

Speaking from the heart about Homeopathy

*If you have knowledge, let others light
their candles at it*

—Margaret Fuller

Presenting homeopathy to the world is becoming increasingly important. With the explosion of interest in alternative medicine, there is the potential for a new golden age of homeopathy. Small things that individuals do now may have a large impact on the future of this healing art.

There is no greater way to help homeopathy grow than by giving introductory talks to the public. While many practitioners give these talks at the beginning of their careers, they neglect this service as they mature. Introductory presentations are both an opportunity and a responsibility for all those who have a serious interest in homeopathy.

Introductory talks are often the public's first contact with homeopathy and may either awaken interest and inspire people, or turn them off completely. Introductory presentations provide an opportunity for practitioners to share themselves; they are the single most effective way of gathering patients for a practice. They also help to solidify the homeopath's knowledge, because explaining the intricacies of the homeopathic method in layman's terms helps to build a new understanding for the speaker as well as the listener. Such talks also provide a deeper opportunity to discover what is on the public's mind.

There are two keys to giving a good introductory talk. First, presenters must believe in homeopathy and be able to impart their enthusiasm to others. Homeopathy is a "great subject"; it is one of the most fantastic gifts of all time to be able to offer others the key to maintaining or recovering their health.

Second, presenters must believe in themselves and speak from the heart. It is not necessary to be an accomplished homeopath to give an introductory talk. Generally, you as the speaker will know more about homeopathy than everyone else in the room. If you can just get out of the way and let homeopathy take over, success is assured.

When I was first asked to give an introductory talk, I thought "There is no way that I am ready." It took me time to practice

and become prepared. I had to be willing to get out there, take a risk, and maybe make a fool of myself. After that first talk, I found that I felt much more alive, and it brought me deeper into the heart of homeopathy.

For many speakers, the first task is to overcome anxiety. Stage fright is the number one issue that keeps people from public speaking. This frequently includes a heightened sensitivity, a fear of poor performance, and the fear of possible humiliation. Many people have had a negative past experience with public speaking. Research shows that there is an optimal level of anxiety for performance—levels of anxiety that are either too high or too low cause a decline in performance. The goal is not to rid oneself of all anxiety but to learn to effectively manage and channel the anxiety into the presentation. This keeps you focused and gives the talk energy.

The keys to managing anxiety are to prepare adequately, to be authentic, and to remember that fear is normal. Most importantly, when speakers immerse themselves in homeopathy, homeopathy has a way of taking over and leading the talk. This is best achieved by focusing on the subject rather than on oneself during the delivery.

There is no right or wrong way to give an introductory talk. Content varies greatly, depending on the speaker and the audience. Talks are best if they are kept simple, illustrating only a few key points. Important elements include: introduction, description of how the speaker got interested in homeopathy, the story of Hahnemann, basic homeopathic principles and philosophy, what to expect when a case is taken, definition of a homeopathic remedy, an explanation of what homeopathy can treat, homeopathic research, homeopathy in the world today, and a conclusion mentioning next steps for those in the audience who are interested in learning more. The most important part of the introductory talk is perhaps the question and answer section. Many people come to an introductory talk specifically intending to ask a single question.

For those who give introductory presentations regularly, it is important to keep the talks fresh. Consider varying

format, stories, and emphasis to keep your presentation vital and appealing. It will vary greatly from audience to audience as you customize it.

One of the most difficult challenges in presenting homeopathy is overcoming public prejudice, (i.e., misinformation and prejudgments). Many people think that they have tried homeopathy when they really haven't. They often confuse it with other modalities of alternative medicine such as herbalism. Most listeners also have trouble relating to the 19th century vocabulary used

in homeopathy. It is important to avoid homeopathic jargon and find language that connects with your audience.

Audience members will weigh and judge everything that the speaker says, according to what they have been taught before. Ultimately, it is those audience members with an open mind, heart, and spirit who will hear and respond to the message.

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