



TO YOUR HEALTH

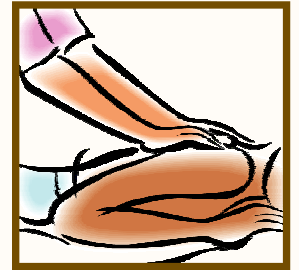


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WHEN MEDICINE FAILS

by Barbara Chenoweth, NP



In our culture, we usually think first of curing an illness rather than coping with the symptoms of chronic conditions. Finding the right medicine or the curative surgery is characteristic of Western medicine. Even for those who would rather not take medicine, living with chronic conditions is difficult to face. It's much easier to reach for the medicine bottle or seek another medical opinion instead of learning ways to live with "incurable" diseases.

Yet many people do have to face chronic conditions that cannot be cured by medicine or surgery. The most difficult are those that require accommodations to pain or to changes in one's ability to do the things that one enjoys. Accepting that a condition cannot be cured requires a deep emotional and psychological shift in a person's hopes and expectations. Such a shift takes time and can be an extended process of adjustment. As one journeys on this path of acceptance, there are many and varied ways to gain help and support other than the traditional cures of modern medicine.

The realm of integrative medicine or alternative medicine is based on the premise that healing encompasses more than treating the body. Curing focuses on the body but healing considers the mind and spirit and how they affect the body. Healing is focused on alleviating symptoms such as physical pain and suffering, psychic distress and depression as well as declining energy and fatigue. The goal of healing is not to cure the disease but to prevent the disease from interfering in a person's life so that he or she can do the things that are important to them. When a person begins to accept that a cure is not possible, the door opens to many alternative means of healing.

People who are struggling with low energy and fatigue can learn to pace their activities, to accept help for less important tasks and to save their energy for the important ones. Some people find help from one of the oldest healing practices, acupuncture. Acupuncture releases blocks to the natural flow of energy in the body, promoting a sense of well-being and often relieving pain, (*Duke Medical Health News*, Vol. 7H, 2010). Like any healing practice, it may work well for some people and not for others. Oddly enough, another major means for combating fatigue is exercise. Walking is probably the easiest, most convenient form of exercise even though beginning a walk can take a "self-push." It's worth it when one can quickly see progress as a 10 minute walk becomes a 30 minute walk over the course of a couple months.



Exercise is equally useful for depression and pain. Movement of the body has a healing effect on the mind as well as the body. The combination of exercise and talking therapy has been found to be as effective as anti-depressant medicine for treating depression. Exercise also

(When Medicine Fails cont.)

is an important part of the treatment of arthritis, one of the most common causes of pain. Walking is central to the care and treatment of knee, hip and back pain caused by arthritis.

Chronic back pain often can be helped by spinal manipulative therapy (SMT), performed by chiropractors, physical therapists and osteopaths. A review of data from 26 clinical trials by researchers at Vrije Universiteit Medical Center in Amsterdam found that SMT appeared to be just as effective for treatment of chronic low back pain as standard medical treatment, exercise therapy or physiotherapy (*Arthritis Advisor*, September 2011).

In another study, published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* (July 2011), massage was found to substantially reduce pain and improve mobility in a sample of 400 people with low back pain. (*Berkeley Wellness Letter*, October 2011) Although it remains unknown exactly how massage works, both relaxation massage (Swedish massage) and structural massage (focusing on specific muscles, ligament, and tendons) worked equally well to reduce pain.

This raises the possibility that hands-on treatments can induce relaxation, especially when they are done by a caring therapist. Reaching a person through their mind and spirit can have a positive, healing effect on the body. The interaction of body, mind and spirit is well-known but not completely understood. Nonetheless, it offers alternative, less traditional ways to alleviate suffering and pain. It gives hope to those who have

The Clinic Staff thanks all of the many Residents who completed the Clinic Satisfaction Survey! We look forward to sharing the results with you soon.

AVAILABLE AT THE CLINIC

Massage Therapy

Liz Parsons, Licensed Massage Therapist
Thursdays and Every Other Tuesday

Acupuncture

Margaret Ryding, Licensed Acupuncturist
Monday Afternoons

Counseling Therapist

Marika Taaffe, PhD, Psychologist
Wednesdays and Thursdays

Chiropractor

Carl Virusso, Doctor of Chiropractic
Wednesday Afternoons

*Please call the Clinic at 781-276-1905
to Schedule an Appointment.*

GOOD NEWS!

The Clinic is happy to announce that Dr. Carl Virusso will be practicing at the Clinic. Dr. Virusso is a chiropractor who is associated with the Marino Center in Wellesley and comes highly recommended. Please call the Clinic for more information.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

On November 16, Dr. Michael Stare will give a talk on “**Low Back Pain: Identifying Causes and Real World Solutions.**” Low back pain is an epidemic, affecting over 85% of the population at some point in their lives, but there are ways to treat and prevent it. Dr. Stare is a doctor of physical therapy who has lectured around the country and treats patients at his clinic in Beverly, MA. Come to his talk at 10:30 a.m. in the Center Auditorium.

November Grief Presentation

“Loss of An Adult Child”
Thursday November 3rd at 10:30am in the Auditorium.