

Homeopathy Web Pioneer Creates Waves of Awareness

Intrepid, inspired, & optimistic: Meet Debby Bruck

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AT THE 2012 JOINT ANNUAL HOMEOPATHIC CONFERENCE IN RESTON, VIRGINIA, I HAD the welcome opportunity to meet Debby Bruck, founder of Homeopathy World Community—a vibrant, international social networking website for professional homeopaths. As a member of Homeopathy World Community since 2009, I had always wanted to meet Debby, and when the opportunity presented itself (I was sitting two seats over from her) I could not resist interviewing her for *Homeopathy Today*.

After earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the State University of New York at Buffalo, a master's degree in art education from Syracuse University, and a second master's in graphic design from North Carolina State University, Debby Bruck developed an interest in natural medicine and focused her curious mind on homeopathy. She studied for over twenty years with many teachers before practicing, and she credits Robin Murphy, ND, and his homeopathy certificate program for giving her the confidence to proceed. In 2009, Debby established Homeopathy World Community (HWC)—a place where homeopaths from around the world can join together and share their knowledge and experience via the internet. She describes HWC as her “continuing education.”

Married for almost forty years, with three kids and four grandchildren, Debby uses qigong movement meditation for centering herself. She somehow manages to find time for writing editorials, blogs, and poetry, as well as baking and gardening, while devoting most of her time to bringing homeopathy to the forefront using the latest social networking and technology.

VS: How would you describe Homeopathy World Community to someone who has never heard of it?

DB: Homeopathy World Community is a website that opened in 2009 as a place for homeopaths to gather. You might think of it as a Facebook of sorts, where people can chat, have formal discussions, support one another, plan events, and share ideas, photographs, and videos. Because anyone can view the website, it's also a way to serve the mission we call “creating waves of awareness”—promoting and advocating for homeopathy everywhere. There are articles, discussions, and even radio and video shows to connect people and spread the word about homeopathy.

VS: What inspired you to create Homeopathy World Community?

DB: I was part of a similar network for small business owners. At the time, I was trying to build my homeopathic practice, and I had no idea what God had in store for me. During meditation one day, I felt inspired, thinking, yes, homeopaths need

a place to be together, exchange ideas and information, and send this energy to the world. All people who like homeopathy and are curious about it could talk to each other and create a “buzz” of energy. So my forte of combining two ideas—using on the one hand, the virtual online community, and on the other hand, the isolated homeopaths—sparked something new. Soon this idea of connecting homeopaths turned into a mission to create a wave of awareness, open people's eyes to let them know this form of medicine exists, and remove misconceptions and misinformation about homeopathy.

VS: Can you tell me a bit about membership in HWC? Do you have to be a member to access the site? Why would someone want to become a member?

DB: HWC is a by-invitation, professional organization, which means that even though everything may be read by anyone surfing the web, a person must be accepted for membership before they can comment or post articles. As a professional organiza-



Debby Bruck and Vatsala Sperling

tion, the face we put forth to the world must look and sound professional, methodical, knowledgeable, and accurate.

Bullying, spamming, and skeptic activity can ruin a peaceful place. Making members feel safe from these tactics explains why our membership is by invitation. We like the ideas of “six degrees of separation” and unification in our desire to help one another.

Many people join HWC to share their knowledge and experience. They also make connections online and then meet face-to-face at meetings, workshops, and conferences to solidify their bonds. Members have collaborated on lectures and presentations. With such a high level of discussion, we generally do not accept non-homeopaths unless someone has a special talent to contribute or a special dedication to serve the community. We usually wait until homeopathy students have graduated before allowing them to join. It is better that students follow along on HWC Facebook and get involved there.

When homeopathy professionals realize the huge benefit of membership, they want to join. HWC ranks high on the search engines. Active HWC members who contribute excellent quality articles will find their names and identities skyrocket on the internet.

VS: What has been your proudest moment with HWC?

DB: Man, that's a tall question. I won't tell a tall tale, but every week something happens that puts a smile on my face. Every time we accomplish something, we can applaud. Must I say that I'm a bit competitive? Yeah. I am. So, increasing numbers of active members and receiving more attention from viewers and listeners moves us in the right direction. We presently have 2379 members. The website hosts 1485 forum discussions, 1431 blog articles, and numerous groups with many discussions. All the 400 BlogTalkRadio shows have recorded 41,000 listens and archive downloads. The new live stream video Health Inn Show now reaches between 1,000 to 1700 live views per show. The Facebook Fan page has 4789 "Likes." When people find solutions to health issues or take action on a petition, I'm proud to have a flourishing community and so proud of the individuals within the community. At the beginning of HWC, I used to think of this tiny microcosm as representing all nations like a United Nations that actually worked at peace-making within the disparate cultures and practices. I'm proud to call HWC members friends.

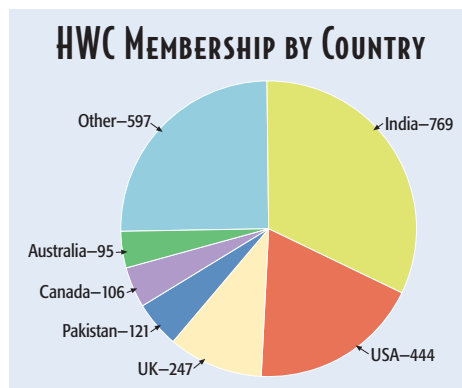
I'm also truly proud of the way members step up to the plate to spread the word about homeopathy. Homeopathy may be old hat to us, but it's brand new to the majority of people around the world. On our live stream video shows, for example, we're opening eyes to a new way of thinking about health and providing options that many have never dreamed possible. I call it "the people's" show because everyone can chat or call in live to speak and tell their story. (See "HWC Special Features" on page 14.)

VS: What countries are most represented on HWC? Why do you think this is?

DB: Last month I took a look at our country statistics and learned that the majority of members live in India, with the US, UK, Pakistan, Canada, and Australia following. Other members come from Malaysia, Germany, Iceland, New Zealand, Bulgaria, Bangladesh, Finland, South Africa, Belgium, Israel, Singapore, Brazil, United Arab Emirates, Mexico, Turkey, Switzerland,

Italy, Hungary, Spain, Norway, Greece, Egypt, Bahrain, Serbia, France, Denmark, Portugal, Philippines, Argentina, and more—60 countries altogether.

Why so many members from India? Well, it could be India's open-minded approach to science, technology, and medicine. Perhaps people there have good computer skills and enjoy interacting online. Certainly, we know that India's government supports homeopathy as an official form of medicine, trains thousands of physicians annually, builds clinics and hospitals with practicing homeopaths, funds research, and plans conferences and events throughout the year.



VS: HWC has forums, or areas for discussion of particular topics. How do you choose the topics for the forums?

DB: I pick topics based on areas of personal interest from the members who contribute information on a regular basis and exhibit expertise in their field. Keeping abreast of current events keeps our content meaningful, powerful, and topical. For example, Dr. Wequar Ali Khan of Florida loves to read the latest medical news, so he requested a forum about "Health and Medical Science News." Examples of other forums include contemporary disease, addictions, isopathy, and epidemics.

As homeopaths, we are concerned about a wide range of issues that affect us and our patients, like nutrition, the environment, vaccination, world events, and other holistic topics. HWC caters to our diverse interests with articles about what is happening with bees, pesticides in our food chain, contamination of our milk supply, and how nuclear radiation from Japan affects us. We keep the site brimming with useful and relevant content. We

want viewers and listeners from every spectrum of life, not just our own little homeopathic society.

VS: What is your take on Twitter? How can the 140 characters allowed in a tweet help homeopathy?

DB: Twitter makes headlines, just like Lady Gaga or the Japan Earthquake. Everything we do or say becomes news. If we all send out twitter posts every time we have success with a remedy, we will have interested people following us, and they, in turn, will re-tweet what we have tweeted. How about we all tweet a simple message: "Arnica works for bruises"? Athletes, actors, plumbers, surgeons, moms and dads—everyone who knows about Arnica and has used it can send such a tweet. Homeopathy can become mainstream when more people learn about it, use it, get good results, and tweet about it to create that buzz of energy. We ask members to link HWC to social network sites like Facebook and Twitter and use social bookmarks like Digg, to increase the reach for all of us.

All during the Joint American Homeopathic Conference, I kept the Twitter site open and tweeted interesting remarks and tips given by the lecturers. I suggest others build a community of followers interested to learn about homeopathy on Twitter. The followers re-tweet messages and ask questions. In our own way, we can all create a wave of awareness. Tweet the important work of your colleagues. Soon scores of people from all walks of life will take homeopathy into their lives, one tweet at a time. It is about sharing the good stuff. You can follow me on Twitter (www.twitter.com/DebbyBruck) and show your affiliation to homeopathy by wearing the Twibbon on Twitter (<http://bit.ly/HWCtwibbon>).

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HWC Special Features

In addition to providing member forums for networking and exchanging ideas, HWC offers these special features that are open to the public:

► **Health Inn: Weekly Live Stream Video Show**

Mondays 11 a.m. ET: Hosts Debby Bruck and Dr. Deepak Sharma discuss contemporary health issues with special guests. Topics have included infertility, migraines, morning sickness, summer sun, vitamins, whooping cough, and more.

► **The News Digest**

This bi-weekly email highlights major article contributions on HWC with reminders about upcoming activities and shows.

► **BlogTalkRadio Shows**

- Heart Health Series: Dr Aadil Kasim, 4th-generation Indian homeopath and cardiologist, each Wednesday 11:30 a.m. ET. (The show has been slowly reviewing every rubric in the "Chest" chapter of Kent's *Repertory*.)
- Vaccinations & Your Rights in the U.S.: Attorney Alan Philips and Debby Bruck talk about how to make informed choices, each Thursday at noon E.T.
- Past shows (all still accessible) have covered *The Organon*, How Homeopathy Helps Grow Great Gardens, Coping with Radiation in the Environment, Pet Health, Homeopathic Facial Analysis, and much more.

I just saw a TV news report about a grandmother bus monitor who was bullied by teenagers. The teens videotaped their cruel activity on their cellphones, posted it to YouTube, and bragged about it on Facebook, where it got posted as a social bookmark on Digg. In 36 hours, two million people saw the news, and a person who started a fundraising cam-

paign gained her over a half million dollars in donations from more than 24,000 kindhearted people.

One act can lead to another and you don't know where it will end up. If someone reads about homeopathy's success to solve a health issue and it touches them in such a way that it "goes viral," we will have created a boon for our cause. We live in a day and age when one tiny action or word can cause a huge repercussion around the world. There is, truly, no end to learning.

VS: How did you learn all this online technology?

DB: The greatest motivator is having a problem to solve. Three years ago I spent day and night reading and learning about the myriad of third-party applications connected to Twitter. I'm stumped quite a bit of the time, but I ask for advice. Find someone, a computer person, who can answer your question. Or put the question into the search engine and don't stop until you get an answer. I would be remiss if I didn't thank Viktor Kolacsai of Budapest for his consistent support managing the network every day, Dr. Wequar Khan of Florida, and all others who have lent a hand these past three years.

VS: You are using a web-based technology for bringing homeopathy to the forefront. Do you come across any negative stuff?

DB: Once in a while I do run into some piece of writing that has negativity bubbling in its core. Anyone who has heard my BlogTalkRadio shows knows that I thrive on motivational quotes, laughter, and joy. I welcome constructive criticism spoken in a diplomatic and courteous manner. However, if someone throws their weight around in a way that will harm others' feelings or disrupt harmony, this behavior won't be accepted. Some time ago, I ended up mediating these types of interactions, until a number of people left the community because their belief systems did not gel with the wider HWC membership. We have had long discussions about placebo, combination remedies, and classical and contemporary homeopathy that can stir people's emotions. As long as our foundation remains solid, we will pull through these difficult moments.

Freedom of speech and self-expression are the gifts we get by virtue of living in a democracy. We have to use these gifts with thoughtfulness and consideration for others. HWC spreads waves of awareness with love, appreciation, and positive energy. Thank you to all HWC members for moving us forward in a positive direction.

VS: What is your message to the readers of *Homeopathy Today*?

DB: If you have something positive to say then say it, otherwise keep quiet. Treat others the way you would like them to treat you. The only way we can repair the world and wounded humanity is by being a force of positivity and hope and by spreading a wave of awareness. I welcome *HT* readers to join this wonderful movement.

If anyone chooses to join HWC, please be patient for the membership approval waiting time. Make sure all profile questions have been filled out fully and completely. Read the guidelines. Enter the name of your HWC member reference. Write in sentences with correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Put your best foot forward. Read the tutorial section. HWC runs on the generosity of anyone who wants to give a donation. There are no membership fees.

At this point, our conversation had to come to a close as we realized that the next session of Joint American Homeopathic Conference talks would be commencing shortly. After exchanging a warm hug, Debby and I headed out to the lecture hall with a silent promise to each other that we will meet again and continue to spread the waves of awareness for homeopathy in our own unique ways.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Vatsala Sperling MS, PhD, PDHom, RSHom, CCH, was chief of clinical microbiology services in a hospital in Chennai, India. To this day, she remembers the taste of homeopathic remedies received from her homeopaths while growing up in India. On coming to the U.S., Vatsala enrolled with Misha Norland's School of Homeopathy in 2004. A published author of eight books (www.InnerTraditions.com) and several essays on health and healing, Vatsala practices classical homeopathy in Vermont. www.Rochesterhomeopathy.com.