

HOMEOPATHY INTERVIEW WITH ERIKA SIMONIAN

Interviewer: Marta Lee – November 2008

1. HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT HOMEOPATHY? DID YOU KNOW THAT IT WAS INCREASING IN POPULARITY IN THE 90'S?

I heard about homeopathy through a friend of mine in 2000, who's sister was studying at a homeopathy school in New York. They had a very inexpensive clinic and I had been suffering from a chronic bronchitis for three months. I'd cracked two ribs from intense coughing fits that I couldn't control. I'd also been to my regular physician a number of times who, no matter what he prescribed, made no difference. I went to the homeopathy clinic, was interviewed for two hours, they gave me one remedy and within a week, my bronchitis cleared up. I was not necessarily looking for 'alternative care', I had just not had success with allopathic medicine for this ailment.

2. WHAT TRAINING/EDUCATION DID YOU HAVE TO COMPLETE BEFORE YOU COULD BE A HOMEOPATH? WHAT KIND OF DEGREE DID YOU GET? WHAT CLASSES WERE REQUIRED?

I graduated from a four-year program at the School of Homeopathy, New York, which is an extension of the classical homeopathy school in Devon, England. The last year and a half included a supervised practice to transition me from education to private practice. We had to have a college degree, which included a college-level anatomy and physiology course, as well as a pathology and disease course. I also did post-graduate training in India with a team of homeopathic doctors at The Bombay School.

3. WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR JOB? WHAT ARE SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD HOMEOPATH?

You must be able to listen with not just an open mind, but a blank mind. You're listening for THEIR experience of their symptoms, mental, physical and emotional – so it's a special kind of listening where you follow the client's words, phrases, hand gestures and body language, asking them to go deeper and explain further and further. The questions may sound obvious ie: 'what's so scary about the dark?' but it's important to hear the client's answer, instead of assuming you know why they're so scared. You don't want to put your own experience into their case, because getting their particular expression of their symptoms is what will lead you to the remedy that puts their health back into balance.

4. HOW DOES HOMEOPATHY HEAL?

Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician who discovered homeopathy, realized that the same substance that CAUSES a certain symptom picture in a healthy person, would TREAT those same symptoms in someone who is sick. Therefore if you give someone with malaria Cinchona Bark (Quinine), then the malarial symptoms of loss of fluids, trembling and intermittent fever - will be cured. This is the major tenet of homeopathic philosophy: LIKE CURES LIKE. The well-indicated homeopathic remedy merely prods the body's life force where it needs some help, releasing one from where they've been stuck, so that the body can go on to heal itself. Our bodies are incredibly opportunistic and possess an innate intelligence. Every day, our bodies and minds don't even need the guidance of medicine; there's work going on behind the scenes of our consciousness while the body fends off infection and dis-ease of all sorts. It's when the energy gets stuck that we produce symptoms, which are essentially waving a flag that says 'Help! Investigate here!' That's when we offer outside assistance. Herbal medicine is a great solution as well, though herbs are usually used as natural alternatives to pharmaceutical drugs - so they're SYMPTOM-BASED treatments - while homeopathy and acupuncture are INDIVIDUAL-BASED treatments, treating the person as a whole. Both are effective and their use in combination is wonderful.

5. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING HOMEOPATHIC MEDICINES?

I can understand the controversy. They're remedies that work on an energetic plane in a person, so they're not spot-treating symptoms. It's very difficult for most of us to wrap our minds around such a concept - the 'evidence' or substance has been diluted and shaken past the point of material traces, so why would that work? It's a completely different paradigm for health than we're used to in this country. However, when someone's is holistically brought back into balance, healing occurs from within and the whole organism is affected; naturally, the body follows suit. Symptoms are seen as expression of the energetic force, or chi - needing balance or restoration, and these expressions can be addressed energetically and holistically by homeopathy.

6. ARE MOST OF YOUR PATIENTS POSITIVELY AFFECTED BY THE REMEDIES YOU PRESCRIBE?

Yes. Not only by the remedies, but the process itself. Almost every client says at the end of the interview that they made some connections about their health that they hadn't previously realized.

7. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THOSE THAT ARGUE THAT HOMEOPATHY IS NOTHING MORE THAN PLACEBOS? (I.E.: THAT THE ACTUAL REMEDIES ARE INEFFECTIVE)

I don't argue with it. Sometimes I explain the energetic principle I mentioned above - but like I said, it's a paradigm of medicine and health to which we're simply not accustomed. Even I can't scientifically say why homeopathy works - we just know when a baby is screaming with a high fever, and we give them a dose of belladonna, their fever goes down and they stop crying.

8. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO ASK EACH PATIENT ABOUT? WHAT PARTS OF THEIR LIFE HAVE AN EFFECT ON THEIR WELL-BEING (OR WHAT TREATMENT YOU DECIDE TO GIVE THEM)?

I don't have a protocol. I let them speak initially about what's bothering them until they're finished, then I follow up on certain words they used in order to find out what's behind them, or what the experience is of these symptoms. I want to hear about their physical, emotional and mental experience - as well as their dreams, fears, hobbies and interests. Essentially, I want all the information I can get about what makes them the unique person that they are.

9. WHAT IS THE STRONGER DISSIMILAR? CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE CONCEPT OF "LIKE CURES LIKE"?

I explained Like Cures Like above. The Stronger Dissimilar is a concept illustrating when the symptoms of one ailment are overshadowed by the symptoms of ANOTHER, stronger ailment. The sensations or symptoms of the first ailment subside as the second ailment takes over, and then when the second ailment is cured, the symptoms of the first re-surface. An example of that is when someone who has acid reflux contracts the flu. While the flu is working its way through the body, the reflux symptoms subside and the client may say, "The flu is horrible but I've been able to eat spicy soups with no problem. My reflux is not bothering me anymore". All the client's energy and vitality was taken up by the combating the flu and therefore not able to manifest the digestive complaints of reflux. However once the acute attack of the flu has been handled, clients often see their original symptoms re-appear.

10. DO YOU THINK HOMEOPATHY IS SOMEWHAT SIMILAR TO VACCINES? (IN ITS GENERAL CONCEPT OF GIVING DILUTED AMOUNTS OF SUBSTANCES THAT MAY PRODUCE SYMPTOMS)

I'm often asked this question and there are two differences - first, homeopathic remedies are diluted and succussed (or shaken) so many times, that there's no material substance in the remedies. This is very different from injecting a live virus right into the bloodstream, which

bypasses all the body's normal defense mechanisms. It's a strong statement – and some people's vitality is too overwhelmed by it. This is why doctors often advise people with asthma or older people to be careful or avoid vaccines.

The other part of the equation is while a remedy picture might look like a vaccine (ie: cause the symptoms you're looking to heal or avoid) – we never give a homeopathic remedy unless it's indicated by the person's expressions and symptoms. There's no 'indication' that a vaccine is needed – we're giving them for prophylaxis, or as a preventative measure against certain diseases.

**11. WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON CASES YOU DEAL WITH?
(WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON TROUBLES PEOPLE COME TO YOU WITH)**

Many conditions. Since it's holistic, we take the case the same way whether it's tennis elbow or cancer. I have a lot of clients with Anxiety, allergies, ADD or ADHD, women's issues such as uterine fibroids or cysts, mid-cycle bleeding, irregular periods, sleep disorders, gastro-intestinal disorders and skin affections.

12. I READ THAT THE FDA REQUIRES EACH REMEDY TO BE LABELED WITH THE DISEASES/SYMPTOMS IT IS USED TO CURE. THIS WOULD MAKE SENSE, BUT ISN'T EACH REMEDY USED FOR MULTIPLE REASONS (MAYBE THEY JUST LIST MULTIPLE SYMPTOMS/DISEASES? AND AS EACH TREATMENT IS TRULY INDIVIDUAL, WOULDN'T IT BE DIFFICULT TO TELL ALL OF THE SYMPTOMS THAT MAY BE CURED USING A SPECIFIC REMEDY?)

FDA approval requires symptoms or diagnosis as attachment to a medicine it approves. We're not used to medicines being for 'us' but for specific symptoms, so it's really just a bureaucratic measure to label symptoms or diseases on the bottles. It's true the Aconitum Napellus is effective in treating certain types of colds, but it's also a great remedy for acute or immediate fear. (This is why it's good to bring on an airplane – the type of fear in which someone's afraid the plane will crash – this is the gestalt of the remedy Aconite.) Listing a bunch of seemingly unrelated symptoms on a bottle is too much; it could go on and on. The FDA picks a few to list.

13. HOW IS CHEMISTRY APPLIED IN HOMEOPATHY? WHAT SPECIFIC USES OF CHEMISTRY ARE NECESSARY IN HOMEOPATHIC TREATMENTS?

Many of our remedies are from the Mineral Kingdom, which puts a heavy reliance on the periodic table of elements. Knowledge of how the elements react in nature, what they combine with, how they bond, whether they bond with other elements – these are all characteristics of each element that we need to understand in order to prescribe.

14. ARE THERE ANY TRENDS IN YOUR JOB THAT ARE RELATED TO CHEMISTRY?

No trends, per se, but there is more and more research being done all the time to more fully understand the elements. We're always looking for a more rounded homeopathic picture of the remedies we're using.

15. WHAT SKILLS ARE NEEDED IN YOUR JOB?

Listening. Perceiving what we call non-human specific language - which are words that have a more universal application than just to the human experience. For example 'stress' is a human-specific word' where as 'drained' or 'burning' could be speaking of a sensation relative to another element - mineral, animal or plant.

16. WHAT IS SOME INTERESTING INFORMATION YOU HAVE LEARNED FROM YOUR JOB?

The whole job is interesting. Every time you see someone, it's an adventure because everyone is an individual so it changes each time. There's nothing 'rote' or 'protocol' about it. Plus, any modality that follows the laws of nature has the infinite potential to keep expanding your view. To me homeopathy is not just a healing modality, it's a lens through which I view the workings of the entire world.