

In one word you have to have a genuine intention about getting what you want, then you can relax and trust and it is bound to happen. You do the visualisation while you relax your body and your mind, having a clear idea, focusing on it often and giving it positive energy.

So I can say now that I am grateful to have had tuberculosis as this enabled me to experience the wonders of the use of the mind, once one knows how to master it. What a wonderful opportunity this was to test out all the things I have learned and all the things I have been teaching.

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- (1) Leonard Orr "**Rebirthing in the New Age**" Celestial Arts
  - (2) Louise Hay "**Heal the Body**"
  - (3) Nushka Tai "**The Subconscious and Positive Affirmation**"
  - (4) Shalet Gawain "**Creative Visualisation**" A Bantam New Age book.
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## Richenda Power

### NATUROPATHY

Naturopathy can be considered the original holistic medicine of the West. Modern naturopathy traces itself back in essence to Hippocrates and his idea of the vital life force of the body. So does orthodox medicine but it is sometime hard to see how the life force and 'intelligence' of the body are recognised by it, with the emphasis on the person as passive and being invaded by disease or attacked by microbes.

Current naturopaths embrace a wide range of treatment approaches and may disagree among themselves about what can and cannot be called legitimately naturopathic. I would place myself with the "straight nature cure" thinkers and I am going to explain this.

The philosophy underlying the practice is very important. It involves a complete turn around of many of our conventionally negative ways of viewing disruption in our experience of "health". It questions the meaning of health and suggests an experience far more dynamic than the mere absence of symptoms. A cough can be welcomed as the clearing out of débris from the bronchii and lungs, a spot may be seen as a channel for clearing the skin and the immediately underlying bloodstream, and so on. These ideas once thought cranky have gained support from occasional pieces of research. An example: the purpose of a fever has been recognised as raising the body's temperature sufficiently high to make a hostile environment for 'undesirable' viruses. In other words, the virus does not invade and 'cause' the fever: it is the body's intelligent perception of a potential takeover that initiates protective action. Fever, as long as it does not go uncontrolledly high, becomes a friend, not an enemy.

Symptoms such as cough, spots and fever may be signals to a naturopath of the existence of vitality and a drive to health in a person, rather than signposts to named diseases. Naturopaths are of course trained in conventional diagnosis and pathology but a major emphasis is put on an understanding of physiology and psychology and their complex interaction. A deductive frame of mind is cultivated, tempered with intuition, such that the person's whole self: body, mind and spirit, within their family, work, social and temporal contexts can be considered as producing and maintaining a particular configuration of symptoms at any one time. Sometimes a person is disappointed not to be given a diagnostic label, as though owning a label is somehow halfway toward cure.

In some ways it may be psychologically easier for someone to feel that they've "got colitis" rather than to look at some of the factors that have predisposed them to get such a cluster of signs and symptoms which they have then maintained. If I have condition X 'and I believe that drug 'Y' cures it (or merely controls it), then I can continue to operate within the same constraints that produce and maintain 'X'. In contrast, naturopathy aims to help us break out of these prescription-dependent ways of conceptualising illness and cure.

Usually a naturopath will spend time with a person trying to understand how and why their body/mind is behaving in a particular way and recognising predisposing factors, trying together to develop some overall approach to aid the situation. It is an educational process, involving the recognition of one's body as intelligent and trying to assist its natural efforts to heal itself. This is where a major difference between orthodox medicine, many unorthodox approaches and naturo-

pathy emerges. It may sound trite to say we aim to work ourselves out of business, but it does tend to work that way, so that those people who begin to understand their own health/disease dynamic and assist its expression, not suppressing it with drugs, or cutting out the 'bad' bits with surgery, but 'feeding and watering it sensibly on all levels, discover that they can cope alone.

For example, maybe someone comes with a cluster of symptoms: - tense shoulders, stiff neck, sore throat, high blood pressure. Gradually we tease out the contributory factors. They type all day in a smoky office, drink endless black coffee, feel they could be doing something more personally valuable, don't get on with the boss, grab kentucky fried for a quick supper on the way home to a demanding family life. (etc!). We start by discovering the things that can be changed quite easily: maybe the coffee can be cut out, relaxation techniques and isometric exercises used at the typewriter, and a vitamin and mineral rich diet started. Psychological work might be used to assist this person's assertiveness with the boss and the smokers surrounding them at work. It could be supporting them in a search for a more congenial job, or encouraging a fulfilling interest or activity during the lunch hour or after work.

So far the level of analysis rests with the individual but in practice I feel it must not stay there. The social and political context needs work too. As a naturopath I feel we need to engage in struggle with the 'manufacturers of illness' and that currently includes the tobacco industry, the sugar industry and the junkfood manufacturers as well as the government that produces huge inequalities in housing, education and recreational facilities, to name but the tip of the iceberg. I think it is useful to discuss these matters with patients as they arise naturally, say when discussing diet or a work situation. If you like, it's a form of consciousness-raising.

So what do I do? I can use massage, neuromuscular techniques, osteopathic soft tissue work, osteopathic mobilisations and manipulations and give postural advice and exercises as physical treatments. I can give people nutritional advice and diets and fasts to follow for specific reasons. I teach relaxation, visualisation and meditation techniques. I use hydrotherapy (e.g. compresses, packs, douches, showers, baths), and get people to do their own treatments at home.

Essentially I favour the use of natural methods of assisting a person to discover their whole potential. Episodes of acute illness can be

welcomed as evidence of the body actively attempting to heal itself. If someone has a chronic condition, I work to bring it back to an acute and thus potentially active healing state.

In some ways it parallels the freeing of blocks in an emotional sense, as can be encouraged in psychotherapy. A facing up to and conscious exaggeration of the symptoms/distressing feelings so that the underlying disease/dis-ease may work itself out.

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