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Moving Beyond the Failure of Conventional Medicine

by Dr. Georgianna Donadio

Read through any alternative health periodical today and you'll find stories of people for whom traditional medicine has failed to resolve their chronic health problems. Today it is a well documented fact that 85% of chronic illnesses are the result of lifestyle habits and behaviors and are usually resolved or best addressed by a change in the lifestyle behaviors that brought the conditions about in the first place. Because the overwhelming majority of health care delivered in the U.S. is provided to address chronic conditions, it's not surprising that traditional medical treatments are failing miserably. Drugs or surgery are virtually the only tools that traditionally-trained physicians are taught and have in their treatment arsenal, and most physicians virtually ignore the basic cause of chronic illnesses. In general, these methods merely mask the true cause of the condition rather than getting at the source of what's causing it.

Depression and migraine headaches are two chronic conditions that can severely affect one's ability to function normally. Every aspect of one's life, from work to sleep to relationships, can be negatively affected and generally, no amount of drugs or surgery will correct or reduce the symptoms. Today, depression is the most common chronic condition in the world and an astounding 40% of the U.S. population suffers from long-standing depression. In addition, 36 million Americans experience frequent migraine headaches. For the pharmaceutical companies, these illnesses have translated into huge revenue streams. In 2007, antidepressants accounted for 21% of total drug sales or in dollars and cents, \$19.4 billion dollars! Another example of the "benefit" of treating the symptom rather than the whole person is the manufacturer behind Botox, who is presently seeking FDA approval of Botox for the treatment of migraines in an effort to raise sales from \$50 million to an expected \$400 million. The hundreds of billions of dollars realized annually by the U.S. medical-pharma complex is a clear motivation for the medical training of physicians to continue to mystify illness rather than identify the behavioral and lifestyle choices that produce them.

While the majority of people with depression and anxiety are filling themselves up with drugs and not getting any better, these underlying problems, as well as many other chronic illnesses, are best managed with health education combined with holistic healing methods and self-care. Based in Wellesley, MA, the National Institute of Whole Health (NIWH), which pioneered the concept of Whole Person Care, and their professionally certified Whole Health Educators and Coaches have made it their mission to educate individuals and health practitioners about the five aspects (emotional, environmental, nutritional, physical and spiritual) of health and how these five influences on our lives come together to produce illness or wellness. The work of NIWH is also to demystify how alternative treatments work and how they can facilitate recovery from chronic conditions in conjunction with whole person self-care.

The concept of health coaching, which has risen dramatically in popularity in recent years, is not a new one. Many health and medical experts feel that patients' are not receiving the right kind of information and awareness to take control of their behavioral choices and this lack of understanding is prohibiting disease prevention programs from being as effective as they can be. Research has proven that educational efforts to reduce or prevent disease, such as the Whole Health Education® model, can save the sizable sum of \$50 per patient per month for many months after an educational session, but many believe the savings could be far greater.

For the first time, the power of NIWH's whole person care philosophy is presented in an exciting documentary film. In the new documentary, *Medical Renaissance Series: The Secret Code*®, Judy, Kevin and Rae are three individuals for whom the veil was lifted when they began to understand what was causing their condition and went from conventional medical treatment to alternative, holistic management of their illness. Conventional drug treatment had failed all three. Two of them have continued to work despite their debilitating problems. Viewers of *Medical Renaissance Series: The Secret Code* get to know them and their relatable struggle intimately through candid interviews, and throughout the emotional ups and downs of spending two weeks of intense alternative treatment at a holistic health center. In addition, other people who have been successfully treated for depression, excess weight, migraine, adult ADHD and insomnia share their stories of recovery. In the end, a message of hope and practical ideas for those wrestling with chronic medical problems of all kinds is delivered. More importantly, the movie reveals its "secret code" for a life lived well—healthy habits, a healthy lifestyle and the importance of spirituality.

C. Norman Shealy, M.D., Ph.D., Executive Producer, Advisory Board Member at NIWH and founder of Shealy Wellness Center in Springfield, Missouri, was compelled to create the film as a means to provide people with practical health information. "When I saw, *What the Bleep Do We Know?* I was impressed that the quantum concepts of consciousness were at last being shown, but I thought it was unfortunate that nothing practical was demonstrated," said Shealy. "I began envisioning a documentary that would demonstrate the phenomenal success of holistic approaches for treatment as well as prevention of illness."

Set in summer, 2007 amid the pastoral, scenic tranquility of a Midwest treatment center, *Medical Renaissance Series: The Secret Code* features a cast of well-respected "stars" in the holistic health field including Drs. Caroline Myss, Belleruth Naparstek, Gladys McGarey, Carl Hammerschlag, Roger Cady and several world-renown researchers. The ninety minute feature documentary was originally released on April 5, 2008. It was produced by Terrace Productions at Holos University Graduate Seminary in Fair Grove, Missouri, to demonstrate the efficacy of Holistic or Complementary and Alternative approaches to most illnesses.

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