WHAT IS DISEASE?
WHAT IS CURE?

“We see disease as the disattunement of the dynamis [vital force] — which will show up in the person not merely in one locale, but may manifest in diverse manners that may not seem to be related to each other from the perspective of reductionist pathology. As such, a person presenting with... athlete’s foot, gastroesophageal reflux, and headache may have three ‘diseases’ according to allopathic nosology; but for us, there is likely one ‘disease of the person’ manifesting simultaneously in these three diverse superficial expressions. Homeopathy addresses the individual case of disease as it manifests diversely in the whole person, rather than pathologically-defined diseases as things in themselves.”

—WILL TAYLOR, MD, 1999 [WT2]

THE BODY MACHINE

Fundamental to modern allopathic medicine is the view of the human body as an elaborate biochemical machine. Over time, our understanding of this machine has become more and more refined. With enough scrutiny, medical scientists hope to uncover every mechanism and detail of the human operating system. They have made great strides and the results have been truly impressive.

Because this model is so popular, most people believe that altering or tweaking components of the body machine will be enough to repair its faulty operation. The hope is that, just like an auto mechanic or a plumber, a doctor will be able to cure us by sealing off a leaky pipe here,
removing a flawed part there, or by pouring in some chemical additives to increase operating efficiency.

As our understanding of the body has expanded, it has also become necessary for doctors to specialize in its subsystems. It has simply become impossible for any one person to achieve complete expertise on the whole machine. A side effect of this partitioning of expertise is the common belief that the body is partitioned in the same way. Thus, many people believe that their headaches have no relationship to their indigestion, or that their skin has no relationship to their respiratory system. Certainly applying cortisone cream to eczema couldn’t lead to asthma?

But a plumber knows that sealing off a pipe will add pressure to the rest of a plumbing system. And a car mechanic knows that plugging up an exhaust valve or pouring some ill-advised additives into a gas tank will cause problems down the line. Caution is certainly even more warranted in the case of the human body. We are not machines. We are dynamic, integrated, and elaborate living entities.

Indeed, the results of a partitioned view of the body can be deadly. All too often we hear about someone who is taking 10 medications prescribed by 10 specialists for 10 different problems, and as a result is suffering from untold side effects and interactions. Below is a not atypical list of medications that was taken daily by a 55-year-old woman with chronic back pain:

- Kapanol (morphine sulfate for back pain)
- Prozac (antidepressant)
- Premarin (hormone replacement)
- Lipitor (for lowering cholesterol)
- Diaformin (antidiabetic)
- Prinvil (antihypertensive)
- Quinate (for night cramps)
- Losec (antiulcer/reflux)
- Urocarb (urinary retention)
- Uremide (diuretic)
- Alodorm (for sleep)
Can anyone truly claim that such a drugging regimen is safe? For some people, just going off their numerous daily medications could bring total relief to a body spinning downward, out of control. Such people are the victims of iatrogenic disease — i.e., disease caused by prescribed medication and treatment. As mentioned in Chapter 2, this kind of disease is now estimated to be the third or fourth leading cause of death in America [Lazarou, Starfield] — far more than the number of deaths from car accidents. Going to yet another specialist to scrutinize yet another broken part of your body may be more dangerous to your health than getting onto the highway.

Jan Scholten, MD, a Dutch homeopath, has pointed out that allopathic and homeopathic diagnosis seem to stand at "right angles" to one another. The allopath sees and treats supposedly unrelated fragments of disease — eczema, pneumonia, an ulcer, depression. To a homeopath, these are only pieces of the overall pattern of a single underlying disease state. Scholten writes:

"The difference between homoeopathic and allopathic diagnosis is similar to the sort of difference between pattern and grade, between form and size, between tone and volume. Allopathic medicine is concerned -with measuring, whilst homoeopathy is concerned with shapes and patterns... Nearly every allopathic diagnosis is not a diagnosis at all in homoeopathic terms... The diagnosis of 'bronchitis' is only the beginning of a diagnosis in homoeopathic terms. We could compare this to the diagnosis of 'fever' in the middle ages. At that time fever was a real diagnosis which told you exactly what the patient was suffering from, whilst to us this sounds absurd. This is because we are so used to thinking: 'Where does this fever come from?'... This example may illustrate that the concept 'diagnosis' implies the feeling 'I understand, so I don't have to look further' This same situation exists in our present times with regard to a diagnosis of bronchitis, rheumatoid arthritis, myoma, colitis ulcerosa, etc. They are not real diagnoses, merely descriptions or syndromes. Homoeopathically speaking, this is only the start of the whole process of diagnosis, i.e., what is the remedy that belongs to this state? In fact we might say that in homoeopathic terms, the concepts 'disease,' 'diagnosis,' and 'remedy' are all one." [Scholten, pp. 830-831]
Rather than diagnose and treat the various parts of a disease, a homeopath will try to understand its overall pattern — composed of all of its symptoms, in every area of the body and mind. Once a homeopath has understood this pattern, he or she can try to match it to the pattern of a known remedy. And by giving this homeopathic or similarly patterned remedy, the homeopath treats the whole person — i.e., treats all symptoms at once.

It may seem incredible that a single substance could potentially cure all of our symptoms — our headaches, our depression, our indigestion and constipation, and our high blood pressure. But the holistic nature of homeopathic cures are illustrated daily in every homeopath's practice. Indeed, it is quite rare for a remedy to cure only one part of a person. If a remedy is truly curative, its effects usually extend to the whole person — because the remedy's symptoms match the whole person as well. In the following illustrative example, American professional homeopath Steve Waldstein, RSHom (NA), describes his own cure:

"When I was given my first homeopathic remedy 25 years ago, my chief complaint was bronchitis lasting four months, leading to cracking ribs with coughing. The result of this remedy was: (1) The bronchitis went away immediately; (2) Asthma and allergies went away; (3) Emotionally, gigantic improvement; and (4) Moderate scoliosis that I had for 13 years — resulting in me spending a number of my teenage years in a back brace — disappeared over the next six months. It is amazing how deep the changes from the correct remedy can be." [SW1]

Steve also describes the case of one of his patients:

"75-year-old with ulcerative colitis, osteoarthritis (one knee has been replaced and the other is looking bad), myocardial infarction and aneurism in past, hearing getting quite bad (wears hearing aid), emotionally no big problems (though the emotional state was the main thing leading to the prescription)... With aqueous doses of [remedy] over 18 months...The ulcerative colitis is almost totally gone — he still has a bit of urgency but only four bowel movements a day instead of 10-15, and always has time to make it to the bathroom. Colonoscopy shows no problem at all anymore. Hearing — dramatically better."

In other words, a true homeopathic cure is systemic. Rather than patching or repairing a part of the body, a curative remedy can bring about a widespread restoration of health to the entire organism — a fundamental change of state that addresses the true root of a patient's disease.

WE ARE MORE THAN MACHINES

"In the healthy human state, the spirit-like life force... that enlivens the material organism as dynamis, governs without restriction and keeps all parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation, as regards both feelings and functions, so that our indwelling, rational spirit can freely avail itself of this living, healthy instrument for the higher purposes of our existence." [Hahnemann, Aphorism 9]

The limitations of the body-machine model and the folly of piecemeal treatment of individual symptoms becomes even more apparent if we accept the idea that there is more to us than just our physical body. Allopathic medicine is nearly alone among the world's medicines in its insistence that bodily disease is completely physical. What if modern allopathy is wrong and Indian, Chinese, and other medicines (including homeopathy) are right? If so, our physical body is merely a veneer or surface view of an elaborate and dynamic energetic entity — an entity that Hahnemann called the dynamis or vital force. This force incorporates our bodies, emotions, mind, and spirit, and interacts in inexplicable ways with other people, animals, plants, minerals, and even man-made creations. Perhaps one day we may develop sophisticated instruments for detecting and measuring the vital force. But for now, all we can do is observe how it manifests itself in terms of physical and behavioral symptoms, and try to find reliable methods for working with it. Certainly, accepting the reality of such a force changes the whole medical equation.

Of course, many allopathic doctors have begun to acknowledge that disease may extend beyond the physical — that a person's emotions and
thoughts can interact with their physical body. For example, most people today acknowledge that life's stresses can affect blood pressure, bring out eczema, or trigger asthmatic attacks. But the growing allopathic understanding of holism is still quite partial and superficial. Although allopaths acknowledge that there may be mind-body connections, most believe that these connections are strictly biochemical. It must be neurohormones at work. It must be a brain chemical imbalance that's causing our depression. The response: prescribe antidepressants or megadoses of vitamins — pour in some more additives.

But the body keeps breaking down — and we keep patching, adding, and cutting. We invent new drugs, but bacteria and viruses mutate and keep up. We dump in new vaccinations, but new and stronger diseases arise. We take antidepressants, but are we really happy, deep down inside? In the meantime, our bodies and minds are becoming weakened by all of these things. Our inherent susceptibility to disease has become greater. The signs are everywhere. Just look around you. Even children have become the victims of severe chronic diseases at rates much higher than was true in the past.

These trends should be causing alarm bells to go off in our society. And, indeed, some allopaths have begun to be concerned. For, despite our increasingly technological medical capabilities, the tools available for treating chronic disease are actually fairly limited in scope. The result is a kind of desperation in conventional medicine today. But rather than genuinely looking "outside the box" for true alternatives, the natural tendency for most allopaths is to believe that developing more drugs, vaccines, and surgical procedures will eventually overcome something they do not understand very well at all.

For instance, consider the modern practice of prophylactic hysterectomies. These are sometimes recommended for symptom-free young women if their family medical history indicates a strong tendency towards uterine or ovarian cancer. But does removing a woman's organs also remove her inherent tendency to develop cancer? If a body copes with life stresses by developing cancer, won't it simply develop cancer in
some other organ? And does this woman even have the tendency to develop cancer? What will be the untoward effects of removing key hormone-producing organs from her body? What happens to her if she is given hormone replacement therapy, a treatment already known to increase the chances of developing cancer?

In my view, a wiser approach would be to try to remove or reduce this woman's susceptibility to cancer. The way to achieve this can be found by adopting an alternative medical view — that susceptibility resides in the energy body, not in the physical body-machine.

A fundamental discovery of 20th century physics was that the building blocks of our reality are much more subtle than they appear to be. True reality is at the quantum level, where thoughts can have effects, and events and actions do not have to be physically close to one another in order to interact. Clearly, modern medicine has not kept up with these discoveries. It is still operating from a Newtonian premise: that the human body — surely one of the most subtle and complex systems that exists — is a big plumbing system. Modern medicine has yet to incorporate the scientific outlook of the 20th century.

Amazingly, Hahnemann, even at the turn of the 19th century, was able to come up with a radically different and intrinsically energetic viewpoint: that the physical body is coupled to an invisible vitalistic force that is the true organizing principle of life. Certainly, his successful use of ultradilute remedies reinforced this view. But what really enabled Hahnemann to make such a cognitive leap was a philosophical shift. Rather than trying to develop a new, more complex model of the body machine, Hahnemann's response to the medical predicament of his time was to rethink everything. In particular, he accepted as a premise that a complete understanding of how the body functions was impossible, and that, in fact, this understanding was not necessary for the successful practice of medicine. As a result, he was freed up to find a system of medicine that did not depend on this understanding.

Of course, this seems odd to those of us with a mechanistic view of the body. Surely, you can't fix something unless you know exactly how
it works. But what if you can't completely know how something works? In this situation, you will focus on empirical observation and experience — in the case of medicine, on what seems to consistently heal or improve the body's functioning. Moreover, your fundamental research goal will be different. You will try to determine what actually cures, rather than figure out how the body works. And through your experiments, you may eventually derive principles or laws about the relationship between curative agents and the diseases they cure.

This is precisely what Hahnemann did. He focused on what actually cured — not on what seemed logical from the perspective of a particular model of the body — and ultimately he discovered a general-purpose law of cure, the Law of Similars. When he applied this principle, he met with great success.

WE ARE INTRINSICALLY SELF-HEALING

In Chapter 2, we discussed how Hahnemann was a naturalist when it came to health, even before he discovered the Law of Similars. To him it was plain common sense that the body is dynamic and integrated, and that when left to its own devices, it will usually be able to repair itself. We are animals after all, just like other animals on this planet, and we are probably even better equipped to adapt and survive. Surely we must have evolved to be self-repairing, self-healing. Our bodies have built-in mechanisms to maintain balance, even in the face of physical and emotional challenges.

Unfortunately, a trust in the body's inherent wisdom and strength seems to have been lost in the modern world. So many of us think of ourselves as flawed, fragile, disconnected machines. We think we need all kinds of props to hold us up. "I have a brain chemical deficiency" "I need more hormones." "I need antidepressants." This view is a modern creation, an illusion we have all bought into, largely due to the influence of the powerful medical and advertising industries. For thousands of years, our ancestors had no access to antibiotics, antidepressants, or antihistamines. Surely the human body is not as frail as we think.
Of course, sometimes the external forces of life do become too much for us. In response, we develop a state of being that is not perfectly balanced; we become skewed. Perhaps our lungs become a weak spot. Perhaps a difficult childhood leaves us prone to anxiety or paranoia. Once we become skewed enough, we tend to become more severely ill as difficult situations arise. Minor illnesses take longer to recover from. We become more allergic and sensitive to our environment. What began as minor spells of the blues becomes a chronic state of depression.

But even if someone is in a Chronic state of disease, it is important to remember that they are not without defenses. Within all of our bodies are mechanisms whose entire purpose is to maintain life, heal our wounds, and reacheive balance. All parts of the body are interrelated and working together to create the best possible adaptation to every circumstance. How can we enhance these mechanisms rather than supplant them with chemicals? One way to regain and enhance this ability for self-repair is via homeopathic treatment. Somehow, a properly selected remedy functions as an energetic stimulus or information transmitter that enables the body to do what it has forgotten or become less able to do: heal itself.

SYMPTOMS ARE OUR FRIENDS

"Disease is a unit. It is one disease for one person at one time. It begins in a single place (usually the individual's weakest spot) but it also shows itself throughout the whole being in many ways, manifesting though many signposts which we call signs and symptoms. Our job is to ferret out that ONE disease for that one person. The vital force's job is to help us find it, by producing signs, or symptoms, that show us the pattern of the disease." [Herscu, p. 6]

So what about disease? What about those nasty symptoms? Once you believe that the body and mind are always doing their best to accommodate to every situation, symptoms take on a whole new meaning and significance:

Symptoms are usually manifestations of the body's best attempt to heal itself. This view of symptoms may seem odd at first. After all, machines can't
repair themselves. When our car breaks down, its "symptoms" aren't signs of self-repair — they are signs of disrepair. But the body is not a machine. It does repair itself. We would all die quite rapidly if this were not the case. Thus, when we develop a fever or vomit, it is usually because the body is trying to kill off invading bacteria or purge itself of toxic matter. When we become hysterical or depressed after an emotional incident, it is the psyche's way of coping and healing from that incident. Symptoms, especially in acute disease, are signs that our defensive system is working.

Consider this. If we did not develop symptoms — if we did not develop a fever when it was warranted or become upset after a traumatic event — we would be quite sick indeed. When a person cannot develop symptoms, it is a sign that their inherent vitality is quite weak. We all know that elderly people do not usually develop high fevers as children do. This is because a young child has a good vital reactive system; a child can develop a high fever that enables them to quickly heal. An older person can only put up a weaker defense, and as a result, it is much harder for them to get well.

Now, if a symptom is a sign of the body's attempt to heal, what are the consequences of suppressing it? What if we suppress every fever with aspirin and every rash with cortisone? Palliate every allergic reaction with antihistamines? Quell every depression with antidepressants? This has become the primary operative mode of modern allopathic medicine — temporarily palliation or complete suppression of symptoms. But what is the effect of this practice in the long run — or even in the short-term?

Consider the use of nasal decongestant spray. Such sprays only temporarily alleviate congestion, they do not cure it. The congestion always returns after the spray wears off. Indeed, we are warned not to use such sprays for too long; if we do, our congestion will become even worse: This phenomenon illustrates a more general point. If we palliate or keep pushing our symptoms down, the body will rebel. It wants those symptoms. If you push them down, they will come back with a vengeance, or perhaps pop up somewhere else, in some other form.
Now what if you go beyond palliation and succeed in completely suppressing a symptom? A recent television ad for herpes medication enthusiastically exclaims, "It's all about suppression!" If you artificially suppress a symptom so that it never reappears, you may have the illusion of cure. But in reality, the underlying disease state that is causing that symptom will have to find a different way to express itself. Don't forget, if the body's symptoms reflect its battle against disease — a battle that is being waged in the most benign way possible — then its symptoms will usually be ones that are least damaging to health, given the circumstances. After all, the body's underlying "goal" is to survive. But if we completely deny and suppress these symptoms, the body will eventually need to compensate — by expressing itself with more serious symptoms elsewhere.

Hahnemann began to witness this phenomenon early on in his career. One of his first observations about disease was that it tended to deepen after suppressive treatments. This was particularly obvious when skin symptoms were suppressed. For instance, Hahnemann noticed that suppressed eczema could lead to allergies and asthmatic respiratory problems. The same observation can be made today. Modern pediatricians have all witnessed the rise of allergies and asthma in children, and they usually assume that pollution is the culprit. But what if the true culprit is the overuse of cortisone and allergy medicines? The following message, posted to a homeopathy Internet list by a concerned parent, provides a typical example of this syndrome:

"My 17-month-old daughter is suffering from "childhood eczema" (as diagnosed by her pediatrician). We have used "1% Hydrocortisone"... ointment when needed, up to twice a day. The medication usually helps, but is not a cure for the eczema which began during the first month or so after birth. This was also when she received the first of many vaccinations required or recommended in Illinois where we live...

My older daughter who is now nine used to have the same problem. Her eczema went away around age four, but was replaced by occasional asthma attacks. The asthma attacks now occur only once or twice a year. I have severe pollen allergies. My wife has mild pollen allergies. I hope this information helps." [MC]
From the homeopathic point of view, a weak spot in this family’s health pattern is the tendency to develop eczema, allergies, and asthma. The children both developed eczema early on, perhaps as a reaction to vaccination. When their eczema was suppressed, their underlying disease tendency was forced to express itself as asthma.

CURE VERSUS SUPPRESSION

After Hahnemann recognized the effects of symptom suppression, he began to examine more deeply the links between disease episodes, and especially, the effects of homeopathic remedies on symptom progression. He found that if symptoms were treated and removed homeopathically, they would be cured without further progression of disease. Moreover, earlier symptoms that had once been suppressed would return. Thus, if a case of asthma was cured homeopathically, the eczema that preceded the asthmatic state would most likely return. And if the eczema was then cured homeopathically (rather than suppressed), there would no longer be a progression into asthma.

Hahnemann also noticed proof of this in nature. He discovered that when disease episodes were left completely untreated and proceeded naturally, their interrelationships and patterns of progression and recession would reflect the same phenomena. For example, Hahnemann observed that if a patient was suffering from a disease and then contracted another dissimilar disease on top of it, the first disease would often disappear; it would become temporarily suppressed. However, once the second disease resolved, the first disease would return. This pattern mirrors the use of palliative drug treatment. Hahnemann wrote:

“When measles and smallpox were reigning at the same time, and both infected the same child, the measles that had already broken out was usually halted in its course by the smallpox that broke out somewhat later. The measles did not resume its course until after the smallpox healed.” [Hahnemann, Aphorism 38]

I’ve even seen this phenomenon myself. Izaak had a mild nose cold and cough that disappeared completely when he contracted a 24-hour stomach flu. When the flu resolved, the cold returned.
A second kind of disease combination that Hahnemann observed is analogous to the use of homeopathic remedies. In this case, the second disease is similar to the first. The result is that when the second disease resolves, the first disease resolves as well and never returns. For example, Hahnemann made this observation about the two similar diseases cowpox and smallpox — indeed, at about the same time as Edward Jenner did. Jenner's observation led him to the use of cowpox as a vaccination for smallpox. Hahnemann's observations and conclusions ran deeper. He noticed that incurring and recovering from smallpox could also cure deafness, testicular swelling, and dysentery that also just happened to precede it. He realized that this happened because all of these symptoms were also characteristic of smallpox; i.e., the process of getting and recovering from smallpox enabled the cure of previously existing conditions whose symptoms were similar to those of smallpox. Hahnemann also understood that Jenner's successful use of cowpox as a vaccination for smallpox was merely an illustration of a much larger therapeutic principle — the Law of Similars. (Nevertheless, as will be discussed later on, the way vaccination is practiced by allopaths is very much at odds with homeopathic philosophy and practice; the homeopathic approach to prophylaxis against disease is quite different.)

Finally, Hahnemann also observed cases in which two dissimilar diseases combined and coexisted. This was particularly common when a natural disease combined with an iatrogenic disease — a disease caused by toxic doses of medicine. Hahnemann noticed that iatrogenic diseases tend to persist and ultimately coexist with a patient's original disease. In modern times, this can be seen in people whose symptoms are suppressed with ongoing use of steroids; ultimately, the patient develops a "steroid disease" that coexists with their original illness.

Because of these observations, Hahnemann came to view the effects of all medicines as diseases in themselves. A "medicinal disease" could be viewed as either similar or dissimilar to a patient's disease. Eventually, Hahnemann concluded that the only way to cure a disease — not palliate or suppress it — was to meet it with a similar medicinal disease. In other words, the only way to cure was homeopathically.
ANTIPATHY, HOMEOPATHY, AND ALLOPATHY

Hahnemann's observations about the various possible relationships between disease states and medicinal states are fundamental to understanding the difference between homeopathy and other forms of medicine. Indeed, it was Hahnemann who coined the terms allopathy, antipathy, and homeopathy, in order to distinguish among different ways of applying medicines to diseases.

*Anti-pathy* is the application of medicines according to what Hippocrates called the *Law of Opposites*. In other words, to counter a symptom, a medicine is given that, if it were given to a healthy person, would create the opposite effect of the symptom. For example, a drying agent might be used in cases of excess mucus, or a constipating agent might be used for diarrhea.

*Homeo-pathy* is the application of medicines to disease states according to the *Law of Similars*. In other words, to cure a symptom, a medicine is given that, in a healthy person, would bring about a similar symptom.

*Allo-pathy* is the application of medicines to disease states according to no particular rule or law. In other words, the effects of medicines on healthy people bear no fixed relationship to their use in sick people. An allopathic physician may make use of antipathic medicines, homeopathic medicines, or any other kind of medicinal substance or method; there is no guiding principle of therapeutics.

Given the above definitions, it is clear that antipathic medicines are primary tools of today's allopaths. This is reflected in their use of antidepressants, antihistamines, antiinflammatories, etc. From the standpoint of homeopathic philosophy, all uses of antipathy are either palliative (i.e., they merely suppress a symptom for a short time, after which it returns) or are completely suppressive (they permanently suppress a symptom at the risk of developing deeper disease later on).

Interestingly, some of today's allopathic treatments are homeopathic. For example, the heart medications nitroglycerin and digitalis are both
tried-and-true homeopathic remedies that were used by homeopaths in the 1800s for cardiovascular disease. Because of the success of these remedies, they were adopted by the allopaths and continue to be used for heart patients until this day.

Of course, when modern allopaths discover new drugs that happen to have homeopathic action, they are puzzled. For instance, doctors are puzzled why Ritalin, a stimulant, should have a calming effect on hyperactive children. Of course, I'm not suggesting Ritalin as an effective homeopathic cure for hyperactivity. From a homeopathic perspective, Ritalin is applied in a blanket, nonindividualized fashion, and is given in toxic doses. But the reason why it works at all is due to the homeopathic principle — likes cure likes. Another somewhat amusing example of this phenomenon appeared in a recent article in the Houston Chronicle:

"An intriguing new study suggests coffee may prevent Parkinson's disease. How a product that makes people jittery could keep them from getting a disease that gives them tremors is not examined... but ... the study found that men who didn't drink coffee were five times more likely to develop Parkinson's than those who drank the most."

[HoustonChronicle]

Once again, heavy coffee drinking is not a recommended habit for anyone, but its ability to prevent or reduce the incidence of Parkinson's disease may also be explained by the Law of Similars.

Allopathic medicines that are neither antipathic nor homeopathic are actually considered the most dangerous by homeopaths. They are so strong that they completely suppress symptoms by engrafting a new, stronger medicinal disease onto a patient. The result is that patients now have two diseases — a disguised but deepened version of their original disease (which will most likely take on a new form) and an iatrogenic disease caused by the medicine. Typical examples of this kind of therapy are the use of chemotherapy for cancer and psychotropic medications for the severely mentally ill.

Over the past two hundred years, the Law of Similars has proven to be a therapeutic strategy that consistently cures without suppression. It
may seem unbelievable, but it is true; homeopathic medicines can cure supposedly incurable conditions like asthma — conditions that allopaths can only palliate or suppress. And, when properly applied, homeopathic remedies do not engraft new disease states. Indeed, they have the power to reveal previous layers of disease that were suppressed before, thereby allowing for their homeopathic treatment as well.

Of course, in serious cases, especially when many allopathic drugs have been taken over a long period of time, complete homeopathic cure can be long and complex — sometimes impossible. The curative process may require expert monitoring and care from both an experienced homeopath and an allopathic physician, to enable gradual and safe weaning off allopathic drugs. But if the body is able, such cures do happen. And even if complete cure is not possible, most people can attain a significant improvement in their health and a decrease in their need for allopathic medication.

One final word of caution. Just because a medicine is ultradilute and potentized does not make its use homeopathic. Potentized medicines can be applied antipathically and allopathically in the hands of a person who does not fully understand their use and cannot distinguish between suppression and cure. For this reason, remedies should always be used with caution, preferably under the supervision of a certified homeopath.

THE LAW OF CURE

As I have already described, Hahnemann’s observational skills enabled him to recognize causal interrelationships between disease episodes. He also noticed that, depending on a person’s particular susceptibilities and areas of weakness, his or her disease progression would usually take a fairly predictable path. Of course, allopaths have also noticed that people tend to manifest typical pathways of disease progression. But what about the reverse direction? What does a cure look like? And how can it be distinguished from suppression?
As I mentioned earlier, the successful homeopathic treatment of disease is often heralded by the reappearance of old symptoms. In essence, the progression toward deeper disease is put into reverse; the outermost disease state is met by a remedy and is lifted, revealing layers that had been suppressed before. These old symptoms can then be treated homeopathically, or, in many cases, do not need treatment at all — they simply "pass through" in lessened form and disappear by themselves. I have seen this in my own case. After taking a remedy, I experienced the return of precancerous cells on my nose that had been burned off years earlier. However, unlike before, these cells now scabbed over and healed completely on their own.

As it turns out, the old symptoms that return during a curative process tend to occur in a particular kind of pattern or sequence. Homeopaths call this pattern the Law of Cure. Although not a "law" like the Law of Similars, it can be viewed as an observational guideline for recognizing a pattern of cure, in contrast to a pattern of disease progression. The Law of Cure states that cure tends to proceed:

- *From the center toward the circumference.*
- *From above, downward.*
- *From more vital to less vital organs.*
- *In reverse order of appearance.*

Thus, internal (and more important) organs tend to be healed first, with the skin usually coming last. Symptoms also tend to return and be healed starting from the head and torso and progressing outward toward the limbs. Finally, symptoms tend to heal in reverse order of their appearance. Of course, this "top-down, in-out, last-first" pattern of cure isn't always strictly followed. The underlying idea, however, is that symptoms tend to be healed so that the most threatening symptoms are cured first. Since disease tends to progress by following the least harmful path of symptom expression, it also makes sense that the body will tend to heal its most important parts first.

The following case treated by Malaysian homeopath and physician Dr. Suriya Osman, illustrates the Law of Cure beautifully. It also demonstrates the dangers of suppression.
"This patient... was first seen in 1988 with what seemed to be a simple case of dandruff. He later developed tinea versicolor [a benign loss of pigmentation of the skin] both of which were treated in a suppressive manner. In 1991 this patient developed a full blown case of psoriasis with abdominal pain and also joint pain. He was referred to a skin specialist who put him on steroids and the usual skin creams... This patient had been on steroids, NSAID's [non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs] (Ponstan), and a paraphernalia of creams ever since, with a symptom picture getting worse and worse... In March of 1998, he complained of bodyache in addition to his usual joint pain and skin lesions. I looked over his records and was alarmed at the amount of steroids he had consumed. I asked if he would mind a slight aggravation and told him I was afraid that the steroids might have weakened his bones. I gave him [remedy] for a week hoping to antidote some of the bad effects of the steroids. I did not see this patient until today. He told me he had not taken any Ponstan ever since my treatment, had not needed any antihistamines and the only skin lesions he had were tinea versicolor! The remedy had brought back the old problem and miraculously taken away his joint pain, abdominal pain and psoriasis... The amazing thing is that the patient did not appear to realize that a near miracle had taken place! He did experience a very slight aggravation for about two days when he started the remedy, but has otherwise been well." [SO]

And a follow-up:

"The patient came back today because he had a slight cold and cough. I asked him about his psoriasis, to date, no symptoms at all. His skin still shows the tinea versicolor. His joint pains only come during wet weather and then only very slightly and only in the morning. I asked him about mental symptoms. While he used to be very easily irritated and angry, was anxious at night due to the pain from the joints, he is now an even tempered fellow who sleeps soundly all night. It still amazes me that all he needed was [remedy] for a week for a condition that spanned 10 years and was labeled incurable by our orthodox specialists!" [SO]

Notice how the treatment of this man's severe body pains (initially caused by suppression of skin disease, coupled with iatrogenic disease...
due to prolonged steroid use) led to a return of the original benign skin complaint of tinea versicolor. This case also illustrates how important it is not to suppress skin symptoms, including those that may reappear in the process of homeopathic cure. Such symptoms are typically not life-threatening and may indicate that deeper disease is simply on its way out. A homeopath should always be consulted if there is any question or doubt about returning symptoms. Remember that skin symptoms are often the body's best safety valve for venting disease. Unfortunately, in our vain and image-conscious society, they are also the first symptoms we suppress.

Here is another illustrative case that describes the retreat of Lyme disease. Notice how the disease regressed in the exact reverse order of its progression. The patient was treated by Christian Kurz, PhD, an Austrian nuclear physicist who is also a homeopath.

"A man came to me... with the diagnosis of Lyme disease. It was a textbook case, with the wandering exanthema [skin eruption] and accompanying pains. The skin symptoms had already subsided, and the muscle pains set in. They were so severe that the pain caused him to perspire so profusely that he would leave a little puddle wherever he was standing for a few minutes. He couldn't walk anymore and was sitting in a wheelchair. The pain had started in the area of the right forearm and had wandered up the arm, around the neck and had settled above the sternum on the chest... After the remedy, the pain retraced the original path. There was a hint of an exanthema on the original spot and all was over in a week. After one week he was completely restored and went on a trip to Bangkok. I have seen him several times since then (2.5 months ago) with no sign of recurrence." [CK]

Since homeopathy deals with the whole person, not just the physical body, the Law of Cure actually applies on a much deeper and more complete level than implied by these two cases. Even before remedies help to heal the physical body, they often address the innermost part of our being — our psyche, our mind, and our emotions. Thus, a common pattern of homeopathic cure begins with an increased sense of inner well-being. This may then be followed by healing on the physical level.
A classic example might be a lessening of anxiety, followed by a cure of asthma, followed by the return of eczema on the face. After this heals, the eczema might migrate out to the limbs, and then finally leave totally. In contrast, it would be a sign of suppression if asthma disappeared only to be replaced by new and more serious symptoms, such as severe depression or heart disease.

Homeopaths usually attribute the Law of Cure to Constantine Hering, MD, the first leader of the homeopathic community in America. A colorful and brilliant man, Hering was born in 1800 in Saxony, Germany. The pupil of the prominent surgeon Robbi at the University of Leipzig, he first came to homeopathy as a debunker; he was asked by his professors to write a paper condemning Hahnemann's new system. In his attempt to honestly do so, he repeated Hahnemann's original experiment with cinchona and found it to be successful. Shortly thereafter, he was cured of a potentially fatal dissecting wound with a single homeopathic dose of *Arsenicum Album* (arsenic trioxide). Soon he began to study and utilize the homeopathic system, and he quickly became an ardent supporter. As he himself wrote:

"My enthusiasm grew I became a fanatic. I went about the country, visited inns, where I got up on tables and benches to harangue whoever might be present to listen to my enthusiastic speeches on homeopathy. I told the people that they were in the hands of cut-throats and murderers. Success came everywhere. I almost thought I could raise the dead."

[Knerr]

Hering arrived in America in 1833 and became the leader among the few homeopaths there at the time. He settled in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and started a homeopathic college in that city in 1837. Later, in 1844, he founded America's first medical society, the American Institute of Homeopathy.

Hering was an avid enthusiast of collecting symptoms that had not only appeared in provings, but had also been verifiably cured by remedies. Indeed, he published his own 10-volume materia medica, whose remedy symptoms are still considered some of the most reliable to this
Hering was also an inveterate prover of new medicines. He proved more than 100 remedies on himself, including the snake remedy *Lachesis* (made from the poisonous venom of the bushmaster snake) and *Glonoine* — the medicine today known as nitroglycerin. As mentioned before, nitroglycerin is one of several homeopathic medicines that are still used by today's allopaths. Every heart patient with a little bottle of "nitro" under his or her pillow (my mother being one of them) owes a debt of thanks to Constantine Hering.

Unfortunately, knowledge of Hering's Law of Cure — simple yet critical observations about the signs of true cure — has yet to reach today's allopaths. Consider the following story from my own family. My older son Izaak had minor eczema as a baby, which we suppressed with cortisone cream. He then went on to develop allergies. As our pediatrician wrote out a prescription for allergy medicine, she commented, "He will probably develop asthma." Did she ever stop to think that the previous cortisone treatment had led to Izaak's allergies and that the suppressive allergy medicine she was prescribing might be the ultimate cause of asthma?

Doctors may notice that progressions tend to occur and that symptoms tend to become deeper and more significant, but they never ask why. It just happens. It's a "tendency." Yes, it's true that people have tendencies toward specific kinds of disease progressions. But because symptoms are routinely suppressed rather than treated homeopathically, doctors never get to see what a real cure looks like, with the return of older and lesser symptoms. They do not even know that such cures are possible.

Thankfully, we discontinued allergy medicines for Izaak, and he never developed asthma. He still suffers from some minor allergies, but he manages without antihistamines or any other kind of allergy medicine. He even has a bit of eczema return now and then. I am happy to see it. We just let it be, and eventually it resolves on its own or as a result of ongoing homeopathic treatment.

Another anecdote concerns a friend of mine. She has suffered for many years from respiratory problems, including asthma and bronchitis,
which she routinely suppresses, mostly with over-the-counter medications. Because she cannot afford health insurance, she is forced to go to the emergency room in crises, where she is given antibiotics, steroids, and a growing stack of medical bills that she cannot afford to pay. Eventually, her condition worsened. Although she no longer had as many respiratory symptoms, she developed severe emotional agitation and chest pain and subsequently suffered several minor strokes. The medical bills racked up further. I could see she was in grave danger — at the age of 45. I helped her pay some of her medical bills and convinced my family homeopath to take her on without a fee. He was able to find a good remedy for her quickly. Her chest pains, headaches, and sleeplessness subsided considerably for the few months she stayed on the recommended remedy. However, her bronchial and asthma symptoms returned, which she soon suppressed. Months later, her heart problems returned as well. Unfortunately, I have not been able to convince her to return to the homeopath.

My friend’s story is the story of many Americans. They cannot afford to take even a few days off from work in order to heal, nor can they afford health insurance or the services of a doctor that is able to follow their case carefully. In the end, they take too many ill-advised medications and develop even more serious chronic problems than most people do.

Homeopathy could be a cost-effective way to help the poor. Although the consultation rates are not inexpensive, the remedy costs are negligible and the results, in the long run, are more satisfactory and cost-effective. But the current legal status of homeopathic practice in this country, as well as the fact that it is not usually covered by insurance, makes treatment of the poor a risky and unviable option for most homeopaths. In addition, the "quick fix" mentality of most Americans makes homeopathic treatment problematic. Most people expect immediate results — usually immediate palliation or suppression — which homeopathy cannot always provide.
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SUSCEPTIBILITY

So why do we get sick? From an allopathic standpoint — the one most of us were indoctrinated with — we are the victims of "germs." Those pesky bacteria and viruses are everywhere, lurking on every doorknob and stranger's hand. If we are unlucky and get attacked, we are their hapless victims.

But wait! That can't be the whole story. Not everyone exposed to a virus or bacteria gets sick. The kids may all get the cold going around, but the parents might not. And doctors don't get every disease they are exposed to; they know how to put up some kind of "energetic" barrier to disease, and it usually works. Besides, we know that germs are everywhere. There is no escaping them. If becoming sick were simply a matter of exposure, we would all be sick all of the time.

The fact is, a person isn't necessarily the victim of every bacterium that jumps into his or her nose. Even in the most virulent epidemic, not everyone gets sick or dies. Some people can swim in frigid lakes without getting sick; others fall ill when exposed to a cool breeze. Some people can endure gruesome abusive childhoods and come away stronger; others are left permanently scarred by comparatively mild upsets. It's all a matter of our individual susceptibility — our ability to defend ourselves, to regain and retain equilibrium in the face of the onslaughts of daily life. That's why a physically and mentally healthy person is able to deal with most bacteria, viruses, and the natural ups and downs of life without much help. After all, the human world is and always has been full of germs, pollution, poor foods, grief, fear, and poverty. There's no escaping it all, and no spray will sterilize sufficiently.

So if disease isn't simply and irrevocably caused by an enemy outside ourselves, what is the cause? The answer is that there at least two forces at work: the external world of the environment and the internal world of the patient. If a patient falls sick, it is because the world has dealt them a blow and they were susceptible to it; their mind/body was simply not able to adapt and regain equilibrium. That is why homeopaths think the
best defense is prevention: observing sound hygienic and dietary practices, and enhancing the body's physical and emotional ability to cope more effectively with whatever life does bring — i.e., decreasing susceptibility.

This is precisely what homeopathic treatment can do. Somehow, a remedy that is truly homeopathic to the state of a patient can not only cure them, but can also reduce their susceptibility and improve their ability to adapt and recover in general. For example, before undergoing homeopathic treatment several years ago, I was increasingly prey to every cold or flu going around. Each year, I found myself getting sick more and more often, and taking longer and longer to recover — often weeks. Today, I rarely get a cold — at most two or three times a year. When I do, it usually takes me only two or three days to recover — without the aid of any conventional medicine.

Of course, the allopathic model of disease treatment is quite different. Bacteria and viruses are cast as enemy agents and treatment as warfare. The result is a never-ending and often escalating series of battles. First there is the skirmish, where symptoms are patched over and suppressed. Then there is warfare — with ever-stronger drugs. We creep about stealthily, avoiding "the enemy" as much as possible. We spray each crevice with protective antibacterial soaps, or dose ourselves prophylactically with antibiotics. But unfortunately, these practices just serve to strengthen the bacteria that surround us, whether we like it or not; the enemy knows how to adapt.

The truth is, by avoiding all aggravating influences, we may actually be depriving ourselves of the opportunity to learn how to deal with them. For instance, if children are sheltered so completely that they never experience sadness, jealousy, or anger, they won't know how to operate very effectively when they leave the family nest. Likewise, if we suppress every disease and kill every germ artificially, our bodies won't learn how to deal with these disease factors on their own. Remember: people were once able to recover from many infections without antibiotics. We should be reserving our big guns for the real battles.
The same argument can be made about vaccination. Medical scientists are developing more and more types of vaccines against viruses each year. But invariably, new and more vicious diseases are discovered as well. While the goal of vaccination may be to stimulate the immune system, research has also shown that the immune mechanisms they create aren’t exactly the same nor as beneficial as the mechanisms developed by actually contracting and recovering from a disease [Parish]. As discussed in the preceding chapter, vaccines boost the humoral or Th2 function of the immune system; actually getting (and recovering) from a disease boosts cell-mediated or Th1 immunity. To overstimulate one type of immunity at the expense of another may be ill-advised. Indeed, there is a very real possibility that overvaccination of today’s children may be inadvertently triggering a variety of allergic and autoimmune disorders (because of overstimulation of the Th2 immune function). It may also be diminishing the ability of the Th1 immune functions to fight disease in general. As immunity researcher Philip F. Incao, MD, points out, "There is no system of the human being, from the mind to muscles to immune system, which gets stronger through avoiding challenges, but only through overcoming challenges. The wise use of vaccinations would be use them selectively, and not on a mass scale." [Incao]

As it turns out, the childhood diseases such as measles, mumps, and chicken pox used to be regarded as beneficial by pediatricians. Doctors of the past noticed that, after experiencing and recovering from these diseases, children tended to make developmental leaps in cognition and physical robustness. The natural experience of these childhood diseases may even be necessary for our children’s normal development. They certainly do exercise the immune system and develop a natural and permanent form of immunity — something that cannot always be said of vaccinations. So what is the effect of removing these experiences from our children’s lives?

Unfortunately, the rate of vaccine use is only accelerating. As recently as 1985, the recommended vaccination schedule in America delivered 25 antigens [disease agents] to children by the time they were five years old.
By 2002, that number had increased to 77 antigens [Mercola], and the numbers are increasing each year. Our societal reliance on vaccinations for every kind of virus may ultimately come at the cost of terrible side effects and a greater susceptibility to chronic disease. Though well-intentioned, these programs may ultimately have grave consequences for humanity.

**SUSCEPTIBILITY IS INDIVIDUAL.**

As will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 5, one of the most important philosophical concepts in homeopathy is that disease and health must be analyzed and understood on an individual basis. Each person exists in a dynamically changing state that is unique to them. This state determines their most appropriate remedy as well as their individual susceptibility and reactivity to their environment.

Suppose that we have a man, woman, or child in a normal state of health. Along comes an exciting cause — a virus, bacteria, parasite, physical accident, emotional event, or stressful situation — that could potentially create a disturbance in their energetic and physical state. How will they react?

Partly, this depends on the strength and nature of the exciting cause. The stronger it is, the more likely that anyone, no matter who they are or what state they are in, will react to it in more or less the same way. For example, if someone hits their finger with a hammer, they will cry "ouch!" and develop a nasty bruise or broken finger. Their reaction will be quite predictable and less unique to them. For this reason, their treatment will also be more uniform, even within the homeopathic system; there will usually be a short list of commonly used homeopathic remedies for such situations. In the case of the hammer blow, the best remedy would most likely be *Arnica Montana* — a remedy derived from a mountain flower called leopard’s bane. It is well known for its effectiveness in treating bruises, shock, and other kinds of physical trauma.

Another example of a strong exciting cause is a virulent epidemic. In such situations, most people develop similar symptoms, regardless of their
individual constitution. For this reason, homeopathic treatment of epidemics is also less individualized. The homeopath's goal will be to find a small set of remedies that covers the symptoms that most people are experiencing — a set called the *genus epidemicus*. In a strong flu epidemic, for instance, the genus epidemicus will usually consist of two or three remedies that match the symptoms of that particular epidemic. Given such a small set of remedy choices, selecting the appropriate remedy for a particular patient is not very difficult. These remedies can also be used prophylactically if the threat of infection is imminent. Indeed, a brilliant aspect of homeopathy is that a genus epidemicus can be found for any epidemic — even of an unknown disease. (Sandra Perko, PhD has written an excellent book that discusses the overwhelming success of homeopathy in the 1918 flu epidemic as well as potential remedies for future flu epidemics [Perko]. In my view, the information in this book would be far more effective and beneficial to the public than the yearly flu vaccination programs.)

Since fairly uniform homeopathic treatment is possible in situations like trauma and epidemics, it is not surprising that conventional clinical trials of homeopathy have met with the greatest success in those situations that are also provoked by strong exciting causes and characterized by uniform patient responses. A good example is a study on the use of homeopathic remedies for severe pediatric diarrhea [Jacobs] that will be discussed at length in Chapter 7. It is only natural that a study constrained to using only a single predetermined remedy (or a small set of remedies) for a specific condition will be most successful when that condition can be characterized by predictable, not idiosyncratic, symptoms. In such situations, successful treatment is also much less dependent on the skill of the treating homeopath. Both of these factors make the outcome of conventionally designed trials more uniform and predictable.

But the forces that cause disease on a day-to-day basis are usually not as strong as a hammer blow nor as severe as an epidemic. In most situations, people will react differently to an exciting cause of disease, and their reaction will depend on their personal areas of weakness. Indeed, whether they react at all will depend on their susceptibility to the nature
of the exciting cause. James Tyler Kent, MD, one of the most important American homeopaths of the late 1800s, wrote:

"The one who is made sick is susceptible to the disease in accordance with the plane he is in and the degree of attenuation that happens to be present at the time of the contagion. The degree of the disease cause fits his susceptibility at the moment he is made sick." [Kent, p. 107]

In other words, there must be some kind of affinity between the disease cause and the state of the person who is susceptible to it. Another American homeopath of the early 1900s, Herbert A. Roberts, MD, wrote:

"In analyzing susceptibility we find it is very largely an expression of a vacuum in the individual. The vacuum attracts and pulls for the things most needed, that are in the same plane of vibration as the want in the body... susceptibility has an attractive force which draws to itself the disease which is on the same plane of vibration and which tends to correct this... deficiency." [Roberts, p.151]

Roberts is implying here that the illnesses a person gets actually meet some kind of need within the person. Another way of thinking about this is in terms of a shaped hole (susceptibility) that is filled by a similarly shaped peg (disease). This type of reasoning, though certainly controversial, is worthy of some consideration. Many people feel that their disease experiences are also their teachers. Personally, I have found it quite instructive to consider why and how I get sick each time I do, and from more than just a physical point of view. What is the symbolism or meaning of a particular disease episode to the individual who experiences it?

For example, consider the modern scourge of lower back pain — or the more recent popular affliction, carpal tunnel syndrome. Why have these problems emerged in our society? Recent work in rehabilitative medicine by John Sarno, MD, links these types of conditions to emotional stress rather than to repetitive hand motions, bad seating choices, or hard physical labor [Sarno]. From a symbolic point of view, it makes sense that a person under severe work stress (unconsciously) develops the exact symptoms that will prevent them from continuing to perform their work — typing at a keyboard, sitting at a desk all day, or lifting heavy objects.

Rather than resorting to the normal diagnosis of slipped disc or repetitive stress injury and the resulting surgical treatment that goes along with it, Sarno has developed a "mind over pain" approach. The treatment simply consists of getting a patient to truly acknowledge and accept the actual root cause of their pain — stress. Sarno has found that this step alone can result in great therapeutic success and relief for a majority of his patients — even those who have suffered for many years and who manifest measurable signs of physical damage to their anatomy.

From a homeopathic point of view, Sarno's mind-cure requires patients to psychologically confront their emotional state head on, rather than suppress their feelings and hide behind a physical diagnosis. Indeed, Sarno has found that the surgical approach, which does not address the true root of the problem for many sufferers, is often unsuccessful in the long-term. I've used Sarno's technique myself. Several years ago, I mysteriously developed a case of "carpal tunnel syndrome." I had been typing at a computer terminal for 20 years without ill effect. Why were my wrists and hands aching and tingling now? After some thought, I realized that this condition developed after I had found out that my son Izaak would need surgery. I accepted the stress factor, and after his surgery, the pain completely left my hands and wrists.

CENTER OF GRAVITY

Another way of understanding individual susceptibility is to view each person's energetic state as having a center of gravity — a general zone of susceptibility to certain kinds of diseases. This notion was introduced by George Vithoulkas, a Greek homeopath who won the Right Livelihood Award in 1996, an alternative Nobel Prize conferred by the Swedish parliament. In his text, The Science of Homeopathy [Vithoulkas], Vithoulkas describes the center of gravity as a combination of states or vibratory levels in the emotional, mental, and physical realms. Within each of these realms is a range of diseases, from simple and largely benign, to serious and life-threatening.
Vithoulkas maintains that individuals resonate only with those diseases that have an affinity to their center of gravity. For example, a psychotic person's center of gravity is weighted very strongly in the mental and emotional realm, but not as strongly in the physical realm. This explains why psychotic patients do not get as many minor physical illnesses as other people. While they are very susceptible to stimuli that affect their minds, they are not as susceptible to factors that affect their bodies. In contrast, a cancer patient's center of gravity is very severe in the physical realm, but may be quite benign in the mental realm.

According to Vithoulkas's theory, a person tends to remain at the same center of gravity until they are shifted by some event to either a more severe level (by suppressive treatment or by some physical or emotional shock) or to a less severe level (by homeopathic treatment, for example). The center of gravity may also shift from one realm to another — for instance, from a primarily physical focus to a mental focus, or vice versa. Vithoulkas writes:

"The principle of resonance renders the organism susceptible to influence on basically only one level at a given moment... Each level represents, for example, susceptibility to a particular range of diseases. If a person treated on Level B for gonorrhea receives antibiotics, his resonant frequency may change; over time, he will become susceptible to illnesses on, say, Level C. While experiencing symptoms of illness on this level, he will not acquire gonorrhea, even though he may be exposed... If however, such a person were to be treated homeopathically, the vibration rate would again move back down the scale, and the patient may well become susceptible to gonorrhea once again."

[Copyright 1980 by George Vithoulkas. Used by permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc.]

Assessing the movement of a patient's center of gravity is one way of determining whether they are getting better or are being suppressed by treatment. For example, it would be considered an excellent sign of improvement if a patient went from having chronic kidney infections to having minor skin problems, or from having schizophrenia to having severe allergies. But a progression from benign skin disease to severe
depression would be a poor indicator — a sign that the center of gravity had been shifted in the wrong direction. Indeed, the grave side effects of many of today's "wonder drugs" are quite telling in this respect. For example, the acne medication Accutane is known to have the potential side effect of suicidal depression. Homeopathic philosophy clearly explains why this is so: because the suppression of acne shifts the center of gravity inward to more serious emotional disease.

Another interesting corollary of Vithoulkas's model is that it would be unlikely for a mentally and emotionally healthy person with minor physical ailments to suddenly and without cause develop a severe disease. Most people who become seriously ill have a history of increasingly poor physical or mental health, or they have experienced a severe jolt to their system — perhaps an extreme emotional or physical trauma or ill-advised drugging. Vithoulkas's model also implies that a lack of susceptibility to a particular ailment can be indicative of two things: that a person is too healthy to be affected or that they are too sick to be affected. Thus, just as a person who is healthy may not yield to the flu, a person who is very sick — for example, a psychotic patient — may not either. One might say that psychotic patients get sick less often. But the fact is, they are extremely sick all of the time, but in a different way.

HISTORY AND ENVIRONMENT

What influences mold a person's state and create their unique susceptibility? One factor that both allopaths and homeopaths agree upon is basic physical constitution and inheritance. Each person is born with inherent weaknesses and proclivities. These are influenced by genetic makeup - inherited familial or racial tendencies. The susceptibilities of parents, and even of previous generations, are related to a person's current susceptibilities. However, the homeopathic view of inherited susceptibility goes beyond genetics. For one thing, a person is viewed as inheriting not only genetic material from their parents, but also aspects of their vital forces. For this reason, many homeopaths believe that if an ancestor suffered
from a serious disease (such as tuberculosis or venereal disease) or if their vital force was severely affected in some other way, a taint or effect from this experience may be transmitted to their descendants. For example, the descendants of a person who experienced tuberculosis might acquire the tendency to develop respiratory problems. Fortunately, homeopaths have also found that inherited disease tendencies can be cured homeopathically. Thus, even if a person's genes can't be altered, the proclivities of their vital force can be.

Curiously, research on the human genome has now revealed that the genetic code is far too simple to explain everything about us. Perhaps this provides further proof that it really is the vital force that is directing the show. Genes may only be receivers of information transmitted by the vital force, much like a television is only the receiver of a broadcast transmitted over the airwaves. Thus, just as fixing your television won't improve the quality of the shows you can receive on it, replacing or removing your body parts won't repair underlying problems with the vital force. And even if you can't replace your television (your genes), there is still the possibility of improving the quality of the programs it receives (the activity of the vital force).

Another factor that greatly influences a person's state and susceptibility is their life history. What physical and emotional experiences have they had? What drugs, vaccinations, and other medicines have they taken? All of these factors help to shape the current state of a patient's mind, emotions, and body. If a person was repeatedly assaulted as a child, it will color the way they look at the world and the way they interact with others. Similarly, if a person has taken a great deal of drugs or has experienced severe physical traumas, specific systems of their body will be left weakened.

From a homeopathic point of view, a person's life history also includes their gestation in the womb. Indeed, homeopaths have found that the experiences of a child's parents during conception and pregnancy can provide invaluable information about the child. For example, it is not unusual for a pregnancy fraught with parental anxieties about work or money to result in a child that is chronically anxious and sus-
ceptible to anxiety-provoking situations, even if the parents themselves are not anxious by nature.

One illustrative case described by homeopath Julian Jonas, CCH, involved a child whose mother was abused by her spouse during pregnancy. The result was a child who was fearful, defensive, and violent. Ultimately, he was cured with a remedy that has the mental symptoms: "Delusion: is being injured" and "Delusion: will receive injury." The homeopath wrote, "What struck me as the clearest expression of his state was his statement that he feels people are trying to hurt him. This was the feeling that caused him to strike out to protect himself. It also probably reflects, to a certain extent, the mother's feeling during the first half of her pregnancy, while she was in the abusive relationship." [flonas]

Another important factor that affects a person's susceptibility is their current living conditions and life habits. If a patient is living in rooms that are cold, damp, or unsanitary; is eating poorly; or is repeatedly exposed to chemicals via food or environment, their vitality will be weakened and their general susceptibility to disease will be greater. Indeed, their disease may simply be a direct result of these environmental factors. Homeopaths call these kinds of disease-provoking influences maintaining causes. Maintaining causes can be mental and emotional as well as physical — for example, a stressful job, an inappropriate school, or difficult family relations. Part of a homeopath's job is to inquire about such factors and to encourage patients, as much as possible, to remove maintaining causes from their lives.

As you can see, susceptibility is a complex thing, and understanding it is an important part of successful homeopathic treatment. A homeopath must consider the entire physical, emotional, and mental makeup of a patient and the full historical context of their case. From maintaining causes to exciting causes, from family inheritance to life history — all of these factors play roles in a patient's disease state. And when it comes to patient treatment and the quest for a true cure, the whole person must be addressed as well — a whole that is integrated, dynamic, and unique.