

# Bronchitis

## A Case from the Celle Seminar

by George Vithoulkas

### Video interview

(Therapist): In June, 1987, the patient received *Kali carbonicum* in a 200 potency because of acute pneumonia and bronchitis. After the initial reaction, he showed a general improvement in energy level and mental capacity. This improvement continued until November 1987, when he had another bout with pneumonia. He then took *Kali carbonicum* 200 once more, and an improvement was seen until February 1988, when he again contracted pneumonia. *Kali carbonicum* was given again. He first took 200C, with no effect, and then 1M, which helped. But after the 1M he had a very stiff neck for three days and he could not move his head. He had to sit, more or less, in the same position for three days. Improvement slowly set in, and after about three weeks his stiff neck disappeared.

(GV): Did he take any extra remedies during that time?

(Therapist): It continued to get worse until April, 1988, and then he tried *Kali carbonicum* again, 30C and 200C. After taking these potencies he had a dream in which he was a big stone. In the dream he was posed a question which he answered over and over again with, "You know very well I can't do that." Still, his lung symptoms did improve. In July 1988, his bronchitis got worse again and was accompanied by a very heavy cough.

(GV): Did he continue smoking in the meantime?

(Therapist): Yes, he smoked the whole time.

(GV): Heavily?

(Therapist): Yes. After he took *Kali carbonicum*, he dreamt that he was a burnt stone, a ceramic figure, but this time the stone had a face and arms. The first time he was just a stone, but the second time he was a ceramic object with face and arms. In the second dream he did not talk; there was no communication. He again tried *Kali carbonicum* 6c or 12c at intervals of three or four days. In January, 1989, his blood pressure was high, 220/120, but that is an old symptom; it had been high all along. He then took *Strontium carbonicum* 12x, which reduced his blood pressure to 180/90. In February, he contracted bronchitis, for which he again took *Kali carbonicum* 12c. It had a mild effect on his bronchitis and high blood pressure. He then took *Strontium* again in a 12x potency. For the past several years he has had headaches that begin at the neck and are accompanied by a burning pain in the face. Normally these headaches start the moment the last customer leaves the store. He is very sensitive to cold air, particularly his head and lungs. Even a very short period of time in cold air will bring about these symptoms. It is not only the headache, it is a general aggravation from cold air.

(GV): Before you go on, I would like to ask him, and he

has to answer very sincerely, did he drink coffee during this period?

(Therapist): Not normal coffee, instant coffee.

(GV): How many cups a day?

(P): Four or five.

(Therapist): He gets a cough if the temperature is below 18 degrees celsius. On the other hand, he finds fresh air ameliorating as long as it is over 18 degrees celsius. The pain in his face is better from wind. He also has stomach problems that are connected with the pain in his face. These pains alternate: when he has facial pain his stomach problems go away, and the stomach and face problems are better when he has pneumonia. He feels worse from fat, which causes him stomach and face problems. Fatty and spicy foods cause a lot of flatulence. The facial pain is better when he is lying down. He feels very sleepy before he gets a headache. He says that he is impotent and that his desire and ability have decreased over the last three years. Now, instead of being impotent 50% of the time, he is impotent 99% of the time. His ability to achieve an erection has decreased a little bit more with every operation. He considers himself to be a nice person, but his family does not agree. He wants to be alone, to hide himself. He has coughing attacks every night starting at 1:00 a.m., which occur hourly until 5:00 a.m. In order for him to get to sleep it must be over 18 degrees celsius in the room. He tends towards hopelessness and he finds it difficult to be in a good mood; he is not allowed to be in a good mood. He is easily hurt. He has a painful spot in his throat from which his cough originates, especially after he has talked a lot. He cannot smell anything. That is all.

(GV): I only have two questions. First, why do you drink so much coffee? You know that coffee antidotes the remedies, so why do you keep on drinking so much of it?

(P): I did not think that instant coffee would antidote the remedies.

(GV): Instant or not instant, there is caffeine in coffee! If you drink four to five cups of coffee a day—and I understand that you drink six cups—this amount of caffeine will antidote any treatment. Instant coffee is as bad as any other kind of coffee. The second question: As we discussed two years ago in Alonissos, you know that with your condition, if you continue to smoke heavily, you will kill yourself. But you still smoke! Why? Once you have decided that your health can and must improve, then you have to do two things: stop drinking coffee and stop smoking. That is all you have to do, I will do everything else. Forget coffee completely! You can drink tea or anything else except coffee, in *any form*.

(Therapist): He says that he drinks decaffeinated coffee.

(GV): But if he drinks five or six cups a day that is still quite a lot of caffeine.

### Analysis

(Q1): What about tea? Does not it also contain caffeine?

(GV): Yes, both contain caffeine, but from studies on caffeine that we carried out in the congress in Athens, we found the most important thing to be the amount and sort of caffeine that the patient drinks. We came to the conclusion that coffee which has been roasted most probably acquires particular qualities which intensify the action of the caffeine. By the way, the patient we have just seen on video told me outside that coffee actually helps him with his neuralgia; whenever he has a head-

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ache or neuralgia, coffee takes his pains away, I do not know why this is. I do not know why the action of caffeine in coffee as opposed to tea is different. Perhaps because when you drink tea the amount of caffeine you get from the leaves is less than what you get from coffee grounds. It seems that the deciding factor is not how much caffeine the leaves or the grounds contain, but how much passes through during the brewing process. When you drink coffee you drink the whole thing, all the caffeine there is, especially with instant coffee. I know that if the coffee has an effect upon you, gives you a kind of lift or some other effect, that is the time when the remedy will definitely be antidoted.

(Q2): And if the person is sensitive to tea, Chinese tea?

(GV): Yes, if you have a case where the person is really sensitive to tea or anything else, like garlic, for example, then he will show a reaction even with a small amount. When I feel very tired, I will drink a cup of coffee in order to give me at least a bit of energy; it has an effect and antidotes. If I drink coffee several times, my back will start hurting; I will get lumbago. If I drink only one cup of coffee a month there will be no effect, but if I drink four cups a day, I will be awake the entire night. So, it is very important that you tell the patient that, in order to protect the treatment, coffee is not allowed.

This very nice gentleman whom you saw in the video was a case that I had handled on Alonissos in June, 1987, almost more than a year-and-a-half ago. At that time, he was running a fever, but just three days later he was feeling better with the follow-up we prescribed. This shows that the remedy was correct and that it had acted. Now, in June, he comes and tells me that in November he had a relapse. First, it struck me as strange, considering how well the remedy had worked before; it is very strange that within five months after a dose of 200 he should have a relapse, and such a clear relapse like the one he described. He then took *Kali carbonicum* and he felt better. But after three months he again suffered another relapse. This shows that caffeine obviously had an antidotal effect. After having relapsed for the fourth or fifth time, I said he had to stop drinking coffee. If he had denied drinking coffee, I would not have believed him, that is how sure I was of what had been going on. Nevertheless, it was of the utmost importance that I find out the truth, and that is why I appealed to him to be honest with me. If coffee was not the antidote, then I would have to search for some other antidotal influence.

There are some laws that we cannot get away from because they are simply indisputable. There are various laws in homeopathy that you cannot ignore. These laws are not always easy to perceive, because often patients have been given so many different remedies that, in the end, you don't know what is going on! But once you know what you are doing, things fall into place and you can see which laws you must follow. *Kali carbonicum* is a deep, correct, and constitutional remedy for him; therefore, the effect of the treatment has to last at least one year. I could understand if he reported a relapse after a year-and-a-half or two years, because then the remedy might very well have been exhausted. You have no doubt heard the expression, 'The remedy is exhausted'.

His symptomatology appears more complicated now, so it is difficult to say without a doubt that the remedy is *Kali carbonicum*. This sort of a hazy diagnostic picture usually comes about when several different remedies have influenced the original symptomatology. In light of this fact, how should we

proceed? Remember, this is a case of chronic bronchitis accompanied by bronchial asthma, therefore smoking, let alone heavy smoking, is not allowed. If asked whether I thought that smoking could have antidoted the remedy, I would have to say yes, but not within four or five months; it would take at least a year. And because I know that smoking would not have had such a rapid effect, it was clear to me that coffee must have been the antidote. If he does not stop smoking and drinking coffee, the organism will be exhausted. Finally, after so many relapses even the correct remedy will no longer be very effective, at least not for very long, because the organism will have been exhausted. Once the organism no longer reacts to the remedy, you will need other remedies to boost it up. This is where you run into problems. You give this remedy and that remedy and you start going around and around in circles, because after too many antidotal influences, the organism does not have the same power to react that it once had.

(A.3): Is it really possible to help him with his smoking and coffee consumption? Obviously he is slightly addicted. I would suggest that he be given *Nux vomica* for a while, particularly because *Nux vomica* would cover some of his sensitivity to cold, especially in the head. I think that you should consider *Nux vomica* as a constitutional remedy.

(GV): That is a very good idea. *Nux vomica* is a good idea for him. It appears that the patient needs stimulation. He drinks a lot of Coca-cola and a lot of coffee in order to do his work. So, what should we do? Give him *Nux vomica*?

(Q4): Give *Kali carbonicum* in the evening, LM.

(Q5): I know of a case of somebody who also smoked a lot and who took *Nux vomica*, and that enabled him to continue smoking more and more. (laughter) A year later he got lung cancer.

(GV): How do you know that it was *Nux vomica* that enabled him to continue smoking? Smoking is a habit that only the individual can decide to do something about. What I have observed is that when you give the correct remedy for a given person, the person feels quite good, strong, happy, and does not need the extra stimulation of cigarettes or coffee, at least not for a few months. If he can exploit this period, he may eventually forget about the habit. But if he continues to drink or to smoke, these two things will bring his organism down; and the more down the organism is, the more stimulation he needs. If he does not take advantage of the first period following the remedy when he feels better, then he'll miss the chance to kick his bad habits. We know that the remedy was effective because of certain things that he said: he coughs from 1:00 until 5:00 a.m., which are *Kali* hours, and drafts make him worse. *Kali carbonicum* is one of the remedies, along with *Silica* and *Psorinum*, that has a tremendous sensitivity to drafts—any kind of draft; even a small draft coming in from under a door! That is the sensitivity of *Kali carbonicum*. *Kali carbonicum* is also a conscientious person, someone who wants to get his work done and do the best job possible. Perhaps he drinks coffee in order to get through all his customers. And by the time he finishes with his customers, the headaches start and his blood pressure goes up. I would say that, in this case, we must order him to stop smoking and stop drinking coffee, and to take *Kali carbonicum*. I would try a low potency again. But since he has not yet tried LM, I would take the suggestion and give him a low LM potency for a while and see how he develops with this remedy after giving up cigarettes and coffee. I believe

that his organism will pick up again.

There is the possibility of *Lycopodium* in this case. We might want to administer it later on as a complementary remedy, but unless you let the first remedy act, you will not know when the complementary remedy is called for. *Nux vomica* or *Lycopodium* are possible complements because of his impotence. *Kali carbonicum* might not affect his impotence, it might only lead to an increased desire for sweets and this would make his stomach problems worse. If he wakes up very unrefreshed in the morning, we have a picture of *Lycopodium* and the time has come to give it to him. But in order to see this development, you have to leave the organism alone and not confuse it with any external influences.

(Q6): How long do you expect the patient to-

(GV): It should be about a month before he will feel a difference in his health. Still, it is up to him to decide to be careful with his health. He must recognize that his health is now in a precarious state. That is the time that you have to be very severe. His age, his blood pressure, his constantly congested lungs, his disturbed digestive system, and his hormonal imbalance, all show a deeply rooted problem. I have witnessed this again and again. I have seen patients give up homeopathic treatment because they refused to believe that they could get along without coffee. Some organisms are able to stand the impact of coffee quite a while before they collapse. I have only had one such case, a case of terrible sinusitis. The patient took *Kali bichromicum* 200 and drank coffee, and after five months he had a relapse. The remedy was immediately given again and then once more six months later. These relapses, after a few months, kept occurring, regardless of the remedies I tried. After every relapse the patient would swear, 'I'll never drink coffee again, give me the remedy and I won't touch coffee again.' He would be true to his word for two or three months and then he would start drinking coffee again. The last time I saw him was two or three years ago. At that time, he told me that he had been drinking coffee and had not yet suffered a relapse of sinusitis. It seems that, after having repeated the remedy three or four times, after each relapse the organism adapted, became stronger. I can't really explain this.

(Q7): My suggestion would be to take away the antidotal substance, if possible, and wait maybe a week or two to see what happens. If you take away this antidoting influence, maybe the remedy will still be sufficiently active.

(GV): That might be an even better suggestion, but I am afraid that he has taken too many other remedies already. It is natural, given the fact that he is still suffering, that he would try out other remedies. If we ask the patient whether he has taken any other remedies and he says no, then I am wrong. (addressing the patient) Did you take other remedies?

(P): No.

(GV): Then I am wrong.

(Therapist): He took *Spongia*.

(GV): I mean after January when he started having headaches.

(Therapist): No, he has not taken anything else since you gave him *Kali carbonicum*.

(GV): But he took *Strontium*.

(Therapist): He has only taken what he has told you he has taken.

(Q8): Is it a typical *Kali carbonicum* reaction to have a stiff neck for three days or even longer?

(GV): No, it is not typical but it can happen. He could have this reaction—the stiffness in the cervical region—in connection with a liver dysfunction. Often when you encounter liver problems, you will see a stiffness of the neck that can become quite painful. This is a side effect of *Kali carbonicum*, a remedy that also has a strong effect on the liver. After this lecture the coffee drinker will say, 'What happened?' You will look at each other and ask, 'Do you drink coffee? Oh God!'

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