

## Shadow Remedies and Hero Remedies

All homeopathic practitioners have favorite remedies that they prescribe and remedies that they ignore. When a practitioner has success with a remedy, there is a very human tendency to prescribe that remedy more frequently. Likewise, when a remedy has not produced successful results, to ignore that a practitioner tends to use it less often.

Hahnemann warns against these tendencies in Aphorisms 257 and 258 of the *Organon*. He states, "The genuine medical-art practitioner will know how to avoid making favorites of certain medicines. By the same token, the medical-art practitioner will not avoid medicine that he previously employed with disadvantage. He will bear in mind that the only medicine that deserves his attention and preference is always the one that in each case of disease, most aptly corresponds in similarity to the totality of characteristic symptoms, and he will not allow petty passions to interfere with this serious choice." In other words, it is important to not be either positively or negatively prejudiced when making a homeopathic prescription.

Often a prejudice influences a practitioner so subtly that they may not even be aware of it. For example, it has been repeatedly shown that when a homeopath looks at a rubric, they don't see the remedies that they are unfamiliar with. Instead, here is a tendency to "round up the usual suspects" Some practitioners are well-known for prescribing one remedy very frequently (for as many as 50% of their cases), while other practitioners, practicing in the same area and caring for similar patients, may seldom or never prescribe that particular remedy

What is going on here? The psychoanalyst Carl Jung describes unconscious aspects of each individual (or archetypes) that he calls them the shadow and the hero. Our "shadow" aspects are those that we strongly dislike and do not see. We tend to avoid anything connected with the shadow in ourselves but we see these qualities that we don't like in others (projection). "Shadow remedies" are ones we practitioners never think of when taking a patient's case.

Similarly, the "hero" represents that aspect of ourselves that we are most

comfortable with, representing an ally or a friend, so to speak. We often choose experiences in our lives that solidify and strengthen the hero. It is important to remember that this process generally occurs unconsciously, without our awareness. "Hero remedies" are ones that we leap to in our reasoning before the patient has even revealed many symptoms.

One of the keys to becoming a good homeopath is self-knowledge. This means a willingness to consider those aspects of ourselves (and those remedies) that we tend to avoid, as well as those that are our favorites. Homeopaths' effectiveness is reflected not only in general homeopathic knowledge, and the knowledge of their remedies and patients but also in knowledge of ourselves. Through careful self-observation, it is possible to reduce errors of judgment and prejudice. This self-scrutiny takes courage, since it is more comfortable to avoid or deny these areas.

A simple way of looking at shadow and hero remedies in your practice is to keep data on your prescribing. If you compile this data over time and compare it to similar data of others, you identify seldom prescribed remedies and those that you prescribe much more frequently.

Ultimately the best practitioners are those who value all remedies equally and are not prejudiced in their remedy selection. This requires self-awareness. By expanding our remedy selection, ultimately we grow both as homeopaths and as individuals.

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