



Fundamentals of Health and Healing

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Our approach to healthcare in the United States and elsewhere around the world ignores our lifestyle and, when our health falters, looks to the medical profession for help. Although there are many cases where this is perfectly reasonable, especially with acute trauma and acute conditions, it is not the picture of panacea that has been painted. Why? Because it typically addresses the treatment of symptoms, ignoring the very basic origin of disease. Genetics and the environment are the only two causes of disease in human beings. And while our ability to affect changes in genetics is just beginning to emerge, and bundled with moral and long-term questions, it is relatively easy to address many of the environmental issues known to cause disease.

Even turning to herbs, or the myriad of other “natural” treatment options is more focused on *effects* than *cause*. For example, many people are drawn to St. John’s Wort to help relieve depression. While St. John’s wort is safe and usually effective, it might be more reasonable to look at potential *causes* of depression.

For example, many vitamins and minerals are necessary for healthy mental function, yet countless studies invariably show signs and symptoms of nutritional deficiencies in most Americans. We also know that certain fats and amino acids play a role for healthy mental function, as well as exercise and the elimination and avoidance of our many environmental toxins.

Thus, rather than using an herb to treat depression as a first choice, which is no different in principle than the use of prescriptions in traditional medicine, it makes sense to look at the more fundamental aspects of homeostasis. What are the typical food choices of the depressed patient? Can we eliminate single or multiple nutritional deficiencies as a possible factor? Does the patient have a lifestyle that involves regular exercise? Is there evidence of a toxic overload or chronic exposure to toxins? Are there spiritual issues that need attention?

Begin at the beginning. Be sure there are no biologically-essential elements missing from the body. Focus first on the avoidance of toxins, diet modification, exercise and vitamin/mineral supplementation. When these truly natural factors have been reasonably addressed and the condition is persistent, then a trial with herbs and/or the many other natural options available for treatment would seem logical. And, in some cases, traditional medical intervention will be an avenue of care. But less will be more as the reduced dose of medication(s) or level of intervention becomes more effective.

Remember, there is no such thing as a St. John's wort or Prozac deficiency in the human body. There are no receptors or enzyme systems in our bodies that *require* these chemicals and, thus, they are not vitamins. Many herbs, and especially prescription medications, are foreign, toxic substances that the body will try to remove as soon as possible.

We begin by addressing spiritual issues. It is physically impossible for a healthy body to exist without a healthy mind and spirit. The frame of mind is also the frame of health.

Then, we look at environmental issues. This includes the foods we put in our mouths, and the nutrition and toxins it contains. It also includes the many other toxins in our water and environment. Short of bio suits worn by those involved in toxic spills, many toxins are impossible to avoid. But diets rich in fresh, whole, unprocessed foods and filtered water go a long way to reduce our exposure. And, of course, avoiding cigarette smoke, household cleaners and herbicides and pesticides sprayed on your personal environment will make a tremendous impact on your toxic liability.

A high potency, therapeutic multi-vitamin/multi-mineral can, in most cases, eliminate individual vitamin/mineral deficiencies as a cause or factor in a chronic disease state. This would include the body's basic antioxidants: vitamin C, vitamin E and selenium.

Omega-3 fatty acid, one of the body's two essential oils, is also well-documented as deficient in the diet of most people. Involved in the composition of each and every cell in our body, and in the formation of our *anti*-inflammatory modulators, the importance and benefit of this oil can not be overstated.

Exercise, no matter what level you begin with, is a health deity of its own. No food, supplement, medicine, machine or treatment will take its place. It stimulates the immune system, balances body fat and muscle; modulates blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol; reduces pain, anxiety and depression; and increases energy, stamina and creativity. And this list is by no means exhausted. *Any* health or healing plan without it is as incomplete and undirected as a sailboat without a rudder.

Food choices, exercise and nutritional supplementation, then, are the platform from which health is enhanced, disease risk is reduced and all other forms of both traditional and alternative therapies are launched. Trying to affect the direction of one's health with disregard for these priorities is like changing the bandage on a wound that will never heal.