

Natural Healing

When Conventional Medicines
Just Won't Do



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DISCLAIMER AND RIGHTS	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER ONE - WHAT IS ILLNESS?	6
WHAT CAUSES ILLNESS?.....	6
<i>Physical illness</i>	6
<i>Mental illness</i>	7
HOW DOES ONE RECOVER FROM AN ILLNESS?	7
CHAPTER TWO - WHAT IS NATURAL HEALING?	8
CHAPTER THREE - WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF NATURAL HEALING?	11
PHYSICAL METHODS	11
<i>Natural Substances</i>	11
<i>Physical Manipulation</i>	12
ENERGY TECHNIQUES	13
<i>Energy paths</i>	13
<i>Vibrational healing</i>	14
<i>Pure energy</i>	14
THINKING AND THE BRAIN	14
<i>Attitudes</i>	15
<i>Centering techniques</i>	15
<i>The Brain</i>	15
<i>The subconscious mind</i>	16
CHAPTER FOUR - PHYSICAL METHODS	18
CHANGING YOUR DIET	18
NATURAL HERBS	20
AROMATHERAPY	21
ENZYLE THERAPY.....	23
CHIROPRACTIC.....	25
MASSAGE THERAPY	27
<i>Pressure point bodywork</i>	29
<i>Deep tissue massage</i>	30
<i>Structural integration</i>	30
<i>Rolfing</i>	30
<i>Trigger point therapy</i>	30
<i>Hydrotherapy</i>	30
<i>Manual Lymph Drainage</i>	31
<i>Orthobionomy</i>	31
REFLEXOLOGY	32
CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY	32
YOGA	33
QIGONG.....	36

COLON HYDROTHERAPY	37
CHAPTER FIVE - ENERGY THERAPIES	39
ACUPUNCTURE	39
ACUPRESSURE	40
JIN SHIN DO.....	41
EFT - EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE	41
REIKI.....	42
CRYSTAL HEALING.....	42
CHAPTER SIX - THOUGHT AND THE BRAIN	48
SELF-TALK	48
GUIDED IMAGERY	49
MUSCLE TESTING.....	51
CONCLUSION	53

INTRODUCTION

More and more people today are turning to natural and alternative healing methods to relieve their physical or psychological problems, both big and small. If you are unfamiliar with them, you may be surprised or even alarmed when you hear about these methods or when a friend or family member has recourse to them.

Often, when people talk about these methods, they lump them together in one package, and make a blanket judgment about them, either positive or negative. But the reality is much more complicated - there are many different methods, each having practitioners of varying competence, and each being appropriate or inappropriate for different people depending on many different factors.

In addition, many people have the notion that one must make a radical choice between classical allopathic medicine and alternative methods, and that choosing one system means that you abandon all that the other one has to offer, while accepting everything that the proponents of your chosen system say as being indisputable truth. Fortunately, this extreme attitude is not at all necessary, even though some people seem to think so.

The purpose of this book is to present an overview of the natural healing scene today, so that each person can come to an informed conclusion about this important subject. The fact that you are reading this book shows that you are ready to approach the subject with an open mind.

Although we will be treating these methods with a respectful and sympathetic attitude, our goal is not to convince or to prove, but to describe what is out there. It will be up to you to extend your research and draw your own conclusions to find out more about any methods that you may find interesting or promising.

CHAPTER ONE - WHAT IS ILLNESS?

The World Health Organization considers the state of good health as one of total physical, mental, and social well-being, rather than just being the lack of infirmity or disease. One is believed to be ill or suffering from an illness when one does not have physical, mental and social well-being.

Is illness different from disease? The two terms are often used interchangeably so that their meanings are intertwined. There are various types of known diseases today (such as AIDS and the different kinds of cancer like breast cancer). Some diseases are deemed curable while others are not.

When one is ill from a disease, one displays symptoms that help physicians to create a diagnosis of what is afflicting the patient. To eliminate the symptoms of disease, a patient is often given medication. For this, the physician relies heavily on the science of pharmacology.

A person is believed to be ill when there are irregularities in the function of the mind or body which create dysfunction, discomfort, or distress in the patient. The word illness may also be used to cover other conditions such as deviant behaviors, infections, syndromes, disabilities and injury.

What causes illness?

When one thinks of illness, they usually think of physical illness. However, it is important to consider mental illness as well. Let's discuss each of them briefly.

Physical illness

Aside from infectious diseases, commonly thought to be caused by pathogens, mainstream medicine does not overly concern itself with the question of the root causes of disease, but rather is very adept at

describing the malfunctioning that occurs in the body once the disease is present.

Many of the alternative methods, however, stem from a particular view of what causes disease in the first place. For example, homeopaths speak of the importance of the "terrain" or genetic background. Mind-body proponents will say that everything starts in the mind, and the physical illness is a symbolic manifestation of a particular mental attitude.

Mental illness

The term is broadly applied to various illnesses that could cover cognitive impairment, behavioral dysregulation, and emotional or affective instability. Mental illness is also known under other generic labels: "behavioral problem," "emotional problems," "emotional disability," "abnormal psychology," "psychological disorder," "psychiatric disorder," and "mental disorder." Mental illness may be traced to biological causes (such as genetic, chemical, and anatomical factors) or psychological causes (such as conflict or trauma). The word insanity is generally applied as a legal term rather than a medical term. Also, brain damage, caused by various injuries, illnesses, or conditions, may be a cause of mental illness.

How does one recover from an illness?

A patient in the mainstream medical system has to rely on health care to get better. Health care is defined as the avoidance of illness, and its treatment and management when one is ill. The maintenance of the patient's mental and physical well being (as provided by nurses, doctors and members of the allied health professions) also falls under the umbrella term "health care." Any individual who has to undergo medical treatment is dubbed a patient. Frequently, the patient has an injury or illness which necessitates receiving medical treatment from a health care professional (such as a doctor).

Natural healing has a different view, which we shall see in the following chapter.

CHAPTER TWO - WHAT IS NATURAL HEALING?

Natural Healing, also called alternative medicine or holistic healing, is a system that emphasizes self-care using natural therapies that aim to develop and restore health and wellness through prevention and natural means, as opposed to surgery and the use of drugs.

Natural health practitioners place a great emphasis on