

Becoming the Unbiased Observer

One of the keys to success in homeopathic treatment is to develop the skill of becoming an unbiased observer. Not only must homeopaths be able to perceive their patients clearly, but also patients must be able to perceive themselves.

Patients reporting symptoms

Homeopaths rely on patients to accurately report their symptoms. Unfortunately in our modern world, many have lost the capacity to describe what is going on within them. They have lost the language of their symptoms.

It is not uncommon in my practice for patients to complain of pain and yet be unable to describe the nature, quality or modalities that accompany that pain. When questioned, they often respond " . . . you know, doctor, it is *just pain*." Frequently patients describe their condition in terms of diagnoses or lab results rather than their symptoms. Some patients, after years of psychotherapy, are no longer able to relate a clear picture of themselves and their emotions, but can only parrot what they have been told in therapy.

Many homeopathic practitioners who move to the U.S. from second or third-world countries report this. They say it is much more difficult to take a good case here, and because of this, they can be frustrated initially with their results.

Much of the difficulty stems from allopathic thinking. The homeopath must educate patients and help them rediscover the language of their symptoms and their bodies. For some patients, it comes easily and they need little direction other than some initial education. They are self-responsible and work with their practitioner to become self-aware rather than blindly turning their health care over to others. Ultimately those patients have the most success with homeopathic treatment, in my experience. Others require frequent redirection and have a tendency when stressed to relapse into allopathic thinking. A third group of patients has great difficulty in even relating their symptoms to the homeopath. This may be an obstacle to cure.

Homeopaths developing skills

Homeopaths must develop skills in unbiased observation so that they may accurately perceive their patients. Samuel Hahnemann stated in the *Organon*, Aphorism 83: "The individualizing examination of a disease case, for which I am giving only general instructions here demands nothing of the medical-art practitioner except freedom from bias and healthy senses, attention while observing and fidelity in recording the image of the disease."

This includes skills in observing verbal, non verbal and emotional cues. It involves the capacity to perceive what is unique and individualizing in a case. Observation skills are not something that can be easily obtained. They represent a lifelong journey of exploration and work.

Homeopaths must also be able to observe life. It is the homeopath's unbiased observation during proving research that gives all homeopaths an accurate description of each of the homeopathic remedies that they use. It is a homeopath's unbiased observation of their cured cases that allows them to further their homeopathic knowledge. It is the unbiased observation of life that allows them to see the remedy states in the world around them. In this way, all of life becomes a classroom and a teacher. This involves the capacity to perceive what is unique and individualizing in life.

Lastly, homeopaths must be able to accurately observe themselves. This is the key to the removal of bias or prejudice. We can see remedy states in others only to the extent that we can see them in ourselves. Each of us contains the potentiality for all remedy states within us, I believe. Often when homeopaths obtain homeopathic treatment themselves, their observational skills greatly improve. We need to be able to perceive what is unique and individualizing in ourselves. It is this awareness of the uniqueness in ourselves that permits us to see it in our patients.

Unbiased observation does not simply come from the mind but also from the heart. It requires the capacity to see with our whole self so that we can engage our patients more fully, as human beings.

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