



Healing with Homeopathy

by Misha Norland

In this section, we provide an introduction to homeopathy and how we view it as a healing skill – what it is, its history, its principles and how you learn to practice it. Each of our regional study program sections then provides information on the specific aims and objectives that we have for the teaching of that program, how we implement those through the training that we offer, and details of some of our key faculty involved. The focus throughout is on training that is practical and effective supported by caring practitioners and administrators.

What is Homeopathy?

Homeopathy means healing diseases by the application of the law of similars, i.e. 'like cures like'. This means that the 'symptom picture' - a recognisable and characteristic set of symptoms - of the healing agent (the medicine) has to match the disease 'symptom picture' of the patient.

Although this principle has been known and applied spasmodically for many centuries, it was Samuel Hahnemann, born in Germany about two hundred and fifty years ago, who clearly established homeopathy as a recognised form of medical practice. At that time the old world-view was being revolutionised by the new wave of what is now called the 'age of enlightenment'. Community and traditional beliefs, many flimsily based upon superstition, were being increasingly subjected to empirical inquiry, and it was experimentation and theory based upon results that Hahnemann brought to the old notion of "let likes be cured by likes".

This is of particular relevance nowadays when new healing forms are being sought because we are questioning the results of medical procedures with their interventional approaches of cutting, burning, drugging and inoculating. These methods are seen to be failing to bring about long-term improvements in health in chronic disease, although they are of undoubted service in the short term. Increasing numbers of inquiring individuals on the healer's path are seeking to find ways in which a humane system of medicine can be integrated with the clearly beneficial attributes of a science rooted in empirical methodology—experimentation, observation, theory and review.

How does healing happen?

Healing happens quite naturally, because life has the impulse to maintain its integrity, to self heal and regenerate. Any adverse influence upon life will be met with a response designed to counteract that influence, to maintain equilibrium and restore health—to turn hell into heaven. These counteractions to adverse influences are expressed as symptoms. These are our best defences, our best efforts. We are wise to go with them rather than look for interventions. An intervention is any action that prevents the symptoms being expressed, but does not deal with the causes. An analogy for this could be a situation in which a warning light in a car indicating a sudden increase in

engine temperature was responded to by the driver smashing that indicator!

Homeopathy is a holistic method of cure that takes into account not just the physical, but also the mental and emotional symptoms. Homeopaths seek to understand diseases 'holistically'. If we lose our ability to rebalance and stay healthy, then our whole being responds by evolving symptoms. When the 'symptom picture' of the healing agent matches our diseased 'symptom picture', it enormously stimulates our capacity for re-balancing, helping us to do the work of 'venting' the symptoms and returning to health. This is the true life-preserving function of symptoms, that when unhindered are the means whereby disease is eliminated. This principle is understood in the field of everyday psychology. We know that grief (inner disturbance) is eased by tears (outward expression—symptoms), that sadness when vented does not play out as chronic brooding over the past or develop into say, anorexia, insidious weakness or MS; that anger when it is expressed does not fester and turn to hatred or develop into, say heart disease or cancer.

Acute diseases are most readily treated by homeopathic means because the initial intensification of symptoms, due to our dynamic response to the similar healing agent, is rapidly followed by the total elimination of the disease. For instance, recent grief with chest oppression, spasmodic sighing, hiccupping and acute stomach pain is cured after potentised Ignatia is given because the symptom pictures match. Then, after a brief intensification of presenting symptoms, flowing tears and sobbing ensue, giving way to returning calm and acceptance.

Chronic diseases are also amenable to homeopathic cures, indeed most of our cases are of this kind, but they take longer to resolve. The principle of cure in chronic illness is the same, i.e. we self-heal. It is only when this inclination for self-healing becomes perverted that we get stranded in a diseased state. This usually happens because of inherited disease predisposition's, past traumas, past and present toxic overload or psychological and environmental stress, poor nutrition due to non-organic farming relying upon the use of agricultural chemicals and pesticides.

The disease, also being a manifestation of life, albeit a distorted one, behaves as if it were a separate entity that also wishes to express itself. It does so by the development of chronic symptoms. These symptoms are a compound of the disease and our unique individuality—they are the outward expression of our internal state. Just as in the case of the treatment of acute disease, they indicate what needs to be cured. We can read this information as we may read a book. In order to bring about a resolution of chronic disease, we require a return to natural living and eating as well as the thrust that the 'intelligence' of the healing agent confers. Then, as in the acute situation described above, the disease is eliminated from the inside towards the outside via established venting routes. It does this in a reverse time frame (last symptoms to appear are first to disappear, first symptoms to appear are last to disappear) and from the most important organs for survival to the least important. This means that as health is re-established, deep distress is supplanted by temporary superficial disturbances. To put this another way, we would expect to see transient acute manifestations in place of chronic degeneration. For instance, these disturbances could range from tears to temper tantrums, from skin eruptions to diarrhoea.

How do we recognise healing agents?

Substances are selected from either past experience of a medicine's healing powers or intuition as to their potential healing properties. The details are then worked out experimentally. Homeopaths call this proving. This is how it works. A group of stable volunteers comprising of both sexes are given a potentised dose of the substance under enquiry. They usually do not know what that substance is. Over a period of time (usually about two months) and while under supervision, they keep a detailed daily log of their altered state. They examine not only new and/or changed physical symptoms but also scrutinize their mental and psychological state. This information is gathered

from all the volunteers and collated. During this process it is established which symptoms are most frequently experienced, which moderately and which least. This organisation of symptoms constitutes the 'picture' of the healing agent. It is verified and enlarged upon, given its therapeutic range, by clinical trial. As we have written, in homeopathy the remedy and the disease are similar. The remedy assists what the disease symptoms were unsuccessfully trying to do.

Because homeopathy is now more than two hundred years old, we work with many medicines that are well tested in clinical settings. Thus their healing characteristics and depth of action are well established.

What does potentised mean?

Let us first examine how healing proceeds. Healing agents work by harnessing the life preserving power within us. This power is invisible, indeed it is immaterial. We know of its existence by the result of its actions. We certainly know when it is absent, for then death ensues. Without its influence only the material constituents of the body remain, unanimated and lifeless. In order that healing should commence a subtle, immaterial, life-empowering force needs to be applied and recognised by the life preserving power within us. Healing agents are said to be potentised when they have been prepared in a particular manner so as to increase their healing properties.

What are homeopathic healing agents and how are they prepared?

Healing agents, or remedies as they are called, are derived from the natural world. Most typically they are of mineral, plant, animal or human origin. Examples of these are: salt (sodium chloride), club moss (*Lycopodium clavatum*), venom of surukuku snake (*Lachesis muta*), cancerous tissue (*Carcinosin*). They can also be derived from energy sources, for instance electro-magnetic sources, such as x-rays. When soluble these substances are dissolved in water and alcohol, while if they are insoluble, they are ground in a mortar and pestle. If electro-magnetic, then the rays are concentrated and permitted to pass through water where their influence is 'recorded' by the water. A process of serial (successive) dilution and agitation is then applied. By these means the material is reduced, within the bulk of the dilutant, while at the same time, the medicinal potency is increased. This achieves maximum effect for minimum stimulus. This process is also called dynamisation. This refers to the dynamic (as opposed to static) nature of the potentised (now potent) dose. It is the subtle, dynamised state of remedies that have resonance to the dynamic life-preserving function of the living organism. In other words, homeopathic practice rests upon the similarity of the remedy to disease and resonance of the remedy potency with an organism's life-preserving force.

How do we teach the healing?

Let us take a look at two co-existent methodologies and worldviews which prevail in the work. If we apply the senses and 'logic' to the enquiry, the world may be understood as a collection of objects. Each object may be assessed, weighed and measured. In this manner the symptoms of diseases and the healing properties of their corresponding remedies are categorised and catalogued. The world may also be encountered as a communion of subjects. These subjects are interrelated and informed of each other's existence and of their participation in the whole by allowing feeling and intuition to enter into the experience. This gives birth to an appreciation of the world as sacred and is best expressed by art—it is sung into being, danced, sculpted and painted. The impulse to practice the art of healing also ensues from this perception of the world. It is to the first world view that reductionism owes allegiance and by the second that imagination is inspired.

As healers teaching at the School of Homeopathy, we integrate both views as we celebrate spirit, body and soul. The sacred view maintains that we regard all expressions of creation as intrinsically equal in value, whether mineral, viral, bacterial, fungal, plant, animal, human, and no matter what race or creed. We are all connected as well as dependent

upon each other. No one is better or worse than another one. No creature or plant or stone or water or air or fire is higher or lower than its counterpart. No things can be owned or possessed (except in the most temporary manner), nor can humans lay claim upon them, for they belong only to themselves and are related to others only through love—a love which is given unconditionally, just as parent to child, mineral to plant, plant to animal, prey to predator. Our DNA has been passed over eons, evolving through successive life forms. We are the sum of all that has been and is now and is yet to be for the seeds of the future are in the present. This is a description of a living experience of the natural world of which we are participant and caretaker as well as exploiter and destroyer. This description is given here because as homeopathic practitioners, we are devotees of nature, for it is the natural world which provides for our sustenance and our healing. Nor is reductionism an outmoded concept for us because we view, not the world, but its attributes in this manner: we name the parts, catalogue the symptoms and we use computers to help us in our analysis.

As homeopaths and teachers, we learn to listen non-judgmentally. (Although our analysis of what we learn involves careful judgement and feedback.) Through reflecting upon ourselves (looking into the mirror of our motivations and our actions) we appraise ourselves, finding a path between our own opinions of right and wrong, good and bad, finding a way which is non-aggressive, which is informed by respect for ourselves, and others and the world in which we live. This is the pledge which we make as we work upon our own nature through the study and practice of homeopathy. Homeopathic healing results through re-establishing the relationship between our inner selves and outer nature through the application of remedies (medicines) which are derived from the natural world.

How do you learn to practice healing skills?

To develop your healing skills requires learning and development. As in any other activity, this has phases to it:

1. Vocation

Before you begin, you have to be inspired.

2. Theory

Inspiration is informed by philosophy, understanding and knowledge.

3. Application

Philosophy and understanding are applied. You underpin your knowledge through the critical appraisal of practice.

4. Practice

You do it—you roll up your sleeves and get on with it.

5. Discrimination

You check out the teachings against your practice, retaining what is of value for you, throwing out what does not work.

6. Masterhood

You extend your developing individual creativity into the task. You add your own skills and understanding to that which you have already learnt. In doing this you continue to develop your skill of healing the sick and inspiring others through your example.

7. Continuing professional development

Through self-reflection, experimentation and research you continue to mature, both personally and professionally.

8. Community

You now have become a valued and contributing member of the healing profession.