

The author found answers to five incurable conditions - even though conventional medicine said it was impossible. She presents an empowering handbook for healing that helps others struggling with illness navigate the world of alternative medicine to find answers, too.

**GET WELL- EVEN WHEN YOU'VE BEEN TOLD YOU CAN'T.  
Simple Step for Finding Perfect Healing Using Methods Outside of  
Conventional Medicine.**

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GET WELL

EVEN WHEN  
YOU'VE BEEN TOLD

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## *Introduction*

I was not always an advocate for alternative medicine, a believer in the holistic approach to healing, or stridently committed to conventional medicine in moderation. I didn't grow up with parents who fed me tofu, who disallowed sugar in the home and who routinely wore Birkenstocks. I am the stereotypical self-made business woman who has earned respect from her peers and always enjoyed enormous credibility in the community. I'm very professional, have served on a number of hospital/healthcare boards and don't look like a typical advocate of a message about breaking free from the conventional - but today I am.

This was the beginning. I was adopted at birth and raised in the Midwest by simple, eighth-grade educated parents who were blue-collar, meat and potatoes people. I was not considered a robust child - maybe even a little fragile, health-wise. I was tall and skinny, and I seem to remember I had lots of colds and sniffles. I had the normal battery of childhood diseases: measles, chickenpox, mumps, and of course, the standard tonsillectomy at age six.

As a working adult, I became entrenched in the media and advertising world, which back in the 60's and 70's consisted of two martini lunches, cigarette smoking and a pressure-cooker work life driven by deadlines. By the mid 70's, I had been through a divorce and my lifestyle, at work and at home, was full of stress and bad habits. It was extremely difficult being an undercapitalized small business owner and single mother. A few years later, it was equally tough being a wife, a mother and an overachiever who worked 70-80 hour weeks and didn't take a full-week's vaca-

tion for eight years. My lifestyle was a mess that included a poor diet, too little sleep and a family dynamic influenced by a new husband and that resulting challenging relationship.

While I was building my business, struggling with my marriage and trying to be a good mother, I also served on the board of directors for a number of non-profits and for-profits, which included a significant chain of hospitals in Arizona. For that reason, I knew the best doctors in the community and many were my friends. When I needed help I ran to one of them for a quick fix so I could keep pushing my body to do the max. I wasn't raised or conditioned to challenge what my doctors told me and besides I was too busy to do anything but take the prescription and keep running full speed ahead.

By the 1980's my body returned all these favors and began a twenty-year process of delivering difficult conditions which were off-shoots of a lifestyle that weakened my immune system to such an extent that every genetic predisposition I was prone to eventually surfaced. Initially, I did what I was conditioned to do: run to the best medical doctors for a "cure". After a couple of years of trusting in a system that previously accommodated my needs, I finally found myself sick of being sick. I began to lose confidence in the results my doctors provided and I started to look elsewhere.

How did I know what to do, where to go, who to call and which methods to try? I didn't. I relied on faith, and some sort of knowing within me that told me since God had created such an incredible, comprehensive Universe - surely he had created answers somewhere, for everything. Maybe they weren't well known - maybe not medically sanctioned, and maybe not easily accessible - but I knew answers must exist because it seemed

*some* people were getting well from these same conditions. My faith was the catalyst. God, or the Universe if you wish, delivered; results followed.

## **Examples From My Journeys.**

### **Rheumatoid Arthritis**

One night in 1981 I awoke about 3:00 AM with excruciating pain in my right knee. I was immobilized for hours, unable to twist my leg or move the muscle that regulated the knee. I thought my cartilage had dislodged. The next day after the pain released, my chiropractor checked my knee for something out of place, but everything seemed fine. Weeks later a similar attack hit my left hip – also in the middle of the night. I had to be carried into my doctor's office because putting weight on that hip generated unbearable pain. I was referred to a rheumatologist; the diagnosis was palendromic rheumatism.

I was told that this condition might eventually transition into rheumatoid arthritis. The physician was right. Some months later, after a rash of similar attacks that eventually became more frequent and longer in duration, I was back in his office, a victim of rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Like others with RA, the expected degenerative, debilitating symptoms plagued me, but in my case they seemed to have come on all too quickly and with a complete vengeance. I was told this disease was incurable but my doctor hoped to minimize the symptoms with medication.

After nearly two years of conventional medical treatment, including daily doses of powerful anti-inflammatory drugs and



trips to the emergency room for steroid injections, my physician decided to prescribe a form of chemotherapy, Methotrexate, to quiet my T-cells and thereby mitigate the increasingly painful symptoms. It became apparent to me that I was not really improving - my medications were just getting stronger. Energy-wise, I could only function at work a few hours a day before I returned home, collapsed on the sofa for the rest of the evening and had to be helped into the bathroom or bedroom by my teenage son or my husband. Deformity started in my hands and the swelling, stiffness and pain were unrelenting in nearly every joint in my body. I lost nearly 20 percent of my hair and my skin looked like a woman in her seventies (I was 37 at the time). My body was aging so rapidly I could hardly believe it. This, I thought, was not the way I wanted to live.

At this point I discontinued conventional medicine and took matters into my own hands. I had no idea where I was going to find help but I knew answers must exist somewhere. I was off all medications within months, and began a healing journey that led to marked improvement within the first 90-days. Using nutritional therapy, controlling my systemic candidiasis, adding a number of supplements, making significant lifestyle and attitude changes and getting more rest - within a few years, my immune system was strong enough to fight the disease and win. No drugs, no doctors, no disfigurement and no symptoms. Today I am as flexible and graceful as a dancer, have the skin of a woman many years younger and have healthy looking hair.

## **Psoriasis**

One day my legs began to itch. I thought it was dry skin – but I could feel hardening under the surface and lotions didn't help. The more I scratched the more my skin became irritated. Soon I noticed dry, red scaly patches appearing and when I scratched them, they bled. The diagnosis was psoriasis. It was ugly and terribly difficult to deal with because the itching never seemed to stop. The condition ran from just under my knees to my ankles on both legs. My legs looked horrific and for more than two years I could only wear pants. I was given topical creams but the more I read about the condition and the prognosis, the more discouraged I became. The doctors didn't seem to have a cure, but there was a national association that I could join with others suffering the same condition.

Again, I became discouraged with the answers I got from my doctors. I applied the cream and hoped for the best. "If this doesn't work", they said, "we'll try a different cream". It seemed to me the itching was a symptom of something much deeper, but because the doctors were unconcerned about digging further, I again walked away from traditional treatments.

Once I discontinued all the prescription drugs I had been taking, many of which sped up my metabolism and filled my body with toxins my skin was trying to release, and the psoriasis began to subside. As my immune system became healthier the condition totally disappeared. Emotional work also helped. I have been psoriasis-free for more than twenty-years and my legs now are back to normal.

## **Chronic Respiratory Issues and Allergies**

For nearly ten years, starting from the time I was in my mid-twenties, I was literally plagued by chronic allergies and upper respiratory issues. Colds and more colds, which generally settled in my chest, often resulted in bronchitis, pneumonia or severe colds that drug on for what seemed like forever. I ran to the pulmonary specialist routinely and took daily doses of antihistamines and bronchial drugs, as well as antibiotics at least every month. When my colds or flu symptoms got too bad, I was given steroids to make it possible for me to keep working. As a single mom with a new business, I couldn't afford to be sick.

When the rheumatoid arthritis hit few years later, I was still battling the respiratory symptoms. Then as I began the holistic healing journey, eliminated all my prescription medicines and began the process of making my immune system stronger, everything improved. By the time my arthritis was gone, so were my chronic allergies.

Today, the chronic respiratory issues are history. Once or twice a year I'll begin to catch a cold (with grandkids – that's a given) but my preventive therapies generally stop the process before it progresses into any full-blown condition. Even if I come down with a cold, it is relatively mild and my chest and lungs are not affected. I am so much healthier overall. It is simply amazing!

## **Leukemia**

Tired - I was so tired. But, I figured since I just finished co-chairing a political fundraiser for a presidential candidate in Metro Phoenix and also had a busy work schedule the past few months, I just chalked it up to overwork and over commitment in general.

Over the next several weeks, I grew weaker and neither rest nor sleep seemed to help me rebound. My energy level was in the basement so three months later I decided to go to my holistic physician for a routine physical. That was in late August, 1999.

I received a phone call at home from my doctor telling me my white count looked a little high and she'd like to have me come back for more blood work. I complied and a couple days later she called again to tell me she was very concerned and recommended I see a hematologist. I asked her, "Why - what do you think is the matter?"

"You may have lymphoma or leukemia. You really need to see a specialist," my doctor stated.

I am a tough cookie; I handle stress well and am usually the strong one in the face of crisis but I must tell you this brought me to my knees. I was in shock. I had spent years getting over the rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis and chronic allergies. I just couldn't understand why this was happening to me now. For the next several hours I walked around the house in a fog and when I intermittently gained enough clarity I'd pick up a book and read about the various forms of lymphoma and leukemia to try to relate to the symptoms. When my husband came home that evening I was sitting on the floor, my knees to my chest with a book of symptoms cradled in my arms. I was staring straight ahead. He knew instantly something was terribly wrong and sat down next to me. I said nothing for a few minutes and then I told him.

It took nearly a month after my bone marrow biopsy to receive the diagnosis from the University of Arizona Cancer Center in Tucson: LGL-leukemia, a rare form of chronic leukemia. It was a chronic condition that was expected to last forever, unless it

escalated into an acute form which then could become terminal. For this reason, the physicians monitored my blood work every three months. Methotrexate was the recommended treatment, but I again rejected it. After I got the initial news, and allowed myself to wallow in pity for a few days (yes, that's absolutely normal), I began massive doses of Vitamin C and started emotional therapy by using Caroline Myss' and Louise Hay's books. My blood work stabilized and I expected to continue my therapies until the white count and lymph count gradually declined. They did. Twenty months later both were perfectly normal and I was well. That was more than seven years ago.

### **Hyperthyroidism**

In the midst of the leukemia diagnosis, I began seeing a thickening in my neck - like a goiter appearing. I had noticed it in photos and thought I'd go once again to my holistic M.D. for her opinion. She sent me to an endocrinologist since I had a few other symptoms as well, where I was diagnosed with hyperthyroidism, a condition that over time can produce a goiter in the neck, irritability, heat intolerance, increased sweating, protruding eyes, and often tachycardia. After the initial visit and analyzing the results of my blood work, the endocrinologist was very eager to prescribe a pretty drastic but common treatment. She wanted the therapy done right away – actually by the following week. It consisted of giving me radioactive iodine, which would render my thyroid inactive. Thereafter, I'd take daily medication to replace the thyroxin my thyroid normally produced. The endocrinologist assured me the treatment was harmless, yet I couldn't be around children or pregnant women for 48 hours, among other incredible precau-

tions. As you might guess, after more independent research and realizing I had years not days for this condition to affect my heart, I rejected her urgent manner and the radical treatment. My condition was not imminently critical and I ended up overcoming it with a simple therapy: tincture of iodine.

## **You Can Do It, Too**

With each of these afflictions I was led to answers once I asked for help and surrendered. Because I was sometimes in shock and other times simply worn out from the condition, I learned to follow instead of always leading and I began to experience success. Not once, not twice, but many times. When reflecting on the process, I realized there were a number of common elements that occurred over and over. It was amazing that I was being directed, not to popular answers, but to the answers that were right for me and for my body. Had I not been open to receive, had interjected myself in a controlling way (my normal *modus operandi*) and taken this journey off track, I am positive I would have not have recovered.

During those twenty-some-years, while I was overcoming the virtual avalanche of health challenges, I found answers when I had been told none existed. With those outside-the-box solutions, I managed to heal without side effects. In fact, my body got stronger, more vibrant and healthier in the process. I am a woman who looks and acts much younger than her years, with energy to spare. Those characteristics are hard to demonstrate when one is

in pain or otherwise very ill. It is simply impossible to look, feel and act great when you are suffering.

Today I watch people struggle needlessly with conditions they are told are chronic or incurable - but which are not. It breaks my heart to see these individuals become victims of a system that rejects other options outside their own and that intimidates patients into believing conventional medicine has the only answers. The result is these patients accept what they hear and give in. They give in to death or give in to damaging therapies that often do more harm than good.

In this book I will share a process, leading you to the perfect answers to heal holistically. The method of healing is called holistic healing, meaning to heal the whole. Although the elements of the methodology appear different for each person, the method can still be taught. You will learn not only the process I used, but can explore what a holistic healing journey looks and feels like - from a patient's perspective. You will also learn what to expect and will gain helpful hints to make your journey easier. The holistic healing I will describe is not a general one-size-fits-all program but rather is a customized process, complex in nature, which will be right for you. Best of all, you will come to realize additional benefits besides improved health that can be gained along the way: a greater sense of self-worth, more balance in your life, and an increased spiritual connection, which as you will come to know - may be the greatest gift of all. Even if you decide to make alternative methods only a complimentary part of the conventional treatments you are currently using, this book will be invaluable.

I am living proof answers exist. If I can find freedom from disease - many others can too. If I can heal on a deeper level -

many others can too. And, if I can be given guidance and direction to make both those things possible - many others can too. So, congratulations for reading this book. If you have been diagnosed with any condition you've been told has no cure or any condition you've been told is chronic - this is *your* book. If you're frustrated because you are aging too quickly, can't find good preventive advice, or the quality of your life seems to be slipping away while a doctor blames it on "age", this book will also be a blessing.

If you are one of the millions who experience a growing frustration with conventional medicine at some level, this book should provide hope because as people attempt to navigate the world of alternative medicine, many find it overwhelming and quit. They find too many options, with no one person to direct the entire process, and too little covered by medical insurance. People become fearful and rush back to a form of medicine that may not truly be right for them. They simply store away the frustration, disbelief, distrust, and disappointment they had for the conventional medicine system and return to blindly following their doctor's orders regardless of the consequences to their bodies.

One last thing. You need to understand that I am not anti-medicine. I believe in all the wonders of conventional medicine, if it is used judiciously. I don't believe in overuse, over testing, over prescribing or rushing into radical treatments when there are less invasive and less destructive methods available that could be tried first. I also don't believe M.D.'s have all the answers - for everything. There is a role for the patient, too. Personal responsibility should also be key. Yes, the health care system needs reform - but that reform starts with us.



This book will not prescribe. It will not tell you which vegetable to eat, which vitamin to take or which practitioner to see. Rather, it will show you how to find the perfect answers for you and help manage expectations as you move ahead.

I heard it once said that holistic healing is what we were truly intended to do, whether we were meant to die from our condition or not. I never understood the full concept of that statement until I experienced true, holistic healing for myself. Come with me now and you will see how to become well - if you are meant to be well - and how to heal, regardless.

It takes courage to launch a journey into the unknown. That is why I am giving you this roadmap. Use it with confidence and you will find a world of surprises, a better quality of life than you ever dreamed possible, and a form of healing that is profound.

## STEP FIVE

# **Take Action Without Fear**

*You Can't Move Ahead  
If You Don't Move At All*

**T**he secret to getting ahead is getting started. This is not a profound quote from a wise old sage, it came from the inside of a fortune cookie and it's completely true. To be successful you must begin with the first step. No fairy-godmother with a magic wand will make this happen for you; you will need to physically get out of your chair or off your couch and do it yourself. I guess this chapter could be summed up with the classic quote: "God helps those who help themselves."

Also, for those of you content to let a Higher Power deliver your miracle, I am here to provide a reality check. Although there is certainly a spiritual component to any healing journey, every individual still has to also do his or her part to make it work. As most everyone knows, prayer can play a significant role in facilitating wellness but in the end, it is up to us to act on that which is given. The Universe, God, Spirit, your Higher Self, whatever you choose to call it - answers prayers in ways we might not understand or even recognize, but prayers are always answered in one

way or another. The key is to ask for the right thing and then be willing to step up to the plate and try what is presented. Let me share a story, with which you might be familiar, that illustrates this point perfectly.

A man was sitting on the roof of his house during a raging flood. He prayed and prayed for God to save him from the rising waters. In the course of those prayers a young boy floated by while holding on to a large log, "Jump on," said the boy. "There's plenty of room."

"No, that doesn't look too sturdy. I'll just wait here, God will deliver me," replied the man as he kept on praying. Soon, the water reached the second story window. By that time a group of people came by in a rowboat. They yelled, "There isn't much room inside, but you can hang on to the side - jump and we'll pull you with us."

"No, the man said, that seems pretty risky. I'm praying to God to help me." The water continued to rise and this time it was nearly to his chest. Soon, deep in prayer, the man heard a helicopter hovering overhead and saw a rope dangling from the open door.

"Grab on to the rope, we'll pull you up." They yelled at him from the chopper.

"I don't think I'm strong enough to do that," the man yelled back. "Something else will come along - I'm in God's hands."

The water continued to rise and finally the man became submerged and drowned. When he reached heaven and came face to face with his Maker, the man impeached, "Why didn't you answer my prayers? Why did you abandon me, God?"

"Abandon you?" God replied, "I sent you a log, a boat and then a helicopter."

This is a beautiful lesson to show us how answers may come we don't understand and why we should not judge. It also teaches us that prayer alone is not enough without some personal action. Yes, you are also responsible for what you do with what is given.

Adopt that Nike slogan that said, "Just do it." Even if you're wrong, you may learn something valuable in the process. I found every single thing I did taught me something either about releasing judgment, learning more about the other components of healing or about faith. The key is to act.

If you are an action person, this part will be easy. If you are a person who thinks, plans, prays and strategizes but is not very action oriented, then you have to find something to motivate you. Just becoming well isn't always enough motivation for some people. So, dig deep and ask yourself, "What is the real reason I want to get well?"

It could be relationships with others that will propel you into action - like a new significant other, an adorable grandchild, a new friend or a pet. All of a sudden being ill or not being in the picture makes a difference. Or, it could be an interest outside yourself that will stimulate you to move: a new hobby, a new job, even discovering a new author who has an inventory of books you'd love to wade through. It may also be simply a fear of dying and you want time to get your spiritual act together; that is fine, too. Or, it can be because you just *want* to.

The sluggish sort of individual who is not prone to jumping into projects will certainly need to identify the motivation that will thrust him or her into tackling this journey. And even for that person, it may take some gusto, enthusiasm and energy but it is certainly possible.

## Do Many Others Use Alternative Medicine?

Well, you'll be one of millions. Consumers are getting smarter. That's why over ten years ago, in 1997, Americans made 627 million visits to practitioners of alternative medicine and spent \$27 billion of their own money (not covered by insurance) to pay for alternative therapies. In contrast, Americans made only 386 million visits to their family doctor. Harvard Medical School estimates that one out of every two persons in the United States between the ages of 35 and 49 used at least one alternative therapy during 1997. That is a growth of 47.3 percent since 1990.<sup>10</sup> That study concludes that people using alternative medicine are certainly not ignorant. They are predominately well-educated, affluent baby boomers.

In 2000, it was estimated that 71 percent of adults over the age of 50 now use some kind of alternative medicine such as acupuncture and herbal medicine. The same study found that 62 percent of adults of all ages used those modalities.<sup>11</sup>

As more people venture out to try alternative treatments, they find for the most part these alternatives are harmless. No side effects and nothing to damage one's body. There are a few exceptions but even when they do damage they don't kill us. I searched

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<sup>10</sup> Eisenberg, David M., et al, "Trends In Alternative Medicine Use In The United States," 1990-1997. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 280: November 11 (1998),1569-75.

<sup>11</sup> National Institute on Aging , 2002. *Survey of 848 respondents*: University of Michigan. (Washington, DC: National Institute on Aging , 2002).

and searched to find statistics about the mortality rate from alternative treatments and couldn't find any - unlike what I found for allopathic care.

### **Isn't Alternative Medicine Full Of Quacks?**

As enlightened as I believe people are today, I still run into individuals who say alternative medicine is weird and really doesn't work. There may be many reasons for this, among them appearance. Many practitioners aren't getting rich by doing the good work they do - and simply don't *look* successful. Their offices are less than modest or in a low rent district. Their office furniture is second hand or inexpensive. Their office staff is minimal, if they have any staff at all.

The truth is, when a practitioner spends much more time with a patient, as naturopaths and holistic physicians do and they don't have the benefit of large surgical fees, for example, they simply earn less money. Add to that the fact that these practitioners probably charge less than a normal doctor visit because quite often, what they do isn't covered by insurance. We are conditioned to believe that an impressive office and flashy accoutrements equate to skill and knowledge. That is not the case and certainly not the case with these folks most of whom are dedicated professionals - many who possess extraordinary healing gifts.

If you are still concerned, ask questions - just as you should of your medical professionals. It is apparent that not every physician finished at the top of his or her class - so when you look at the odds - 33 percent of all medical physicians had to fall in the

bottom third. Therefore, I do the same thing in selecting alternative providers that I do in selecting medical practitioners, I ask questions. I ask how long they have been practicing. I also use the referral method and occasionally, I'll check with the State Medical Board or other governing body to monitor complaints. For referrals I ask someone I trust - like another provider in the field - who is good in a particular specialty. Peer or patient referrals are best. If you can't find any, pick up publications from the industry and look for articles about or written by various professionals. Sometimes with alternative practitioners, I will look at their ads and then call and ask a few questions. If I am drawn to them, I call. The one thing that is different about alternative providers is that some have few if any credentials but have incredible natural gifts for healing. You can spot them a mile away and they are the ones I find generally come to me from referrals from others - or through coincidence, which I always honor. You'll see why later.

It is important to check on anyone who treats you; although someone who is incompetent in alternative medicine will only waste your time and money whereas an incompetent in the medical field could potentially do much more damage.

Finally, don't assume someone is a "quack" just because his or her methodology sounds unusual. I have had some pretty strange things done to me and they have all worked. Ear "coning" for example is a terrific way to remove wax from one's ears. They don't use whatever method a typical E.N.T. specialist does today; they gently insert a paper cone and light it on fire. Well, the paper doesn't burst into flames or anything like that - the material burns very, very slowly and the trapped smoke and heat draws the wax out into the paper. It is amazingly effective and a very relaxing

process. So, to me - a little "quackery" can be surprisingly helpful and fun.

I just caution people to not let their intellect get in the way and second-guess their way out of the alternative area. Just because it is something you don't initially understand - doesn't mean it won't be good for you and won't work. A little bit of skepticism is no reason for inaction.

### **Remember, Conventional Medicine Is Not Traditional Medicine**

As you move forward with alternative medicine, remember its roots. That may get you more excited about venturing out. Although most people continue to refer to conventional medicine as traditional medicine and everything else outside of that realm as alternative, that is not correct. Traditional means based on or related to tradition. Modern medicine, as we know it, only truly began in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Acupuncture, Ayurvedic Medicine, Chiropractic, Nutritional Therapy, Sound Therapy, Yoga, Massage, Hydrotherapy, Imagery and Visualization, Essential Oils and other forms of alternative medicine go back thousands of years. I spent a long time researching each of these modalities through a variety of sources and cross checking the information in several books that mention the options available. I knew most were extremely old but really had no idea how far back many of the methods originated.

Ayurvedic Medicine, for example, began with the sages of ancient India 5,000 years ago. Acupuncture was developed in



China thousands of years ago and both these modalities are still used in their countries of origin as well as all over the world. Massage, which many people consider a feel-good treatment and not a credible method for healing is actually the most natural of natural remedies. Most forms have been around for at least 5,000 years. Nutritional therapy, also acknowledged for its benefits but not necessarily given the credit it deserves as a highly effective healing modality, dates as far back as Hippocrates, who said in 400 B.C., "Let food be your medicine and medicine be your food." Chiropractic, although started formally in 1895, was originally invented by the ancient Greeks in 1250 B.C. It was the Greeks who first considered treating muscular and skeletal disorders through manipulation of the spine.

One of the more unusual forms, Hydrotherapy, was first used by Hippocrates in the fourth century B.C. and has been part of the healing tradition of nearly every civilization from ancient Greece and Egypt to Rome, where virtually all medicine was practiced at the public baths. Imagery and Visualization have been considered healing tools in practically all of the world's cultures including Western Indian tribes such as Navajos as well as the Ancient Egyptians and Greeks such as Aristotle and Hippocrates. Sound therapy appeared about 2,500 years ago when the Greek mathematician and philosopher, Pythagoras, developed 'prescriptions' of music to help his students work, relax, sleep and wake up better. Today it is used to regulate heart beat and ease pain, as well as to relax. Essential Oils and their use topically, diffused or through aromatherapy can be documented in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics and Chinese and Eastern Indian manuscripts as well as references in the Bible.

The longevity of these methods cannot be questioned and the reason they have lasted all this time is because they work. Now, doesn't hearing a little about their history make the thought of exploring some of those options more intriguing?

So, specifically what is the action are we supposed to take, when are we supposed to take it and what if we make a mistake? Let's start with the last question first and it will answer all three. The most interesting part of the healing journey process is that there are no mistakes. The process is cumulative and progressive and perfect. Everything will come in perfect order. It is your job to have faith and to follow. You will not find one guru, one doctor, or one adviser to tell you what to do and explain it all to you. The process does not work that way. There isn't a silver bullet, a quick fix or a one-source method for answers, either. It may not even make sense at the time. You have to believe that whatever is presented to you is something you are supposed to try. In the process of trying you will learn information beneficial to your healing. One source might only help you five percent but you will be five percent ahead of where you were. Remember, it is irrelevant how slow you go as long as you are headed in the right direction. Any improvement is good improvement.

## **Find Measurements To Chart Your Progress**

I had dramatically different healing journeys with my two most significant conditions. One condition presented symptoms on which the improvement was easy to gauge. The other did not and the measurement had to be managed another way.

With the rheumatoid arthritis I looked for pain relief, less joint swelling and less stiffness. In other words, total symptomatic improvement. I also watched for improvement in my energy and for a healthy look to return to my skin and hair. My leukemia left me, on the other hand, with a very exhausted feeling but the doctors tracked the severity of my condition through my blood work. I had a high white count and a high lymph count. So to gauge my progress, I looked for more energy and to feel more like my old self but I also wanted my blood work to return to normal.

The monitoring of my white count and lymph count required some doing. The doctor at the University of Arizona Cancer Center was content to see me every three months and chart my progress. That was not enough for me. Since I was taking an active role in the healing process, I found a holistic medical office that would draw my blood monthly, send it to the lab and fax me a copy of the CBC results. That way I could chart the progress of my white blood cell count as well as the progress of my lymph count. Don't be afraid to take the initiative in your own case and to ask for information or make arrangements that work for you.

I wasn't discouraged if my white count and lymph count didn't drop dramatically or as fast as I had hoped each time. I watched every month to make sure the white count, in particular, didn't increase and even if it simply remained stable I figured I was ahead of the game because the doctors expected it to spike up and down routinely. Spiking up was no option for me. The timing for improvement would take as long as it took, so I was patient with the results of each report. I waited with anticipation for the results each month and celebrated to myself when each fax report came. I watched each count drop and drop until finally both

reached the normal range with no spikes upward. It took nearly two years and that was perfectly fine with me.

You will find a way to measure your progress, too. Keep a record via charts and journals and remember, the timeline will not be yours. It will happen when it does. You are only in charge of making sure you're headed in the right direction. Every new experience should help you improve - even a little. Add that knowledge, remedy or information to your wellness regime and build one upon the other. If your experience doesn't seem to help in some way that you can identify - let that one go and simply move on. But, even at that - I'll bet you learn a great lesson from every experience, perhaps releasing judgment or about a modality that will serve you well later.

## **You Have To Be Willing To Change**

Some action might necessitate making changes in your normal routine or your normal way of thinking. Change is good; change is progress. Illness often forces us to look at situations or conditions we have ignored in our lives on many different levels; the important thing is to dig up the courage to tackle them and to be courageous.

There are a number of reasons why people resist change, even if they know change will be good for them. Most every reason is based on fear. "What will my friends think?" "I can't afford it right now." "I'm not ready yet." "I might fail." "People might laugh at me." "I don't know enough, yet." "It might hurt my image." "I don't know if I can trust them." "I might lose my

friends." "It's too hard to do." "Who knows how I might end up." "I don't have the energy" "I might hurt someone's feelings." "I don't have any personal support." This fear needs to be replaced by faith.

In creating wellness, you have to let go of excuses and the need for validation. Sometimes you just have to let go of what is not working, like an overly stressful job, old ideas and beliefs or unhealthy relationships. One of the reasons people don't heal is because they are afraid of the pain of letting go. Ask for help in finding the courage to let go if it is necessary and ask for the strength to deal with the change when it comes because sometimes it will be thrust upon you. Those requests would be effective prayers.

In order to heal, leave those parts of your life, which no longer serve you, behind. As you release them, you will make room for new and better experiences and relationships.

A wonderful example comes to mind of a bookkeeper I had employed some time ago. She had been suffering with gout in her big toe. It was very painful and she complained to me about it more than once. After watching her suffer, I offered a suggestion. "Teresa, you might want to quit wheat, shellfish and red meat for a few days. It will help lower your uric acid level and give your body a chance to recover from this." I said. She whipped around and stated defiantly, "Well, I'm not going to change my *whole life*." Hearing her reaction, my sympathy ceased and so did my input. Change and personal responsibility are key to any successful healing.

I adored reading Bernie Siegel, M.D.'s books especially, *Love, Medicine & Miracles*. In that particular book he talks about

the three kinds of patients he experienced in his practice. The victims, who give up and die, the 60 to 70 percent in the middle, who do what they're told, but rarely make hard decisions on their own. This group, he recounted, resists making radical changes in their lifestyle and are loaded with excuses as to why they aren't more aggressive about wellness. Finally, there are the exceptional patients who refuse to play the victim to a disease. They educate themselves, they participate in their health care, and they demand dignity and control. They ask questions and are sometimes considered uncooperative or difficult as patients. They aren't afraid to make lifestyle changes and they are the most likely to get well. I would surmise that these patients are probably the first to use complimentary methods to integrate into their conventional care or may select a totally alternative route if they get a doom and gloom prognosis.

The exceptional patients Dr. Siegel identifies are not afraid to take action. They accept risk as a means for ultimate reward.<sup>12</sup>

## **Releasing The Fear**

When we become ill it is a logical reaction to become gripped by fear. At first, we fear what might be wrong. Then when the diagnosis comes, we fear the prognosis. Then we begin to fear the pain or complications that may result from the progression of our condition or from the suggested treatment. Soon we begin to fear death and being taken before we are ready. There are

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<sup>12</sup> Bernie S. Siegel, M.D., *Love Medicine & Miracles*, (New York: Perennial Library, Harper & Row Publishers, 1998), 24, 26.

lots of places along the way where fear creeps in and grabs us. Don't let fear dictate the actions you take. Once you are committed to wellness, learn to release fear and have faith.

Fear can do terrible things to people's lives. It will make us cling to the familiar, regardless of whether the familiar is really right for us. We might stick with a doctor longer than we should because we're afraid to try someone or something else. It could make us also blindly accept a treatment that is recommended without asking any questions or respecting our own feelings. Haven't you sometimes felt that a recommendation just didn't "feel right" to you, yet you went ahead with it anyway? Letting go of fear means trusting ourselves and our feelings.

The other day I opened the newspaper and was amazed at what I saw. It was the perfect example of a fear-based therapy. The article was announcing a new prophylactic treatment for women genetically prone to breast cancer. It stated that women with a high risk or propensity toward the disease had a new option. The headline read: *Mastectomy May Extend Life For Gene Carriers*. The article went on to state that a recent study was the first to estimate how much time a "mastectomy in advance" would buy for a woman with a sharply increased risk of breast cancer. Of course, this was based on medical studies (scientific studies). Mayo Clinic researchers had said the surgery could reduce the breast cancer risk by 91 percent but they didn't quantify the benefit in added years of life. Some other studies did try to quantify additional years, assuming the woman would actually contract cancer that was incurable. It never ceases to amaze me how fear can motivate some people to do almost anything.

Fear can also keep a person from acting. You have heard of people who have become paralyzed by fear. That may happen to you - with a bad diagnosis and prognosis. It actually did for me - for a couple days after the Leukemia diagnosis, until I decided I could sit there and wallow in self-pity and grow worse and worse or I could do something about it.

If fear is paralyzing you or is causing you to do something you really don't want to do, you might ask a Higher Power for guidance to make the right decisions. Or, you could simply turn it over and let go. Or, have the confidence to trust your body and yourself in the process. Then, nurture and love yourself every day, do what brings you joy and be grateful for the good in your life.

The following includes steps you can take to replace fear-motivated behavior with love-motivated behavior:

Since there are only two basic emotions - love and fear, the more you can stay in a state of love, the less you will be overcome by fear. Ask for help with that.

Begin to meditate and first thing every morning - fill yourself with light and love on a daily basis. At some point, there won't be room for fear-based feelings.

Learn to live in the present moment. Fear is rooted in the past or future. In the past it is magnified by negative, old experiences. If you can replace those destructive feelings with a centered, present mind it will be much more productive. A future focus allows for fear of the unknown. If you insist on projecting ahead in your day-to-day thinking, replace that fear with trust that the perfect result will be delivered. Those adjustments will make it easier to maintain a state of love within.



Stop negative thoughts and negative self-talk. If you can't think or say anything positive about yourself, don't think or say anything at all.

Learn to reframe negative experiences that happened in your past. See these situations as gifts that were given to you to help shape the person you are today. They may have taught you how not to be or made it necessary for you to develop other traits that have benefited you in later years.

Instead of worry, which is fear-based, let go and turn your troubles over to God, some other Higher Power, or something else and then forget them. Some societies use "worry dolls". People give each of the little dolls one of their worries to handle so they no longer have to, then, they forget the issue.

Do more things in your life that make you smile and bring you joy.

Learn to nurture and love yourself more. You can't give to others if you are empty yourself. Take time for the things you love.

Since your healing will be dramatically affected by your attitude and by how well you recognize and deal with your emotions, learning to minimize fear in your life will be very helpful. Of course, perfection is not a realistic goal and all of us experience fear-based emotions from time to time. So, instead of worrying that negative emotions might crop into your life and concentrating on their elimination, why not concentrate on filling your life with more healthy thoughts? This is a good time to learn to focus on the desired outcome instead of the problem that exists.

## **Reflect On Yourself And Others In Your Life**

Holistic healing is an active state not a passive one. In conventional medicine, we can be passive and let the physician assume all responsibility. In the holistic model, we have the primary role. So, it is up to us to become aware, to take action and to make any changes necessary for our success. In the mind-body-spirit model, self-reflection is also a part of the process. There is no reason to be fearful of self-reflection; it is healthy and beneficial. That is most likely the area in holistic healing that strikes the most fear in the hearts of practitioners - emotions - especially old buried emotions.

As I mentioned before, a great tool to begin this process is *You Can Heal Your Life*, by Louise Hay, to reveal the emotional root cause for the particular illness or condition you have. There you might find a clue to unlock more answers that can facilitate part of your wellness. Even the most minor illness often provides a chance to look at yourself and your life in a different way. With my first major illness, when I referred to Louise Hay's book and looked under Rheumatoid Arthritis, I saw something I didn't initially understand, "Deep criticism of authority. Feeling very put upon." I didn't get it at first.

"How could that be?" I said to myself. "I am very respectful of others. I was a good daughter and was dutiful in that role. I certainly didn't act-up or cause problems." After more thought I still had trouble applying this to me, "I respected all of my bosses in the early years and realized my role as an employee. They loved my work and things were most generally positive. I was always a good person."

Then I looked further. The way I ended up was my first clue. I ended up an entrepreneur; I became my own boss. Not out of resentment, I thought, but based on a desire to control my own destiny. I didn't ask for help from others - maybe it was pride or maybe it was ignorance. I trusted myself more and preferred to make my own mistakes. I could see the imperfections in others and thought those imperfections might contribute to less than 'perfect' advice, so I decided I'd rather trust myself. I had found a way to live without much authority in my life - regardless of how premature that jump to entrepreneurship may have been, and how much stress it eventually caused. I'd rather suffer the stress than take orders from others - especially others who might not know what I knew.

I developed a disease that stopped me from continuing with that paradigm. Over the years of my healing journey, I learned to put aside judgments and accept answers to my healing which came from others - even imperfect individuals. I learned to accept answers from unusual sources and help from people I never would have considered my equals. I learned to seek advice and to take it once it was given. I also learned to love myself more and learned to go within for guidance. I became more humble, more spiritual and more contented with wherever life took me. I learned to let go of control and be less attached to the "specific" outcome. In the process my physical self was healing, I was more open to healing emotional issues and grew closer to God. In all instances, I was taking action and making changes.

Others will find their paths much different. A book such as Louise Hay's may not feel right at all, it might be more meaningful to begin by redefining your priorities. A redefinition that puts

achieving your wellness first and perhaps, one that begins to open you up to the love of yourself and others.

My second major illness, leukemia, carried with it a totally different issue to be addressed. The morning after I heard the news of my potential illness, I went to the desk in my bedroom and picked up Caroline Myss's book *Anatomy of the Spirit*. I opened it to parts I had highlighted when I read through it the first time, years prior. I settled on a very meaningful paragraph that said: "Unquestionably, a strong link exists between physical and emotional stresses and specific illnesses. The connection has been well documented for instance, with regard to heart disease and hypertension and the so-called Type-A personality. My particular and spiritual insights, however, have shown me that emotional stresses or dis-eases are the root causes of all physical illnesses. Moreover, certain emotional and spiritual crises correspond quite specifically to problems in certain parts of the body. For instance, people who come to me with heart disease have had life experiences that led them to block out intimacy and love from their lives. People with low back pain have had persistent financial worries; people with cancer often have unresolved connections with the past, unfinished business and emotional issues; people with blood disorders frequently have deep-seated conflicts with their families of origin."<sup>13</sup>

The last two concepts really resonated with me. What flashed in my mind was an experience I had as a child, one I didn't remember but was later told about. At age five, my mother was

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<sup>13</sup> Caroline Myss, Ph.D., *Anatomy of the Spirit*, (New York: Three Rivers Press, Harmony Books, 1996), 66.

sitting on my bed - as she always did before she said goodnight - telling me stories about her youth or just talking about the old days. As many children do, I asked if I was adopted. The trigger might have been that I was a blonde, blue-eyed tall youngster with parents were dark haired and brown-eyed or it may have just popped into my head. My mother, who thought lying was the worst sin of all, said "Yes you are." My parents had never told me about my adoption, probably because of my mother's fear I would not love her. So, I know she responded only as a reaction to my question. I panicked and this five-year old began talking about the dog, the weather, tomorrow and rattled on and on about other meaningless things. I guess I wanted to keep my Mother from saying anything more. I think she was relieved, perhaps hoping I had not heard her answer. She didn't continue the conversation and didn't say another word about it for many, many years. I have absolutely no memory of this incident, and my adoption was never discussed again. When I was 18 years of age, my mother told me I was adopted and recounted this story.

I don't know how one survives a "black-out" experience such as this without some type of damage later. Well, this must be *it*, I thought. Ironically, this realization gave me some peace by identifying this incident. "Now, there is something I can do to facilitate my healing on an emotional level," I thought. That morning I talked to Steve about the book and what popped into my head. Still depressed about the recent news, a glimmer of light began to appear as I recounted the passage in the book and my revelation about what I considered the root cause - emotionally. I knew I was right. I had found a place to begin. I found the start of my power to heal.

Later that day, I spent some time alone thinking about that incident as a child. I did what Paige Jackson, a very gifted woman who helps individuals on emotional clearing recommends - I re-framed it. I sat cross-legged on my bed and imagined myself back in Kewanee, Illinois in 1949, in my bedroom off the kitchen of our house on Garfield Street. I became the mother sitting on the edge of the bed and talked to the little girl lying there. This time the mother was armed with all the knowledge, wisdom and love available in the Universe. I said all the things my dear mother would not have recognized were necessary to help me through this trauma. I said what my mother wasn't equipped to say.

When that innocent little child asked the adoption question, I responded with a slow, dramatic pause that helped illustrate the magnitude of the question. Once I was asked *the* question, I then said, "Oh, Sandy. You have to be *very special* to be adopted because a child who is adopted is chosen. She is picked-out of *all* the children in the world to be loved and adored by her new mother and father."

"But, Momma, aren't I that special?" the child asked pleadingly. "Let me tell you a story about a *very, very special* little girl who was adopted by parents who think she is the best little girl in the world." And, she proceeded to tell the story of how a woman with a little boy found out she was going to have another child. The little boy was just reaching pre-school age when she and the boy left a bad marriage. She had to work and support both herself and the child. With a new baby coming, what would she do? She could not stay home with the baby because she had to work to support herself and her son. She was confused and upset. Then, she

heard about two people who wanted a baby desperately. She agreed to put her baby up for adoption."

"When the baby girl was born, the mother took one look at the child and wanted to keep her. She was beautiful, sweet and a very special child. The biological mother was changing her mind about the adoption. She didn't know how she would manage with two little children, but she would try. Then she met the husband and wife who wanted a baby so badly. When she saw them in the hospital she knew instantly that they would give her baby a wonderful life and a wonderful home. She knew the adoption was the right thing to do. She said the moment she saw them, "This is your baby girl - she is beautiful, she is special and now she belongs to you."

The little five-year old lie in bed, her eyes wide open listening to every word and imagining she was every bit as special as this adopted little child. "Momma, am I that special? Am I as special as that little adopted girl?" she asked with hope and anticipation.

"You *are* that little girl, sweetheart." her mother said. And they both hugged with joy. The little girl felt treasured and reassured and the mother knew she had told the truth and was truly loved, too. It was the perfect ending.

I sat and cried knowing how happy and secure the little girl felt and how happy and secure I was with the new way this event turned out. A flood of contentment swept over me and I felt peace for the first time about this quite unfinished piece of business in my life. I had begun to take action right away to begin the process of healing.

But, sometimes there is more than one answer to a question. I wasn't content that I had explored every emotional avenue - so I picked up Louise Hay's book, as well. She said the root cause of

leukemia was something slightly different, but something to consider nonetheless. I pursued that path, as I covered earlier in an earlier chapter and realize for me there were two elements emotionally for me that needed fixing - the unfinished business with my family of origin and finding joy once again. The second part wasn't able to be fully accomplished until seven months later. So you see, with alternative methods it doesn't matter if something is precisely the correct remedy or if it happens when you think it should. Everything you do will be perfect at the time. That single emotional issue was something that clearly needed to be cleaned-up in my life and whether the root cause was unfinished family business or finding joy - I could benefit from both.

There are other ways to begin claiming your power to heal on the emotional (mental) level. You can begin by actively loving yourself more. In that regard, try to do more things that make you happy. If you loved fishing but never took the time, a fishing trip might be the first vacation you plan. If you love to play cards but never had the time, you might join a bridge or poker club. If it is just seeing your children more often or reading a good book - you should begin to fit that into your schedule. Action is the operative word, here. Intentions are great and a good first step, but only thinking about the things you can do, won't work - you must act.

Life is too short and unpredictable to ignore experiences that truly bring you joy. And, the end result is that by experiencing that joy, you are strengthening your immune system and nurturing your self-giving and self-loving tendencies.



***Thoughts to consider.***

God helps those who help themselves.

There are no mistakes on a healing journey.  
You will learn something from  
every experience.

There is no silver bullet.

The healing process is cumulative,  
progressive and perfect.

Any improvement is good improvement.

Leave behind the parts of your life that no  
longer serve you.

Every emotion is either love or fear – let go  
of fear.

We have control over the emotions  
we choose.

By filling our lives with more love, it leaves  
less room for fear.

Holistic healing is an active state not a  
passive one.

***Steps to take.***

The secret to getting ahead is getting started.

Identify the reason you want to get well so  
you have a real motive stored in  
your subconscious.

Find measurements to chart your progress.  
That way you can keep track of how well  
you are doing.

Embrace change - change is good and  
change is progress.

*Take Action Without Fear*

Replace fear-motivated behavior with love-motivated behavior (use the list on pages 85 and 86.

Let go of worry. Turn it over to a Higher Power then forget it.

Reflect on yourself and others in your life. Reflection is healthy – maybe some answers will begin to take shape.

If you are dealing with an old, unresolved issue, reframe it and release the negative charge.

Begin to do things that make you happy.

Learn to live in the present moment. Fear is rooted in the past and future

## STEP SEVEN

# Commit To The Journey

## *There Is No Silver Bullet*

Anyone who undertakes a holistic healing journey and has never experienced one before will need some explanation about what to expect and what not to. Because the process is so different from conventional medicine, managing expectations was part of the reason for this book. Had I known twenty-five years ago how my healing would unfold, the entire journey would have been much easier.

First, in a holistic healing journey there is no quick fix. You might have guessed that by the name holistic, that there is total healing on multiple levels. The holistic process is, then indeed, a journey. This can be tricky for the individual who expects immediate gratification in all facets of his or her life; a person who wants everything right now. It is also tough for the individual who is overstressed, impatient and not tolerant of any process whatsoever. Finally, those who have been totally conditioned by the allopathic model of treatment, which taught us to believe that a single office visit, a simple prescription or surgery will fix everything on the spot. If you are any of the above – you will need to adjust your expectations. Holistic healing takes time. The payoff: healing is permanent.

Here is a recap on how it basically unfolds: you make a statement of intent, first. Then you wait for the answers and all will come at the perfect time and in the perfect order. You act upon them as they appear to you - so the second and third steps happen simultaneously. But, because the healing is on three levels - the spiritual, emotional and physical those answers can jump around among the three categories as needed to ensure lasting and complete success. The complexity dictates much more time than a couple office visits or one hospital stay. It could take months or years. As long as there is continual improvement and as long as your body is becoming stronger, naturally, it doesn't matter how long it takes.

### **There Is No Quick Fix**

A silver bullet or quick fix is typically reserved for band-aid-type cures that are never effective in the long term. Those symptomatic fixes rarely get to the root cause of an illness or keep it from returning. That is why so many chronic conditions exist. A person keeps running back to the doctor over and over for symptomatic relief but years later the person is still sick.

The use of conventional medicine also advocates the gatekeeper approach in terms of one physician controlling care, whereas the holistic healing process is dramatically different. We are used to finding a doctor and trusting that one person to give us all the answers or refer us to specialists on occasion. What happens with a holistic healing journey is that there will be many sources of help along the way, often simultaneously, and each one will pro-

vide expertise in his or her own arena with no one practitioner having all the answers. A patient takes what is of value from each source and selects those sources typically on their own.

In alternative medicine it is perfectly acceptable to move around a little: to stop going to someone, to make a change to another practitioner or to add others to the mix. That could mean you have several practitioners - all for different reasons. Perhaps a masseuse you use routinely for lymphatic stimulation and circulation, a naturopath for general work, a chiropractor for skeletal adjustments and a Jungian counselor for dream interpretation. You could add acupuncture, some Chinese herbal medicine, a homeopathic practitioner or you might see a holistic MD. Because this process can be self-directed, you will learn as you go and you will always be led to helpful decisions regarding your health. Guidance will come when you are ready for the next step and throughout personal responsibility will play a key role.

## **Taking Responsibility**

The most tragic part of the allopathic regimen is the belief that it is your doctor who heals you. That is not true. As was discussed earlier, on a physical level, it is a person's body that heals. On the emotional and spiritual level healing occurs at the soul level. Healing does not come from some external source. In holistic medicine, practitioners take time to learn about the person, learn about that person's body and then both patient and practitioner do what they can to help the body heal itself.

There was a brilliant Canadian physician and medical historian named Sir William Osler, who once said the outcome of tuberculosis has more to do with what went on in the patient's mind than what went on in his lungs. He was echoing the sentiments of Hippocrates, who said he would rather know what sort of person has a disease than what sort of a disease a person has.<sup>22</sup>

Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, was born in 460 and died about 377 B.C.; he was credited with freeing medicine from superstition. Although all doctors take a Hippocratic oath before they begin practice I doubt whether they are familiar with all of Hippocrates' beliefs. The idea of preventive medicine, first conceived in *Regimen and Regimen in Acute Diseases*, one of Hippocrates books, stresses that diet and the patient's way of living could influence his or her health. Physicians today and we as patients tend to ignore the details of diet and lifestyle in our healing. That is where personal responsibility enters the picture.

What does taking responsibility really mean? When our bodies are in top form they are miraculous instruments. They kill germs, destroy viruses and bacteria, defeat cancer and zap other assorted critters that might invade or be housed in our bodies and they do that on a daily basis. That is the job of our immune system. But, when our immune system is weakened or compromised - these intruders can take hold and temporarily overtake our systems. Over time we learn that it is the choices we have made in our life that weakens or strengthens our immune system. Past transgressions always show up later.

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<sup>22</sup> Bernie S. Siegel, M.D., *Love Medicine & Miracles*, (New York: Perennial Library, Harper & Row Publishers, 1998), 2.

As we look at our health and look at the shape our bodies are in today, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to determine that we may have done some damage to ourselves in the early years. The overworking, the overeating, the overwhelming stress, the drinking and smoking might also have been factors. For some, it was even drug use in the 60's or later. Our abuses chipped away at the magnificent machine we were given, little by little, until our bodies were weakened and are now beginning to give out.

Years of too little sleep may have taken its toll especially if we crammed for exams for a number of years, dated and partied until all hours of the night or worked multiple jobs with too little rest. We probably also ate lousy food and developed bad recreational habits including limited exercise or a yo-yo program of weight loss and we are now seeing the result. If we didn't learn how to release our emotions when things got too bad, if we stuffed and stored our feelings, if we were young and ignorant and invincible - today we're probably paying the price.

So here you are in trouble. If you can admit choices you made might have contributed to the weakening of your body, you have just taken the first step toward getting well.

If you can weaken your body you can also strengthen it. Accepting responsibility is the first step to taking control of your healing.

### **It's Not My Fault - It's In The Genes**

Some people try to excuse their illness based on a family history of one condition or another. Genetics are no excuse for

poor health. Some people are very lucky and come from a strong gene pool, but most of us have a number of chronic or life-threatening ailments somewhere in our family tree. There are potential problems we have inherited from one distant relative or another including heart disease, cancers, arthritis, and sometimes even more exotic strains lying-in-wait in our bodies. Yes, many of us were blessed with destructive genes.

Still, even if a person might have a predisposition to a condition, it does not guarantee they will actually contract it, especially if their natural defenses are in good working order. For example, we all have cancer cells floating around within our bodies but we don't all get cancer. One of the jobs of our immune system is to scan cells in order to recognize and eliminate those that do not belong there; it routinely weeds out the malignant cells. We have developed this defense over the course of our evolution and it works - unless we have weakened our immune system in one-way or another.

In my own case, there was a strong genetic case for my eventual rheumatoid arthritis diagnosis. On my maternal side, there was an uncle and aunt both severely crippled with rheumatoid arthritis, a female cousin currently suffering with it and my biological mother, (you recall my being adopted at birth) has osteoarthritis. Yet, I have been able to regain my health and live pain free and drug free by keeping my immune system strong enough to keep this weakness from surfacing in my body. Leukemia is also within the family lineage with an uncle who died from it and a cousin who is currently struggling with the disease.

Genetic weaknesses can be prevented if we are aware of those conditions and don't encourage that pre-disposition through



our own reckless behavior. At the risk of oversimplifying, if we have a propensity for diabetes, we'd watch our weight and make sure we get plenty of exercise. If we are prone to heart disease, we wouldn't load up on saturated fats. For most conditions, simply learning how to rid our lives of stress and not generate more can be beneficial. Basic education, common sense and a desire to preserve our bodies is what is needed to ensure good health.

Even if illness strikes, there are a number of things we can do to help ourselves recover. The control we have regarding our health comes mainly from the choices we make every day. And, no one but us makes those choices.

## **Healing Is Cumulative And Progressive**

As you are exposed to many different teachers and coaches on your journey you will notice that each practitioner will impart something valuable. It may be advice, a recommended treatment, or a supplement to take. All along the way you will pick-up bits of information that you will add to your "routine" to help your body improve. You'll know which ones are right because your body will immediately respond and you will see some degree of improvement. When there is no improvement - you might rethink the treatment, supplement or practitioner and probably remove it from your regimen.

Holistic healing is a cumulative process. So, if a certain vitamin or mineral is recommended and you notice a slight improvement - say 5 percent - continue with it. If acupuncture is something else you experience and you jump another 20 percent

with this modality, keep that too. Now, you are at 25 percent. Let's say you begin another method that helps another 25 percent - now you are at 50 percent. You are headed in the right direction. When you improve, you don't quit the regimen. Too many people, the minute they start improving, quit what they are doing that helped get them there. A big mistake. You continue with what works because it is those things that are keeping you on track. The goal is to get as close to 100 percent as you can.

I began taking a certain level of Vitamin C nearly 25 years ago; I still take roughly the same level today. There are a couple more supplements I am consistent with and others I add on an as-needed basis. I see certain practitioners for some treatments and have modified my lifestyle to generate less stress. I have my 100 percent program in place and it works beautifully. As my life situation changes, I modify it a little, but basically the team of providers and remedies is in place and I have learned how and when to use them.

With each experience your body will judge its value. Some providers will give you advice about what you should do with your lifestyle or nutritional choices still others will provide direct remedies. Some will provide spiritual resources and emotional tools. Odds are you'll receive something you need on your journey from every experience you have.

Over time, it will become possible to build up a regimen of therapies and treatments as well as practitioners that work for you. That is why alternative methods are best used as early as possible, while there is time for the process to work and when your body has not been ravaged by devastating drugs or radical surgery. That doesn't mean you have to begin at the first diagnosis; even toward

the very end - one can achieve results. It just becomes tougher to do when you wait because of the toll unsuccessful medical treatments will have already taken on your body. With surgery, for example, the body becomes so distracted trying to heal after the surgery - it cannot focus on fixing itself. With chemotherapy, radiation or other powerful drugs, the immune system is rendered helpless or has been totally shut down so it could take longer to restore its healing potential to finally attack the disease it was originally designed to. Since you're relying on your body to do the healing, you'll want it to be as healthy as possible to begin.

### **Time Is Your Friend Not Your Enemy**

Time isn't something that you manage on this journey – it is what it is. Progress will also not happen on your timeline so forget trying to control that, either. With every visit, with every new treatment or remedy and with every experience along the way – something new will be learned. The magnificent reality of a holistic healing journey is that not only is the timeline set according to how quickly you are able to learn, absorb and apply each lesson but the answers will come in the perfect order to compliment the chemistry of your body and the receptiveness of your mind. The timing becomes irrelevant.

As long as you are improving, you are moving in the right direction and the process is working. Again, because we are dealing with the complexities of holistic healing and working with the spiritual, emotional and physical factors - those elements will come to you as you are capable of receiving them. The more open

you are and the more receptive, the more rapid your healing. Some folks are ready and grasp the physical part of the healing journey but the mental and emotional or spiritual pieces may take a little longer. It doesn't matter in which order your progress comes - it will come together in the perfect order for you.

To reiterate once again, the longer window of time you have to heal from your illness - the better for alternative treatments. That is why alternative methods are ideal for anyone with a chronic condition. There is no excuse for living with a disease that goes on and on and on and on and on. Critical illnesses can also be overcome but it becomes more challenging with your diagnosis reveals a very short window. When there are only days or weeks available, it is best to begin with allopathic treatments. Alternative care can become supplemental to build-up your body and try to repair the damage done during the allopathic process. Then when the aggressiveness levels out - a transition can more easily occur, if that is your choice.

My father was diagnosed with lung cancer in 1980 and told he had a maximum of six months because of his inoperable tumor. His doctors gave him radiation to help the tumor shrink but doubted it would do much. It didn't. A stubborn man and a smoker, my precious father said he would follow whatever I suggested to help since I was so devastated at the thought of him leaving us. He quit smoking and began Vitamin C therapy, which in those days didn't involve intravenous methods that could have accelerated his results. He took Vitamin C orally with a maximum dosage of 10,000 units daily (practitioners are using higher doses today). Within three months his tumor had shrunk to 35 percent its size and amazed his doctors. His radiation had stopped long

before this with unnoticeable results. This progress was achieved without any major diet adjustment and also in spite of a few puffs on a borrowed cigarette from time-to-time. As he began to see some improvement, his confidence increased about his crazy daughter's methods and he relented to try a trip to Mexico for laetrile injections, which was the popular alternative therapy at that time. Daddy was still pretty weak and couldn't drive so Mom drove their camper down to the border where the two of them visited an alternative clinic. Mom learned how to change their diet of 40 years and she tried her best to cook foods that would be less stressful for his body to digest.

Four months later, on a Saturday morning I heard my doorbell ring and there stood my father and mother. Daddy had a smile on his face, having driven back from Mexico all by himself. He was much stronger and had regained a little of his old zest for life. We found a woman in his town to give him the laetrile injections (a nurse who agreed to help) and he continued his treatment at home. His slow but steady progress through the end of that year (10 months from his original diagnosis) had already defied the medical prognosis of death by six months. He was still improving, but, my daddy was old school, stubborn and impatient. He still didn't feel 100 percent, hadn't gained much weight and couldn't go fishing, continue his routine of smoking and drinking like the good old days and couldn't play cards until late at night like he used to.

Even though it had taken a number of years for my father's body to become weak enough for this cancer to appear, he just didn't want to wait for the measured improvement. My father was not a fighter and had never been. He had really tried the therapy

just for me and although he was remarkably better and his tumor was minute compared to where it was, he wouldn't fight any longer. He quit everything - the diet, the laetrile, the Vitamin C and he continued to smoke every once in a while - even later with Hospice care at home and oxygen in his room (he'd smoke in the bathroom with the window open and door closed). He passed away in late April, 1981.

My father lasted 14 months - more than double the original prognosis and could have completely recovered had he been patient enough but he was a man who resisted change; change that meant no more smoking and drinking until he was completely recovered - and probably not the smoking - even then. He was living with a new diet he wasn't used to and he was in a recovering mode, which made him "different" than his friends. He hated that. Had his faith been stronger, had his tolerance for change been greater and had he been patient with the timing, my father might have lived to see his great grandchildren, whom he would have loved. Somehow, living under those conditions wasn't worth it for him.

To completely heal, it can take weeks, months or years. One just has to be patient and realize that if you are stable or even slightly improving - you are headed in the right direction. So, patience is a must. We must also remember how long it took for us to break down our bodies in the first place - enough to allow the disease to take hold. If your body took years of abuse you can't expect miracles in a few short weeks.

## **Healing On The Physical And Emotional Levels**

Understanding the mind-body-spirit healing model is not difficult. Especially if one takes it, isolating the focus to one specific disease, and dissects the process so it is easier to grasp. In the case of my rheumatoid arthritis, on the physical level, for example, I was initially being treated to relieve joint swelling and pain by a rheumatologist. Of course, the pain didn't totally subside but it was dulled dramatically because the drugs reduced the inflammation in my joints causing the pain. Had I been satisfied with relieving just that, I never would have been free of the eventual crippling and debilitating symptoms of this disease. Later, surgeries would have removed the calcium deposits from my joints but the ugly crippling would have still been present. On top of it, I may have had face swelling from all the cortisone prescribed and suffered from a host of other side-effects from taking the many drugs. Side-effects like irritable bowel syndrome, colitis, depression, irritability and other symptoms I regularly experienced.

So when I made the change to holistic healing, my focus was getting to the physical root cause of this condition, which was an auto-immune disease and involved a T-cell malfunction. I could only truly be rid of the RA when I got my immune system and those pesky T-cells functioning more normally. That was a tall order and much too complex for me to try to figure out all by myself - so I decided to leave it to my body to heal and ask to be guided to the right answers to make sure that marvelous machine of mine was given all the tools it needed to perform masterfully on the physical aspect.

On the emotional or mental level there were also root causes with which to be dealt. These were often more complex. Once you identify some of your emotional blockages you will find messengers bringing you advice or suggestions to which you will relate. It may be a friend who shares a similar story, a guest on Dr. Phil or Oprah that sounds eerily familiar or an article in a magazine you feel compelled to read dealing with the subject. Absorb the information and then try to apply the lessons you have learned to your own life.

With leukemia, it was equally complex but I had simple benchmarks to watch on the physical level: my energy level, my white count and my lymph count. I could have been content with fixing those with the Vitamin C therapy and a couple other reinforcing supplements I used but eventually it would have returned in that form or some other until I fixed the final *real* problem. That *real* problem began at the emotional level as I also read in Louise Hay's book: brutally killing inspiration, "What's the use?" lack of joy or lack of circulation of ideas. I had addressed the "unfinished business with my family of origin." Caroline Myss defined in her book. The real trigger was the giving up - the "What's the use?" portion that set the wheels of this condition into motion. I finally dealt with all three, which is the reason I had such remarkable, steady results.

In retrospect I was able to identify exactly the time when I subconsciously "gave up". I had just experienced a number of days anger directed at me by my husband that left me emotionally exhausted and spiritually bereft. The reoccurring event, this time, was devastating to me. I was so full of pain I was numb. The one salvation was the existence of my son, my only child and some-



one I adored. At that time, he too, seemed to emotionally abandon me. He was getting married and was captivated by his wife's family, which pulled him away from us more than usual. Because I was so emotionally vulnerable at the time, I actually felt as though I was losing him to another family. Whether this was real or imagined, it didn't matter. It was real to me at the time. It wouldn't have been so devastating had it not been the fact that these two people were the closest to me in the world - since all my other immediate family was gone. I can remember saying to myself, "I can't take the pain. I don't want to be here anymore." It was only a split second but the grief was so real and both emotional attacks hit simultaneously, which was just too much for me to handle. I had given up.

That was in February, 1999 and by April I was so tired I could barely function. I thought it was my workload, a huge presidential fundraiser I had co-chaired in Phoenix and a couple other significant projects I was working on for a nonprofit I cared about then. Month by month I got weaker and felt worse. By August I went in for a check-up and in September I had the diagnosis. It was this simple: I said it; my body heard it and then delivered what I asked for.

Realizing what triggered the onset of the leukemia and doing the emotional work to clear the old family of origin issue, I had only to find my joy. That happened months later in the spring with the birth of my first grandson. With that my healing accelerated and I knew the last emotional element had been satisfied and the leukemia would never return. The joy search was fascinating for the goal was to find it again in my life. When I had searched for joy I didn't know where to begin. I looked at old photos to try to

identify when I was truly joyful. I was happy. I was excited. I was optimistic and positive. I was even content at times but none of that was true joy. Then little Charlie was born and the moment I saw that angel in his father's arms - and he looked exactly like my son, Jon, had looked when he was born - I was overcome. This was, indeed, joy. Once I experienced that feeling again, I was able to find joy in other parts of my life: my friendships, a glorious sunset, the magnificent nature all around me and in daily experiences I had taken for granted. After that, my healing began making lightning progress.

One never knows what will trigger a feeling like that. To myself, I call dear little Charlie my "Joy Boy". Since then, I have been blessed with two other beautiful and very special grandchildren who have magnified that joy enormously. Just a tiny dose of Charlie, Jack or Lucy makes my life true bliss.

## **The Spiritual Level**

On the spiritual level you will find healing, too. For me, the natural progression of my healing on the other two issues and the time it took to eventually get well provided the platform for spiritual growth. You, too, will find a connectedness that you never dreamed would occur. Some people are already connected solidly in the spiritual arena and so trust and faith will come easily. For others, it will take time and will unfold throughout your journey.

You should look for progress in the quiet time, the silent time, the alone time you experience. When you begin to quiet your mind and learn meditation - you will be able to listen more

### *Commit To The Journey*

intently and to read your body more readily. Quite often then your Higher Power or Higher Self will talk to you, very often through spontaneous thought.

As you surrender and become humble in this process, it will be amazing what develops as a result of all the intense emotional work, physical adjustments and work you do at the soul level. I opened up my creative side, got clear about my purpose, and found peace and contentment I never felt before. Probably the most remarkable results were the intuitive gifts that appeared; those shocked me. Much of what I describe will happen to you, too, as you pass through a similar wondrous time.

Through this remarkable journey, you may begin to see and then become overwhelmed with gratitude for a life that does not have to be a struggle at all. All the answers are there. We simply have to ask and they come - sometimes in odd forms - but who are we to judge?

### ***Thoughts to consider***

A holistic healing journey and the process  
for conventional medicine are  
totally different.

Holistic healing happens on three levels: the  
physical, the emotional and the spiritual.

There is no silver bullet.

Healing is cumulative and progressive.

Not one person will direct you to all  
the answers.

In alternative medicine it is perfectly fine to  
access more than one practitioner.

## *GET WELL*

Your doctor does not heal you – it is your body that heals.

A genetic predisposition is no excuse for poor health.

Time is your friend not your enemy.

As long as your body is improving, you are moving in the right direction and the process is working.

A cure may be only temporary, healing is permanent.

### ***Steps to Take***

Realize that you played a role in your body's present condition.  
Take responsibility.

Begin to build a regimen that will work for you.

Keep what works – discard what doesn't.

Don't set expectations – go with the flow.

Surrender and become humble during the process. You don't have all the answers

The author found answers to five incurable conditions - even though conventional medicine said it was impossible. She presents an empowering handbook for healing that helps others struggling with illness navigate the world of alternative medicine to find answers, too.

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