

Do-it-yourself?

I have a patient, a woman of 37, who I have been treating periodically for the past two years, mainly for anxiety. When she first came to me she had four children aged eleven, nine, seven and four.

Her problems started after the birth of her fourth child, when she was diagnosed as having Pelvic Inflammatory Disease and was put on antibiotics for three months. At the end of this time she was then told that she was suffering from Irritable Bowel Syndrome which coincided with panic attacks and PMT.

Over the following year her condition improved considerably, mainly using *Arsenicum*, *Argentum nitricum*, and *Thuja* until she began to feel well enough to want to "do something with her life". She was feeling restless and dissatisfied. She decided to try for another baby and was pregnant within weeks.

Her pregnancy was relatively trouble free, she felt well most of the time and problems were dealt with using homœopathic remedies. The birth was very good and she was well afterwards. The result was a healthy strong baby boy with a serious hair-lip. Although the parents were distressed about the hair-lip, they were reassured by the medical staff, who immediately booked the little boy in for a repair operation for when he would be six weeks old.

As the time approached for the operation the mother's anxieties began to return with a vengeance. Wakefulness, worrying, tension, irritability and diarrhoea began to drain her hard won energy reserves. Luckily in this case, she could not breast-feed the baby due to his condition. He continued to grow and thrive, fed with specially adapted bottles, while his parents worried about the impending operation.

Finally the day dawned. After complicated preparations to ensure the rest of the children and the family business were taken care of, both parents accompanied the baby to the hospital. However they were home after only a few hours. The baby's white blood cell count was found to be slightly raised, and the surgeon would not take the risk of operating in case he had an infection. He was booked in again for three weeks later when the same thing happened.

This situation has been repeated at least three more times now, each time the baby has had a slight snuffle or raised leukocyte levels at the last moment. Only once to my knowledge has his condition actually worsened into anything recognisable, and then only a slight cold. And each time the mother's anxiety has intensified. She is now needing *Arsenicum* 1M at least once a week, more frequently than ever!

The last time they were sent home from hospital she phoned me for advice. There was really no point in treating the baby. He shows no symptoms, is strong, healthy and contented – a model baby apart from his looks! As I sympathised with her I found myself saying "if it happens

many more times you'll get used to it, and you won't feel anxious any more". And what that the penny dropped.

What is restricting this woman's freedom and draining her energy, so that she is able only to struggle unhappily through her days instead of enjoying her family as she wants to? Her anxiety – her fear. Why was she being put in the same situation over and over again? Being faced with her deepest fears time and time again? So that she would learn!

It was such a simple and obvious illustration of one of the central processes in life – but as usual it took a while to see it.

I asked my patient what was her worst fear around the whole situation, and it was predictably that her baby would die. So I believe that every time the day to book into the hospital drew near, her anxiety would build and transmit itself to the being at present closest to her. In response his white cell level would rise, and she would have 'saved' him, and her self, one more time. Until she was able to let him go, put him in the hands of fate, or 'God' she would repeatedly be faced with the effects of fear, or his disfigurement – constant reminders of what she had to do.

Knowing that my patient and her family are committed Christians, I found myself saying "where is your faith?". She told me how she and her husband had discussed this at length, and decided they must be being tested, but she didn't know what to do, could not find it in her self to cope.

This is where homœopathic remedies come into their own. We discussed which remedies would be most suitable for dealing with the anxiety, but it occurred to me that she also needed *Thuja* for the symptoms 'soul and body divided'. Her spiritual side was telling her that she should have faith in the workings of the universe, but her body would not agree and plagued her with tension, diarrhoea, sleeplessness and irritability.

In order for her disfigured child to have the simple operation that will render his face beautiful, his mother has got to relinquish control of him. She has to not only put him into the hands of the surgeon and anaesthetist, but also if she believes in it, of fate, or 'God', and she professes to believe wholeheartedly in 'God'. So this is a deep test of her faith.

If we can see what our fears are, feel them but do the thing anyway, we can overcome them. We can feel more contented, we no longer waste valuable energy on fear, and we can do more with our lives. Homœopathic remedies can bring these insights into the conscious mind, they can soothe or palliate, but can they really cure without our conscious understanding of what is going on and what we need to do? Ultimately I think we have to do it ourselves.

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