

The Naturopathy-Aromatherapy Connection

by Vatsala Sperling, Ph.D.

There is a famous story of how Sir Isaac Newton saw an apple falling from a tree and realized the existence of gravity. Similarly, Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843), a German medical doctor, chemist, multilinguist and scientist, observed cinchona bark could produce symptoms similar to malarial fever. He thought if this natural substance could bring on symptoms of malarial fever, it could also be used as a remedy for treating similar fevers. Hahnemann's experiments, observations and conclusions about the medicinal potential of natural substances; vital force; illness, health and remedies; a special method of preparation and dispensing; descriptions of the disease process; and the science and art of case-taking, all together brought on a revolution in the medical scene of his time. While the mechanistic model of medicine and the mechanistic world view were gaining momentum, Hahnemann had the courage to go against the mainstream and establish a system of healing known as homeopathy, meaning "similar suffering."

After Hahnemann discovered homeopathy, knowledge of it spread throughout the world and is today practiced in almost every country.

Homeopathy considers health and illness as expressions of the vital force, or life force, on all levels: body, mind and spirit. Homeopaths understand these three components coexist in all of us, and one of these components does not suffer without affecting and involving the other two. When the homeopathic remedy picture completely matches the symptoms expressed by an individual, the remedy is able to cancel out the disease symptoms and help the vital force get well from the inside out. This principle of homeopathy is known as "like cures like."

Hahnemann discovered the method of making homeopathic remedies by diluting and succussing, or vigorously shaking, medicinal substances, a process unique



to homeopathy that is believed to release the healing potential, or energy, of the medicinal substance. This method is beginning to be understood more clearly by modern science, due to the advent of nanotechnology. Using Hahnemann's method, almost any substance of plant, mineral or animal origin can be turned into a homeopathic remedy.

In fact, the latest development in homeopathic practice, known as the sensation method, is about finding the nonhuman energy—be it from animal, plant or mineral source—that superimposes itself on the vital force and creates a disease state that expresses itself as symptoms at the physical, mental-emotional and spiritual levels. When the source of this nonhuman energy is identified by the process of case-taking, made into a remedy and administered in a suitable potency, clients can experience healing.

As homeopathic remedies are administered in very minute doses, there are no side effects. The remedies are nonaddictive, noninvasive, gentle and reasonably priced, and many of them can be purchased without a prescription.

When a client seeks a homeopath, it is a commitment to a journey together in which the homeopath serves as an objective observer; tries to understand the client with empathy; and figures out where and how energy flow is blocked, thus causing disease symptoms to appear.

During case-taking, questions will come up about physical complaints, how they affect daily life, thoughts, spirit, hunger, thirst, energy level, desires, aversions, cravings, fears and phobias, dreams, and even hobbies and ambitions. All of these details help the homeopath create a picture of the disease state. The homeopath will then match that picture to a remedy that can cause—and, therefore, cure—such a disease state as per homeopathy's Law of Similars. In this manner, homeopathy is a highly individualized healing modality and not a one-size-fits-all approach.

Homeopathy can be used to help newborns, children, adult men and women, and older people. There are several self-help books that describe home-based care options for common

ailments, seasonal acute conditions, simple aches and pains, and minor injuries that educate readers about what remedies to take for relief.

However, for chronic and recurrent conditions, it is best to see a professional homeopath, because she would take into account all expressions and symptoms of your body, mind and spirit, and then recommend a remedy. Being completely holistic, homeopathy does not revolve around disease labels, but focuses on the whole individual and strives to restore wellness to a person's vital force.

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Common good can be achieved by cooperation, trust and support between healing modalities.


A similar approach to revitalization of the vital force and removal of energy blockage is attempted by alternative healing modalities like therapeutic massage, reflexology, acupuncture and aromatherapy with essential oils. I have used all of these for myself and my family's wellness. It is recommended homeopathic remedies not be exposed to the strong smells of essential oils, to maintain the integrity of the homeopathic formulas. Since aromatherapy and homeopathy both deal with the vital force and flow of energy, I believe it's best to not use them at the same time. However, some experts suggest aromatherapy can be used on a limited basis while treating with homeopathy.

For example, experts at Nourishing Herbalist (www.nourishingherbalist.com) say using essential oils derived from flowers and fruits is safe while using homeopathy, but that oils derived from trees are potent enough to interfere with homeopathic remedies. To be certain if aromatherapy may be used with homeopathy, it is best to refer clients to a trained homeopath for consultation.

Americans spend more than \$34 billion on

complementary healing modalities each year, according to the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. This number is growing, showing more people are turning to complementary health care practitioners. Complementary therapies reduce the financial burden faced by our hospitals, so their staffs can do what they are good at: treating people for life-threatening illnesses, accidents and offering surgical intervention when needed.

Just like the philosophy that holistic systems of healing rest on, the common good for people can be achieved by a model of cooperation, mutual trust and support between all healing modalities so that all living beings can reach their full potential and contribute positively to their families, communities and world.

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