

# Homeopath, Heal Thyself

by Ian Watson

Anyone who has practiced homeopathy for a while will notice that there is often a discrepancy between the initial presenting problem that brings a person for treatment, and the eventual outcome, which turns out to be something altogether different. Frequently there is, it seems, a 'bigger reason' why a person embarks on a self-healing journey, which only reveals itself once they have taken the first steps and begun the treatment.

Interestingly, I've noticed that a similar process takes place when a person decides to train as a homeopath. Each of us has an initial impulse which provides the catalyst to get us started, and we begin our journey with perhaps only the slightest notion of what we have let ourselves in for. Assuming that our booster rockets of enthusiasm and zeal-to-heel are able to sustain us for the duration of the training, which is by no means guaranteed, it is a distinct possibility that they will eventually fall away and need to be replaced by something more enduring. At which point we will be required, just like our clients, to go deeper within ourselves and find a 'bigger reason' to continue to pursue the joys and perils of being a practicing homeopath.

I can recall quite vividly the moment when it became clear to me that I was facing a seismic shift in my work as a practitioner. All of my original aspirations had been fulfilled and I had, by any normal standards, become a successful homeopath. I was running a busy group clinic, with reception staff, public education programmes and training opportunities for students. We had built up an excellent local reputation and had enough 'satisfied' customers to keep us busy with referrals. I was earning my living practicing and teaching homeopathy, which is all I had ever wanted to do since beginning my training.

One day, the window-cleaner paid his monthly visit to my office, and a strange and completely unexpected thing happened. As I watched him cleaning the windows I found myself fantasizing about swapping jobs with him! I imagined what it must be like to just turn up someplace, complete a piece of work to your own satisfaction, get paid and, presumably, go home and spend the proceeds. No responsibility. No phone calls. No demands. No working on cases until the early hours. It suddenly struck me that I was craving something - some kind of freedom and simplicity in my work that I hadn't even noticed had gone missing until that moment.

Thus began a long and difficult process of making conscious what were, and had been, the driving forces behind my work. What was really motivating me to want to heal other people, and why was that no longer sufficient? What did I no longer love about my work, and what was it that I still cherished? I was amazed to discover that there were many things that I had taken on board without question, assuming them to be part and parcel of practice life: the sense of responsibility for others' well-being; the need to 'get it right' more often than not, or else risk feeling that I hadn't done a good enough job; the endless phone calls; the struggle to repertorize

symptoms that didn't seem to want to be repertorized. The list grew longer and longer, and I began to see that the whole way in which I was practicing didn't suit me any more. It had become burdensome, and tiring, and I felt trapped by the demands it placed upon me.

Working my way through this inner maze taught me a great deal about the healing process itself, which I hadn't really grasped up until then. First of all, I saw very clearly that learning and absorbing, which I had done a great deal of during my training, had to be counterbalanced by releasing and letting go, which was a fairly new concept to me at that point. Secondly, I learnt that there are distinct growth phases to which we are subject, and that the demands and requirements of one stage of life are irrelevant to another stage. To put it another way, we outgrow our old identity as we develop ourselves, and we must be willing to shed who we thought we were in order to grow into who we are now becoming. Which is a scary business! I had seen many of my clients undergo just such a transformation, and now it appeared to be my turn.

It also began to dawn on me that individualisation is such a cornerstone of homeopathic philosophy, and yet in practice we often cling to the standard practices and procedures that belonged to our teachers, and probably to their teachers. I longed to find a way of working that I knew was intrinsically 'right' for me, but I had no idea how or where to find it, because there didn't seem to be any model or template I could adopt that wasn't just someone else's way of doing things. All I knew for sure was that being true to oneself was a key component of health and wholeness, and that the only way I could authentically facilitate this for my clients was by applying it to my own life.

At the risk of losing everything I had built up thus far, I set about identifying and relinquishing every aspect of my practice that didn't fully 'belong' to me. If it didn't feel right, I gave it up, piece by piece, in order to uncover what was truly mine. I gave up asking all of the 'standard' questions that I had asked a thousand times before, and asked only what seemed appropriate to the individual concerned. I stopped writing down everything that clients said, and gave more of my attention to really listening. I let go of the need to repertorise anything and everything, and fairly soon I realized that my insistence on finding remedies for everyone was on shaky ground as well.

Conventional homeopathic wisdom states that less is more, and yet every year we are bombarded with hundreds of new remedies, such that the repertories are out of date before they even make it to the printers. Well, the argument goes, we have computer programmes now that can handle tens of thousands of remedies, so there's nothing to worry about. And yet..... I had this niggling feeling that something important was in danger of being lost, and it had to do with simplicity and trust and the relationship between practitioner and client.

Was it possible to work effectively with *fewer* remedies, rather than more? Were clients capable of finding their *own* remedies, homeopathic or otherwise, given the right encouragement and support? In being the homeopathic 'expert', was I unwittingly creating dependancy relationships with my clients, helping and yet disempowering them at the same time? These were the kind of questions I found myself grappling with. I don't have any definitive answers, but I knew that I had to

explore these possibilities, at least to my own satisfaction.

And this I have done, and am still in the process of doing. My once-busy practice is much quieter these days, but I like to think that there are certain qualities present in my work now that have replaced the quantities of clients I used to see. I spend more time with people, yet I see them much less frequently. I try to help my clients find what is meaningful in their suffering, rather than to simply take it away. I use remedies to *support* the healing process rather than to bring it about, and in that way I have relinquished the need to 'get it right'. I endeavour to be responsive to my clients, but I know now that I am not responsible *for* them. It feels so different to the way I used to work that I don't know whether I can still call myself a homeopath. But I do know one thing: I feel better in myself.

© Ian Watson 2005

---

**This article first appeared in Similia, the Journal of the Australian Homeopathic Association in December 2005.**

**For more information on the A.H.A., click here.**

**For more information on Ian's work and to read other articles visit [www.ianwatsonseminars.com](http://www.ianwatsonseminars.com)**