

Health and Death

Western medicine has developed thousands of prescription, and non-prescription, medicines designed for all kinds of ailments. Some seem quite effective at treating symptoms, others are designed for selling customers and have little to no real value, many prescription drugs seem designed to be addictive, and unfortunately, most have side effects that are ultimately detrimental to overall well-being. Few pharmaceuticals truly promote healing, for the most part they focus on symptoms. Nevertheless, we want them when we feel we need them, and I'm glad they are available.

It should be clear that only the body can heal itself. No one can actually heal us, they can help, but it is our own body that must do the repair work when needed. If it does not, we die. Thus, the medical tests suggested, the medicines that are prescribed, the surgeries, chemo, radiation, etc., that may be pursued, are all designed to either identify specific issues, reduce uncomfortable symptoms, or remove or destroy infected material. The purpose of medical assistance is to support the body in its own healing process. And yet, most of us tend to treat our bodies more like our car. When there is something wrong, we take it to a mechanic for repairs, or to a doctor in this case. Basically, we want someone to step up and fix us.

My father was a dedicated health food and natural medicines believer. Growing up, my sister and I had an array of vitamins at our disposal. Some we took, most we ignored. We were encouraged to read health food books. I read two that dealt with healing cancer naturally as my father had been diagnosed with cancer. We went on trips to Utah and to Texas for his therapy. At the time, Utah and Texas were the only states that would allow non-AMA approved cancer therapies. This was way before health food stores were accepted as normal. Basically, anything not specifically blessed by the AMA in those days, was considered witchcraft. Thankfully, this is no longer the case.

My father's cancer went into submission. Then it evidently returned or perhaps it was a new form of cancer. Our family did not share this kind of information. To treat his cancer, he decided to eat carrots and drink carrot juice. This was a program developed by Albert Schweitzer, a Nobel Laureate, whose wife had cancer. Albert and his wife were both medical doctors, scientists, and Christian missionaries in Africa. My father, an atheist, nonetheless deeply respected Albert Schweitzer. So it was, that my mother and I hauled 8 large bags weighing 25lb each of carrots from Marshburn Farms every single week for more than a year.

My dad had bought a newfangled thing called a juicer. Only our father was allowed to touch it. He would juice carrots every morning. Eventually he would begin adding celery and sometimes some apple slices. He drank the awful-tasting concoction before leaving for work. He made up two mason jars full of carrot juice to take in a lunch pail with him daily. This was about all he had morning, noon and night for some time. Although he eventually began to include cottage cheese and lots of grape juice. After time he turned orange from the carrots. His teeth turned purple from the grape juice. It was embarrassing. I refrained from inviting anyone to my home.

After about a year of daily carrot consumption, the orange color could no longer be ignored. The Long Beach School District tried to force my father to take a medical leave of absence and not return until he had an AMA approved doctor say he was safe to teach. The district administration stated he had jaundice, which is yellow, not orange, but they were certain they were correct. They would not listen to anything that did not come from an AMA approved doctor. It became a big issue. Soon thereafter, my father claimed he was healed and quit the carrot juice. In a short time his normal color returned. He went on to live another 25 + years cancer free.

My mother was diagnosed with cancer not long after the carrot juice days. She was about a decade younger than our father. Mom was not at all convinced that what her husband believed about treating cancer was correct. She stuck with Western medical procedures and died at 51.

We are born, live, and die. To quote Disney's Lion King, "It's the circle of life." While we live, the body can and does heal itself, at least until we've aged to the point that the healing process is thoroughly interrupted. During our lifetimes most of us will contract viruses, bacteria, fungus, or experience accidents to the point we need medical attention. Most of us will do what we know. Take something to reduce the symptoms, along with rest and recuperation. That works for almost every ailment, as it gives the body a chance to rest and repair itself, but some things require further attention. That's when we risk getting caught up in an addictive medical loop. Been there. Done that. In 2006, I had eighteen active prescriptions. In 2026, twenty years later, I have none. I use Ibuprofen and other meds from time to time, but I take nothing regularly as a prescription. I supplement Vitamin D3 somewhat regularly when I remember to buy it.

Although I've essentially ignored health food and excessive use of vitamins, most of my life, my father's approach was likely closer to being correct than my

mother's. In retrospect, I have come to conclude that we are way better off to ignore the siren song to jump up and get medical attention every time we are concerned about some medical issue. Instead, we may want to seek more natural solutions to the medical scenarios that arise. Both approaches have their place, but more often than not, we actually put ourselves further at risk doing invasive tests and taking addictive medicines, rather than stepping back and changing the way we think about our health.

Having had eleven hospital procedures on my back alone, including disc surgeries, vertebrae scrapings, spinal injections, etc., the non-invasive treatments of chiropractic and massage seemed to serve me better than hospital care. At least for the most part. However, when a pain issue rises to the level of desperation, the pills win. Pain meds were my friend, until they were not. Valuable in short durations but dangerous over time.

The way we think about a medical issue may be more important than what we do about it. Our body knows what is needed, although our conscious mind may not. Healing is a process driven by our subconscious. It directs our body to do what is needed when it is needed. The conscious mind basically worries, takes medicines, decides on surgeries, and various medical therapies. But it is also the conscious mind that literally programs the subconscious as to what we believe about healing. Yet it is the subconscious mind with the greater power. It is responsible for more than 95% of everything that happens with us daily. Subconscious instructions for healing are first filtered through our belief system, which has evolved as a consequence of conscious thought. That can be good or not so good. For example, just listening to a serious medical diagnosis can program us in such a way as to make things exponentially worse, especially if we are given to serious worry. It is now well known that our health can be significantly improved by focusing on happy thoughts, healing thoughts, and keeping the mind occupied with uplifting feelings as opposed to worrying about a medical condition and stressing about which pills to take when and what foods you can or cannot eat.

When I first moved to Mexico, I had to return to Oregon to see my cancer surgeon (that's what his card said) every few months. Years previously, I had been lucky to discover colon cancer in its early stage. After two surgical procedures it seemed to disappear. Colonoscopies for the next number of years followed as a double check, but each of them suggested I was clear of the problem. A few years later I was plagued with Squamous cell cancer. It is a virulent form of skin cancer. It can be controlled but it was spreading fast.

Sometimes I would have several dozen lesions that had to be surgically removed or frozen off in just a few months' time. My doctor said I was farmer, I grew these things fast and in great abundance. I decided to think differently about an otherwise disturbing condition. I quit doing what I was instructed. I went out in the sun 2 or 3 times a week, which had been forbidden, and I started hanging out on the beach, walking along at water's edge. I ignored sunscreen. Natural vitamin D surely helped. My spirits rose dramatically. I felt so much better. The cancer went into remission, and has remained so, with only a couple of exceptions for more than ten years.

We can aid our health and healing via physical means, such as eating better, sleeping better, and exercise. But when a health issue crosses one's pain threshold, medical assistance feels needed. And yet, it may be more effective to seek out energy healing, such as Reiki or Qigong, chiropractic, acupuncture and/or massage. My experience for overall well-being validates the latter more than the former, although I keep Ibuprofen handy. At the moment, I am convinced that seeking balance, a middle way, is called for once it is established that there is a medical problem to address. In other words, I am not in favor of simply turning my body over to a medical professional and expect them to heal me. That is not the best way forward.

So why am I going through all this mental machinations about health right now? Well, as my deceased wife used to say, "Terry doesn't know what he's thinking until he reads what he writes." She was usually right. Oh yeah, and I'll be in 80 less than two months, and at the moment, I am passing blood rectally with bowel movements four to five times each 24 hour period including in the middle of the night. This has gone on for about ten days. I have done the research and know the likely issues, so I decided to write out my thoughts and seek mental clarity over the situation. The good news is that I feel fine. No pain. No other significant problems have presented themselves. It seems a bit scary when I admit in writing what is going on, but because there is no pain I am not worried. My body will heal itself, or it won't.

I have had a wonderful life. And I do not fear death. Of course, I prefer not to suffer, but the truth is that none of us are getting out of here alive. That's not a bad thing. As in my view, we are spiritual beings having a mortal experience and death is simply a birth into a greater existence. Ergo no fear, in fact I look forward to the experience, but not the suffering that is so often a part of the process.

It seems evident that with effort we can likely delay the dying process, at least to

some degree, but the real issue is how we have lived, not so much how we die. Yes, of course, I would prefer something easy like a stroke in my sleep. That is so much better than the high-tech nightmare of being plugged into beeping machines in a hospital. That is not for me. So, if it happens to be the reader's choice of whether to plug me in, or unplug me, let it be the latter. I am ready to go when it's time, and I do not want that process slowed down. Especially true, if there is a serious risk of surviving only to live a miserable physical life without the freedom to move about. Ergo, let me go. Do not keep me alive in this world.