

ESSAYS IN HOLISM

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PREMISE FOR DISCUSSION OF HEALTH ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

Health and health care reform in the U.S. have become issues of paramount importance and increasing intensity. This Premise suggests that publicized assessments of the situation from industry analysts, the major media, politicians and other commentators are missing important points. It also suggests that rethinking the prevailing theory of disease would be most helpful, because without philosophical reform, we are likely to get little more than a series of desperate, shallow, and increasingly expensive stopgap measures. It is finally suggested that current proposals for administrative reform, though needed, are not up to the task of making acceptable improvements in cost, or most importantly, safety and effectiveness.

FOR THE RECORD

Disease-research organizations have solicited donations by citing the number of people lost to individual diseases. However, statistics for the overall rate of illness and overall death rate from illness are never considered, based upon the assumption that it is acceptable to die of illness and not simply old age. An idea of the overall death rate can be gotten from considering that over the last several years, roughly four Americans died every minute from the two major killers only: heart disease and cancer. However, is this the kind of track record we should expect after pouring many \$billions into research and treatment? More importantly, we have no statistics for the primary and collateral stress induced by illness and the loss of *quality of life*.

Despite the claimed elimination of some diseases through medical advance, both the advent of new diseases and the intensifying of existing ones are considerable. Also on the rise is the proportionate number of ill people in the population, particularly the catastrophically ill. What progress there may have been seems therefore diminished or neutralized: new, more perilous and baffling circumstances replace old ones. This highly suggestive aspect of the track record is virtually ignored in the publicized assessments cited above. Is there an explanation for this swapping and intensifying of diseases?

WHEN IS A DISEASE NOT A DISEASE?

The Holistic view of health makes a crucial distinction between the collection of diagnosed symptoms (the so-called disease), and the *underlying disease condition* supporting them. The current incidence of symptoms represents only the tip of a mountain of underlying disease obscured by a cloud of misperceptions about health. The manipulation of symptoms (conventional medical treatments) ignores and intensifies the disease condition. Individual health and that of society are dangerously compromised by the habit of not acknowledging and correcting this situation. (See essays *Introduction to Holistic Health* and *Surrender to Well Being* for more detail.)

IF IT BUGS YOU, KILL IT

The roots of a plant exist in a complex soil environment that determines the results above the surface. It has been shown that insects attack weak plants to a far greater degree than healthy ones. Insects may be seen as part of the symptom picture (erroneously called a disease) of the imbalance (disease condition) in the soil/plant complex. Typically, our solution is to poison these symptoms with pesticides, the agricultural equivalent of drugs, rather than cultivate a balanced environment for the roots. Merely to kill that symptom allows the underlying imbalance to persist and probably worsen. (Naturally, its unhealthy influence may be transferred to those who ingest the plant—except the insects, of course!) Thus, the Planet is doing us a favor with the bugs by showing us that there is a problem in the *ecology*.

The foregoing model can be applied to human disease organisms (germs). If we regard these “evil attackers” as the basic cause, rather than components of the symptom picture, and the killing of them as the whole cure, then, like the plant, we may remain susceptible to further expressions (symptoms) of the underlying ecological imbalance inside us. Isn't it wiser, less expensive, more efficient, and infinitely more humane to heed Nature, correct or prevent this condition, and head off symptom pictures?

It would be most helpful to question the habit of regarding “diseases” as specific entities, evil attackers, and nearly personified victimizers of the innocent. This habit grew out of a half-true theory of disease adopted by medical science in the 19th century. It diminishes our ability to cultivate or regain health by separating us from personal responsibility and by distracting us from the root of the problem. If experts have faltered philosophically, however, we, the people, are responsible for having allowed it in practice. It has simply been too convenient to play victim and to turn responsibility over to others. But have we also been lured away from personal responsibility by the deceptions of an abused scientific “authority?”

SCIENCE IN HUMAN HANDS

It is widely believed that the hard facts of scientific observation support traditional medical approaches. However, history shows science to be no less susceptible to bias and other human frailties than any professional discipline. Too frequently, science has clung to false notions rather than gracefully accepting new theories. Certain historians have shown that biological science was mocked in the 19th century by political interests. At a critical point in history, a deceptive, yet easily believable, half-truth known as The Germ Theory of Disease was manipulated into scientific acceptance, and is still considered gospel. Several unheeded researchers have since stated that it is a dangerously restricted and superficial view.

HALF TRUTH = HALF HEALTHY

The germ-theory habit of regarding symptoms as disease entities spread beyond the infectious realm to become a model for all medical disease categories. Its victim mentality encourages us not to nurture our inalienable self-healing power, but to use force, invasiveness and toxic substances. And it creates the convenience of avoiding personal responsibility. Some Holistic practitioners feel that it also diverts our attention from deeper aspects of existence. For example, it is said that the states of health in the individual and social body reflect the state of our individual and collective psyche. (This

may provide insight into epidemics.) Could medical treatments based upon the lucrative disease-entity model be promoting new or intensified symptoms of the ignored ecological imbalance? If there is a more likely explanation for the current epidemic of degenerative illness, it is this writer's fervent wish for someone to come forward with it.

It seems past time for a philosophical shift from focus upon (1) victimization by entities and (2) the manipulation of symptoms, to emphasis upon (1) individual awareness/responsibility and (2) cultivation of the healthy expression of our innate body wisdom. It is worth considering that it may be natural, and possible for most of us, to die in essentially healthy condition—simply in a natural cycle, and not plugged into the disease-facility wall.

SOME HARD QUESTIONS

Would such an approach, or any other effective one, get a cold reception from the masters of our unwieldy “health care” system—a colossal entity whose financial health depends upon rampant illness? Is the system itself a symptom of disease? Would reduced demand for this entity's services and products lower their cost dramatically? Or are we helplessly trapped in an economy whose prosperity depends considerably upon a sick population? These few questions reach into the heart of most, if not all, of the major threats to well being in America. From a certain perspective, health is not where the money is.

ADMINISTERING WHAT

Even the best administrative and delivery system, if informed with misconceived, ineffective and dangerous treatments, will provide only a cost-multiplying nightmare of revolving illness. We are in a fierce struggle for *survival* with a massive, profit-motivated structure dependent upon illness. Transforming it from symptom manipulation to health promotion, while reducing current demand upon it are the main keys to health care reform. The last great challenge—gaining widespread third-party support for Holistic and alternative approaches—is the most valuable structural improvement. It is the “photographic developer” which will allow the whole health picture to come into view. Consequently, it is likely to meet the most resistance from authority.

AIDSYNDROME—THE WAKE-UP CALL?

With regard to health awareness, our society may be compared to an individual who has taken sleeping pills, and who must be walked and slapped to be kept awake. May the arrival of AIDSyndrome be the final slap in the face which snaps us awake and brings us into wide-eyed confrontation with our deadly lack of health awareness—because even full-blown AIDSyndrome cases have seen complete remission when treated by Holistic means.

IT'S NATURAL TO DIE HEALTHY!