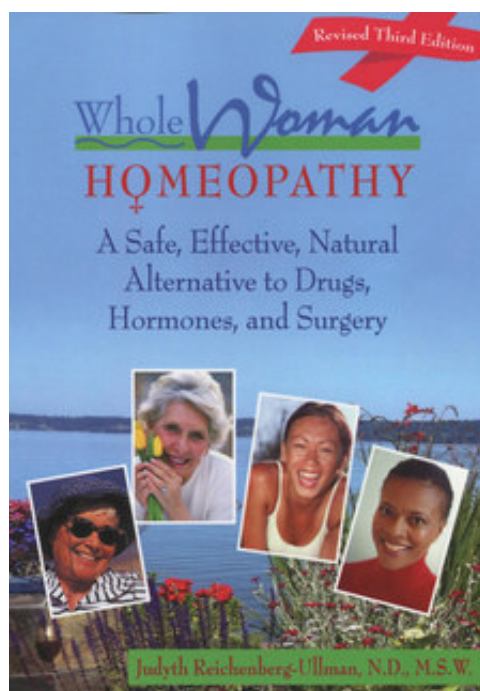


Judyth Reichenberg-Ullman Whole Woman Homeopathy

Reading excerpt

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Homeopathy—What It Is and How It Can Help You

A Safe and Effective Natural Approach

LIKE CURES LIKE

Homeopathy is a medical science and an art unlike any other form of healing in a number of ways. Let me start with a simple definition. *Homeo* is Greek for "like" or "similar" and *pathos* means "suffering." Literally, homeopathy means "similar suffering." Translation: The very same substance that can produce a particular set of symptoms if you take it over and over again, can relieve those exact or very similar symptoms if you suffer from them. This is in contrast to most conventional medicine, which is also referred to as *allopathic medicine*.

Allo means "different." The basis of conventional medicine is to use drugs that are not at all similar to the disease, but that fight against it (antibiotic, anti-fungal, anti-inflammatory medications).

A simple example of this *law of similars* is a bee sting. If you ever happened to have the misfortune to cross a mad bee, you will be unlikely to forget the symptoms of the sting: swelling, redness, heat, and burning or stinging pain. The homeopathic approach to treating your bee sting, rather than using a topical conventional medicine, would be to use a substance capable of *causing* those very same symptoms. That substance in homeopathy is *Apis mellifica*, which is made from a honeybee. If, in fact, you take a dose of *Apis* soon after you are stung, it is very likely that the pain and discomfort will be alleviated within minutes. However, *Apis* is not only good for bee stings, but for many other conditions that have similar symptoms. Now, think again: swelling, redness, heat, and burning or stinging. What other conditions could mimic

these symptoms? How about an acute allergic reaction in which your face becomes quite swollen, red, and hot? Or conjunctivitis, with very swollen and puffy eyelids? Arthritis, in which the joints are inflamed, swollen, hot, red, and painful. Or a bladder infection with burning pain every time you urinate and a feeling of swelling in the urethra? Each of these conditions shares these four symptoms and can respond quite well to homeopathic *Apis*.



HOMEOPATHY HAS BEEN AROUND FOR OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS

Homeopathy has a proven track record. The concept of like cures like dates back to the writings of Hippocrates in 400 B.C. The concept of a vital force, or energy principle, had its origins in ancient Chinese and Asian texts. Homeopathy is based on this concept, as are acupuncture; Chinese, Ayurvedic, and Tibetan medicine; and most other indigenous medical systems. However, it took Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, a brilliant and bombastic German physician in the 1800s, to integrate all of these ideas into a single system of medicine: homeopathy.

Hahnemann was disgruntled, to say the least, with the barbaric medicine of his day. So, fed up with bloodletting, purging, and the use of toxic substances such as mercury and arsenic, Hahnemann decided to retire from his medical practice and focus his attention on medical translation. Fluent in seven languages, this original and creative thinker began to explore medical textbooks with the determination of finding a single principle on which all healing was based. There must, Hahnemann reasoned, be identifiable causes for why people get sick in the first place; for why they, in chronic disease, remain ill; and for how they recover from illness. Certainly, he surmised, this was not a random process.

The other fundamental motivation that drove Hahnemann was to find a safer, gentler, more effective method of treatment so that people like George Washington need not suffer from bloodletting applied haphazardly and, in cases such as his, fatally. Familiar with natural medicine traditions from all over the world, Hahnemann set out to find a better way.

And so he did. Upon reading in the herbal texts that the bark of the Peruvian cinchona tree (from which quinine is extracted) cures malaria, Hahnemann asked himself, "How and why is this possible?" Dissatisfied with the explanation of the herbalist authors, he embarked on a systematic ingestion (called a *proving*) of the bark itself. Through his own carefully documented experiments, Hahnemann verified the principle of like cures like. The intermittent sweats, fevers, and weakness that he suffered after ingesting the bark mimicked the actual symptoms of malaria. Convinced that he had discovered a unifying principle of healing, Hahnemann, and subsequently his students, set about to prove many common natural substances. Each proving was meticulously recorded and forms the basis for the knowledge that homeopaths have

today. Next, Hahnemann and his fellow physicians administered these substances to their patients, in homeopathic preparations. The results were so impressive that the word spread of a remarkable new medical art.

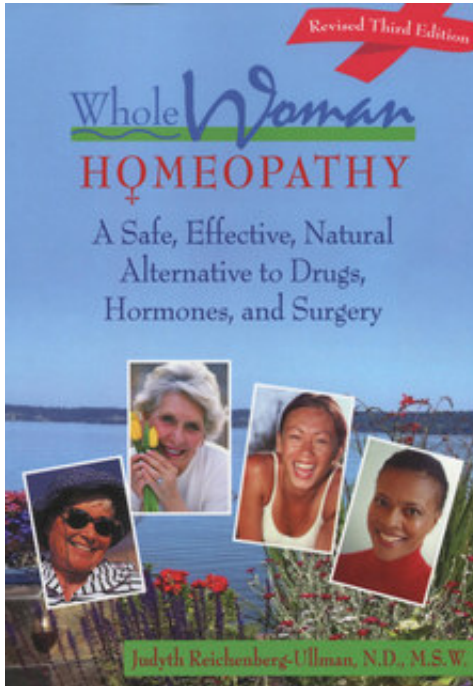
In 1810 Hahnemann wrote his famous *Organon of Medicine*, which introduced homeopathy to the rest of the world. Though he was considered a medical heretic in his own country, many renowned European artists, musicians, writers, and playwrights nevertheless flocked to Hahnemann and his colleagues. By the mid-1820s, homeopathy had spread throughout Europe and reached the United States. By the turn of the century, homeopathic medical schools, hospitals, nursing homes, and sanitariums flourished in this country. In fact, around 1900, one out of every five or six medical doctors was a homeopath.

In 1910, while homeopathy continued to enjoy increased success in Europe, it was nearly crushed in the United States—thanks, in large part, to the Flexner Report. Andrew Carnegie commissioned a group to evaluate all of the American medical schools; and, as it turned out, all of the homeopathic institutions (as well as the practice of midwifery) were downgraded, resulting in their loss of funding and eventual closure. With no further formal homeopathic medical training, the profession gradually ground to a halt, with lay study groups in private homes and an occasional course here and there being the only way one could receive any exposure whatsoever to homeopathy. It is amazing that homeopathic medicine survived at all in the United States from 1920 to 1970, but somehow, thanks to its small but determined number of proponents, it did.

In the late 1970s, everything changed. The back-to-the-land and health food movements sparked interest in all that was natural, including homeopathy. A particularly strong group of homeopathic students in the Bay Area happened upon George Vithoulkas, a dynamic engineer-turned-homeopath, who helped stimulate a renaissance in homeopathy. The level of homeopathy in the U.S. and abroad, has improved dramatically since that time, thanks to such brilliant teachers as Drs. Rajan Sankaran and colleagues in Mumbai, India Dr. Divya Chhabra, Dr. Jan Scholten, and to many other innovative teachers and seriously dedicated practitioners.

HOLISTIC MEDICINE AT ITS FINEST

The very essence of homeopathy is understanding and treating the whole person. Homeopathy espoused this idea way before the term *holistic* came into vogue. Except in treating first-aid situations or with certain minor acute illnesses, a homeopath always undertakes an extensive, in-depth interview in which she investigates everything she can about the person in front of her. Without knowing and understanding the whole person, it is impossible to prescribe a homeopathic medicine for a chronic illness. The mental and emotional symptoms are considered to be at least as important as the physical ones. The picture of each individual is unique: like a jigsaw



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