appropriate immune regulatory circuits. Children should be allowed to go barefoot in the dirt, play in the dirt, and not have to wash their hands when they come in to eat. [Gasp! ed.] And let kids have two dogs and a cat which will expose them to intestinal worms that can promote a healthy immune system.”*

This way of thinking seems very far removed from today’s germ-minded culture. But perhaps the above text also signals a turning point in 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking on maintaining good health and on disease causation. Again, reading between the lines, the authors are merely looking for a more balanced outlook on hygiene and cleanliness. On Hencke’s statement on ‘germ indoctrination’, I’d like to spend just a minute or two on the story of the vacuum cleaner. Now, I bet you didn’t think you’d be reading about that today!

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Prince of Wales had an analysis taken from the dust removed from his residence. Germ ‘experts’ apparently discovered over 355 million living organisms - many of them potentially lethal!<sup>167</sup> At around the same time, H. Cecil Booth was adding the finishing touches to the first successful suction vacuum cleaner. His first portable machine ‘Puffing Billy’ was mounted on a horse-drawn trolley. Before the invention of the vacuum cleaner, people kept their floors clean by sweeping them or by taking rugs into the yard to beat them free of dust. Now, if a king could have so many bugs in and amongst his household dust, then what chance the common man in his relative squalor?

Advertising and commerce soon recognized the avenue being opened up by our fear of malfasant infestation. An appropriate level of cleanliness could now be marketed as *vital* for the protection and maintaining of adequate health. ‘Puffing Billy’ and its descendants were to revolutionize the way we thought about dust and dirt.

In 1907, with few houses having any electric power supply, US inventor J Murray Spangler developed the first portable vacuum cleaner. He sold his idea to William H. Hoover. The first ‘Hoover’ went on sale in 1926. Author of *Germ Manic*, Satre Stuelke, states:

*“As we look about our environment, and specifically our home, we conclude that anything that is not an intended part of our home is naturally a contaminant - the most common contaminants being dirt, dust, and dust bunnies. Before germ theory, these were considered natural inhabitants of the floor; somewhat of a nuisance, not contaminants necessarily, but certainly not pathogenic. After germ theory it then became imperative in our minds for the health of the household to prevent the previously unchecked accumulation of dust and dirt. The eventual hysterical exaggeration of germ theory’s importance in our everyday lives has made it possible for a multitude of appliances and cleaning products to infiltrate our psyches.”*<sup>168</sup>

In 1993, almost 70 years after the first Hoover went on sale, a new kind of vacuum cleaner appeared, claiming to suck 100% of dust. By 1997, the Dyson Dual Cyclone, which was named after its British inventor, James Dyson, had infiltrated the worldwide psyche, generating sales of more than £1 billion worldwide.<sup>169</sup>

Aside from the usual parental influence, germ *theology* today is reinforced through the school system via the chemistry and biology curricula and onwards through to adulthood where we are subjected to all sorts of uncritical media scare stories on germs and viruses plus the incessant barrage of anti-bacterial advertisements beamed out to us from ‘the god in the corner’. Housewives and especially mothers have failed their families miserably unless every surface and every child is gleaming. Satre Stuelke again:

*“Our culture exists now in a well-cultivated classic Pavlovian response with a twist. The stimulus has been internalized as the knowledge of germ theory. The response is to obliterate anything that can possibly be linked to the presence, even the threat of the presence, of germs.*

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<sup>167</sup> Stuelke, Satre, ‘Germ Manic’ at [www.peekreview.net/archives/germ\\_satre.html](http://www.peekreview.net/archives/germ_satre.html)

<sup>168</sup> Stuelke, Satre, *ibid*

<sup>169</sup> McWhirter, Norris, *The Book of Inventions*, Brilliant Books, 1999

*Thus our culture is plunged into a vicious circle of inventing, marketing and using products designed to quell our fear of all microbes - dangerous or not.*<sup>170</sup>

There's no chance of any dirt under the fingernails with the latest product of this *vicious circle of inventing* - the **new, improved** soap dispenser 'you don't even need to touch!' Simply wave your hand under the nozzle and, 'Lo and behold!' You are automatically dispensed your sacred squirt of magi-clean! As automaticsoapdispenser.org states:

*"Another handy feature is the optional 20 second LED light timer which is the recommended amount of time that you should be lathering your hands with soap. When you see the news these days, there are a lot of concerns regarding the flu and the H1N1 strain. Keeping your hands cleaned on a regular basis will help to reduce the chances of obtaining such common illnesses. Of course, washing your hands won't necessarily prevent these diseases from occurring as you may still need vaccination or shots to stay healthy."*

Nobody's suggesting we tramp around with nil regard for hand-washing before cooking or performing surgical procedures. This should be a basic teaching.<sup>171</sup> These infomercials though, serve only to reinforce our fear of the germ and encourage us towards an even more unhealthy state of *uber-cleanliness*. Sensibility and balance seems to have gone out of the window on this one. Speaking of which, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in the US has issued guidelines for householders expecting a visit from anyone with a dust allergy. Recommendations include emptying and cleaning the room: emptying and cleaning all cupboards; if possible, sealing all cupboards and storing the contents elsewhere; if this is not possible, then making sure to store clothing in zippered bags; putting all shoes in boxes and storing them off the floor; cleaning the floor and any woodwork thoroughly. The article suggests:

*"Maintaining a dust-free zone may seem like a lot of trouble, but making these cleaning steps part of your housekeeping routine can make it easier. The results? Less laboured breathing, fewer medications, and greater freedom from allergy and asthma attacks are worth the extra effort."*

<sup>172</sup>

Now, it may be the child will have a wheeze attack in a dusty room. But are there more fundamental reasons behind this response? As a child can inherit his parents' physical characteristics, so too can he inherit his parents' (groundless) fears and phobias. So now, this child not only has a paralysing fear of dust but also, and probably for the rest of his life, he will also have a general sense of fear all round. Growing up amidst such a religious and psychologically damaging cleaning routine, what chance does this poor lad have of a balanced outlook on life in later years? And what chance his children and children's children? Like Ayurvedic cooking, the anti-dust, anti-dirt message breeds obsessive behaviours, its wearied disciples doomed to a life of incessant scrubbing plus all the psychological strongholds that accompany such a lifestyle. I include the following post from an allergy news board entitled **Allergies or anxiety?** For all his obvious suffering over the years, his post and obvious reliance on the doctor gives us a window into a sign of the times:

*"Hey all, this seems like a good board for anxious people. I have allergies, asthma, and anxiety. All my life I thought my anxiety was caused by asthma, and the asthma was caused by external things like perfumes or pollen, but today a (general) dr told me it may be the other way around and wrote me a clonazepam script. Not sure I believe that yet. Gonna get more tests done. I sought treatment because I had sudden shortness of breath. It started after taking Benadryl (one a day for two days) instead of the inhaler. That left me with a tight chest and shortness of breath. I've had the issue before with Benadryl but this time it didn't go away. Before I sought treatment for this I used an albuterol inhaler from time to time. As of today (after two dr visits over the past week) I am on prednisone, advair, and clonazepam. I also quit coffee and smoking this week. I'm going kinda bananas. My goal is to get cleared of lung damage and treat the anxiety, or the other*

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<sup>170</sup> Stuelke, Satre, *ibid*

<sup>171</sup> It was 19th century Hungarian physician/obstaetrician Ignaz Semmelweis who insisted on hand-washing between births - a simple procedure dismissed as irrelevant by fellow physicians, but which later was proven to reduce maternal illness and mortality rates enormously.

<sup>172</sup> 'Dust Sensitivity', *Senior Magazine* at [www.seniormag.com/caregiverresources/healthtips/dustallergies.htm](http://www.seniormag.com/caregiverresources/healthtips/dustallergies.htm)

way around... (?) This is my first night using clonazepam for this. I've used it before, but never for shortness of breath. Anyways, I will post results when I am more clear, and hopefully provide some insight to someone."<sup>173</sup>

Something, somewhere's got to change. At least he quit smoking.

For much of his life, the godfather of 20<sup>th</sup> century germ theory Louis Pasteur strove to demonstrate the entities in his petrie dishes were the source of disease and that we needed an array of chemical weaponry to protect ourselves from these marauding critters. Pasteur's contemporary and fellow biologist Claude Bernard was also in the search for the cause of disease. But unlike Pasteur, Bernard did *not* believe germs caused disease. It was, said Bernard, the state of the host - our bodies - that influenced pathological processes. It isn't how big and bad the germs are, rather the onus is on us as individuals to look after ourselves properly by eating and drinking and living sensibly and enjoying a healthy immune system as a result. Our health, said Bernard, is our own responsibility, an idea anathema to state medicine, however.

Publicly, the two did battle for many years. But with the weight of the pharmaceutical industry behind him, Pasteur's 'dangerous germs' of course held sway. We still 'needed' the pharmaceutical industry to keep us healthy. Before Pasteur died, he instructed his family that upon his death, they were not to release his 10,000 pages of lab notes. On his deathbed, Pasteur confessed to his friend Professor A. Renon, who was caring for him, "*Bernard was right. The microbe [germ] is nothing, the soil [body] is everything.*"<sup>174</sup> The harmlessness of said 'microbe' in this instance should not be confused with historically proven harmful bacteria found in bad food and water which of course can cause serious illness to those ingesting it. Examples of such include *Aeromonas Hydrophila* (found in fish, shellfish, meats and poultry), *Bacillus Cereu* (milk, rice, potato and cheese products), *Campylobacter Jejuni* (raw meats and bad water) and *Listeria Monocytogenes* (dairy, vegetables and fish products) plus a few other proven, microscope-identifiable microbes.

It was only after Pasteur's grandson died in 1975 that Pasteur's notes were made public. Professor Gerald Geison, a science historian from Princeton University, made a thorough study of the notes and compared them with Pasteur's publications. He presented his findings at the 1993 congress of The American Association of the Advancement of Science in Boston.<sup>175</sup> This re-evaluation forced him to conclude that Pasteur had committed scientific misconduct, had violated various medical, ethical and scientific rules and had published abundant fraudulent data.<sup>176</sup> The publication of Geison's book prompted the following review from the *New England Journal of Medicine*:

*"Geison's controversial but stunning biography raises many important questions about the nature of science, past and present. It requires us to re-evaluate our heroes and consider the complexities of science as it is actually created instead of merely clinging to comforting and heroic myths."*<sup>177</sup>

The history of the germ *theory* is a fascinating read (or maybe it's just that I don't get out much!). When studying any influential theory, we must always take into consideration *why* we believe what we believe about said theory, in this case the germ and the virus.<sup>178</sup> Who are the possible 'educators' and 'thought shapers' in the equation? Certainly, the underlying diktats of germ theory encourage us into the care of our local doctor who, in diagnosing a 'bug' or a 'virus', will then prescribe any number of conventional drugs to do heroic battle against said enemy. And with an alarmist media

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<sup>173</sup> <http://www.anxietyzone.com/index.php?topic=41394.0>

<sup>174</sup> *The Cause of Degeneration*, The Soil and Health Library at <http://www.soilandhealth.org/02/0201hyglibcat/020121horne/020121ch7.html>

<sup>175</sup> **Geison, Gerald L.**, *The Private Science of Louis Pasteur*, Princetown University Press, 1995

<sup>176</sup> *ibid*

<sup>177</sup> Review for 'The Private Science of Louis Pasteur' on the Princetown University page at <http://pup.princeton.edu/titles/5670.html>

<sup>178</sup> Why is it the only photographs of viruses that exist are only ever computer-generated images? Why no actual picture of an actual virus, anywhere? The can of worms this question opens up is not for this book but interested readers should enter *norwalk* into google images. The detailed images shown are *not* at all what's under the lens of the electron microscope itself. The images are electronically generated by the 'scientists' themselves who are trying to convey in picture form what *they believe to be* the shape and form of the disease causing agent. Yours to investigate at your will.

constantly scaring us with all manner of contagious hobgoblins, imaginary or otherwise, it's the perfect commercial circle. All the while we believe that only establishment medicine can heal and protect us, inordinate amounts of cash will keep rolling in for big pharma.

The recent hullabaloo over the so-called *norovirus* vomiting illness is also worth noting. Per head of population, the number of people affected in these so-called 'outbreaks' rarely falls outside of the norm for seasonal winter sicknesses, despite the outrageous media headlines otherwise. Including all the usual clichés such as, '*wreaking havoc nationwide*', '*showing no signs of abating*', '*huge increase*', '*significant outbreak*', '*numbers affected doubled in a week*' etc., etc., a UK *Daily Mail* report dated 19.12.2012 alarmingly told us: **Winter vomiting bug could cancel Christmas for thousands as cases near 900,000** *The number of people affected is 83 per cent higher than this time last year due to an early outbreak of the virus.*"

Cases near 900,000? Hmmm. So, how is this figure calculated? That's easy enough. Take the *actual* number of people reported with said sickness across the UK - a mere 3,046 (0.00468 percent of the UK population) and x that number by 288 (the number of people the Health Protection Agency *estimate* are infected but don't report in with their illness). In other words, nil sensible evidence for the 900,000 estimate. If we banned the words *rocketed*, *soared*, *plummeted*, *escalated*, *slumped*, *doubled*, *decimated*, *pandemic*, *outbreak*, *all-time-high* etc., etc., how many health reporters would be stumped for editorial? The next day, the same paper advised that to avoid catching this *virus*, we should wash our hands 5 times a day and scrub our kitchens with bleach-based cleaning fluids. It also noted that *Superdrug* was enjoying a 52% increase in its sales of anti-bacterial hand-washes. No surprise there, then. One web reader's comment said simply, '*The continual reporting of the norovirus makes me sick.*' Hear hear! Some people say we get the press we deserve. I don't think that's fair. No-one deserves this standard of reporting. And sorry but I do have to get this off my chest. In those 'multiple cases' of sickness occurring within a confined area such as a cruise ship, holiday camp or hospital, it's certainly a lot more convenient to blame a virus instead of the far more likely cause - food poisoning or similar bacterial contamination. The recurring *norwalk* virus at Butlins Minehead is a case in point.

In April 2003, approximately 300 people at the resort were affected by violent sickness - a sickness that had struck the same resort three years running. A spokesman for Somerset Health Protection Unit said the infection was not thought to be connected with food consumption. Yet the 'founders' of said *virus* - Ohio State University - say *norwalk* is found where there is bad food or bad water.<sup>179</sup> In essence, the largest employer in Minehead was given a clean bill of health by local officials who instead of scrutinising the quality of food, plumbing and sanitation, blamed an alleged *virus*... that thrives in bad food and water! It is also interesting to note the Minehead camp was the subject of a BBC *Watchdog* investigation and that it has a history of sub-standard service. Just google 'Butlins food poisoning' and look at the sheer number of blogs and comments detailing poor quality food and serious illnesses at Butlins sites across the UK.

The jury's still out on how we 'catch disease' but I'll take virus/contagion theory a lot more seriously when News at Ten announces '**Norovirus decimates Glyndebourne Opera audience**' and 100% of the audience keels over vomiting - an audience who definitely did *not* consume any of the food or drink provided on site. If we concentrate on fortifying 'the host' with proper nutrition, we need not be half so fearful of any 'bug doing the rounds'. *Uber*-cleanliness by no means explains all our allergies today. We live in a vastly more chemicalised world and our increased consumption of synthetic foods and pharmaceuticals must also play a part. But this is not a topic for this book. There are a plenty of outlandish but also a number of balanced reading resources online. Our next chapter looks at the business end of conventional medicine, at the tactics employed to keep the tills ringing, and at the leading pills and testing procedures promoted by big pharma.

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<sup>179</sup> <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5569.html>

# The Medicine Business

*“I will lift mine eyes unto the pills.” Malcolm Muggeridge*

As stated in the opening chapter, there have been some amazing advances in conventional medicine over the years. Yet, these conventional medical advances would, if the mainstream press gave more coverage to the matter, be considerably overshadowed by the harm being meted out to thousands of people through the over-prescription of toxic and often ineffective pharmaceuticals for the sake of profit. In this respect, conventional medicine poses far more of a threat to our health than the occasional CAM poisoning or misdiagnosis ever could. Some 10 years ago, the admission by a Dr Roses, a former senior executive at Britain’s biggest pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline, that most prescription medicines do not work, made for one of the rarest but also most refreshing world headlines in years. Said one UK broadsheet at the time:

*“It is an open secret within the drugs industry that most of its products are ineffective in most patients but this is the first time that such a senior drugs boss has gone public. Some industry analysts said Dr Roses’ comments were reminiscent of the 1991 gaffe by Gerald Ratner, the jewelry boss, who famously said his high street shops are successful because they sold ‘total crap’. But others believe Dr Roses deserves credit for being honest about a little-publicised fact known to the drugs industry for many years.”<sup>180</sup>*

At ground level, our doctors and nurses just do not have the time to keep up with the politics and commercial shenanigans taking place at pharma-boardroom level. We also have to do battle with the doom and gloom PANDEMIC! headlines incessantly warning us of imminent worldwide death in the shape of SARS, flu and Bird Flu. **Get your shot WHILE STOCKS LAST!** etc., etc.. However, there’s another side to these stories. In the introduction to their paper entitled ‘*Selling Sickness*’, three *British Medical Journal* authors state:

*“Pharmaceutical companies are actively involved in sponsoring the definition of diseases and promoting them to both prescribers and consumers. A key strategy of the alliances is to target the media with stories designed to create fears about the condition or disease and draw attention to the latest treatment.”<sup>181</sup>*

This is the commercial reality in the drugs business. And it’s also no coincidence that any news on supposed worldwide viruses that might MUTATE! at any minute are always supported by graphic, scare-mongering documentaries and news stories that re-enact the approaching havoc along with reports of life-saving vaccines ‘just around the corner’ or even... a dreaded vaccine SHORTAGE! The national reporting on the 2010 UK flu ‘outbreak’ was a case in point. All the major UK health news editors had been leading with their scary ‘vaccine shortage’ headlines. This from *Daily Telegraph* reporter Rebecca Smith:

***“Officials are releasing stockpiles of pandemic vaccine but why is this being done now and who is to blame for the shortage? The vaccine, called Pandemrix, was made in 2009 in response to the emergence of swine flu, but will not expire until the end of this year. However, unlike the seasonal jab, it will not offer the wider protection against other strains. How will patients be affected? Geoff Martin, from the campaign group Health Emergency, said those who had the swine flu vaccine would not be protected against the other strains. He said: “There’s a real danger that people will think that they are protected when they are not.” The Patients Association said problems with the distribution system meant vaccines were not getting to the right places.”***

What? I’m not fully protected with just my single dose? I demand to know where I can get the correct dose, IMMEDIATELY! Haven’t you read the papers today? Don’t you know there’s a swine flu holocaust heading this way?’ Similarly, there’s always the ‘WONDER CANCER DRUG!’, just around the corner, promising benefit to millions. These news items raise just the right amount of

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<sup>180</sup> Connor, Steven, Glaxo Chief: Our Drugs Do Not Work On Most Patients, *UK Independent*, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2003.

<sup>181</sup> Moynihan, Heath, Henry, ‘Selling Sickness: the pharmaceutical industry and disease-mongering’, *British Medical Journal* online, *BMJ*, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2002

fear and hope in the populations and keep us clamouring to be saved. And of course, in all the 'pandemonium', the drug companies continue to make their massive profits.

The pharmaceutical industry has proven itself a consummate master at making extraordinary amounts of money from our misplaced faith that its glittering technology will eventually eradicate disease. For example, there are currently some 200 human vaccines in the pipeline, Epstein Barr, cholesterol, diabetes, ulcer, multiple sclerosis, SV40, asthma, arthritis, allergy, clostridia, psoriasis, nicotine, gonorrhoea, syphilis, chlamydia, cocaine, anti-marijuana, lumpy skin disease(?), STD, PCP, shingles, osteoporosis, Parkinson's Disease, anti-fertility, *Candida*, warts, herpes, periodontal, dental caries, RSV, diarrhoea, peanut allergy, fifth disease, *E Coli*, leptosporosis, malaria, fungal disease, Alzheimer's, ebola, penicillin-resistant infection, West Nile virus, HIV, Lyme disease, rhinovirus, rotavirus, TB, anthrax, smallpox, yellow fever, typhoid, cholera, and another 170 besides.<sup>182</sup> Readers baulking at the near-blasphemous suggestion these magic bullets may not be such a godsend after all are encouraged to research the topic for themselves. Just follow the money trail.<sup>183</sup>

The 1.7bn per annum UK antibiotic industry is no different. What kick-started me into researching the history of this particular magic bullet is the literal translation of antibiotic which means 'against life'. Antibiotics are a form of biological chemotherapy, destroying all bacteria, good and bad. As Michael Schmidt states in his book *Beyond Antibiotics*:

*"It causes the destruction of normal bowel flora. Like pesticides, antibiotics kill good bugs along with the bad ones. Wide-spectrum antibiotics are notorious for this. The human intestine has a delicate ecology in which certain bugs help digest food, produce certain vitamins, and maintain a balance of organisms that prevents harmful bacteria and yeasts from multiplying. Wide-spectrum antibiotics derange the normal ecology of the intestine. This can cause parasitic infection, vitamin deficiencies, loss of minerals through diarrhoea, inflammation of the gut, mal-absorption syndromes and development of food allergies due to defects in intestinal function."*<sup>184</sup>

It would be good to see more of the research on the food allergy link but otherwise, the side-effects listed above are fairly typical to antibiotics. In America, the amount of antibiotics used by hospitals in the United States today is 100 times greater than it was 35 years ago.<sup>185</sup> Millions of people here in the UK are taking antibiotics as a first line of medicine. In an article on antibiotics in the UK *Daily Telegraph*, Prof Mark Enright said:

*"Doctors are prescribing at least twice as many antibiotics as we really need but people do feel hard done by, even nowadays, if they leave the GP surgery without antibiotics... even if on a population basis people know that antibiotics won't work, on a personal basis they still want something."* Antibiotics are some of the most commonly prescribed drugs in Britain and cost the NHS £1.7 bn a year.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Vaccination News at [www.vaccinationnews.com/vaccines\\_in\\_the\\_pipeline.htm](http://www.vaccinationnews.com/vaccines_in_the_pipeline.htm)

<sup>183</sup> As it is with almost all alternative health industry literature, today's £multi-billion vaccine industry literature and the heavily romanticised Jenner 'bographies' found down at the local library bear little resemblance to the facts. A London GP for twenty five years, Dr Richard Halvorsen's book *The Truth About Vaccines: How We Are Used as Guinea Pigs Without Knowing It*, Gibson Square Publishing 2007 is the latest of many books that dare to put forward a contrary view of vaccination. Said one reviewer on Amazon, "Honest credible answers and thoughtful analysis are given to the questions about whether or not to vaccinate. Every pregnant woman should read this book and give it to her obstetrician and paediatrician. Change can only be made from the grass roots up because of the ties that bind politicians to the pharmaceutical companies. As more parents become aware of the link between chronic disease and the over-vaccination of children and refuse to sacrifice their children in the name of the good of the whole, we will be better able to demand safety and effectiveness from future vaccine policy." at [www.amazon.co.uk/Truth-About-Vaccines-Without-Knowing/dp/1903933927/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1206187178&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Truth-About-Vaccines-Without-Knowing/dp/1903933927/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1206187178&sr=1-1)

Books available from Think Twice Global Vaccines Institute include **Miller, Neil Z**, *Vaccination, Theory vs Reality*, **Murphy, Jamie**, 'What Every Parent Should Know About Childhood Immunisation' at [www.thinktwice.com/VaccineBookshelf](http://www.thinktwice.com/VaccineBookshelf). See also Vaccine Awareness Network at [www.van.org](http://www.van.org)

<sup>184</sup> **Schmidt, Michael**, *Beyond Antibiotics*, North Atlantic Books, 1992

<sup>185</sup> **Robbins, John**, *The Food Revolution*, Conari Press, July 2001

<sup>186</sup> **Smith, Rebecca**, *Millions wrongly take antibiotics for coughs and colds*, UK Telegraph 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2010

I remember many years ago going to see my GP after coming off my bike. I had a large area of road-rash on my right forearm which had become infected. The doctor recommended some specially designed bandages to soak up the weeping from the wound which I would need to change when the little built-in window indicated the bandage was full. And I have to say, they worked brilliantly! He also handed me a prescription for some antibiotics which I declined. Quizzing me on this (my arm after all was quite an angry sight), I said I'd be upping my intake of foodstuffs containing natural vitamin C and that I'd be eating a lot more raw onion and garlic (all historically proven infection fighters with the necessary tissue repairing properties). Looking at me almost incredulously, the doctor replied, "*Vitamin C has got nothing to do with it, my boy.*"

For a second or two in my mind, I felt my resolve weakening; like I was coming under 'the spell of the consultation' (the nickname 'shrink' has its roots in this same psycho-reflexive response). But I politely stood my ground, and my arm did heal and without the need for any antibiotics. Without being too prescriptive, I think that if given the chance, it is God's natural pharmacy working in tandem with our wondrous immune system that will see us through in most instances.

There's the joke that runs as follows: "*Doctor, doctor! I feel fantastic!*" "*Now hold on young man. Let's not get too carried away. It may be you just haven't had the right test yet.*" I was in a major UK chain store recently where leaflets were being distributed on prostate cancer - '*the silent killer in our midst*'. The whole pitch of the message was that men should go and get themselves tested as soon as possible. But how many men are aware of the inaccurate nature of so many of these tests, particularly the prostate test? The leaflet certainly made no mention of this fact.

The standard prostate cancer test measures levels of a protein called prostate-specific antigen, otherwise known as PSA. But natural fluctuations in a perfectly healthy body can trigger these tests to read as if PSA is present. Qualified opponents of the PSA test have also long been stating that a great many prostate tumours, when they occur, are slow-growing and that many elderly men die *with* prostate cancer, not *of* it. The following excerpt is taken from a book written twenty years ago by Linus Pauling and Dr Ewan Cameron entitled *Cancer and Vitamin C*. Linus Pauling PhD is considered the father of Vitamin C research and Ewan Cameron was an oncologist with some thirty years' experience in treating cancer patients conventionally.

*"In many European hospitals, meticulous autopsies are performed, without regard to cause of death and these autopsies reveal a remarkably high incidence of cancers that were never suspected in life. Autopsy cancer of the prostate increases steadily with increasing age until after aged 75 it is found in every second male, yet only 2% of males die of prostate cancer."*<sup>187</sup>

In conventional cancer circles, tumours are divided into pussy cats and tigers. A great number of men are living with 'pussy cat' prostate enlargement and/or other cancers and are not troubled by it. The sobering truth for many men is that it's only when they submit to the various 'tests' and the ensuing procedures that their troubles begin. Pauling and Cameron also note that in those autopsies, cancer of the thyroid and pancreas was thirty to forty times as common than is presented in doctors' surgeries and they go on to state:

*"Cancer is therefore far more common than we usually realize and is not such a vicious disease as is commonly thought, except when it gets out of control. The great majority of cancers are held in check by the body; they grow for a while, then regress and disappear, and it is only an occasional one that escapes from control and forms a progressive cancer."*

This highlights the importance of a good diet throughout our lives and also the danger that these tests are detecting quite safe cancers and patients are suffering needlessly, even dying as a result. More on this in the next chapter.

Genetic testing for hereditary disease is another cash cow for Big Pharma. On Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2012, the UK government announced a *vital* £100M project to genetically map 100,000

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<sup>187</sup> Pauling L, Cameron E, *Cancer and Vitamin C: A Discussion of the Nature, Causes, Prevention, and Treatment of Cancer With Special Reference to the Value of Vitamin C*, Weidenfeld Publishers, October 1980

cancer patients, 'so as to improve our medicine for the future'. Said Prime-minister David Cameron:#

*"If we get this right, we could transform how we diagnose and treat our most complex diseases not only here but across the world, while enabling our best scientists to discover the next wonder drug or breakthrough technology."*<sup>188</sup>

The practice of genetic testing particularly for cancer is, I believe, another clear example of 'trust in the establishment gone mad'. Since the advent of this technique, there has been a steep rise in double mastectomies being performed on women with perfectly healthy breasts. The oncologist now has permission it seems to pronounce a psychological, pharmaceutical and surgical curse upon otherwise healthy, unsuspecting patients.

There is actually little solid evidence to show that cancer of any kind is inherited. But there is plenty of evidence to show just how much money is being earned by the major corporations pushing mammography, genetic screening for cancer and other such devices. But who are we as mere underlings to question any of this higher wisdom? But question it we must. James Le Fanu, author of *The Rise and Fall of Modern Medicine*, is not impressed with the god-like status bestowed upon those who are constructing the latest genetic theory:

*"By all accounts, 1<sup>st</sup> December was a momentous day in the history of science, with the publication in the journal 'Nature' of the first chapter of the 'Book of Man', snappily titled 'The DNA Sequence of Human Chromosome 22.' It is not however an easy read, its alphabet restricted to only four letters: a typical line reading TTTGAGCTGATTAGCC plus 35 million more of these same letters in the first chapter...The information that is locked away in each and every cell is of such inscrutable complexity as to defy imagination... This is just one illustration of a recurring feature in genetic research - the yawning gap between the key to a golden future and the reality that in practical terms its benefits are scarcely detectable. It would be to overestimate considerably the collective intelligence of scientists to suggest they have even the vaguest idea of how this information begins to translate into 'who we are'.*

*Geneticists must insist that what they are doing is important to guarantee the continuous flow of research funds. They endorse the image of the 'blueprint' because their claim to holding the key to deciphering this blueprint elevates their role in society to that of the shaman - the possessor of arcane knowledge that no-one else can understand. The reality is more prosaic. 'The DNA Sequence of Human Chromosome 22' is an extremely tedious document whose claims to profundity are unwarranted."*<sup>189</sup>

We are being herded from pillar to post to receive mis-diagnoses and unnecessary treatments from these experts - dangerous treatments often causing serious psychological and physical harm. Again, I am not minimizing the reality or dangers of cancer. I have known a number of people who are now no longer with us because of this horrible disease. My father died of a brain tumour when I was only twenty and my dear brother Run, who died of inoperable lung cancer in November 2012 and who also suffered the most brutal conventional treatment.

Of course, we cannot dismiss testing and screening outright. Such methods have detected cancers in time to save many thousands of lives. And neither must we forget the tremendous skill of the surgeons removing these often dangerously-sited cancers. But it's also the case that many are no longer with us because of a false positive diagnosis, leading needless surgery and aggressive follow-up cancer treatment. Readers are urged to research this subject for themselves. A good place to start is the excellent book *Testing Treatments* by Hazel Thornton which is freely downloadable at the James Lind Library.

In an interview in *The Spectator*, author of the controversial book *The Constant Gardener*, John le Carré says of our medical press:

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<sup>188</sup> £100m DNA mapping project for cancer patients announced *Independent Newspapers*, Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2012

<sup>189</sup> **Le Fanu, James** "Stop All This Fuss About Our Genes," *New Statesman*, 13<sup>th</sup> December 1999

*“The mainstream media has failed us completely in the UK and USA. Any news on the pharmaceutical industries is just too damned uncomfortable to handle; too complicated, often deliberately, too scientific for the layman. Many hacks, who should know better, have been lunched, holidayed and bamboozled into silence.”*<sup>190</sup>

Although interviewed some ten years ago now, le Carré’s observation has not dated. Dr John McDougall has written several books on diet and health. Here, he hints at a serious problem within the conventional camp:

*“I went into medicine with the idea that I was going to save all these lives with all the tricks and tools that medical doctors learn. And what I found was that very few of my patients got well, that I often did harm to them. This was quite disturbing to me as a young doctor. But what was even more disturbing to me was to find out these failures had been fairly well documented in scientific literature. Now, that literature sits on the library shelf, because it doesn’t fit into anybody’s advertising campaign.”*<sup>191</sup>

Interestingly, a strike by medical doctors in Israel back in May 2000 put a severe economic strain on the funeral business in that country. The decline in the death rate prompted the burial association to ask the government to approve an increase in doctors’ pay. According to *The Jerusalem Sun*, industrial action by doctors in Israel seemed to be good for their patients’ health. Death rates dropped considerably in most of the country when physicians in public hospitals implemented a program of sanctions, according to a survey of burial societies.

*“The number of funerals we have performed has fallen drastically,” said Hananya Shahor, the veteran director of Jerusalem’s Kehilat Yerushalayim burial society. “This month, there were only 93 funerals compared with 153 in May 1999, 133 in the same month in 1998, and 139 in May 1997,” he said. The society handles 55% of all deaths in the Jerusalem metropolitan area. In April 1999, there were only 130 deaths compared with 150 or more in previous Aprils. I can’t explain why,” said Mr Shahor. Meir Adler, manager of the Shamgar Funeral Parlour, which buries most other residents of Jerusalem, declared with much more certainty: “There definitely is a connection between the doctors’ sanctions and fewer deaths. We saw the same thing in 1983, when the Israel Medical Association applied sanctions for four and a half months.”*<sup>192</sup>

I could have filled this book twice over with the most jaw-dropping abuses taking place in conventional medicine but readers have been given more than enough pointers to show that vigilance and homework are vital before submitting wholly to the orthodox wisdom of the day. Yes, we have committed doctors and nurses working in the NHS providing amazing services. But until there is a nuts and bolts overhaul of the pharmaceutical industry which too often puts profit before people, the delivery of genuine medicine will always be hampered

As for those front-page headlines screaming out un-mopped floors! MRSA! save our scanner! patient waiting times nightmare! life-saving drugs in postcode lottery fiasco! etc., etc., these papers would serve us far better by addressing some of the real issues as outlined in the last few pages. In doing so, the superficial ‘bugbears’ our press continually seem to highlight would all but disappear. And the next time you read a headline **‘Homoeopath risks child’s life!’** or **‘Toxic herbs in our high streets!’** let’s put these relatively small-scale occurrences into context. Of course, we can’t have empty remedies or even poisons being sold to us in the guise of CAM but there are a far greater number of toxic conventional medicines out there that require immediate removal from our shelves.

My research unavoidably leads me to conclude it is poor diet and a lack of accurate information on harmful conventional treatments that plays a major role in prolonged ill-health in the west today. Our refusal to investigate these issues for ourselves, either because we harbour certain anxieties about what we might discover or because we believe ‘this type of thing just doesn’t go on

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<sup>190</sup> ‘The Biggest Pushers of All’, Interview with John le Carré, *Spectator*, 16<sup>th</sup> December 2000

<sup>191</sup> Interview with John McDougall, MD at [www.shareguide.com/McDougall.html](http://www.shareguide.com/McDougall.html)

<sup>192</sup> ‘Doctors’ strike in Israel may be good for health’, *British Medical Journal*, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2000 at [www.vitaminfoundation.org/docstrike.htm](http://www.vitaminfoundation.org/docstrike.htm) and at [www.wcanews.com/archives/2000/Jul/jul1000c.htm](http://www.wcanews.com/archives/2000/Jul/jul1000c.htm)

in our country!' or because we just don't have the time - this is the dangerous hereditary disease we pass on to our children.

Now, what if we are familiar with the controversial information on misdiagnosis and on toxic cancer treatments and we understand the implications and we then hear a family member, friend, work colleague or neighbour has been diagnosed with cancer? What is our duty of care at this highly sensitive time? Should we share such unsettling information? If they're unfamiliar with this information, do we in effect, hit them with another bombshell? Let's now look at some of the positive things that we can do to help and also at what we could quite easily do that would only hinder.

# The Visit

*“Visitor’s footfalls are like medicine;  
they heal the sick.” African Proverb*

But not always, as we shall find out.

Here in the UK in late October 2012, we experienced some rare headlines indeed. Television and newspapers were warning women their breast cancer diagnoses may well be errant and ensuing mastectomies and other treatments unnecessary because of the high number of ‘false positive’ screenings. Said one report in the UK *Daily Mail* dated 30.10.12:

*“About 4,000 women each year endure gruelling, unnecessary treatment for breast cancers that were not life-threatening, a review has found. For every life saved by early detection, three women have therapy they do not need, according to the most definitive investigation of breast cancer screening so far. Nearly all are given aggressive treatments - including chemotherapy, radiotherapy or having a breast removed - even though they might never have experienced any symptoms during their lifetime because their cancers were slow growing or non-aggressive.”*

A cancer diagnosis is a bombshell that throws not just the individual but the whole family into disarray. Now, what if this person who has just received this news is your friend, neighbour or close family member and you strongly believe he or she is not in the best conventional medical hands for any of the reasons outlined above? Just how do you go about sharing your concerns?

Let’s take Louise as an example. A wife and mother of three young children, let’s suppose Louise has just been diagnosed with breast cancer. After the initial shock of the diagnosis, Louise and husband David will try as quickly as possible to identify a course of action to best deal with the monster now in their midst. In any crisis, knowing that we’re dealing with the monster at least focuses the mind and helps channel those thoughts that could now otherwise stray into all sorts of unimaginably dark areas. Quite naturally, Louise (along with most other women in her situation) will head straight for the place that in her mind represents the greatest degree of safety and greatest chance of cure - the conventional cancer treatment centre.

Now, Louise may well have recently read a few of those cancer mis-diagnoses stories. But right now, with everything else that’s going on, Louise and David do not need the added anxiety of conflicting information. Right now, what Louise in particular needs is a sense of direction and order. As such, Louise and David have acceded to the advice of their oncologist who after all, knows best. Chemotherapy is the suggested route and the treatment dates have been set. These decisions have all been made in a very short space of time but the planning of this program of care has certainly helped Louise to feel she’s winning back some sort of control over her life. Outwardly, the dust has settled and, as they wait for treatment to start, Louise has determined she will be as strong as she can for her family. Inwardly however, Louise hardly dares think about her husband and children lest she burst into tears again, sickened for the future. The house quite understandably is fraught with spoken and unspoken emotion.

Cue a surprise visit from a well-meaning friend/relative/neighbour armed with the very latest chemo scare stories and alternative healing testimonials. With utmost sincerity (so let’s call him Ernest) Ernest launches into his message of salvation for Louise and spares no detail on the ravaging effects of chemotherapy, on industry stated cancer survival rates *vs* true survival rates, on the oncologists who refuse their own treatments because of their toxicity, on what natural foods are best in order to survive conventional treatment plus a range of ‘alternative’ cancer treatments to consider. At no time though during his succinct doorstep presentation does it register with Ernest that he has not ‘connected’ with Louise at any level, prompting the following furious response from protective bear David: *“Listen mate, you haven’t got a \*\*\*\*\* clue what we’re going through. Dr Robson and his team have been so good to us and now, you turn up here, on our doorstep, telling us he’s a murderer? No, I know you didn’t use those exact words. But you might just as well have done. Now, take your \*\*\*\*\* hippie nonsense and \*\*\*\* off home. Louise love, are you OK?”* Something along these lines, anyway.

Nobody could blame David for wanting to strangle this socially inept visitor from hell. But equally, Ernest genuinely does care for Louise and family and believes her oncologist, although a respected and considerate physician, could send her down a horribly wrong treatment path, to her death even, and perhaps, even worse, that all of this horror could be a huge medical mistake in the first place. How in all good conscience could Ernest keep any of this to himself?

What Ernest needs to do is to learn there's a time and a place for certain conversations and that door-stepping Louise on chemo survival rates etc., etc., wasn't the wisest or timeliest of moves in this instance. Maybe speaking with David over a pint and giving him some printed information for him and his wife to digest later would have been the better option. But even then, the situation could still be quite dicey. What wacky alternatives might Ernest recommend to David whilst out for that pint? The Intrasound website for instance claims to be able to heal cancer by ingesting special super-charged clay at £20 a jar. The website also contains some 'before and after' aura pictures - a dull, indistinct aura before treatment and then, only one hour after treatment, vibrant purple! Says the site, "*The improvements in health that many people are getting with the Intrasound formulas are astonishing.*" Equally criminal is 'healer' David Babb who tells us cancer can be reversed through hypnosis and that he can detect the onset of cancer simply by analyzing a person's handwriting. For as little as £50.00 for a sixty minute live session, Babb will study Louise's handwriting and if any cancerous negativity is detected, he will hypnotize her to stop the cancer from developing further.

We can only hope that Ernest does not recommend any of these treatments (or hundreds similar) but if he does, then there's every chance his rational observations on chemotherapy and mis-diagnosis could get lost in the backlash over the insane treatments he's proposing in their place. It is this high degree of compromised thinking across medicine in general but particularly alternative medicine that has been the main reason for me wanting to write this book. I hope it fills a gap and if you think this information would be helpful to your friends and family or to the ill or recently diagnosed, then please consider the best way to introduce this information to them and then just do it. But do remember, you can't force anybody to read anything and if, at the end of the day, a solitary email is the closest you ever get to communicating with the intended recipient, then at least you've done your bit. The ideal of course, is that the book is read and its content assimilated well before any cancer bombshell is delivered. So, please send [www.mindblowingdecisions.com](http://www.mindblowingdecisions.com) far and wide.

And Ernest, don't go chasing David and Louise a week later for any feedback. If they want to know anything more, they'll certainly be in touch. Having said all this, let's not come down too hard on Ernest. At least he got out of his chair and did something. And who knows? Despite his car crash of a visit, the sensible information he delivered on misdiagnosis and chemotherapy may prompt Louise to ask a lot more questions concerning her conventional treatment choices. Our next chapter looks at the intellectual inconsistencies found in both the CAM and conventional camp. What on earth is happening to our powers of reasoning?

## Consistency! Consistency! My Kingdom for Consistency!

*“Inconsistency is the only thing in which men are consistent.”* **Horace Smith**

Dani Veracity is a natural therapy author who seems happy to swing between intelligent observation one minute and fairytale the next. A regular contributor to [naturalnews.com](http://naturalnews.com), here's a snippet from Dani on the dangers of chemotherapy:

*“Imagine you own a house that is perfect and beautiful and with all the necessities, except that it has some rodents inside. When you call the exterminators, they tell you that they won't be able to target just the rodents, as these rodents are of an especially stealthy breed. They tell you they're going to set off a series of explosions in your house that may kill the rodents. They warn you, “Oh yeah, it may destroy some of your house in the process, but, hey, you want those rodents out of your house, right?” There's probably no way you would allow that; instead, you would do some research and find other, more specific and less generally destructive ways of getting rid of the rodents.”*

Insightful and engaging, Dani's obviously done her homework on chemotherapy. But here's Dani again, this time extolling the virtues of Qigong for bone marrow 'cleansing':

*“The founder of Zen Buddhism, Bodhidharma, is believed to have originally created this purification technique, which sends healing chi through the bones and has an amazing immune-boosting effect. It's remarkably easy to learn: stand in a natural Qigong posture with your hands in front of you, palms inward, as if you were holding a sphere: slowly raise the imaginary sphere up to chest level... Imagine that your body is filling the universe. Universal chi can flow easily through you... Hold this position for one minute, imaging that you are in a dome of protective, healing light. Slide your hands forward and lower them down the front of your body, palms facing down, imagining that the healing chi is cleansing your entire body, even on a cellular level.”*<sup>193</sup>

Really Dani? And in the longer term, just how destructive are these ideas to our intellectual health? How can I risk sending your excellent chemotherapy link to David and Louise, when I know they're going to have to click and scroll their way through *domes of protective, healing light* etc., etc., in order to get there? Likewise in the conventional camp, we see the same intellectual inconsistency. In her essay, *'Some Thoughts on CAM'*, confirmed CAM skeptic JeanneE Hand-Boniakowski notes the following:

*“There is a smiling, even sweet, intellectual dishonesty among the CAM crowd, which they see as open-mindedness and cultural sensitivity. This allows them to hold equal belief in an enormous array of nonsense. Going to wellness fairs, folk festivals, new age shops and other venues crawling with CAM practitioners has exposed perhaps the most insidious aspect of this loose movement. In a spirit of equality and inclusion, fairness and access, there is virtually no discrimination. It is a mutual admiration society, with oohs and aahs, hugs and healings for all. It is a sweet and kindly crowd, for the most part. Your personal experience is the highest standard of proof. And they are all recipients as well as providers of services. They accord equal respect for the varied 'healing modalities' offered by each. Thus, a wild crossbreeding of goofy ideas is fertilized in the permissive soil of uncritical enthusiasm. Allergies are diagnosed by applied kinesiology and cured by waving laser pointers over acupuncture points, supplemented by Chinese herbal medicines and homoeopathic preparations. Of course, people will see what they desire and expect to see, and reinforce one another in delusion and illusion. It is these dependable aspects of human perception and psychology that honest magicians and unethical charlatans alike depend upon.”*<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> **Veracity, Dani**, Qigong Master Kenneth Cohen shares the secrets of qigong and energetic healing at [www.mindbiology.com/Qigong-Master-Kenneth-Cohen-Shares-The-Secrets-Of-Qigong-And-Energetic-Heal.html](http://www.mindbiology.com/Qigong-Master-Kenneth-Cohen-Shares-The-Secrets-Of-Qigong-And-Energetic-Heal.html)

<sup>194</sup> **JeanneE Hand-Boniakowski** 'Some Thoughts on CAM' at [www.quackwatch.com/01QuackeryRelatedTopics/cam.html](http://www.quackwatch.com/01QuackeryRelatedTopics/cam.html)

Well-observed and wickedly well-written, if not a little caustic. Yet in other writings, JeanneE describes antibiotics as wonderful, expresses concern that some parents are questioning vaccination and touches *not once* on any of the many dubious practices that so define big pharma. As such, those CAM advocates having read Ms Boniakowski's insightful piece on 'wellness fairs' and perhaps considering their own intellectual position - at tipping point if you like - will be hugely grateful for this 'loophole' suddenly presented to them and, forgetting in an instant all that had intellectually 'pricked' them previously, they will instead, with much fervour and emotion, rail against Ms Boniakowski's *'obvious allegiance to big pharma and all its murderous methods!'*

No acknowledgement by the alternativists that any of the points raised in Ms Boniakowski's initial critique have any validity, and likewise, no acknowledgement from Ms Boniakowski that conventional medicine has an extensive track record of 'goofy ideas, fertilized in the permissive soil of uncritical enthusiasm'. Instead, there is just this constant and violent see-sawing between the two paradigms, each camp looking for the first opportunity to savage the other, whilst at the same time, staunchly defending its own set of false and failing pet ideologies.

University College London pharmacologist Dr David Colquhoun refers to the 21<sup>st</sup> century as 'the time of endarkenment' and believes the corrosive nature of new age thought is having an effect that extends way beyond just medicine.

*"Homoeopaths are a manifestation of a society in which wishful thinking matters more than truth; a society where what I say three times is true and never mind the facts. If this attitude were restricted to half-educated herbalists and crackpot crystal gazers, perhaps one could shrug it off. But the endarkenment extends to the highest reaches of the media, government and universities. And it corrupts science itself. Even respectable newspapers still run nonsensical astrology columns and respected members of parliament seem quite unaware of what constitutes evidence.*

*The University of Central Lancashire's justification for its BSc in homeopathic medicine consists of 49 pages of what the late, great Ted Wragg might have called 'world-class meaningless bollocks'. All the buzzwords are there: 'multi-disciplinary delivery', 'formative and summative assessment', log books and schedules. But there is not a single word about the fact that the course is devoted to a totally discredited early 19<sup>th</sup> century view of medicine, not a word about truth and falsehood. Has it become politically incorrect to question things like this? If all we had to worry about was a few potty homeopaths and astrologers, it might be better to shrug and get on with some real science. But now the endarkenment extends to parliament, universities and schools. It is far too dangerous to ignore."*<sup>195</sup>

Hear! Hear! And in the eyes of many, CAM supporters especially, the pills, procedures, places of learning and insider practices held dear by the establishment are indeed 'endarkened'. Sir Richard Sykes for instance, the former chairman of perhaps the most powerful, even infamous pharmaceutical company in the world GlaxoSmithKline was appointed to the post of Rector of Imperial College London - a well-respected UK medical college. It was a post he held until 2008. How should this appointment be viewed? Intentionally or otherwise, would his appointment have introduced any bias to the curriculum?

What room would there be for any teachings that hint at non-pharmaceutical solutions for disease? Would he for instance help to set up a nationwide 'Natural foodstuffs and Vitamin C vs (a £1.7b per annum income) antibiotics trial? I doubt it very much. You can bet though that as soon as such questions are asked of this esteemed establishment, quick as a flash, back would come the response, *'Who is this who speaks such outrageous blasphemies against our college? Founded in 1907? Students from 123 countries? Perhaps the best pass results in Europe? At the forefront of disease eradication?' Away with your pernicious nonsense!* etc., etc.. More fiery arrows from on high.

Yet, it is interesting to note that Sykes' successor at ICL - Sir Roy Anderson (who resigned after only 16 months in post), had also held several high-profile positions including a £116,000 pa non-executive director post at GlaxoSmithKline whilst at the same time being a member of the UK's

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<sup>195</sup> Colquhoun, David, *The Age of Endarkenment*, Guardian Newspapers, 15.08.2007

Scientific Advisory Committee for Emergencies, advising on the influenza A H1N1 supposed 'pandemic'. On May 1<sup>st</sup> 2009, Anderson was interviewed on Radio 4 and openly praised the efficacy of the conventional drugs available to combat the current 'deadly outbreak' but strangely, did not tell listeners of his close financial ties to GSK - the company manufacturing these latest 'life-saving' interventions. No wonder the CAM camp gets so hopping mad when alt-med critics steeped in 'the conventional way' start getting on their high horse about some trifling (in comparison) CAM jiggery-pokery.

The battle that rages between the two camps was brought home to me in stark and simple form recently. Through amazon.com, I'd ordered a second-hand copy of Rose Shapiro's book *'Suckers, How Alternative Medicine Is Making Fools Of Us All.'* The book had obviously been read by someone who did not agree with Ms Shapiro on all points, as the margins in places were filled with angry, black biro. Two comments in particular stood out.

Where Ms Shapiro had quoted Dr Yasuhiro Suzuki of The World Health Organisation speaking out against alternative medicine and calling for 'a return to rationale', this reader had written, "*What? And have the World health Organisation vaccinate us into oblivion?*" And then, at the point where Ms Shapiro began extolling the virtues of vaccination and antibiotics and referring favourably to a number of other 'heroic' and quite toxic conventional interventions, our fuming friend had written "*Bollocks! Bollocks!*" - complete with exclamation marks. By page 25, at the start of the chapter entitled, *How To Spot A Quack*, there were no more comments. Presumably, it was at this point our exasperated reader had given up on Ms Shapiro and had posted the book up on Amazon, with still another 245 pages to go. Yet in those unread pages, Ms Shapiro goes on to make some very good points. A UK *Times Review* of Shapiro's book included the following comment: "*My fear is that the people who need to read this book, won't. If you already buy into CAM, Shapiro's tirade is going to make you feel angry and/or stupid.*"<sup>196</sup>

If there is one thing that has become clear in all the mud-slinging, it is that we cannot rely fully on conventional medicine to guard our health, much less so the wishful imaginings of CAM. Personally speaking, engaging the old grey matter should see us through in most instances. This is where intellectual consistency and clear-thinking become a key 'medicine' in the cabinet. From auric candles and antibiotics to chemotherapy, chelation therapy and zonal therapy, we must think our own path through the thorny jungle of misinformation on all sides. We must take it upon ourselves to ask pertinent questions of our healthcare providers and we must fully research the answers we are given. Only in this way will we be able to determine the best way forward during times of illness or as part of a longer-term plan for guarding our health. How many ways can it be said? Sound reasoning and a sound mind are vital to maintaining good health.

In the next chapter, we look at the philosophy of CAM and at its capacity for inflicting harm upon the mind and especially the spirit.

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<sup>196</sup> *Rose Shapiro's Suckers prescribes a dose of scepticism, Times Online, Feb 23rd 2008 at [http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts\\_and\\_entertainment/books/non-fiction/article3418051.ece](http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/non-fiction/article3418051.ece)*

## The Spirit of The New Age

*“Chopra’s pasteurized ‘spirituality-lite’ has annoyed me for years. Achieve the wisdom of the age in one easy paperback gulp! Yeah, right.”* **Thepolitic.com**

Doctors now say that up to 70% of conditions presenting themselves in the waiting room may be anxiety-related and they’re finding it difficult to manage the unrealistic expectations of cure. If what they’re saying is true, then how can the doctor effectively treat the adult, teenager or child if their condition has been triggered by anxiety over divorce, marital strife, abuse, bereavement, crime, inadequate housing, unemployment or debt? Whatever the doctor prescribes will at best, be little better than Elastoplast therapy. Some would argue these stresses have always been with us and that we should stop thinking the doctor can solve all the problems that life throws at us. Are not these the ills for which there is no pharmaceutical or herbal pill? Older generations might well mutter, *“Just toughen the \*\*\*\* up!”*



But now, with the advent of the digital age, mental health experts are saying these stresses are being exacerbated by the effects of a 24/7 worldwide tv and the www bringing us graphic images of war, terrorism, bloody street violence, pollution, famine, natural and man-made disasters as well as the usual hype over ‘global warming’, encroaching plagues, bin Ladenism [sic] and the threat of nuclear Armageddon. An article entitled *Down in the Dumps in the Nuclear Age* stated:

*“The World Health Organization estimates that nearly one million deaths from suicide take place every year, and that depression is one of the most prevalent of mental health problems. The reasons for depression are complex, of course, but the point here is that an international security regime based on nuclear weapons is the pervasive backdrop of every person’s life today. It can only compound despair and loss of hope.”*<sup>197</sup>

Faced with this daily assault on the senses, is it any wonder many of us are looking for a more meaningful, perhaps more *spiritual* way of life? Our ‘toxic hopelessness’, as it has been described and our desire for an instant ‘cure’ has opened the door to a whole host of new age ‘tranquility’ medicines that apparently have the power to heal the body, mind and spirit. The Star Flower website recommends its *Sobralia Setigera* orchid essence:

*“This chakra essence contains the new energies for us to access the space where truth and peace flow out of our ecstatic hearts: we feel enraptured bliss, peace, serenity and harmony. When you go into this space you will ride the currents of the universe through your consciousness and feel wisdom and love and acceptance of all that is. Here you have recognition of self. This essence assists your subtle bodies in sustaining balance, tranquility, peacefulness. Become steeped in divine contentment. ½ oz. concentrate \$18.00”*<sup>198</sup>

<sup>197</sup> **Felicity Hill**, *Down in the Dumps in the Nuclear Age* at [www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/nwc/mon1flick.html](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/nwc/mon1flick.html)

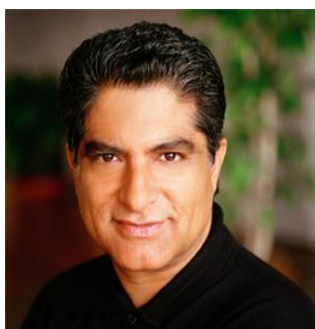
<sup>198</sup> [www.starfloweressences.com](http://www.starfloweressences.com)

Susan Ann runs the Touched by Light website and offers:

*“a variety of one-to-one sessions. She has extensive experience in the alternative health field, working for many years as a homoeopath and health kinesiologist.<sup>199</sup> In recent years she has focused her energies on spiritual development and the angels and now prefers to use the sessions to help individuals to connect with the angelic and spiritual realms. Susan Ann calls upon the angels to lead her healing sessions. She is intuitively guided to place her hands directly onto the physical body or into your aura, acting as a channel for healing energy to pass through her hands into your being, clearing areas of disharmony and dysfunction. The client is left feeling relaxed and calm. She may also use crystals or essences to enhance the healing process. £60.00 for a one-and-a-half-hour session.”<sup>200</sup>*

The Spiritual Activation Massage website sells essential oils that bring us into the presence of God, apparently:

*“A sacred fragrance connects us to the spiritual, to the divine. It opens pathways and clears distractions. Now our hearts can communicate with that which is holy. Now our minds can hear the whisper of peace that will bring us comfort and enlightenment. Emerge in wonderment as you receive, experience and know your divinity. \$85.00. Prepay [here](#)”<sup>201</sup>*



Why is it that the only route to the divine on these sites is via Mastercard, Nochex or Paypal? This next text was taken from a UK promotional poster, fan-faring the arrival of ‘inner healer’ and new age guru Deepak Chopra (left). Original poster boy for the Maharishi, and his second in command for a while (before they fell out over leadership roles), Chopra was earning \$millions in the US with his own syrupy brand of instant wish-fulfilment, and was now headed this way. *“We all need to be healed in the highest sense, by making ourselves perfect in mind, body and spirit. The first step is to realize that this is even possible. The power asleep in us all doesn’t awaken until we call.”<sup>202</sup>*

Visitors to Chopra’s website are invited to take part in ‘*The Seduction of Spirit - a celebration of your divine essence. Standard enrolment \$2,375.00*’: ‘*Perfect Health - 5 days, \$3,475.00*: the ‘*Grow Younger, Live Longer*’ cruise - *We invite you to join Deepak, David, and the Chopra Center family on the excursion of a lifetime! Deepak will teach you a powerful approach to healing and revitalizing your body and mind, while you experience the springtime beauty of Alaska’s inner passage. Prices on application.*”

Chopra also teaches we can reverse the ageing process. In an interview featured in *In Touch* magazine, the now grey-haired Chopra stated:



*“If you can wiggle your toes with the mere flicker of an intention, why can’t you reset your biological clock? The reason most people can’t do it is because, first, they never thought of it and secondly, they think that certain things are easier to do than other things. For example, it is easier to wiggle the toes than reset the biological clock, but that is just a belief that is rooted in superstition. If we could understand that the human body is a network of information and energy, then we would see that the same principles apply everywhere in the body.”<sup>203</sup>*

<sup>199</sup> Kinesiology - CAM therapy based on the false belief that finding a ‘weak’ muscle in the body supposedly enables the practitioner to pinpoint dis-ease in an internal organ corresponding to that muscle. Akin to ancient acupuncture charts, a weak muscle in the chest indicates a liver problem; a weak muscle near the groin might indicate ‘adrenal insufficiency’. Practitioners contend that muscle-testing can also help diagnose allergies and other adverse reactions to foods.

<sup>200</sup> [www.touchedbylight.co.uk/Pages/Main/one2one.htm](http://www.touchedbylight.co.uk/Pages/Main/one2one.htm)

<sup>201</sup> [www.dianaewald.com/Spiritual\\_Activation\\_Massage.html](http://www.dianaewald.com/Spiritual_Activation_Massage.html)

<sup>202</sup> Extract from the poster taken from *On Health and Disease*

<sup>203</sup> **Hay, Veronica**, Interview with Deepak Chopra, *In Touch Magazine*, 18.12.05 at [www.intouchmag.com/chopra.html](http://www.intouchmag.com/chopra.html)

Chopra jets from venue to magnificent venue, flogging the dream that we need not age, that we can be free of all disease and that we can be perfect in body, mind and spirit. But everybody knows our bodies are susceptible to malfunction, that over time they will decay and eventually fail. Serious illness and early death can also strike at any time. This is not being morbid or fatalistic, that's just the way life and death is. That we do not have ultimate control over our lives is argued quite succinctly by David Hunt, author of the book, *America: The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, who states:

*“Consider the spontaneous case with which lightning blacks out a city, a snowstorm closes a road and airports, a tornado tears off rooftops - all of this not only without any help from any human minds, but in spite of hours of seminars, subliminal suggestion tapes and positive affirmations.”*<sup>204</sup>

What about the tornado of a daughter's nervous breakdown, Deepak? Or the lightning strike of a husband's muscular dystrophy diagnosis that blacks out the whole family? I've spoken with many people over the last twenty years who've bought these new age 'total healing now!' box sets. Usually, it's some kind of crisis that's brought them to the auditorium and despite trying to live their lives as close as possible to Chopra's instructions, their crises remain unresolved, unhealed. So, what's going wrong for these people?

Horribly, the inference is that deep down, it will have been *your* lack of faith in Chopra's teachings that's preventing 'your ultimate and supreme genius' from carrying out its healing work. *You* just don't believe enough. Your continued muscular dystrophy is *your* fault. And so, rather than restoring body, mind and spirit, Chopra's teachings have the very real capacity to destroy in all three areas. And in so many instances, that is exactly they do. Given the opportunity to talk about these issues and asked the right questions, many people reveal they have been left emotionally and spiritually shredded by such teachings. Just as horrible, the corollary is that if these people do recover from whatever dis-ease, their recoveries will have had nothing to do with Chopra's teachings, but Chopra still gets all the glory, and all the money. It is this 'win win' aspect to Chopra's 'ministry' that is perhaps the most galling. But with an income last estimated at approximately \$22M, there's little chance Chopra will be cancelling any tour dates just yet.<sup>205</sup>

Since the 1970s, cancer physician O Carl Simonton has been promoting the idea that positive thinking and guided imagery can be used to reverse cancer. Like David Babb, only more *spiritual* and *professional*, Simonton's website features various auto-suggestion cds and books including *Mobilizing the Body's Defences to Beat Cancer*. 'Harness the power of your mind to beat cancer through step by step imagery meditation.' Simonton's most famous book is called *Getting Well Again* and forms part of a \$75.00 patient support package. In the book, Simonton 'suggests' the following:

*“If you are now receiving treatment, picture your treatment coming into your body in a way that you understand. If you are receiving radiation treatment, picture it as a beam of millions of bullets of energy hitting any cell in its path. The normal cells are able to repair the damage that is done, but the cancer cells cannot because they are weak. If you are receiving chemotherapy, picture that drug coming into your body and entering the bloodstream. Picture the drug acting like a poison. The normal cells are intelligent and strong and don't take up the poison so readily. But the cancer cell is a weak cell so it takes very little to kill it. It absorbs the poison, dies and is flushed out of your body.”*

Again, I've spoken with many people on the receiving end of standard conventional cancer treatment and often their biggest struggle is summoning up any positivity at all, simply through the sheer gruelling nature of the treatment. Of course, it's imperative we try to create an environment of hope, purpose and meaning during times of serious illness. But this has to be grounded in reality. Considering Simonton's near thirty years' experience in the field of oncology and cancer counselling, his suggestion to his patients to picture that their toxic, intravenously-fed chemotherapy is doing little damage to healthy cells is unrealistic to say the least. Simonton will surely be aware of the mechanism of chemotherapy, that it does not differentiate between healthy

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<sup>204</sup> Hunt, Dave, *America, The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Harvest House, 1988

<sup>205</sup> *Forbes Magazine* Rich List at [www.imdb.com/name/nm0159149/](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0159149/)

and unhealthy cells but carpet-bombs the entire body, sometimes leading to permanent internal injury and even death. Moving on through Simonton's guided imagery:

*"Picture your body's own white cells coming into the area where the cancer is, recognising the abnormal cells, and destroying them. There is a vast army of white blood cells. They are very strong and aggressive. They are also very smart. There is no contest between them and the cancer cells; they will win the battle."*<sup>206</sup>

Now, some people listening to Simonton's narrative may well be recovering from their cancer ordeal. But their recovery will not be the result of any special healing powers residing in Simonton or his tapes, nor for that matter, any *special healing powers* residing in us that by some 'secret box set' process we can kick-start into action. Just as people mistakenly credit Chopra with all the healing glory, so too in this instance, it will have been the skill of the surgeon who removed the life-threatening tumour or the fact the patients' immune systems were fortified with the necessary nutrients to sustain them throughout their chemotherapy ordeal or because their condition was not as life-threatening as first thought or because they are one of those people inexplicably blessed with an exceptionally strong immune system. Or even because, quite simply, they stopped their chemotherapy.

And likewise, just as with Chopra, there will be those in Simonton's audience who are seriously ill and who are *not* getting better, who are suffering the added cruelty of succumbing to their illness and/or treatment whilst at the same time, trying to visualize themselves back to full health and feeling a failure for not doing so. People need facts at a time like this, not expensive fairytales.

A continuous theme in new age philosophy is the idea we each have within us an untapped pool of wisdom and healing power just waiting to be discovered. Working alongside Simonton at his \$3,500 five-day 'heal yourself' retreat is Erin Sommerville. Her *Happiness Heals* website accents on this and features all manner of self-discovery audio-visuals, including the following meditations:

***'Planetary Healing:*** *in this session you will discover your eternal source of healing energy. Learn how to focus this energy and send it to anyone and anywhere on the planet. We are all healers and honing our ability to send love to others is an exciting and exhilarating experience.'*  
***'Weaving the Dream:*** *open up to the natural flow of your creative energy and tap into the unlimited resources of your imagination. This session will inspire you to trust the creative process and assist you in bringing your dreams and visions into reality.'*<sup>207</sup>

In his book *Homoeopathy, Medicine for the New Man*, George Vithoulkas considers the following philosophical instruction to be vital to all homoeopathic college students:

*"Finally, the teachings of the school should be such as to bring about in the very depths of the students' hearts the realization that mankind's destiny is to free itself from the bondages of pain, of passion and of selfishness."*<sup>208</sup>

Similarly, in his book *Acupuncture*, author Marc Duke tells his readers there is nothing in the world we humans cannot fathom:

*"The entire universe, he [the acupuncturist] feels, works to such a precise, orderly fashion, that it contains no mysteries beyond his scope of understanding. This is not arrogance, but a rich feeling of association between man and nature. Because no supreme power, no Lord of Hosts created the world, the forces behind life and death and illness and health are not beyond man's comprehension. They are in the form of chi, present in every living creature, every tree and flower, every puff of wind and drop of rain."*<sup>209</sup>

In these confident assertions are found the cornerstone beliefs of new age philosophy: that nothing is beyond our own understanding, that it is our destiny to heal ourselves of all our physical,

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<sup>206</sup> *ibid*

<sup>207</sup> Sommerville Cancer Coaching at [www.happinessheals.com/guided.html](http://www.happinessheals.com/guided.html)

<sup>208</sup> **Vithoulkas, George** *Homoeopathy, Medicine for the New Man*, Thorsons 1985

<sup>209</sup> **Duke, Marc**, *Acupuncture*, Pyramid House, 1972

mental and spiritual dis-eases, and further, if we can heal ourselves, then we can also be like God, or even that we are God! As Deepak Chopra boldly stated in a March 2011 *Playboy* interview:

*“I do not believe in God as a dead white male or as God in the sky. In fact, I used to be an atheist until I discovered I was God.”*<sup>210</sup>

Similarly, the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (deceased), the founder of transcendental meditation (TM) has been a key figurehead in new age thinking, instructing millions that ‘God-realization’ is the answer to suffering. Mis-quoting Psalm 46:10 from the Bible, the Maharishi stated:

*“Christ said, ‘Be still and know that I am God.’ Be still and know that you are God and when you know that you are God you will begin to live Godhood, and living Godhood there is no reason to suffer.”*<sup>211</sup>

*Cahoots* natural therapy magazine tells us that we have all the attributes of an immortal God. Following the instructions in its article on healing meditation, we should find somewhere quiet, concentrate on a flickering flame, tune out our busy surroundings and repeat the following words over and over:

*“I am pure, I am blissful, I am happy, I am free from mistakes, I am infinite, I am limitless, I am total, I am whole, I am complete, I am the Immortal, the Everlasting, the Eternal, I am not dying, death cannot affect me. So-Ham, So-Ham.”*<sup>212</sup>

Most of us I think (other than the most hardened atheists) would accept there are aspects to life and to our planet that are inexplicable, wondrous and beyond scientific explanation. The spine-tingling *frisson* we experience when holding our new-born baby, when in the middle of a booming and rolling thunder and lightning storm, when gazing up into a clear night sky, amongst ten thousand voices singing in unison, the beetling Grand Canyon, the incredible engineering found in a single bee’s knee (hence that phrase of praise ‘the bee’s knees’), looking out of the airplane window to the earth far below - these and other astounding phenomena can trigger that ‘something else’ within us, a ‘something else’ beyond explanation. We are surely more than the sum of our parts.

However, being riveted to the spot at the edge of the Grand Canyon or at the incredible dancing bird of paradise, it is a huge metaphysical leap from there to believe that by our own efforts, we can steadily progress towards Godhood, that we can know the mind of God, that we can become God or even that we are God. If anything, such spine-tingling moments in life should make us look upwards, not inwards. Scientists too with the likes of Dawkins and now-deceased Stephen Hawking are looking to reduce the miracle of life to demonstrable scientific equation. As Stephen Hawking stated in his book *A Brief history of Time*: *“If we discover a complete theory, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason - for then we should know the mind of God.”*

In my experience, those people who adopt the inwards-looking new age mantras, telling ourselves over and over we are infinite and all-conquering, these people find themselves at constant loggerheads with the stresses and strains of everyday life. *‘But I’m immortal! This shouldn’t be happening to me!’* And it’s the anxiety produced by this constant clash with real life that’s the real killer. Personally speaking, I see the new age ‘healing journey’ as nothing more than mental and spiritual slavery. I’ve followed various new age healing blogs over the years and I include the following extract as an illustration of what I mean.

Melissa was abused as a small child and it’s obvious from her writings she still suffers from that experience and that she’s never really thought of herself as anything other than ‘damaged goods’. Melissa’s been studying and teaching yoga for an income but mainly as a means of healing for herself and also, because of her experience, wanting to help others. In her blog, she writes about her ‘four yogic rules for life’: breathe, practice, eat, meditate. She also makes many references to her time ‘on the mat’. Here’s what she says about practice:

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<sup>210</sup> <http://deanwilson.posterous.com/playboy-interview-with-author-deepak-chopra-m>

<sup>211</sup> **Maharishi Mahesh Yogi**, *Meditations of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*, New York: Bantam, 1973

<sup>212</sup> *Attunement*, Cahoots Magazine, Spring 1995

*“Practice. This is often the first thing that goes when people get busy, but it’s so important. When I get on the mat, whether it’s for a few minutes or a full practice I get back to me. I get back to that place of surety and peace. When I’m in that place of just Melissa I can make decisions better, I can schedule and make lists without getting sidetracked or distracted. When I practice my mind is clearer, my body feels strong and integrated and I am connected with my heart and with the universe and I feel whole. When I forget to or put off practicing I’ll get tight throughout my neck and shoulders and then I’ll get a headache. My jaw gets tight. I get cranky. I forget things. I’d so much rather spend ten minutes on the mat or even just in my bedroom doing warrior poses and feel great than pop a painkiller and just feel okay.”*

*Practice is the foundation for feeling great all the time. The more we do it, the more we benefit. The trick is not to fall in the not-good-enough trap. Whatever I do, even if it’s just a forward fold and an eagle pose while I’m waiting for my son to get out of the bathroom is good enough. And then when there’s time and energy for something longer and more evolved that will be good enough too.*

*If I do these four simple, but not necessarily easy things [breathe, eat, practice, meditate], I can get really clear. I feel whole. I can remind myself that if the dogs smell for another couple of days everyone will survive. I remember to smile and have fun and be pleasant and fun to be around. The most important thing of all is to remember that not everything is done perfectly, and that life isn’t made up of as many shoulds and have-tos as I sometimes think. Five minutes on the mat is okay and if I’m driving while I’m focusing my mind, well, that’s just the way it worked out today. And when I get to a place where my language is peppered with shoulds and have-tos then it’s time to get back on the mat and Breathe.”*

Yoga, stretching and exercise in themselves are good for the body. It is the metaphysical and spiritual, new age elements Melissa attaches to her yogic routines that become the damaging influence. Melissa’s ‘spiritual yoga’ typifies the never-ending on-and-on-ness of new age ‘healing’. Practice, practice, practice. Practice for balance, practice for centredness, practice for wholeness, awareness, completeness, breathing, whatever, Melissa can’t let up from practicing for a moment. Because if she does, her ‘new age shield’ drops and the same old demons come rushing back in. Reading her blog, it is apparent Melissa suffers only a constant state of mental and spiritual anxiety. But true healing surely, is about allowing the shield down and realizing the demons have gone? If Melissa ever tires of her yoga and goes online looking for other means of new age healing, there’s a whole host of equally repetitive, ritualistic ‘therapies for sexual abuse’ for Melissa to try - aromatherapy4soul.com for instance. Here’s what this site says about one of its so-called trauma essences *Amyris Balsamifera*:

*“the essence of choice for people who have lost something of themselves in the past, buried things deep, forgotten who they really are, carry secrets and old burdens. Soothing and gentle resolution, evolutionary, no shocks, time healing.”*

The same site also links to ‘a new way of healing’ via *EmoTrance* and includes the following new age prayer/invocation:

*“I put my healing hands on my heart of energy to heal what once was broken, to make right what once went wrong, to soften and to flow, to restore the Even Flow so that my heart of energy can once again shine like the sun.”<sup>213</sup>*

For abuse victims in particular, who wouldn’t be attracted to such promises? From as far back as she dare remember, all Melissa has wanted is to shine like the sun on the inside. Outwardly, the aromatherapy site positively oozes healing for trauma and abuse, and the people running the site may also believe wholeheartedly in what they are selling. But when we examine the evidence, new age therapies only ever scratch the surface of the issue. We can burn all the incense we like and repeat ‘*I am pure, I am infinite, I am complete,*’ as often as we like, but in reality, no chanting or channeling, yoga or meditation, no chakra work, breath work or reiki, tarot readings, aura readings or astral readings, mindfulness or in-the-momentness will ever bring healing the new age way. For

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<sup>213</sup> Heart Healing Prayer at [www.scribd.com/doc/30098220/Introduction-to-Emotrance-2010-eBook](http://www.scribd.com/doc/30098220/Introduction-to-Emotrance-2010-eBook)

Melissa and millions like her, there will never be any such thing as ‘new age healing’. It doesn’t exist. Just like all the other new age ‘spiritual healing modalities’ *Amyris Balsamifera* and EmoTrance will lead only to more of the same soulless chant and ritual and the same on-and-on-ness.

And on a wider scale, the venerated leaders of new age thought and associated organisations are still frail and still susceptible to the same human weaknesses and temptations. In his critical essay on new age thought entitled *Jung and the New Age*, author David Tacey discusses...

*‘... the notorious problem of rampant egotism, emotionality, splits, and competitiveness that plague New Age groups, cults, sects, ashrams, clubs, societies and communes. Although all these groups work toward transcendence of ego in favor of soul, they are often destroyed by a secret, dark, and malignant egotism, which eats away at the high ideals and eventually causes the whole edifice to collapse, often with devastating consequences to society and to all concerned. What began with perfumes and chanting ends up in the law courts and in police interviews: we pay an enormous price for repressing our ordinary impulses and our basic humanity.’*<sup>214</sup>

The Maharishi’s personal involvement in mind control, financial and sexual exploitation, lavish properties plus \$billions in various accounts world-wide is well-documented. And he’s left thousands and thousands of psychologically wrecked spiritual soul seekers in his wake. For an excellent insight into the TM movement, readers should check out ‘*Where Have All The Flower Children Gone?*’<sup>215</sup> By their fruits shall you know them.

The holistic ideal that we can heal ourselves of our physical, mental and spiritual dis-eases by our own powers is perhaps the single most destructive new age teaching being woven into mainstream thinking at present. But just try discussing any of these issues with the holistic big-wigs. There is a quiet malice reserved for the ‘non-believer’. And if you yourself have been having doubts about your therapist, you are not to question his wisdom. What your channeler, *spiritual enabler*, therapist or even ascended master ‘*imparts to you*’ cannot ever be questioned. Here’s Chopra again on the role of the disciple and his guru:

*“The role of a disciple isn’t to question a guru, but the exact opposite: whatever the guru says, however strange, capricious, or unfair, is taken to be truth. The disciple’s role is to accommodate to the truth, and if it takes struggle and ‘ego death’ to do that, the spiritual fruits of obedience are well worth it. A guru speaks for God and pure consciousness; therefore, his words are a direct communication from Brahman, who knows us better than we know ourselves. In essence the guru is like a superhuman parent who guides our steps until we can walk on our own.”*<sup>216</sup>

In *Thorson’s Guide to Medical Herbalism*, author David Hoffman believes that herbalism is an ecological healing force for the body, mind, spirit and planet. He puts forward a number of ideas such as the yin-yang concept, astrology for health and herbs for planetary wholeness and suggests that: “*perhaps people can attune to these plants, visit the places where they grow and establish a deeper rapport with nature through their healing processes.*” But what if some readers feel slightly uncomfortable with these ideas? Again, the subtle phraseology in the preface to this book warns us not to question Hoffmann’s wisdom on these matters. The preface - penned by new age guru Sir George Trevelyan, contains all the elements one would expect to find in a cult grooming pamphlet. This is the quiet malice, albeit clothed in such sugary niceness:

*“Our minds are still overcoming centuries of conditioning to ‘apartness’ thinking. The holistic world view lifts us beyond such separation. We learn to see Truth as a hovering, crystalline*

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<sup>214</sup> <http://www.nhne.com/updates/0059.html>

<sup>215</sup> **Baxter, Bronte** *Where have all the flower children gone?* at [brontebaxter.wordpress.com/where-have-all-the-flower-children-gone/](http://brontebaxter.wordpress.com/where-have-all-the-flower-children-gone/) “*In 1987, when I left TM and Fairfield, I had lived 17 years within the movement’s perimeters. I’d seen the world go from flower power to mantra power. My friends had changed from buoyant folks delighting in free expression to paranoid people with phony smiles and legislated attitudes. It took me two years to break free of the thinking that kept me in Maharishi’s orbit. It felt traumatic, like a failed marriage. I didn’t know what was happening, but I knew I could no longer be part of it.*”

<sup>216</sup> Chopra and the Maharishi years at [www.huffingtonpost.com/deepak-chopra/the-maharishi-years-the-u\\_b\\_86412.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/deepak-chopra/the-maharishi-years-the-u_b_86412.html)

*structure of many facets. You pick up one glint, I another and separatist reasoning can too easily conclude that since I know and can prove I'm right, you must be wrong. All the glints together make up the Truth and we are finding that true 'conversation' (a' turning about together') is an art of helping each other to see the wonder of the whole revealed in every part. This lifts it above intellectual discussion or that debased form of exchange called argument. In our age of drugs and chemicals, here is a path to safe treatment which respects the oneness of life... etc., etc..."*

There is no room to challenge any of the philosophical issues raised in Trevelyan's address. To do so would be seen as being 'against the oneness of life', as 'the debased, argumentative one', the 'separatist' and by association, very probably a supporter of 'drugs and chemicals'. Trevelyan has structured his opening sentences in such a way that any critical reply appears crass in the face of such overwhelming planetary benevolence. And by default, Trevelyan has gained the immediate moral high ground. But hey ho. Welcome to the syrupy world of new age prose.<sup>217</sup>

Ignoring Trevelyan's subtle call to obeisance, his idea that everybody's own little bit of truth somehow coalesces to make up the *Ultimate Truth* can never really work in the real world. As a simple example, picture Trevelyan on an airplane, gazing out from his window seat. The plane begins its descent. But it doesn't approach the runway as expected. Instead, the pilot is lining up to land smack, bang in the middle of the huge oil refinery adjacent to the runway. Looking down in horror at the jagged steel structures and flaming chimneys looming ever nearer, Trevelyan instantly and very lucidly communicates the following to the pilot: "*What in God's name are you doing? The runway's over there, you \*\*\*\*\* imbecile. You're landing in the WRONG place! Pull up, man! Pull up! You'll have us all killed!*" And with all the honeyed new-age wisdom the pilot can muster, the pilot replies, "*Learn to let go, Sir George and just BE! Just as there are many truths, there are also many runways. That's your runway over there. This is mine over here. Together, all our runways make up the one true runway. Separatist reasoning can all too easily conclude that since I know....."* Kaboom!

An unlikely scenario in real life, granted (the pilot's common sense would of course prevail), but if we do actually follow Trevelyan's philosophy through to its logical conclusion, a plane crash is always the end result and no amount of positive affirmations, inner journeying or mental gymnastics will transport him or his philosophy to any other place. And this is the bugbear I have with today's new age authors and philosophers. They will happily spend all day lucidly deconstructing the deceitful inner workings of big pharma *et al* yet will steadfastly refuse to apply the same level of intelligent critique to their own wacky nostrums and beliefs.

For instance, in order for Trevelyan to remain loyal to his all-embracing philosophy, he must now concede that prescribing diluted moonlight juice is a valid form of medicine, that Edward Bach's thoughts and theories are a sensible collection of healing ideas, that wiring up a scorpion to a 12 volt battery is a worthwhile medical experiment, that selling clods of earth as a cancer cure at £20.00 a jar is a valuable addition to the CAM healing cabinet, that David Babb has every right to advertise the monstrous lie he can detect serious diseases just by studying a person's handwriting and then charge for his services and that multi-millionaire Deepak Chopra is not lying when he says he has discovered the secret of immortality. Trevelyan cannot be seen to argue against any of this lunacy and outright criminality because they're all '*the glints of truth that make up the wondrous whole*'.

The latest idea is that children's schoolwork mistakes should not be highlighted necessarily as mistakes and should therefore not be marked in red, because of the negative impact this might have on the child's psyche. This is all part of the same gradual slide away from sound reasoning, albeit for the most altruistic of reasons. Despite the huge push towards Trevelyan's relativism, there is still such a thing as objective truth, right and wrong, good and bad.

In the next chapter, we will look at what I believe to be a few sensible pointers to maintaining good health in body and mind.

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<sup>217</sup> The age-old technique of framing or loading the argument is clearly explained in Vance Packard's illuminating book *Hidden Persuaders*, D Mackay & Co, 1957. An expert in the psychological tactics of the advertising world, Packard suggests that in order for one party to gain immediate advantage over another, "...one must pre-empt the vocabulary in order to gain the moral/political high ground."

## Nothing New Under The Sun

*2000 BC: eat this root. 1000 A.D: that root is heathen, say this prayer. 1850 AD: that prayer is superstition, drink this potion. 1940 AD: that potion is snake oil, swallow this pill. 1985 AD: that pill is ineffective, take this antibiotic. 2000 AD: that antibiotic is artificial, eat this root. Anon*

It has never been my intention to present an in-depth study of the fruits and the failings of conventional healthcare or an exhaustive manifesto for optimum health. I'm not qualified enough by far on the minutiae of medicine, diet and fitness to do that. I have also purposely stayed away from 'this trial, that trial' tit-for-tat type-tennis that starts up as soon as either party get anywhere near the negotiating table. Although it has its place, there's nothing more mind-numbing than endless data comparison, even worse, compiling it and calling that a book. We don't need any more trials to demonstrate the paucity of the therapies. The only negotiating that needs to take place is with government ministers on how best to phase out all offending CAM (and conventional) therapies from the NHS as soon as possible.

Yes, there are well-intentioned CAM practitioners offering good advice on looking after ourselves and on the on-going health benefits of a toxic-free environment combined with simple, sensible nutrition. Certainly, a reiki master, naturopath or acupuncturist can advise us on how to reduce the refined foodstuffs in our diet and to make sure we eat adequate amounts of protein, roughage and fruit and vegetables and drink enough clean water. And the local homoeopath, local GP and even health criminal Mr Babb can advise that we exercise more often and guard against smoking and excessive eating and drinking. And if we ignore this advice and our saturated fat diet sees us tipping the scales at 20 stone or if we get wheezy going up the stairs because of too much smoking, then whose fault is that? Do we really need a therapist of any persuasion to tell us any of these things? Shouldn't we be thinking these basics through for ourselves? Apart from these common-sense generalities offered by CAM, there's little in the holistic medicine cabinet that could be considered sensible. In the main, what's left serves only to trick and dazzle the unsuspecting mind.

In October 2010, cancer researchers from the University of Manchester published a paper in *Nature* which suggested that cancer is a man-made disease. After investigating hundreds of Egyptian mummies, they came across just one case of cancer - worldwide only two cases have ever been detected. Incidence of cancer, especially childhood cancer rose considerably after the Industrial Revolution. Said Professor Rosalie David: *"In industrialised societies, cancer is second only to cardiovascular disease as a cause of death. But in ancient times, it was extremely rare. There is nothing in the natural environment that can cause cancer. So it has to be a man-made disease, down to pollution and changes to our diet and lifestyle."*<sup>218</sup>

I haven't had time personally to investigate fully Professor David's claim that nothing in the natural world causes cancer, and I also wouldn't call her paper 'the new golden rule on cancer' but I think we all know what she's driving at. Here's Dr John McDougall again, summing up the basics for a healthy life:

*"I think it's very important people realise they can regain lost health. A lot of folks out there think they're trapped; being fat, sick and dependent on drugs - and that's not the case. Well over 80% can get off their medication. Essentially all of them can get their weight down and get to feeling and functioning well again by doing something cost-free: by eating the right kinds of foods. Actually, you can cut your food bill up to 40% by cutting out animal products and processed foods. Add some exercise and clean up your habits and you will get far greater results than any pill could*

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<sup>218</sup> Medical News Today Cancer is probably man-made, caused by pollution and diet at [www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/204809.php](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/204809.php)

*ever give you. If everyone knew they had that option, I would be the happiest doctor in the world.”*

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For the most part a vegetarian, McDougall does admit to being led astray by the occasional carnivorous dish. And why not! I don't think I could fully make the crossover to a meat-free diet. And although I can't vouch for the exact percentages in McDougall's summary, it does seem he's got most corners covered. Basically, when it comes down to it, healthcare is just a matter of common sense. My personal opinion is that for many conditions, good nutrition is very often the best medicine. Or even, that with good nutrition, many conditions don't make their appearance anyway.

Qaraandin Afia Boro is an African health journalist and writes for Exodus Online, a health webpage for African communities living in western society. He does not believe the *hereditary illness* theory. Instead, he observes the effects of environmental toxicity on those who come to the west from less toxically hazardous environments. He cites the leading causes of death for Africans living in western society as cancer, heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Boro states:

*“Our grandparents had pure, natural well or spring water to drink. They rarely drank anything other than water. We drink everything but water. Water helps flush poisons from the system. All dis-eases - including cancer, diabetes, heart dis-ease, and stroke - are the result of poisons being held in the body. When there are no poisons in the body, we do not get sick. Our grandparents ate nuts, seeds, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. There were no chemicals added to their food while it was being grown or after it was picked. We have been taught to expect our health to get worse as we age.*

*It doesn't have to be that way. What we accept as old age is the result of years of poor nutrition. 'Hereditary' dis-eases are also the result of years of poor nutrition. As long as we don't ask where 'hereditary' dis-eases begin, we will fail to recognise the importance of nourishing our bodies. There are no 'hereditary' dis-eases. When everyone in a family has the same bad eating habits, they all get the same dis-eases. We will be as healthy as our grandparents were when we learn to take care of our bodies as they took care of theirs.”*<sup>220</sup>

Living the natural way is the 'alternativist' mandate and a visit to the Glastonbury Green Field area for instance or to the little-known Off Grid festival offers an inventiveness and a hope for a sustainable future far greater than anything gained from any school trip to some government-sponsored wind farm project. Again though, it's the intellectual inconsistency that's the rub. I'm all for taking a group of inquisitive youngsters on a tour of an alternative farming collective. But please don't attribute the bountiful crop to a zodiac planting calendar, to treating the livestock homoeopathically or having as your personal mission statement *'I am free from mistakes and death cannot affect me'*, and teaching young minds the same. This is not a healthy legacy for the future. As ever, there will be far more down to earth reasons why the animals are healthy and why the oven-baked bread tastes so delicious!

I am grateful for all the good in conventional medicine and for the many hard-working men and women who bring such expertise and dedication to so many vital areas in their various fields. But I am also grateful I know the conventional approach has a flip-side and that serious homework should always be undertaken before consenting to some of the longer-term and more toxic conventional regimes. Health officials should strive to deliver proven and non-injurious conventional treatments and should have the balls to weed out the injurious and non-proven treatments making so much money for the pharmaceutical industry. They should be aiming for a medical school curriculum that emphasizes the health and healing benefits of a good diet and they should also spend more time researching those recoveries attributed to particular vitamins and minerals which, when consumed in their natural state by the gravely ill, seem to have a track record of cure, despite vociferous cries of *'Dangerous quack!'*

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<sup>219</sup> Interview with Dr John McDougall *ibid*

<sup>220</sup> **Boro, Qaraandin Afia**, 'A Few Words about Hereditary Disease', Exodus Online at [www.exodusnews.com/HEALTH/Health002.htm](http://www.exodusnews.com/HEALTH/Health002.htm)

Throughout this book, I have purposefully refrained from referring to alternative therapies and therapists as ‘complementary’ (and the new buzz word - *integrative*). I just couldn’t bring myself to use the term, except to explain right at the beginning of the book what the C in CAM denotes. The standard definition of the word complementary is ‘serving to complete’ or ‘mutually supplying each other’s lack’. Whilst the empathy and understanding the alternative therapist brings to the doctor-patient relationship can often be of great therapeutic value, the fairytale theories woven into the consultation, diagnosis and subsequent prescriptions more than undo any of the good achieved. For this and the other reasons laid out in this book, CAM will always fall well short of fulfilling the true meaning of the term complementary.

My final my tips for preserving health, aside from those already mentioned, would be as follows: stay vigilant; ask lots of questions; strive for clear-headedness; keep a sense of humour and a sense of perspective; remember that letters after a name don’t always guarantee we’re in safe hands; remember the words of physicist Max Planck who said, “*Science progresses funeral by funeral.*” And remember, there’s nothing new under the sun. What’s all the rage today will more than likely have enjoyed its fifteen minutes of fame in a previous era and might also have had its own entry somewhere in Bacon’s calendar of popular error.<sup>221</sup> The ancient Egyptians after all, used manta rays and conger eels in the treatment room as a form of electro-convulsive therapy. Now, that *would* have been a sight to behold!

At a deeper, more philosophical level, why an eighty-year-old can credit his health and longevity to beef dripping sandwiches and a ten-a-day full strength Capstan habit while across the street from him a ten year old dies of cystic fibrosis, is beyond me. As I said at the beginning, I do not profess to have all of the answers.

In his essay *Modern Medicine: The New World Religion*, Oliver Clerc suggests our faith as such - the ‘religious side’ to our humanity - isn’t really dying away; our worship is merely being given over to another god - the doctor:

*“The facts show clearly - for anyone taking the time to study them - that medicine today enjoys an astonishing degree of undeserved credit that is out of all proportion to its actual results or promises. Real health keeps regressing, while the great medical ‘miracles’, such as vaccines and antibiotics, are now clearly showing their limitations, which some had foreseen and warned of right from the start. This undeserved credit comes mostly from the fact that medicine and science have replaced religion as the only certain belief in an uncertain world. And the doctors and scientists are seen as the priests of the new religion, delivering through the certainties of science what the old discredited gods were not able to deliver. If we can no longer believe in the miracles, cures and curses of the old religions, we can certainly believe in the miracles, the cures and the destructive powers of the new science.”*<sup>222</sup>

Oliver Clerc raises an important issue concerning faith and humanity, reminding us we humans do have a worshipful, religious side to us. I have to say I have some difficulty with the word ‘religious’. For me, it conjures up quite negative connotations - strictness, starchiness and rules laden, *‘He’s very religious, don’t you know.’* So, to that extent, I don’t think I’m religious. At least I hope not. But I do have a faith in a personal, loving God. I thought a great deal about stating my position right from the start of the book but it brought up too many questions in my mind, not least, how you the reader might then approach everything else I’d be writing from that point on, like I was ‘a sandwich short of a picnic’ or ‘out there with the fairies’. I hope that what I’ve written so far demonstrates otherwise. In the preceding pages, we’ve paid attention to body and mind. So, in the last three chapters, I’d like to look at the spiritual nature of man and the important role that ‘spirit’ plays in this uncertain world of ours. These chapters are a late addition. As such, they may not necessarily represent the viewpoints of those who kindly submitted reviews for the preceding chapters.

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<sup>221</sup> Francis Bacon 1561 - 1626 *‘The Advancement of Learning’*, in which was proposed ‘a calendar of vulgar errors, that man’s knowledge be not weakened or embased by such dross and vanity.’

<sup>222</sup> Clerc, Olivier, *Médecine, Religion et Peur; l’influence cachée des croyances* (The hidden influence of beliefs and fears), Editions Jouvence, France, 1999

## Our Age of EnBlighenment?

*'Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strength.'* **Charles Spurgeon**

Holism states we are body, mind and spirit. But to a degree, I believe spirit can be separated from body and mind. For instance, there are those who use alternative therapies who don't give spiritual matters a second thought. All they want to do is treat their physical and mental aches and pains homoeopathically, naturopathically, acupuncturally or other non-conventional means. Then there are those who view the therapies as a means of assisting them to lead more spiritual lives. It is this *spiritual* aspect of holism I would like to look at now - the new age spirituality that claims we can resolve our philosophical and spiritual struggles ourselves, that we can heal our broken hearts and transcend our 'lostness' by our own efforts, that we can, in effect, be like God, even that we *are* God. I believe this new age spiritual *wholism* to be a flawed philosophy and in these last few pages, I would like as best I can to explain why I believe this to be so. I will also venture an explanation of my own faith in God.

I believe in the existence of a loving creator God. Now, the rationalist in you might say, show me this invisible God. And if He is a *Creator* God, then what about David Attenborough, the Natural History Museum and evolution? And if He is a Creator and He loves His creation, then what about the famines, floods and earthquakes, sicknesses and other disasters across the world, and the sheer brutality and selfishness of one man towards another? And if the church is His representation on earth, then what about all the church child abuse scandals, Richard 1st and his abhorrent crusades, the burning of thousands of innocents during the witchcraft trials, Torquemada, the crass US 'Operation Enduring Freedom' carried out in God's name plus all the other 'holy wars' over the centuries too numerous to mention?

And if the Bible is God's 'loving' guide for living, then how come all the *Old Testament* cruelty, the *New Testament* rules on women's dress code and stuff, those unbelievable miracles, all the rows over selective editing, differing translations, missing 'scrolls' and books? And what about those money-grabbing tele-evangelists, the arguing over women bishops and gay marriage and the value of the land and property amassed by the church? Why not just sell all those silver goblets to help feed the poor? If this is God and church in action, then count me out thanks.

There were also my own misconceptions about the Bible, about church and the people I thought I'd find in them - weedy blokes in open-toed sandals, all the hats in *Songs of Praise*, ghastly organ music, no actual fun being had by anyone, plus a load more knee-jerk reactions at the time, I'm sure. All I can say is twenty eight years ago, I had a Supernatural encounter with Jesus Christ which changed my life completely and is continuing to change me to this day. Allow me to tell you my story.

Before I had any idea any kind of God even existed, I was fearful for the future and I had a deep mistrust of the direction our world leaders were taking us. To me, we were headed for oblivion. All that life seemed to offer was a constant state of war, big business corruption, a worsening state of pollution and ecological exploitation, and with no politicians coming forward with any truthful or sensible solutions. Outwardly I appeared fine. I was getting on with my life and working for a leading telecoms company but was also drawn to the alternative lifestyle and to many of its political viewpoints and was going to like-minded festivals and gatherings. Glastonbury was a fiver to get in. You could park your car next to your tent and no hi-viz 30 meter ring around the main stage. There were plenty of drugs and it all seemed like great times at the time.

I was also involved with Green Peace, doing my bit for the planet as best I could. What killed it for me there though was the arguing and in-fighting that went on and finding out an arm of the movement had been infiltrated by certain activists for nefarious government purposes. If Greenpeace couldn't get it together, I thought, then what chance anyone saving the earth? Similarly, if I was an alternative health fan today, I'd have been equally dismayed by the closure of Prince Charles' flagship *Centre for Integrative Medicine* due largely to finance director George Gray embezzling approximately £250,000 over a three year period to help pay off his £700,000

mortgage. Once again, the best-laid plans (albeit an alternative health study centre) scuppered by the weakest link in the chain - human fallibility. Anyhow, for me in my late twenties, it seemed no-one had any philosophical or spiritual ideas worthy of serious consideration, nothing that held any water. I was now married and outwardly, it all appeared fine. Inwardly though, I was scared for the future. My drug-taking really only masked how I really was inside. I was heavy of heart and with nowhere to go with my 'soul baggage. I was as good an example as any of 'spiritual enblightenment'. Thinking back on it now, I was a prime candidate for the new age way of life.

An open-air preacher I'd heard in Tunbridge Wells shopping precinct around that time made it sound so simple and yet so very hard. If I wanted assurance and peace of mind on this earth I first and foremost needed to humble myself before God. I needed to say sorry to Him for my own selfish choices and sins over the years (yes, that word still exists) and I needed to be big enough to admit I was lost for any human answers. If I acknowledged my true fallen state and helplessness before God, and accepted that Jesus died on the cross in exchange for my sins, God would make Himself known to me and would help me to lead a fulfilled life from then on. The whole Jesus thing put me off, I have to say. It all sounded very 'uncool'. I certainly had regrets about my past, the things I'd foolishly and selfishly done over the years and the way I had treated some people. But I didn't really feel that what the man was preaching right then actually applied to me. Or at least *I didn't want to feel* that what he was preaching applied to me. I'm sure there was a whole pride thing going on inside of me. Either way, preacher man's words wouldn't go away. And so, wrestling with all of these things in my mind for about a year, Kathy and I went travelling with our baby son, saw some sights, came back home and I realised I was as 'stuck' as I ever was. And so I gave in, and cutting a long story short, I got down on my knees and I 'gave God a go'. I asked forgiveness from a God Who I didn't really know whether He would answer or not. In short, I humbled myself. As husband and wife, we both did and our lives haven't been the same since! But within these pages, I'll stick to my encounter

God's forgiveness and personal affirmation of me flowed over me and deep into me like nothing I'd ever felt before and for the first time in my life, quite incredibly, I felt myself being lifted up and out of my 'speck in a meaningless universe' mentality. For the first time, I knew that I was known Supernaturally, that I was loved and genuinely esteemed by an Immense, Amazing 'Force for Love' outside of any earthly framework I had ever known previously. And it's this whole experience and everything associated with it that I'm going to be discussing in these last remaining pages. Yes, me, the same person who's spent most of the previous chapters undoing the so-called 'invisible powers' of alternative health and telling readers we should exercise caution over feelings and experience, I'd now like to discuss my own experience of this Invisible God and His Invisible Spiritual realm. You have to laugh at the irony of it, I suppose. I want to try to explain this as uncomplicatedly and as logically as possible, knowing that Spirit and logic are as chalk and cheese. I'm sure it says somewhere though that God loves a trier!

Before looking at exactly what happened to me though (and it was certainly a most amazing turning point in my life), all those who testify to the same encounter with God agree this begins a Supernatural process of behavioural and attitudinal change within us - a process we could never instigate or manage ourselves. Anybody looking down on the general behaviour of the human race over the last several thousand years would have to agree we've not done a very good job of policing ourselves so far. Now, in this amazing encounter, we most certainly are *not* changed into delightful little angels overnight. I wasn't, anyway. We still have annoying traits and habits. It's been twenty eight years since my first encounter with God and I'm still not perfect by any means. Slowly and lovingly though, God brings the various glitches and gremlins in our lives to the surface. He addresses root issues and root causes within us and we find ourselves becoming 'works in progress' - the 'sanctification process' as it is more elegantly described. In other words, it's not an instant 100% change. It never is. God helps us gradually to become more like Him in His overall Character, in His patience, in His Forgiveness and Kindness towards others. And He also helps us to look upon people as He looks upon them.

And as we get to know Him and we begin to get to know our place within this new, upside- down, at-odds-with-the-world, Supernatural framework, we begin to understand there are certain set boundaries for living this New Way of life. I'd like at this juncture though to point out that whilst knowing God does indeed lead us into new ways of thinking and living, it certainly does *not* mean

we need turn into those 'religious typecasts' as portrayed on tv. There only ever seems to be two categories; wimps or saucer-eyed extremists. And you can bet your house on the 'qualities' required for the role of the standard tv vicar. Single, socially awkward and feeble handshake a must: thick-lensed glasses and out of touch dress sense desirable: and the golden rule: must not in any way demonstrate balance of character or that his/her faith has any practical application in today's world.

Granted, there's a trade-off when following God's guidelines. Gone are the wild parties, wild living and the more earthly pursuits. But even then, the term 'trade-off' sounds as if choosing to follow Jesus implies we'll lose out somewhere down the line which in my experience, isn't the case at all. In fact, I'd say there's nothing to lose and everything to gain by taking that first step towards God. And I'd also say I think we're actually quite 'normal', whatever normal might constitute today. We have friends. Yes, real live normal friends. And if you observe us carefully, you'll see we can sometimes have a laugh, go out and do normal 'going out things'. If we're feeling daring, we may even have a beer or a glass of wine and, shock horror! If we're extra daring, maybe even another! And Jesus blokes know how to relax with non-Jesus blokes and can often be seen watching or even playing football and rugby and tackling just as hard as the rest of them. What I'm really trying to say, if you hadn't picked up on it already, is please don't believe all of the mealy-mouthed, stereotypical press that Christianity receives.

Again though, I would have to say that in my twenty eight years' following Jesus, He *really does* know how we best operate and that living within His boundaries brings a true sense of Spiritual freedom. Now, boundaries I know, aren't immediately associated with freedom and so I'd like briefly to try and explain this incongruity. Firstly, the very concept of boundaries is anathema to the new age way of thinking. The *boundless*, the *endless*, the *limitless* and the *infinite* are all key adjectives in new age prose. In his excellent essay on Carl Jung and new age thought, David Tacey notes the following:

*'The New Age man searches for highs, peak experiences, altered states of consciousness, and avoids lows, depressions and bleak pessimism. He looks for spirituality (for which read 'devices and techniques that will connect me with the divine') and he often avoids or rejects established religions (for which read 'those dogmatic structures that limit my individual freedom, inhibit spiritual expression, and diminish personal expectations of glory'). Spirituality promises highs, but religion threatens with its emphasis on moral restrictions, social conscience, and ethical obligations. The New Age man wants the Goal (unity with the divine) without the Way (the discipline, ethics, and self-effacement that make such unity possible). He wants blissful union without the suffering of the cross, spiritual rebirth without having to first endure spiritual death. He is 'hooked' on the sacred, addicted to spiritual techniques and practices and his credo is: 'Follow your bliss.'*<sup>223</sup>

The suffering of the cross we shall look at shortly but as we have read in a previous chapter, new age man says we don't need God or any of His rules and regulations. To the new age follower, God's guidelines for living, His discipline and moral restrictions are just that; restrictive. We can do the God bit ourselves. As Shirley MacLaine says in her best-seller *'Out on a Limb'*:

*'You are everything. Everything you want to know is inside of you. You are the universe. Maybe the tragedy of the human race was that we had forgotten that we were each divine. You must never worship anyone or anything other than self, for you are God. To love self is to love God. I exist - therefore I am. I know the God Source exists - therefore it is. Since I am a part of that Source, then I AM that I AM.'*

This in essence conveys the heart, the aspirations and the *spirit* of new age *wholistic* health. A genuine desire for deep and lasting worldwide change but to the exclusion of any external God. I'm in charge. I know best. I am God. It is a remarkably self-ish manifesto, not necessarily in the literally accepted sense of the word. But always, *always*, the therapy, the focus and the goal is inwards, self-wards, me-wards. Contrast this with the following verses in 1 Peter 2: vv 21-25 in the *New Life Bible*:

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<sup>223</sup> David Tacey, Jung and the New Age, 1998 at [www.planetdeb.net/spirit/contrast.htm](http://www.planetdeb.net/spirit/contrast.htm)

*'Christ suffered for us. This shows us we are to follow in His steps. He never sinned. No lie or bad talk ever came from His lips. When people spoke against Him, He never spoke back. When He suffered from what people did to Him, He did not try to pay them back. He left it in the hands of the One Who is always right in judging. He carried our sins in His own body when He died on the cross. In doing this, we may be dead to sin and alive to all that is right and good. His wounds have healed you! You were like lost sheep. But now you have come back to Him Who is your Shepherd and the One Who cares for your soul.'*

I thought to include here the same passages from the King James and the New King James Bible (my preferred translations) but for the sake of clarity for those readers perhaps new to Bible passages, those last few sentences from 1 Peter are translated in *The Message Bible* as follows: *'His wounds became your healing. You were lost sheep with no idea who you were or where you were going. Now you're named and kept for good by the Shepherd of your souls.'*

The above passage emphasises the importance of putting others before ourselves and tells us there is Someone outside of ourselves Who can help us in the battle against our own natural inclinations. This message runs opposite to the inwards-looking *spirit* of the new age which teaches that personal transformation, and mental and spiritual salvation is our own struggle and responsibility and that 'our joy' is found in the 'nowness' of the journey - a journey with no spiritual map, no specific route or destination, no boundaries, no guidelines, no rules, just the journey. Again, contrary to new age thinking, the Bible teaches there is One Who has already gone before us, Who has made a specific way for us, a Shepherd Who knows us better than we will ever know ourselves, Who knows best how we can live our lives and Who has marked out an expansive field for us - a field with a God-defined *Spiritual New Testament* perimeter, within which we can live in Spiritual peace and safety. A God Who is *very definitely* outside of ourselves Who we *very definitely* need to invite in and invite Him in on His terms not ours. God's guide for living is as far as it gets from new age thinking.

Does living within God's behavioural, moral and Spiritual guidelines mean we need live a pinched, trapped life? Personally speaking, I don't feel that at all. I've travelled many countries over the years doing my own thing and I've experienced the unrestricted freedom that comes with living such a life - a life without borders so to speak. And there really is no comparison. Yes, in earthly terms, I was rich. I was healthy, young and free and living on my wits. Each day was different and there's no denying it was great fun. But I didn't really know who I was or where I was really headed in life. I had everything and yet, I had nothing.

Knowing who we are and that we have true identity in God's Eyes is the bedrock to assurance and mental stability. This is what our God has given me and in fact, what He has given us all if we would only seek Him. And I truly thank Him for that! Now, if I wanted to, I could 'hop' God's Holy Perimeter Fence at any time. I could jump right back into my old ways of living and thinking. But I've been there before and it just wouldn't work for me. Having taken that first step towards God all those years ago, and having been with Him since that time and now knowing His deep Love for me, I wouldn't ever want to take myself out from under His Guidance and Care. And He has also proved to me in this time over and over again that He really does know me better than myself. A return to 'the other side' would be my mental and Spiritual undoing. Living within God's boundaries also allows Him to develop our character and fashion us into who we really can be. It is, I believe in this whole process and in making ourselves open and accountable to God that we find true Spiritual freedom.

God always, *always* promises us Spiritual safety but not always physical and emotional safety. People who profess Jesus as their Saviour are, as I write, experiencing heartache and emotional turmoil, are being diagnosed with serious illness, are being seriously injured or dying early, are falling foul of their own wrong choices and falling foul of other people's wrong choices. No-one on earth is immune from life's everyday blows. But for those who have encountered this God and for those who seek Him, He is there for us and He can be found, especially during these difficult times. Extraordinarily, some believers are also right now are being imprisoned, tortured and even martyred for their faith in Jesus. Our time on earth is fleeting. Their Eternal reward will be great.

This is the life and death, gritty, stark, glorious, unique, ‘upside-downness’ of the Gospel of Jesus. It is a life-changing, life-defining, life challenging Message. If you’re within hearing or reading distance of the Gospel, it penetrates you like a sword and cuts you to the quick. And once it does, it’s then impossible to unhear what you’ve just heard or unread what you’ve just read. Similar to cigarette packets, the front cover of the Bible should carry an advisory sticker. **Warning! Reading this content will seriously affect your life!** It is a Message that demands our life, our all. God’s Word is powerful. As it says in Isaiah 55:10-11

*“For as the rain and the snow come down from Heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, 11 so shall My Word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”*

With the Gospel, you’re either in or you’re out, you’re hot or you’re cold. As Jesus Himself says in *Revelation*, He prefers coldness rather than luke-warmness towards God. And for as many who are railing against the Gospel, there are thousands every day being drawn to it. So, does The Gospel of Jesus actually hold water? And what does this Jesus have about Him that leads people to believe He’s actually worth dying for?

# The Most SuperHuman Act in all of History

*"Nobody's perfect. The only One Who ever was, was crucified."* **Loretta Lynn**

I do believe Jesus is worth living for and also worth dying for. In this country England today, and sat here in front of my laptop in the comfort of my own home, this is still an easy statement to make. But in other, more repressive counties, it is a different story altogether. Innocent people are being imprisoned, tortured and even killed for confessing Jesus as their Saviour. So it is with all seriousness that I say, may God's Grace and Mercy ever preserve me from the horror of literal martyrdom. As far as meeting with Him goes, my understanding is there's no hard and fast prescription. He will choose to meet with whoever and however He wishes and will sometimes intervene in a person's life in the most dramatic and unexpected way. In most instances though, God makes Himself known to us only when we make a conscious decision to ditch our pride, get down on our knees before Him and verbalise a genuine remorse for our sins and selfishness and admit we've no answer to our lost human condition.

Unlike today's new age philosophy that tells us we have an untapped well of pure, godly wisdom within us, the Gospel of Jesus says there's a huge, sinful fly in the ointment, that it's tainted the well and all the while we don't acknowledge this, our planet and all who live on it can only slide further and deeper into chaos. Any other remedy to 'fix' ourselves will be merely adjusting deck chairs on the Titanic, tinkering at the periphery and will only ever deeply scratch the surface of our earthly woes. The biggest barrier to an encounter with God isn't the logical struggle with 'faith in the invisible'. The biggest barrier is acknowledging hard-hearted us. Hard-hearted me.



If you're anything like I was (before my own encounter with God), I was very worried for our future as a human race. It was the early morning hours that would often hurt the most. Laying there wide awake, doing my best to fend off the latest grim headlines and darker fears pressing in on my mind - can we really take comfort in some golden idyll to come, as promised by Deepak and Shirley? Is it really the case we're all going to wake up one morning, forgiving each other, bearing and sharing with one another and living peaceably together in a bountiful new age world? Isn't this just another childlike imaginary hiding place in our adult minds?

These teachers and new age 'prophets' - Oprah Winfrey, Eckhart Tolle, Louise M Hay, Elizabeth Clare Prophet, Wayne Dyer, Joseph Campbell, Gary Zukav, Fritjof Capra *et al*, they're all in the million-seller, £million income plus bracket. I have no doubt though that just like their readers, these frail, flesh and blood, fellow citizens will suffer the same early morning demons, and if anything, as the authors and purveyors of these new age 'cures', they will have to battle even harder to 're-align', chant and 'magic away' the previous night's graphic news headlines from their minds - the sinful, bloody, real world.

All the while we do not acknowledge the buzzing bluebottle of sin and stubbornness in our lives, all the while we allow our natural inclinations to reign, God by and large won't intervene. He Loves us all dearly but won't force Himself on anyone. We do have freedom of choice in all of this. We do have God-given free will. He does though provide all manner of indirect signs of His Existence, Divine hints with His Fingerprints all over them. What better hint than a clear night sky for instance? We only need to look upwards to get a sense of Something or Someone enormous behind all of this beauty. As Paul says in the New Testament, *The Heavens declare the glory of the risen Lord*.

I'd now like to tell you in more detail about my own encounter with this Invisible God and about the thoughts, feelings and mental tussles I had immediately around this time. It may resonate with some readers. As I said earlier, I'd heard an open-air preacher telling the crowds that if we genuinely want to know God, we need only ask Him in simple, repentant prayer to forgive us our sins and He will do just that. And so, after months of wriggling and prevarication, that's exactly what I did. In accord with the preacher's advice, I said my simple prayer. But what I didn't know at the time and what nobody could ever have prepare for when taking that first genuine step towards God, is the succession of quite extraordinary Supernatural events that occur immediately around this time. I'll try and explain what I mean. And whilst this won't always be everybody's experience, this is what it was for me.

Firstly, there are those immediate few moments before we actually start to pray. And it's a weird place we're in, in our minds, and I'll assume I'm probably no different to most. There we are, on our knees or sat on our bed or wherever, knowing in heart and mind we've reached the end of ourselves, knowing that something's got to change in our lives but thinking also that this is perhaps the craziest way ever of looking for the answer. And how exactly am I supposed to pray? How do I begin this 'confession'? What if my friends could see me now? Am I dressed right? What if nobody's actually there?



And isn't this all just a bit false? I mean, I don't even know Him. A few vague memories of school prayers maybe, a few weddings, a baptism and the odd funeral, and somewhere in the back of my mind, some pulpit somewhere with a humungous wooden eagle on top etc., etc.. And oh yes, there's The Lord's Prayer. I know most of the words to that I think. But I don't know this God to talk to personally ... and now look at me. All weirdly vulnerable and trying to strike up a conversation with Him. And yet a somehow a vague feeling of being strangely 'drawn' to this moment? Our first meaningful prayer communication with God is an altogether alien, confusing, most un-characteristic and most un-British dilemma.

And yet, what's so amazing and kind about this Gigantic, Loving God, and what we couldn't possibly even begin to realize at this point is that despite our endless, tortuous analysis of the situation and despite our feeble, even non-existent allegiance even outright defiance towards Him over however many years, and even if it feels kind of fraudulent, like it's only finally, finally, finally now that we're considering this God - none of this matters to this God It really doesn't. He Loves us so much! All that matters as we're sat there before Him in this new moment in time is that He sees the beginnings of a repentant heart and that He sees we're looking for a genuine change in direction in our lives.



And in those same few moments before we actually begin to pray to this God, it's also very likely as we're sat there, that we'll be carrying all sorts of burdens, different, hurtful life experiences and the many different wrongs we've committed in our lives - our sin. And if you're feeling anything like I felt at the time, all of this might also, deep down, make us feel completely unworthy to come before God. Again though, this God we're praying to right now really isn't looking for an inventory of everything we've ever done wrong in our lives. He knows the whole list anyway. And He also knows all the doubts and deeper cynicisms we might have about Him, as well as all the anxieties, hurts and secrets we carry around about ourselves - our 'soul garbage'. Every single micro-gram of our lives - the good, the bad and the ugly - He knows all of it intimately.

And even more amazing, and even though we don't know this yet, this garbage can and *will* be sorted out sooner or later by the God we're praying to right now. Can you even dare to believe that? Anyway, our stumbling confession begins. This was my prayer:

*'Jesus, I'm sorry for all the stuff I've done wrong. Thank you that You died on the cross in my place for my sins. I ask You to forgive me and help me by Your Holy Spirit from now on to lead a new life with You in charge. Amen.'*

That was it. That was my prayer. No big, long sin list. That was all I said. No relationship with this God beforehand. No earthly right to approach Him really. And those were the last words I ever said! In my old life anyway. Everybody is different but for me, just a few seconds later, my mind, my heart and my life were turned upside-down.

Firstly, in this simple prayer to God, we can have absolutely no idea of the Heavenly chain of events already set in motion as a result. Even before our confessional had begun forming on our lips, we couldn't possibly have known this God would be quite literally running towards us with His Loving Arms wide open, rushing to greet us (Luke 15:11-32). And neither would we be aware of the Heavenly tears of joy and the deafening cheers crashing right around the Heavenly Realms, as another lost soul who's just taken his first willing steps towards God, is found, born again and added to God's family on earth and for Eternity (Luke 15:7).

And then, as I'm saying this prayer and being aware that something somehow feels slightly different about me and around me, suddenly, unbelievably, He's here with us! Right here, in the real world, in my room, His Holy Spirit Presence warming us all over, an enveloping blanket of Pure Love and Forgiveness, our bodies tingling from top to toe, The Maker of Heaven and Earth is actually meeting with us, with tiny, little, undeserving me! And He gives us an enormous, loving and forgiving, Supernatural Hug, a Hug like no other we've ever experienced before. It is a life-changing moment. And although we can't see Him, we know this is God. And we also instantly know He is all-Kind, all-Knowing and all-Powerful and that we are Home.

And we are also given a liberating, and most 'un-new age' perspective of ourselves as it sinks in just how tiny we are in comparison to this God, and how even such a huge, huge part of Him is beyond rational explanation and how even the most articulate will struggle to convey in words the Immensity and Awesomeness and Totality of the God we've just encountered. As if any human could ever truly believe that he or she is God. It is an encounter which immediately ends our search for validation, ends our 'time on the mat', an encounter that exchanges lostness for 'foundness', an encounter with Love, Grace and Forgiveness that brings about the beginnings of deep healing and true Spiritual freedom. And for the first time, with the Holy Spirit living inside of us, we soon discover how some of those more difficult passages in the Bible now start to make sense. But more on that later.

These few moments are immense beyond measure. He is Immense beyond measure. He's beyond words. But this is Who He is and what He does. He hears our earnest request for forgiveness, He meets with us, hugs us, forgives us, sets us on our feet and Supernaturally over the next few days, weeks and months, He begins to piece together His Story, the Supernatural Plan He has for the human race. By the Power of The Holy Spirit, the Story we hadn't really listened to properly before - He starts telling it to us all over again. And as He does so, we are awesomely privileged to begin to understand, and to be given our first few glimpses of the inexplicable, invisible, even Spiritual things of The Kingdom of God. What was previously impossible or ridiculous about this God starts falling into place.

And as it does so, as the days and weeks unfold - new days and new weeks, it dawns on us the scale and depth of the anti-God 'infotainment' industry in all its subtle forms and how so much of what we've assimilated about this God over the years is so skewed, twisted and just plain wrong. All the wise men and women of the world out there, on our screens and in our schools and universities, teaching us such grandiose falsities about where we came from, the lie of random and chance and evolution and the lie of the meaningless oblivion that awaits us: the revered David Attenborough, producer of beautiful animal programs but himself vehemently against God: Ricky Gervais and his world-wide anti-God franchise, mocking the crucifixion and all aspects of The Son of God: Richard Dawkins promoting to his millions of adoring fans his ideas on a cold, selfish gene and his best seller *The God Delusion*: the deceased Stephen Hawking who constantly promoted the idea that God can be arrived at using mere mathematical theory: and the latest pop-science darling on the scene - Professor Brian Cox, still to work out in his own mind the exact anti-God

angle he'll be promoting but nevertheless staunchly anti-God. The blasphemous comedians and panel show hosts, the Netflix box sets and anti-God Hollywood films, the myriad youtube channels specifically promoting all manner of lifestyle behaviours and choices to millions of their young viewers, all of this only ever increasing.

And so, should we rant and rail and wail at all of this? I personally don't believe so. God is not mocked. These things are written and we deceive only ourselves if we think our God can be toppled or that our defiant actions and choices can somehow diminish or even erase the Power of His Word. He is returning soon to Judge us all - His people. We all will stand before God one day to give account for our lives. And anyway, it isn't human argument or finger-pointing that melts hearts. Jesus only ever preached the Good News when He was out in public. As it says in Romans 2:4: *'Don't you know it is God's kindness that leads to repentance?'* Would that these anti-God forces and voices begin to see our God at work in this world. And to those tv evolutionists and naturalists especially, may the scales fall from their eyes, and may they have a heart-turnaround and begin to boast of the awesome creative Power behind the starry host above and God's magnificent created earth below. As that famous line from the hymn *Amazing Grace* reads, *"I once was lost but now, I'm found. Was blind but now I see."* Wouldn't it be great one day to watch a David Attenborough wildlife documentary and hear him give thanks and glory to God as he commentated on the dance of the bird of paradise or those awesome luminescent creatures that live 7 miles down.

And as The Holy Spirit begins to bring His Story truly to life within us, we find ourselves for the first time *truly* contemplating exactly what His Son Jesus did for us when He was nailed to the cross. It dawns on us that when Jesus was crucified, He was wholly innocent of any crime and that it was ordinary people just like you and me who were responsible for mocking Him, sentencing Him and eventually killing Him. It also dawns on us that throughout the travesty of the judicial process that led to His death, the only 'crime' that Jesus committed was to tell us the truth about our human condition. *'Shut up! Shut up! SHUT UP!'*, we shouted, as He made it clear we do NOT have an untapped well of divine wisdom within us, that we most certainly are NOT God. We ranted and raved at Jesus as He destroyed the imaginary 'new age' hiding places in our minds, as He unflinchingly told us we're jealously loved by God but we're fractured, sinful and hopelessly lost, yet we can be found, forgiven and made whole again through a life with Jesus, the one true Three-in-One God of all mankind.

He did not demand a retrial when we convicted Him of all these 'outrageous blasphemies' and He did not struggle as we hammered those nails into His hands and feet. Instead He prayed, *'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.'* Crucifixion is probably the most painful way to die that man has ever devised. Jesus knew that. But He still voluntarily walked that long walk to His place of execution. And He did it for you and me. Father God sent His own Son to the cross. He then told us what He had done in the Bible, so that by us reading these things, in accepting and believing and thanking Him for that amazing sacrifice, every sin that man might ever commit could be forgiven and that every spiritual wound could be healed. No sweet, innocuous, meek and mild, little Jesus here. Not a single shred of me, myself, I about the Man central to this momentous event. The crucifixion of Jesus was, and to this day, remains the most selfless, astoundingly brave, Superhuman act in all of history. Through our confession and profession of this amazing act of Self-sacrifice, we all can receive forgiveness and know true soul and spirit healing.





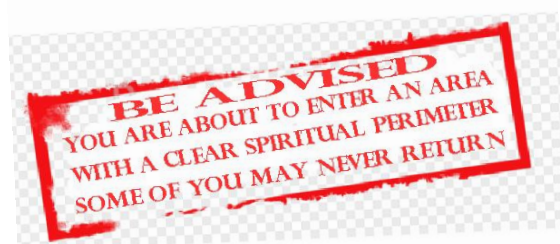
And as our fledgling walk with this God continues, the awesome glimpses we are privileged to be given of His Invisible, Spiritual Kingdom also afford us glimpses of His Divine Power - a Power no man could possibly conceive in his own mind - a Power so far above any human ability to imagine or describe - a Power that makes it easy for us to believe in the miraculous, to believe in a Creator God Who says He can create Adam from the dust and breathe life into the lifeless - easy to believe He can fling the sun, moon and stars into the firmament above us, and to believe that three days after He was crucified, Jesus was raised from the dead! A true encounter with the Living God makes us quickly realise in our hearts and minds that all these things are possible

The life and death and risen Life of Jesus is also mentioned in secular documents around that time. Joseph ben Mattathias (also known as Flavius Josephus, left) is one such historian. He lived from 37 - 100 AD and wrote two great works of Jewish history:

*The Jewish War*, written in the early 70s AD and *Jewish Antiquities*, finished around 94 AD. This passage is taken from *Jewish Antiquities*: “Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ, and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him. And the tribe of Christians so named from him are not extinct at this day.”

Jesus went through His agonising death not only as a huge, loving, ‘once and for all time’ atonement for every conceivable sin you and I might ever perpetrate - the only death in history that turns lostness into foundness. But also, in being tortured and dying in such a manner, nobody can ever say of Jesus that He doesn’t understand fear or rejection, that He cannot identify with persecution of the innocents or that He has no idea of intense physical, mental and spiritual suffering. Jesus, the Innocent, understands all of these things deeply. Thanking Him for going to the cross so He could buy us back from our ‘lostness’ is the start of a real Spiritual dialogue, a dialogue that begins the amazing Supernatural process of whole mind and whole spirit healing.

It is in these Spiritual conversations and in our developing relationship with Father, Son and Holy Spirit that broken human hearts are pieced back together. We begin to understand this God *really can* breathe new life and new hope into the bleakest of situations and that He *really can* forgive our sins and forget them too. We also learn to forgive those who trespass against us and to apologise and put things right with those people on earth we have offended. And according to God’s good pleasure, all of this mind-blowing Supernatural theology rumbles awesomely into life, only after we humble ourselves, only after we ‘bow the knee’ - perhaps the most difficult call to action in our lives. But also the most liberating. In the last chapter, we look at how we could be so deceived into believing we humans could ever be on a par with this God. In doing so however, our world view is in serious danger of being turned upside-down.



## No MasterCard or Paypal Required

*So listen to me, my sons, and pay attention to my words. Don't let your hearts stray away toward her. Don't wander down her wayward path. For she has been the ruin of many; many men have been her victims. Her house is the road to the grave. Her bedroom is the den of death. Proverbs 7 vv 24-27*

Dedicated to Melissa

Early on in my research for this book, the idea we could think of ourselves as on a level with such a magnificent God totally perplexed me. As if we could ever heal and shepherd our own souls. I wondered perhaps if some kind of spiritual fog had descended upon us, that some spiritual force was at work even, deceiving us into this puffed up image of ourselves. Is this too outlandish a suggestion? As we have already seen, there are enough earthly forces busy deceiving us into irrational thinking patterns.

I believe we do have a real spiritual enemy and that an invisible battle is taking place for spiritual ownership of our hearts and minds. The subtle, bit by bit assimilation of new age thinking into education, natural history, politics, some aspects of church teachings, the arts and entertainment, science, medicine and particularly holistic health is very much part of that battle. And who is this enemy? I believe it to be the same enemy who persuaded us way back then in the Garden to taste the fruit, telling us that in doing so, we could have the mind of God. As it says in Genesis 3 vv 1-5:



*‘The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?” “Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’” “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.” The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too.’*

Paraphrased, this everyday conversation runs as follows: ‘Go on. Don’t worry. You’ll be fine. God didn’t really mean all that stuff about steering well clear. Just a little taste? What’s the worst that can happen?’

And the rest, as they say, is bloody, human history. Where was the ‘Just say No!’ campaign when we most needed it? One small bite from an apple to send everything pear-shaped. We can point the finger at the wily serpent all we like but really, we have only ourselves to blame. And let’s not kid ourselves that if it was you and me in the Garden back then that we would have resisted that temptation to eat the fruit that God forbade us to touch. We fell for his smooth patter back then and we’ve been falling for the same self-centred new age spiritual candy floss ever since. And so to today, and as part of his long war against God and man, this most artful of shape-shifters is once again arching and slinking his way towards us, this time appearing as utterly irresistible angel of light *Mme Holisme*. All scented and sensual, this ‘new goddess of natural health’ is seducing millions with her alleged ‘miracle medicines’, and cooing and murmuring the same sweet, spiritual lies, telling us how wise we are, how profound we are, how we can fulfil our deepest desires, how we can heal our hearts and minds with her many oils and ointments. Proverbs 7 describes the dangers of adultery, and particularly spiritual adultery. The same honeyed words are being whispered by today’s new age teachers. ‘Lay down with me’, she says, ‘and you can emerge in wonder. You can be all that you want to be. You can be like God.’

Those falling for her shimmering, androgynous beauty soon find themselves on the never-ending 'whole health merry-go-round', first down one 'healing path', then another, then another, crystals, tarot, channeling, herbs, astral projection, yoga, reiki *ad-infinitum*, deeper and deeper down into her bright, beautiful, dark, shadowy world they follow her, deeper and deeper down into themselves they wander, the healing they seek never quite materializing, always just around the next corner, always in the *next* expensive box set, at the *next* 'mindfulness' gathering, at the *next* new age 'whole healing retreat', always just a little bit further ahead. This is the downwards on-and-on-ness of the new age 'healing journey'. It doesn't ever end. It just gets deeper, more confusing and spiritually darker.



Liberace was once described as '*a deadly, winking, sniggering, snuggling, chromium-plated, scent-impregnated, luminous, quivering, giggling, fruit-flavoured, mincing, ice-covered heap of mother love*'.<sup>224</sup>

I'm sorry Liberace but what a fantastic few lines of prose! I never knew the man but I do know new age philosophy and I can think of no better description for the *spirit* of the new age, for the snuggling, fruit-flavoured pseudo-spirituality she inspires, for her deadly, winking 'Godhood now!' seminars and for all the sniggering 'mother love' showmen she has under her spell, busy making a nice, fat living from the vulnerable, the ill and the dying. As far as east is from west, God's true healing Love will never be found in new age spirituality. At its heart, new age *spirituality* and new age *spiritual* holistic health is a cruel, beautiful, cold, loveless, sugary lie, her followers held captive in the dank, dark dungeon of 'self'. A den of death.

The *New Testament* message of Love and Grace that rescues us from this bleak, lonely place runs in total opposition to the new age way of thinking. In fact, it's not in opposition at all. That would be to imply that God somehow has an opposite. With our God, there is no cankered 'as above, so below', 'everything in balance', 'yin yang' occult-type philosophy. He has no opposite, no equal. He's The Lord of all Creation. He Loves Deepak, Loves Oprah, Loves Louise M Hay, David Attenborough, Richard Dawkins, Brian Cox and everybody else who rails against His name but according to His gift to us of free will, He is allowing them their time to 'shine'. But He will not contend for too much longer with our hard-heartedness and with the spirit (small 's') who has gone out into the world. Our God is returning one day soon. The question is, are you ready to meet Him? As He reads out the Holy Register, the Lamb's Book of Life, will your banner be clear? Will your name be in The Book?

My message to dear Melissa and to so many like her would be this. I've not walked in Melissa's shoes but I know plenty of people who have and who have also sought help and healing from the God who so graciously met with me twenty eight years ago. For them, a greyed out existence is being transformed into a radiant one - a sunshine from within that's evident to those around them. Of course, there are difficult days but theirs is NOT a journey of on-and-on-ness. There's no ritual or chant, no convoluted, man-centred, new age spiritual rules to follow, no 'sacrificial mat'. These people are not super-spiritual or special in any way. Neither are they jumped up or religious. The unifying factor is that they humbled themselves and admitted they needed Jesus' unique Supernatural power and Spirit to help them to come to terms with their past, to appropriate the terrible things that had happened to them and to learn how to move on from them. And also to help them move on from their own self-oriented choices and past mistakes.

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<sup>224</sup> The article went on in similar vein, referring to Liberace variously as 'a calculating candy-floss', a 'slag-heap of lilac-covered hokum' and 'a sugary mountain of jingling claptrap wrapped up in such a preposterous clown'. Liberace won his libel case. Asked afterwards how he felt about the £8,000 settlement, a small fortune at that time, Liberace famously replied, "I cried all the way to the bank!"

Life can be very hard for people sometimes and horrible stuff happens. But that does not mean God is not there for us or that sin and its consequences are somehow God's fault. With the gift of free will comes all of its consequences - good as well as bad. And those who have turned to our God for help have come to understand these principles and have also discovered that unlike the shape-shifter, when God tells us He will heal our broken hearts, that's exactly what He will do. And abundantly more besides. This is our restorative God in action.

I mentioned earlier about the deeper hurts, secrets and 'soul garbage' we carry with us and that they can all be sorted out later by this God. We all have this deeper 'stuff'. It's called life. And it's sorted out later I believe, for the following Good and Gracious reason. As it dawns on us over the coming weeks and months that this new-found Hope and Peace in our lives is not just some new age gimmick, that God is *not* going to do a disappearing act on us, that He *really, really* is the God Who stays with us, forgives us our sins and forgets them, and that He *really, really* is the God Who heals bruised and broken hearts (and all the new people we meet in our new-found church family all testify to the same), it's only then that we dare to allow our own deeper 'gunge' to come to the surface before God. And Lovingly and Graciously, and with the support and wisdom of friends and church family, He helps us to deal with these issues too and helps us get back on our feet. Whatever your garbage, nothing is beyond His Healing Touch. The following is a condensed account of the spiritual life of Marcia Montenegro, a long-time adherent of new age occultism but who found a New Way:

*'Spirit guides, meditation, astrology, the 'higher self', raising the kundalini, developing psychic abilities, praying to gurus, astral travel, numerology, tarot cards, contacting the dead, hanging out with witches, Sufis, followers of Muktananda, Rajneesh, Sai Baba, Maharaji - all these and more were part of my journey. How did I get on this path? In an Inner Light Consciousness class, I was introduced to my 'spiritual master' during a guided visualization. This guide, a spirit being, looked kind and wise. I felt his presence with me and sometimes saw him in dreams and meditations. I also had unpleasant, scary and weird experiences and visitations, once seeing a tall hooded figure in dark robes looking at my body in the bed as I hovered out-of-body nearby. Although extremely frightened by this apparition, I rationalized it by telling myself that I was being tested.*

*An unexplained compulsion to go to a church gripped me in the spring and summer of 1990. Since I hated Christianity, churches and Christians by now, this made me angry. I first ignored this compulsion, then resisted it, and then, after struggling against it for a while, I decided to give in, hoping that it would go away. It was probably from one of my former lives as a Christian priest or monk, I reasoned. In the opening minutes of the service, I felt a love I had never known wash down over and through me, so powerfully that I started quietly crying. I knew this love was from God, not from the music, the people, or the place. I returned the following Sunday, not to have another experience, but so that I could be where that love had happened to me.*

*Now what? Thinking I should read the Bible, I started reading in Matthew, the first book of the New Testament. Reading the Bible put me in touch with something pure, but I didn't know what it was. Although I had read the Bible before while growing up and had quoted from it for astrological articles, this time it was different. I felt as though I was encountering something clean, much cleaner than I was, as I read it.*

*Spiritually, I had been in a grave with the buddhas and the gurus and the seekers of wisdom who had rejected the Truth of Christ. The complicated and intricate studies that had enthralled me, the endless layers of 'truths' and 'realities' I had pursued, the constant effort to 'evolve', the paranormal experiences, the need to believe in one's own goodness at all costs, were all a maze and a trap.*

*What is the biggest difference between my former life and my life in Christ? That I am happier, that life is easier? The difference is that I am Spiritually satisfied. There is more to learn and much room to grow, but the learning and growth spring from Christ as the foundation, not from a*

*search outside Him. The search has ended. The thirst has been quenched. The hunger within has been filled.'*<sup>225</sup>

The local church we belong to reflects our community. We are an ever-growing family of individuals, singles, marrieds, reconciling couples, divorcees, business men and women, nine-to-fivers, unemployed, young mums and kids, young mums and dads and kids, older families, ex-offenders with drugs and alcohol issues, the retired, eccentrics, introverts, all sorts of people, people just like you and me really, no 'religious nutters' (none that I know of anyway), just everyday people who support each other and who believe their sins and soul baggage have been atoned for by the death of Jesus on the cross. People with Hope and with New Life powered by God's Holy Spirit now dwelling within us.



We're not some army out to save the whole world. What is written is written and what will be will be. The Bible says the path is narrow and few find it, even choose to find it. But all the time we're on this earth and before He comes again to Judge the earth, we uphold God's mandate to share *The Good News of The Gospel of Jesus*, to love the unloved and the unlovable and to do practical good in the local and wider community. And new each day for us, God's Love, Grace and Forgiveness that has transformed the tainted, stagnant well within us into streams of Living Water. True Soul Cleansing. True Spiritual healing.

As far as contending with those more challenging passages in the Bible, all I can say is I don't have the answers to everything contained in God's Word, and we never will this side of Heaven anyway. However, and whilst this is not a prescriptive answer (because God can choose to speak to any of us in any manner and at any time He chooses) The Bible only starts to come alive once we have humbled ourselves, repented, confessed our sins and received the Holy Spirit which God describes in the Bible as our Helper. As it says in Acts 2:38 *'Repent and be baptized.'* And in that order too. And then suddenly, with the help of the Holy Spirit Who is now living within us (yes, it sounds crazy but this is exactly what happens), we begin to understand certain passages in the Bible. Suddenly we can see what God means by certain parables.

Now, the hardened and intelligent atheist could look on at all of this and continue to rail all day against the Bible and could point to all manner of contentious passages in God's Eternal Word and convince himself in his hard-heartedness that he is right. But you speak to a few *former* atheists as I have done - former atheists of equal intelligence - former atheists who have found God to be real, speak to them and invariably they will tell you it was their hard-heartedness that kept the door closed to them to God's Kingdom on earth. God is not discovered through intelligence - intellectual integrity maybe - but not intelligence. It is hard-heartedness and our willful pride that most-times keeps our God at a distance. And please don't shoot the messenger on this one! This is the way He planned it.

If it helps anybody to understand my heart's desire for God to be made more widely known, and especially those who believe the church should be more vocal in these darker days, I have to say it does irk me that many churches avoid discussing the more contentious issues - the passages in the Bible such as the Levitical laws, passages where God instructs Moses to slaughter men women and children, the apparent fairytale in Genesis 6 of the fallen angels - the Sord of God who looked down upon the daughters of men, saw that they were fair and came into them, Paul's ideas on women's place in the church. More careful reading reveals these were Paul's own ideas on women's roles in the church - not God's! Women have astounding gifts and teaching to bring to a wider audience. And especially I rue the almost total silence from the church in general on discussing the signs of the times and how the Bible writes so clearly on these matters. For example, Sweden is one of many countries which is now adopting the practice of inserting a microchip into the human hand to open doors, open computers, start cars and operate domestic appliances. All of this technology, as well as the rise of artificial intelligence - AI - is being sold to us as a means of great convenience. Never mind that the influential techno-futurist Elon Musk has appeared almost from nowhere and told

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<sup>225</sup> Marcia's Story excerpted from [http://www.christiananswersforthenewage.org/AboutCANA\\_SpiritualJourney.html](http://www.christiananswersforthenewage.org/AboutCANA_SpiritualJourney.html)

us directly that in embracing AI, we are summoning the demon. And if we couple this looming technology with the advent of cashless, digital crypto-currency, this then makes the 2,000 year old prophecy in Revelation 13:15-17 come alive almost in front of our eyes:

*16 And the beast also causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, 17 so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name.'*

Yet, across the western world, the church is virtually silent on these huge matters that are closing in on us as you read! In 2019, I plan to hold a series of informal get-togethers in my home town to discuss these issues. It's not about solving these things, it's merely making us aware and equipping ourselves for the days ahead. For Jesus tells us we are not accept the mark. There IS an underlying angst in the human heart. Underneath it all, people really *are* fearful for the future. And the promise from God is that those who put their trust in Him need NOT be fearful. And what about the mobile phone! This device is opening up a world to children that dumbfounded parents can only helplessly stand by and wring their hands. Yet God has guidance and answers to all of these situations.

And so, finally, believing we live in a Supernatural world in which Spiritual Truth, spiritual lies, Spiritual Goodness and Purity and spiritual evil and deception exists, I have included another passage from the *Message Bible* for your consideration. As I have already said, the usual versions I read are the original *King James* and the *New King James* and I am aware of the current debates surrounding the various translations and I certainly support those watchmen on the walls who blow the trumpet to warn us if they see God's Word is being diluted and adulterated. But for me, and I hope for any newcomer to the Bible, this particular interpretation in the *Message Bible* beautifully illustrates in today's language, the compassion Jesus has for each of us, the relevance of His Teachings today and the Love He has for each of us, in all our diversity and with all our diverse needs, hurts and desires and unforgiven sins. *Matthew 11 vv 25 - 30*:

*Abruptly Jesus broke into prayer: "Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You've concealed your ways from sophisticates and know-it-alls, but spelled them out clearly to ordinary people. Yes, Father, that's the way you like to work.*

*Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me - watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."*

For 'burned out on religion', you might also want to add 'burned out on new age occult practices, burned out on marriage or relationship difficulties, on hidden unhealthy desires, on work, unemployment and finances, on guilt, stress and anxiety, on fear and on life in general'. If you believe these passages are speaking to you, then wherever you are right now and in your own way, ask God to meet with you in your need and if that is your genuine desire, you will be amazed at what follows. Banker, builder, widower, war-monger, plumber politician, homoeopath, naturopath, neurosurgeon, social outcast, top of the pile, everybody, everywhere, God knows us all inside-out and He loves us all dearly and wants us to get to know and love Him too. He wants to change our lives for good. No Mastercard or Paypal or 'time on the mat' required. The transforming Love and Grace of God is free. Just ask.

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TO JENNY AND EDDIE,  
TO THE WIFE AND TO THE POOR HUSBAND  
SHE HIT IN THE EYE, TO LOUISE  
AND DAVID, TO MELISSA AND TO THE MANY  
MILLIONS LIKE HER ON THE SAME HEALING JOURNEY