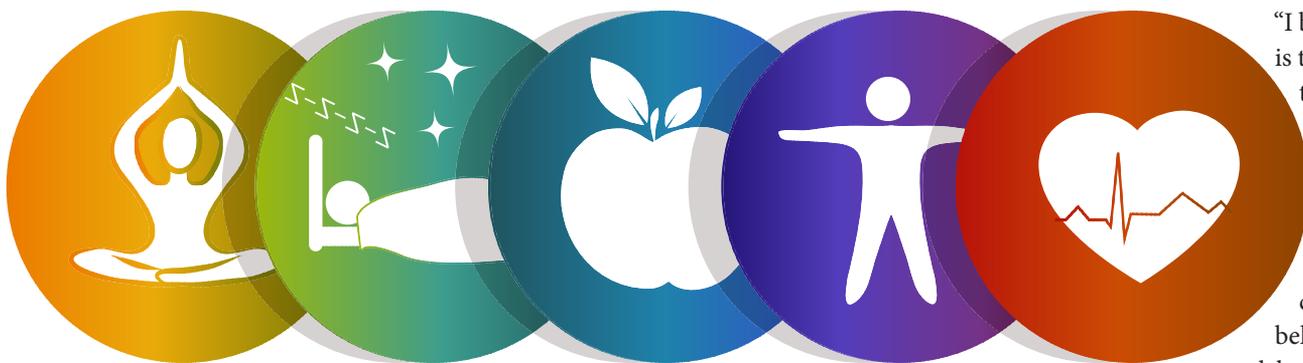


HEALING THE HARD STUFF

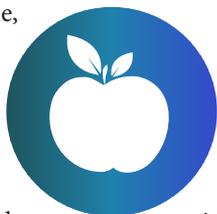
Natural Approaches Resolve Major Illnesses

by Linda Sechrist



Although natural health enthusiasts may recognize alternative healing modalities as a preferred approach to treatment, in the face of major health issues, even they tend to join the crowd that's turning first to conventional medicine.

Thus, many gentler modalities described in *The Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine*, co-authored by doctors of naturopathy Michael T. Murray and Joseph Pizzorno, remain largely untapped resources. Ignored because they are unsupported by traditional science-based medicine, holistic measures such as acupuncture, energy medicine, essential oils, herbs, detoxification, health-promoting diets, homeopathy, prayer and meditation, supplementation, yoga, massage and naturopathy are sacrificed in favor of often painful medical procedures and prescription drugs which can't claim to permanently cure anything and can have many harmful side effects.



Lack of Awareness

"A patient that dabbles in holistic medicine for minor health issues such as indigestion, headache or insomnia often turns to conventional methods after receiving a serious diagnosis such as diabetes, heart disease or cancer because they are scared," observes holistic physician Dr. Wendy Warner, medical director of Medicine in Balance, in Langhorne, Pennsylvania. The co-author of *Boosting Your Immunity for Dummies* suggests that relatively few people turn to natural solutions for both preventive and therapeutic measures because they're unaware they exist.

Integrative oncologists and endocrinologists that are aware of the benefits of natural complementary methods are scarce. Relatively few conventional doctors are educated in functional medicine. "Yet complementary modalities such as acupuncture, massage and some essential oils can support the immune system and help an individual deal with stress experienced from coping with their illness," says Warner.

Outside Pressure

Rob Wergin, an experienced energy medicine practitioner, speaks from experience regarding clients that consult him for life-threatening diagnoses. "When I see them, they're desperate and have exhausted all conventional methods. I'm their last-ditch effort," remarks Wergin. The most frequent reason he hears is, "My family, friends and doctor told me not to waste my money on charlatans."

"People find it challenging to put faith in natural methods and are nervous about going against a doctor's advice until they feel or see positive results; even these may not provide sufficient motivation to continue with alternative treatments," he says.

"I believe this is the result of the influence of pharmaceutical advertising promising results, the medical community's belief in proof solely through clinical trials, websites like *Quackwatch.com* and well-meaning friends insisting that the conventional route is the only way to go. It's sad to see the gravity of these influences pulling clients back into solely believing in the Western model of medicine," says Wergin.

Ann Lee, a doctor of naturopathy, acupuncturist and founder of the Health for Life Clinic, Inc., in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, notes, "This mindset continues to get reinforced by insurance companies that do not cover alternatives. Paying out of pocket for medical expenses also influences a patient's choices."

Kelly Noonan-Gores and Adam Schomer, director and producer, respectively, of the documentary film *HEAL*, suggest that unconscious conditioning plays the biggest role in an individual's choices. "We are deeply conditioned to view medical specialists and prestigious medical institutions as the ones with all the answers. Sometimes they do and sometimes they don't,"



says Noonan-Gores, who intends to have her film awaken viewers to the possibilities of alternative paths of healing. As just one other example noted in the film, thousands have used the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), tapping on their body to help release the trauma and stress often associated with illness.



Resistance to Change

“The conventional medical community wants to maintain the model in which they have heavily invested centuries of time, energy and money. Patients that investigate integrative and complementary medicine may resist hearing that in order to get well, they might need to change their worldview and lifestyle, take a leave of absence from their job, develop a spiritual practice, exercise or maybe even leave a toxic relationship,” says Schomer. “Conventional medicine says take this pill and keep living your life the same way,” says Schomer. “We are not demonizing doctors, pharmaceuticals or the medical system. We simply believe that individuals are more empowered to heal when they take control of their health.”

Eva Lee, a resident of Los Angeles featured in the documentary, suffers from a rare and unpredictable form of blistering skin inflammation. “I’ve tested negative for faulty genes and all sorts of rare viruses and bacteria, which helped point me towards holistic methods. So far, following the directives of Dr. Mark Emerson, a chiropractor specializing in nutrition, in Maui, Hawaii, who I met while filming, has helped my body become healthier and deal with inflammation levels that rapidly reduced as soon as I detoxed and eliminated meat and dairy from my diet,” says Lee. Still, it’s hard for her to accept that her condition could be due to the type of stress

and How to Finally Heal.

“Before, I wasn’t familiar with EFT, which I continue to use and benefit from. However, despite everything I’ve learned, I can’t give up on all Western medicine, put my faith in alternatives and let my intuition and faith guide me to healing. It’s easier to be skeptical than to have faith,” Lee says.

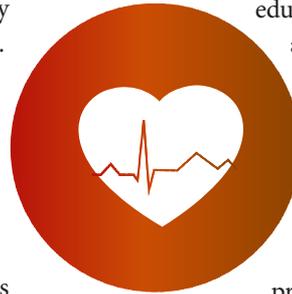
Quiet Role Models

Sheila Tucker, a resident of Navarre, Florida, has been a registered nurse for 20 years, practicing in hospital settings such as critical care, emergency and administration. “I know and understand doctors, surgeries and pharmaceutical treatments and hospitals,” says Tucker, who recalls that throughout her life she was taught to believe in a system that suddenly stopped working for her.

“In 2014, I was dying from a rare autoimmune condition, requiring full-time care, and planning my funeral. Doctors had tried everything, yet my health continued to decline. When I saw a friend’s Facebook posts about her use of essential oils, I was curious, but reluctant to reach out, and didn’t want anyone to know that I called her for advice,” recalls Tucker.

“Shortly after my friend arrived with her oils, my husband came home with our daughter, who had strep throat and a fever. She made us promise to use selected oils through the night and prayed with us.” Tucker attributes the miracle of her daughter’s turnaround the next morning to shifting her paradigm and opening her up to believing in the healing power of essential oils.

Thanks to her friend and role model, Tucker learned how to use therapeutic-grade oils, supplements and a healthy diet to cleanse her body of the heavy toxic load accumulated from several years of expensive drug treatments. Today, she is a healthy and enthusiastic advocate, and her personal results opened the eyes of her physician to the point where she also shifted her own philosophy of healing.



Tucker now offers educational classes in her office and online through her website *FloridaOilsRN.com* that reaches hundreds of individuals worldwide. She advises, “Reach out to people that you see are having positive results with a different healing system than yours. Ask them to show, help and teach you. I’ve seen many people restored to health by using methods that science is only beginning to understand.”

It’s a Marathon

“Outside of any dominant paradigm, it’s easier to cast suspicion than to make curious inquiry and, over time, working within a dominant worldview creates polarity, the antithesis of ‘wholism.’ An inclusive approach integrates all medical and complementary approaches, as well as interaction with the natural world,” says Patrick Hanaway, a family physician and founder of Family to Family Medicine, in Asheville, North Carolina.

Hanaway, the former director of medical education for the Institute for Functional Medicine and the first medical director at the Cleveland Clinic Center for Functional Medicine, explains, “Doctors have a rigorous job filled with responsibility. Change is difficult and investigating vastly different ways of practicing medicine requires a degree of curiosity and openness. I am heartened by thought leaders and heads of top medical schools who are presently opening up to functional medicine, natural medicine and complementary approaches.”

“The paradigm shift we are ushering in has been 50 years in the making,” assesses Hanaway. “Some medical professionals are immersed in a polar view of right and wrong, offering personal attacks and disparaging comments to maintain control of the dialogue. This is not appreciated by patients who look to the doctor as a teacher—the Latin *docere* means to teach.

“The movement to change medicine and the cultural paradigm of healing is a marathon, not a sprint, and those of us involved are prepared to stay the course.”

Linda Sechrist is a senior staff writer for Natural Awakenings. Connect at LindaSechrist.com.



and suppressed emotions that Anthony William explores in his book *Medical Medium: Secrets Behind Chronic and Mystery Illness*