

Is Being a Good Homeopath Enough?

We should aim to cure sometimes, to relieve often, but to comfort always.

—William Osler MD

Early in my career as a homeopath I saw a nine-year old boy who suffered from asthma, recurrent bladder infections and psoriasis. After taking a careful case, I prescribed the remedy *Staphysagria 1M*. The child did well with complete resolution of his chronic asthma and bladder symptoms and a gradual amelioration of his psoriasis symptoms over time. I was very pleased and felt that I had found the *similimum* (the exact right remedy for the case).

Yet the child had a very physically abusive father. The child was very shy, withdrawn and quiet, suppressing much anger about his family situation. After the remedy, he became more vocal and challenging to his parents. This was intolerable to his father who became so enraged that he beat him, breaking the child's arm and leg and the child had to be hospitalized. The family refused to let me see the child again. Later I learned that he had fully relapsed with resumption of his physical symptoms.

This, and other similar cases, brought me to wonder if being a good homeopath is always enough? I have found that it is just as important to be a good healer as it is to be a good homeopath. Some homeopaths are poor healers, while some excellent healers have minimal skills as a homeopath.

To be a good healer, one must possess wisdom, compassion and the capacity to see the larger picture. This requires the ability to hold and build rapport with one's patients. It necessitates mutual respect between patient and practitioner. It is much more than simply technique or knowledge.

What attracts patients to a homeopath is most often not their homeopathic knowledge as much as their skills as a healer. When asked why they chose a particular practitioner, patients will often say "he listened" or "she cared" or "I felt comfortable with her", rather than "he has much homeopathic knowledge".

I believe that it is important to teach and train homeopathic practitioners to be more than just good homeopaths. Specific skills and attitudes as a healer need to be nurtured and developed. This, unfortunately, is something that is frequently neglected in allopathic training. Much of this training must be individualized. Every practitioner and teacher has certain skills, knowledge and qualities that are unique to them and that make them good at what they do. These are akin to the secret ingredient that a master chef places in his/her creation. This is part of the magic and mystery that makes the homeopathic process work. Good teachers do not focus so much on imparting this quality to their students. As helping their students find the gifts that they bring to homeopathy that are uniquely their own.

With my patient, I learned that finding the right remedy is not always enough. It is vital to see the whole picture and to determine what type of effect giving the right remedy would have on the system. For example, in the above case, it would have been necessary to treat the parents before even considering treating the child. This of course presupposes that the homeopath can even see the potential for abuse. Cases like these have been vital to my growth as a homeopath and as a healer.

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