

PART ONE

Homeopathy and Women: A Perfect Match

Healing the Whole Woman

You Are Far More Than the Sum of Your Body Parts

YOUR BODY

Perhaps your physical concerns disturb you the most. The annoying, incessant, or even unbearable discomfort of a chronic yeast infection. The intermittent, and sometimes exhausting, flood of blood due to excessive menstrual bleeding. The misery of morning sickness. The excruciating pain of a miscarriage or labor. Or the agonizing discomfort of recurrent bladder infections. It may seem, in such cases, that you just want your body to feel better . . . the pain to go away . . . the bleeding to stop . . . your baby to be born.

Whether the approach is conventional or alternative, the goal is to relieve your pain and suffering. In your moment of intense discomfort, you might give anything for a quick fix . . . a strong pill . . . the big guns . . . having the problem part removed. You probably want your suffering to be taken away as rapidly as possible and be forever eliminated.

YOUR MIND AND EMOTIONS

Physical symptoms rarely occur in a vacuum. As you will learn in this book, illnesses seldom occur just on the physical level. “But,” you might ask, “what if I develop a bladder infection after unusually active or frequent sex? Isn’t that cut-and-dried? Physical cause generating physical effect?” That may or may not be the case. If a

homeopath explores more deeply, he or she is likely to find that some emotional stress or trauma occurred just before an illness began. “What about a flu?” you might ask. “Or some other contagious disease? I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time.” Maybe, but even in acute illnesses, and occasionally with first-aid situations, a certain vulnerability or stress may have been present before the sickness began.

Not every woman has to deal with the trauma of honeymoon cystitis following a sexual relationship with a new partner. Nor does every individual who is exposed to a cold or flu or strep throat actually get it. The ground must be fertile for the seed of disease to be sown before you can become ill. If you are not susceptible, even if everyone around you becomes sick, you will remain symptom-free. Mental and emotional imbalances can be severe and obvious or more subtle. Many physical problems are the result of unexpressed, repressed, or deeply buried emotions.

YOUR SPIRIT

Many illnesses arise out of an emptiness of spirit, a profound feeling of disconnectedness, separation, and isolation from God or Divine love. This deep sense of loneliness may originate from the traumas of childhood, disappointments during one’s adult life, losses, illnesses, addictions, and personal pains of one sort or another. Often, such a state of poverty of spirit precedes a serious physical illness. A feeling of entrapment, in turn, generates a terminal illness from which there truly is no way out. Our health and illnesses are often a metaphor for our lives, beliefs, dreams, and perceptions. The idea that body, mind, and spirit are intertwined is becoming more widely accepted, and homeopathy is one of the only forms of medicine that can integrate and heal all three gently yet powerfully.

Edith’s Story

Edith was a sixty-five-year-old financial planner from Minneapolis who first consulted me for depression nearly five years ago.

“My family practice doctor heard about your work and referred me here. I’m desperate. Two years ago I came down with a terrible flu. I was so weak that my knees buckled and I couldn’t even hold up my head. My doctor called it chronic fatigue syndrome. It took a year before I got my energy back. Two months ago it started all over again, which surprised me since I did receive a flu shot last fall.

“People would call me a recluse. No partner and no support from my immediate family. That leaves a giant hole in my life that I try to fill partly with cigarettes. I’ve smoked for fifty years. Each time I inhale, I try to fill the void. No matter what I try,

part of me just doesn't want to stop smoking. That part of me wants to kill myself, but not with emphysema. You're my last chance for hope.

"My childhood was horrendous. At sixteen my mother became pregnant. It was obvious that she never, ever wanted me. When I turned twenty, she actually told me how she'd tried to abort me with a clothes hanger. I almost starved to death during my first week of life because her nipples were inverted and I couldn't seem to keep any formula down. I've been starving ever since.

"I don't remember my mother touching me as a child. Not even once. Or protecting me. I never felt she was my mother and she did not feel I was her daughter. When I was six, she'd leave me at all-night movies and lock me in the car while she drank herself into oblivion at the bar for hours. I've blocked out most of my childhood.

"I didn't belong anywhere. I was so withdrawn in high school . . . almost catatonic. I started out with ten strikes against me and I've spent my whole life pulling myself up. Two poor choices of husbands, a son who was difficult from day one. My depression was so bad. It felt as if someone put a black bag over my head. Suicide seemed like the best option. Antidepressants helped for a while. Now the fatigue and depression are back. I'm going downhill again."

Edith noticed that when she bent forward, she felt as if her heart was in a vise. She had a long history of transient ischemic attacks (mini-strokes). Never rested, she awoke in the morning just as tired as she was the night before. She also complained of urinary dribbling and incontinence and had a lifelong aversion to eating. Although she had two grown children and grandchildren, she had next to no contact with any of them.

This is the kind of profound emptiness and disconnection that I spoke about. It's no accident that Edith suffered from transient ischemic attacks. Her heart was broken—so shattered that life no longer seemed worth living.

Edith's health and happiness have improved significantly, with the help of homeopathic *Aurum metallicum* (gold), over the past five years. She felt dramatically better within five weeks of taking the first dose and has needed ten or so doses in all. Edith reestablished contact with her children, her heart condition has been stable, and her outlook on life is much more positive. When I talked to her quite recently, she estimated the overall improvement in her health and emotional state to be 80 percent. Edith's deep alienation from and disappointment by life could have resulted in her suicide or death due to heart failure. Instead, she has to a large extent been healed. She still works on letting go of her smoking and, by her admission, has a ways to go, but she recognizes where she was five years ago and how far she's come. Her recovery, which I believe is more impressive than any she could have achieved with

antidepressants, is a tribute to the healing power of homeopathy. Edith's heart is now much healthier, inside and out.

HEALING ALL OF YOU

Homeopaths have very high standards for healing. It's not enough just to have one or two of your main physical symptoms improve. Let's say you go to your gynecologist complaining of abnormal menstrual periods. You are put on the birth control pill to regulate your cycles. You may not have had time to mention your recurrent migraines or your panic attacks. Or perhaps you didn't bother because you went to a women's specialist who only addressed your irregular periods. You might be satisfied that the pill now regulates your cycle; however, you still have all the rest of your symptoms and you no longer ovulate. Your gynecologist might be satisfied that your periods are back to normal. End of story. The rest of your problems are not addressed, but you are considered fixed.

Not so with homeopathy. All of your symptoms must be significantly better or, at least, clearly progressing in the direction of healing for a homeopath to be satisfied that the medicine is correct. A homeopath considers the following criteria to be bottom-line in defining healing:

- ***A significant, lasting improvement in your physical symptoms***—Your symptoms, most or all of them, need to be definitely better over a period of time—not just for a few months or every other menstrual cycle, but consistently and over at least one year. Better, by my standards, means that the symptom is either gone or is at least 70 percent better in terms of its frequency, intensity, and duration. You should be able to endure the same kind and level of stress that may have triggered your symptoms in the past, without getting those symptoms back to the same degree as before, if at all.
- ***Increased energy***—You should feel more vital, energetic, and full of life. You should have a renewed zest, feel better when you wake up in the morning, and be able to accomplish your day's activities without feeling exhausted.
- ***Mental stability and clarity***—This means clear thinking and the ability to concentrate and complete tasks, make wise decisions, reason out problems, and be intellectually sharp; to feel a sense of mental calmness and well-being despite the normal stresses of life.
- ***Emotional balance***—Emotional equilibrium means experiencing the full range of human emotions without being stuck in any one emotion. You recognize happiness, love, and compassion as well as irritability, fear, and impatience. Your emotions are sufficiently in balance so that you can care about other people rather than being absorbed only in your own self. You are happy a good part of the time and get along well with others.

- **Enhanced creativity**—It doesn't matter whether the talent that gives you joy is painting, interior decorating, directing a choir, raising puppies, baking delectable desserts, styling hair, planning skyscrapers, designing programs to spread economic wealth, or, as I read about recently, traveling around the world making funny balloon-head ornaments to lighten everyone's spirits. What does matter is that it gives you the sense of exhilaration that occurs when you create something that is truly your own.

- **A sense of purpose or mission**—One of the greatest motivators of a long, happy life is a sense of contribution—that you do something that is important to, and makes a difference in, the lives of others. If you can give to others in a special, meaningful way, it makes your existence worthwhile.

- **Connectedness with other people**—Having close and loving family and friends with whom you can share your happiest and most challenging times is part of a healthful, balanced life. Solitude, a rare and undervalued commodity in our society, can be wonderful, but there is nothing like sharing a genuine, heartfelt bond with another being.

- **Spiritual satisfaction**—I recently saw a patient who had been through tough times in her life. Raised a Catholic, she confided that no matter how difficult the trial, she never doubted for a moment that God loved her. This abiding faith carried her through many a dark, and even suicidal, moment. Even in her loneliest times, she engaged in regular conversations with God, which gave her the strength and sustenance to go on.

Regardless of how tough your life has been, no healing is complete unless you realize a fundamental sense of peace and contentment. It is vital to hold that hope and vision even in the seemingly worst moments. I recently read a heartwarming story about a courageous and generous woman who has been through some of the most dreadful situations imaginable.

Sarah Kahaloa, or Miss Sarah, as she is lovingly addressed, is a forty-three-year-old woman who was born in a tiny village in Hawaii and now resides in Seattle. Once, she was beaten brutally by her father with a metal pipe; her legs and spinal column were so severely damaged that doctors doubted she would ever walk again. A year's worth of physical therapy finally elicited a twitch in her legs and she was eventually able to get around again. As a teenager, Miss Sarah was raped. Her first two husbands beat her and the second one abused other family members as well. Miss Sarah conquered alcoholism, drug abuse, and kidney cancer, which killed her great-grandmother, grandmother, and aunt. She lost her mother to leukemia. As if this were not more than enough, next came a recurrence of her kidney cancer and a metastasis to her ovary, followed by a torturous regimen of radiation and chemotherapy.

Miss Sarah's response? In addition to working twenty hours a week at an art store, she volunteers another twenty hours a week as a support worker for AIDS and hospitalized cancer patients. Every Thanksgiving for the past ten years, Miss Sarah has opened the doors of her small, housing-project apartment to anyone and everyone who has nowhere else to go. She offers food, solace, and a safe haven from the outside world. The only conditions she imposes are no drugs, alcohol, swearing, or fighting.

When Miss Sarah isn't working, volunteering, or handing out free food on Thanksgiving Day, she is often found dancing in the Seattle rain. "It's all by the grace of God that I'm able to do any of this, that I'm able to get up in the morning. I'm so thankful just to be able to walk. I even like the rain, how it waters the Earth."¹ Now that's gratitude!