

ADAPTOGENS in Medical Herbalism

Elite Herbs and Natural Compounds
for Mastering Stress,
Aging, and Chronic Disease

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INTRODUCTION

The quest for a long and vital life is ancient and universal. Throughout history, human beings have sought to optimize health and longevity, employing a variety of approaches, from the simple to the complex and from the mundane to the esoteric. Although Americans are living longer than ever before, their life expectancies lag far behind those of other developed nations and most of the population over the age of sixty-five has at least one chronic health condition, such as hypertension or arthritis, and poor overall quality of life.¹ As the average life span has increased, we have continued in our search for ways to improve our well-being and quality of life. I like to refer to this as “healthy aging.” The elderly population in the United States has grown from three million in 1900 to thirty-nine million in 2008, with a projected growth to almost ninety million by 2050. As our population ages, there is an increased risk of chronic disease and an overall decline in quality of life.² In 2005 133 million Americans—almost one out of every two adults—had at least one chronic illness.³ And seven out of ten American deaths each year are from chronic diseases. Heart disease, cancer, and stroke account for more than 50 percent of all deaths each year.⁴ This book provides a blueprint to providing a revolutionary and comprehensive approach to healthy aging.

Today, with so much information on health available, it can be difficult to separate fact from fiction. In addition, people often tell me how daunting it is to balance the everyday demands of life while incorporating the lifestyle choices that can help prevent disease.

Unfortunately, for many people a health crisis must occur before they pay attention to their health. While in the midst of a major health challenge it can be overwhelming to make sense of the array of wholistic and conventional medical options. The reality is that few of us are prepared to handle the complicated decision-making process that a serious medical condition requires. Oftentimes I find that people want to do whatever it takes to “get rid of” the disease, regardless of the consequences and without a true understanding of the underlying causes that undermined their health in the first place and brought them to their current state of dis-ease. This is one of the primary reasons why I encourage people to maintain optimum health while they are still healthy, rather than waiting until some kind of crisis occurs. The vital question remains: how can we achieve vibrant, lasting health and well-being?

In my personal pilgrimage as a practitioner of herbal and nutritional medicine, I am increasingly aware that most people I encounter, regardless of their complaint, condition, or disease, have a common theme underlying their poor health: the loss of true

vitality. This loss of vitality affects people of all ages, economic and social statuses, and nationalities. I believe that we must exhaust all possible therapeutic resources in order to understand and address the root cause of this deficiency.

My research and clinical experience have led me to an understanding of the central role of vital energy in health, and I have observed how stress drains this vital energy, causing disease, premature aging, and chronic conditions of poor health. I believe that all living organisms possess a spirit-driven inner force, a cosmic intelligence that is the source of all biological phenomena and that directs all internal healing responses. This book explores how our individual vital energy and our unique personal and physiological responses to stress affect our health and longevity, and how a specific group of elite herbal remedies known as adaptogens—incorporated into a comprehensive integrative protocol based on botanical medicines, nutritional supplements, dietary improvements, and lifestyle changes—can dramatically improve our lives.

WHY HERBAL MEDICINE?

Herbal medicine utilizes botanicals as vital elements in treating chronic and acute illness. Fundamentally it is directed at addressing and removing the *cause* of suffering, enhancing a person's constitution and vitality, and not merely alleviating symptoms. The underlying philosophy of traditional herbal medicine expresses the basic understanding that healing comes from the wisdom of God and is thus inherently found in nature.

Humans and plants have coevolved over millennia and are intimately and inseparably related, from food, through medicine and healing, to spirituality. Herbs provide us with a profoundly appropriate and harmonious form of medicine, engaging, involving, and directing energy toward healing and well-being and enhancing our life force in a unique manner. Herbs support the “will” of the life force; the innate healing force within must desire to be well and herbs, in turn, lend a helping hand. Otherwise, the human-to-plant relationship is incomplete, and the healing power is compromised.

Herbal medicine, both ancient and modern, is vastly complicated and at the same time surprisingly simple. Modern scientific research is engaged in an

ongoing process of validating the foundational principles and practices of traditional herbal medicine, providing new insights at the molecular, cellular, and genomic levels. These insights enable ever more refined, targeted, and individually tailored therapeutic strategies that are increasing the efficacy, scope, and success of herbal medicine.

The advent of genomics—scientific information about the composition and functions of genomes—has created unprecedented opportunities for increasing our understanding of how nutrients modulate gene and protein expression, and ultimately influence cellular and organismal metabolism. The diverse tissue and organ-specific effects of bioactive botanical components include gene-expression patterns (transcription); organization of the chromatin (epigenome); protein-expression patterns, including posttranslational modifications (proteome); as well as metabolite profiles (metabolome).⁵

In some cases where the disease process is at least partially understood, elements of protection can be related to a single compound or structurally related group of compounds in the herb. Some of the bioactive components of herbs include the following groups: polyphenols, isoflavones, saponins, terpenoids, isothiocyanates, phytosterols, phytates, and fatty acids.⁶

These and other specific compounds found in herbs are often druglike, yet herbs are not drugs, even though pharmaceutical companies may extract or synthesize various plant compounds to use as drugs. Herbs—in their whole plant form—differ from drugs in that they work through cooperation with the body's natural processes rather than by domination and suppression. Herbs enhance the body's healing and protective responses, in contrast to drugs, which merely act functionally by artificially blocking or chemically replacing physiological functions—such as beta-blockers and calcium channel blockers for treating hypertension or hormone replacement therapy for menopause. Herbs are pleiotropic, which means that they act in a multitude of ways and pathways to modulate and normalize physiological functions. Unlike drugs, herbs are much more than the sum of their parts. For example, although scientists often attempt to isolate one particular constituent of a plant to explain its healing properties, the

answer is rarely that simple. Most of the time it is the complex interaction of the many different constituents of a plant working together and balancing one another that creates the healing effect.

There's no question that modern conventional medicine has made huge strides and saved countless lives, especially in the field of emergency medicine. But when it comes to the prevention or treatment of chronic illnesses, conventional medicine is frequently unable to offer long-term improvement or enhanced quality of life. In contrast, traditional healing systems, which go back thousands of years, offer an expansive view of chronic illness that is often deeply therapeutic; such systems utilize time-honored approaches like acupuncture, diet, herbs, hydrotherapy, and lifestyle modification.

Practitioners of traditional medicine regard most clinical conditions as marked by various degrees of chronic debility. Conditions such as allergies, anxiety, cancer, chronic fatigue, depression, emotional stress, headaches, heart disease, persistent respiratory and gastrointestinal complaints, skin conditions, stiff joints, and viral and fungal infections are all linked by a common thread: a lack of vital energy caused by the failure to adequately maintain a state of healthy balance. The fundamental focus of traditional, nature-based medicine is to support the person's constitution and vitality through the intelligent use of herbal or other natural compounds that enhance the body's innate healing processes.

As we study the ways in which herbs work, we come to understand the various levels of relationship between herbs and the human body. On the most basic physical level, we can identify a plant's chemical compounds and observe the various physiological reactions elicited in the human body. On a deeper level, there is the effect of the external environment in which the plant developed. Factors such as animals, insects, rain, soil, sunlight, temperature, and wind influence a plant's growth and vitality, and therefore its ability to act therapeutically in the human body. On a more esoteric level, herbs also have the ability to attune and harmonize the energetic, informational, and physical levels with the true essence of the spirit within.

Illness often takes years to develop and frequently has many causes, some of which cannot be readily quantified in conventional medical thinking or terminology. To address such conditions therapeutically, it is impor-

tant to allow the given remedies and protocols time to both connect and work with the inherent healing wisdom that exists within each one of us. In beginning a journey of healing, it is essential to cultivate patience and to remember that all of life is in motion and is continually adapting and evolving.

In my practice, I find that one of the most deeply rewarding aspects of helping people lies in employing traditional approaches such as herbal medicine to promote health and harmony of the spirit, mind, and body. Herbal medicine is uniquely appropriate for healing because herbs support balance, which is one of the fundamental objectives of any health-related intervention. I believe that herbal medicine represents an understanding of healing that comes from the wisdom of God and is inherently found in nature (in Latin, *natura*). This wisdom is spiritual and dwells within all human beings as well. Unlike current conventional medical practices, which view the body as being somehow separate from the mind and spirit, herbal medicine is transformational in the sense of fully integrating all aspects of what it means to be a human being, and in so doing it can carry us into the infinities of life. Herbalism practiced in this way is an integration of science, art, and the divine. It is at once scientific, improvisational, and philosophical.

Herbal medicine, practiced within the framework of a traditional system, involves a person-to-person relationship. Of key importance is the practitioner: When entering into a healing relationship with an herbal practitioner, it is important to learn who the practitioner is. What is his or her approach to medicine? How deep is his or her understanding of herbs? And does this person have the ability to listen deeply and to then formulate an appropriate approach for a given individual? I create my healing protocols based on a philosophy of strengthening the whole person from within, because I strongly believe that a systemic lack of vitality leads to premature aging, and eventually to disease. This approach increases vitality and promotes overall healing for people of all ages while improving our ability to maintain optimal health as we face the challenges of life in the twenty-first century.

Science is just now beginning to unveil the intricate ways in which herbs help us at the molecular, cellular, and genomic levels. Researchers are discovering that herbs convey information to our genes in a variety of

ways: by lending a helping hand in modifying gene behavior, inhibiting damage, repairing damage, or when cells have been irreparably damaged, by inducing apoptosis to prevent abnormal cell growth and cancer. These findings are so profound that science is merging with theology to provide a framework for a deeper understanding of the ways in which plants nurture, protect, and heal us. The ultimate reality is that botanical medicine goes far beyond the grasp of mere intellect. Herbal medicine is a kinship between the intellect (mind) and the mystical (spirit), and this needs to be acknowledged before the true healing potential of botanical medicine can be fully embraced by the modern medical world. The great gift of herbal medicine is that it humbly offers to us its healing power and its mystical wisdom, which we can only partially understand.

ADAPTOGENS: THE FOUNDATION OF HEALTH

The word *adaptogen* refers to the nonspecific, endocrine-regulating, immune-modulating effects of certain plants that increase a person's ability to maintain optimal balance in the face of physical or emotional stress. These botanical agents provide the perfect antidote for the life-robbing deficiencies in vitality created by the demands of modern life.

In my two and a half decades of clinical experience, I have found that using adaptogens together with targeted nutritional remedies and supportive herbs (which I refer to as *adaptogen companions*) forms the basis of an effective health-supportive program that promotes a state of thriving, as opposed to merely surviving. In this book you will discover the ways that adaptogenic plants and nutritional compounds, combined with a healthy lifestyle, proper nutrition, and appropriate exercise and rest, can help you build a foundation of vitality as well as an abundant reserve of energy for optimal health.

By exploring how stress affects the body, you will understand why adaptogens are essential as the foundation of any effective program for improving health and well-being, regardless of a person's challenges or goals. Researchers are finding that adaptogens positively affect every aspect of human and animal health. In cancer research, there is substantial evidence that these beneficial plants decrease the risk of developing

cancer, inhibit reoccurrence, and support the effectiveness of cancer-related treatments and recovery. Unique in the plant kingdom, adaptogens offer safe, effective, health-promoting benefits for everyone, regardless of age or health status.

Herbal adaptogens and adaptogenic formulations can be considered tonics for the entire body, including the adrenal glands, brain, heart, immune system, and liver, because they strengthen resistance to unfavorable influences and limit the consequences induced by chronic stress. In an ever-changing world, herbal adaptogens enable us to adapt and delay the ill effects of aging. They are the foundation of natural medicine for healthy aging.

THE PRACTICE OF LISTENING

On a personal level, the practice of herbal medicine for me is an exercise in listening at the deepest level, which I think of as making the connection and finding the harmony. This level of listening is a synthesis of knowledge and wisdom combined with prayer and focused intent. It is the place where the physical and the spiritual dwell together, reflect each other, and relate in such a way as to make a love offering for healing. I learned the concept of deep listening in two rather different ways: by experiencing life in a monastery and from being a jazz musician.

Playing jazz taught me to listen not only with my ears, but also with my soul. Such listening goes beyond the physical notes and beyond what the conscious mind can create. It is our deepest felt self, a place where we can leave the material world and be transported into another realm of existence where the soul can open and express itself freely. John Coltrane said to always “keep listening, never become so self-important that you can't listen. . . . You can improve as a player by improving as a person.”⁷ My personal practice of herbal medicine, like the improvisation of a jazz musician, is infused with a spiritual force that harmonizes the unique rhythm and melody of each person while calling on the artful expression of human science and intellect—all with the intention of supporting the whole person in his or her fullest expression of being. The understanding of jazz is very much like the understanding of how plant medicines work in our bodies. Both jazz musicians and plant medicines can be defined as flexible; they change

in response to the conditions under which they find themselves, and are therefore responsive to both internal and external influences. The jazz musician comes to the bandstand in the same way that an herbal medicine comes into our body. Both know how to perform at a high level, yet neither knows exactly what the immediate situation will demand. The jazz musician has no idea what will come out of the instrument during any given concert; likewise the herbal medicine will perform differently in response to the state of health or disease it encounters within the body. Both are free to express the meeting of the inner heart with the mind. Thelonious Monk, one of our greatest jazz artists, said, “The inside of the tune is the part that makes the outside sound good.” The deep applications of botanical, nutritional, and lifestyle medicines on the inside are the core of the healing that manifests on the outside. This foundational concept comes from the ancient Chinese practice of Fu Zheng, which supports the root well-being of the person; its name translates as “to normalize the center and support the righteous qi.” My approach is the same, which is to emphasize the practice of “healthy medicine,” which is aimed at the root source of ill health, with the primary focus being to bring about harmony and balance throughout the body in collaboration with the healing life force within.

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) originates in Eastern theology and philosophy; it is primarily rooted in Taoism, with aspects of Buddhism and Confucianism incorporated as well. Taoist philosophy had a strong influence on the development of TCM: The idea that humans are part of nature and need to live in harmony with nature is fundamental to the Taoist way of thinking. This point of view is expressed in the saying, “As above, so below.” From the Taoist perspective, health is viewed as both spiritual and physical, and balance can only arise when the physical (*jing*), subtle energetic (*qi*), and spiritual essences (*shen*) are perfectly balanced. In the West, the treatment of the mind, body, and soul are separated into the distinct fields of psychology, medicine, and religion. This viewpoint dominates modern medicine, and is viewed in most Western countries as the only viable approach to healing. Unfortunately, this approach doesn’t provide a comprehensive picture of an individual and, as a result, any attempt at healing is fragmented and incomplete. In my practice,

I find that taking the time to consider all aspects of an individual allows for the deepest healing to occur.

I assess each patient by applying various “lenses”; some are subjective and intuitive while others are totally objective and rationale; some look solely at the patient in front of me while others examine the patient’s inner terrain (or microenvironment); and some lenses focus on the disease state itself, if applicable. All of these lenses require the ability and desire to listen attentively, deeply, and prayerfully, pouring my heart and mind 100 percent into the relationship. My development as a practitioner, formulator, and writer comes from years of the utmost dedication and hard work, along with deep introspection as a human being.

I learned more about deep listening in the early 1980s, when I spent a couple of years in a Byzantine Franciscan monastery, where I studied to be a monk. There I learned that the life of a monk, first and foremost, is a life of prayer. This requires quieting the thoughts, listening to the spirit of God, and contemplating the will of God. Prayer is the place where God speaks to us and we respond. Second, I learned that the life of a monk is a spiritual practice that can be carried out both privately and publicly. Third, I discovered that it is a life in community; and fourth, that it is a life of responsibility for our service or mission.

Although I no longer live in a monastery, I choose to still live according to the principles of the monastic order; the difference is that I now see the world around me as my monastery. Truthfully, at times this makes me feel very out of place in the modern world, but I know in my heart and spirit that this is my life’s path. I know that I am on the right path because living in this way makes me sing inside. This is perhaps why I have come to view herbalism as the practice of listening and regard it as essentially a spiritual practice centered within the clinical practice of herbal medicine. Mother Teresa taught that the sick and suffering don’t need pity and sympathy; they need love and compassion. In her words, “We cannot love and have compassion if we do not pray. The fruit of prayer is a deepening of faith and the fruit of faith is love.” It follows that the fruit of love is service. Prayer enables us to clearly see God, and this in turn allows us to see God in one another. And so we begin. And as Mother Teresa said so beautifully, “The whole work is only a drop in the ocean. But if we don’t put the drop in, the ocean will be

one drop less. It doesn't matter how many diplomas or degrees we have received, how much we make, or how many great things we have done. It is merely this: I was sick and you cared for me with all of your love."

To me, the healing plants signify the invisible attributes of God, who is the origin, the exemplar, and the beginning and end of all that is alive. Within the humble herbs and all throughout nature, the invisible attributes of the Divine shine, being clearly seen and understood through the "eyes" of the heart. Before I listen to a client, I pray. Just as I should have clean hands to touch you, I need a clean heart to love. It is not how much we do, it is how much love we put into the doing. To love and to heal is not a luxury for the few; it is a simple duty for all of us to extend to one another.

OUR HEALING JOURNEY

Wellness can be defined as an emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual vitality that is supported by engaging in attitudes and behaviors that enhance quality of life. However, a true state of wellness is not merely the condition of the person. Our level of wellness is also influenced by and intertwined with the health of our family, community, and environment. Just as wellness is multifaceted, so is the etiology of disease. Disease manifests on more than one plane, from the most obvious physical levels to the emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects of being. Ultimately, to be fully well we must give love, receive love, and feel a true sense of belonging.

Healing is not a simple mathematical equation or a rational, self-centered, mechanical model as the prevailing biomedical worldview would have us believe. Healing is any experience that increases communication between the spirit, body, and mind, and allows us to move toward greater levels of self-acceptance, integration, and wholeness. True healing requires us to go deeper, to the center of our being. This is the first step in the quest for wholeness and health.

While on our healing journey it may be helpful to explore the following questions:

1. *Who am I?*

- Body type, genetics, constitution

The healing traditions of ancient medical systems have much to offer us in understanding some

of the most basic ways in which we can support our health. For example, ayurveda, the ancient medical tradition of India, recognizes three basic constitutional types known as doshas: kapha, pitta, and vata. Each dosha has unique characteristics, and identifying your dosha or combination of doshas helps in understanding which foods and herbs will be most supportive. In a similar way, traditional Chinese medicine identifies five archetypes (earth, fire, metal, water, and wood), each with unique energetic, emotional, and physical qualities that are kept in balance with specific foods, herbs, and lifestyle choices. Knowing your cultural heritage is also helpful. For example, persons of African-American, Asian, or eastern European descent should consider incorporating traditional foods into their diets.

2. *Where am I?*

- Geographical location, inner and outer orientation

A person living in a cold northern climate with little sunlight has very different needs than a person living in the tropics. For example, someone who lives in Mexico and moves to Alaska would be wise to consider making dietary changes to align with the new climate, such as eating more warming foods and increasing animal protein. He or she would also want to consider the impact that reduced exposure to sunlight has on his or her body and mood and make appropriate changes, such as increasing his or her intake of vitamin D.

3. *When am I?*

- Age, time of the year, lunar rhythms and circadian cycles

What we eat, how much sleep we need, and what we are able to do changes as we age. The same is true during different times of the year. During the cold winter months we have different nutritional and physiological needs than during the hot summer months. Making appropriate changes supports our ability to adapt to our external environment. For example, eating warm, nourishing foods such as curries, soups, and stews stokes our metabolic furnace to keep us warm during the colder months, while eating fruits and salads helps cool and refresh the body during the heat of the summer. What we consume during a specific time of day makes a difference, too. For

instance, drinking thirty-two ounces of water early in the day is a health-supportive practice, but doing so just before bedtime is inappropriate because sleep will inevitably be disturbed. Likewise, eating a healthy sweet after a main meal will cause less dramatic shifts in blood sugar and insulin levels than does eating sweets on an empty stomach. Often in prescribing a protocol I specifically direct patients to take certain supplements early in the morning and others only at bedtime. I do this to harmoniously support the natural rhythms of the day.

4. *Why am I?*

- Philosophy, values, beliefs

In other words, what does my existence really mean to me and to others? Am I working at my job because it pays well or because it allows my essential self to manifest and grow as I experience life? When we live in alignment with our honest answer to the question “Why am I?” we are happier and more fulfilled, our stress level naturally lowers, and our ability to adapt is greater.

Chronotherapeutics

Giving different botanical and even nutritional formulations at different times of the day, including specific formulas before bed, is referred to as *chronotherapeutics*. For example, I often recommend the use of melatonin before bed to regulate circadian rhythms. Because the body restores itself during sleep, I often tell my patients to take cellular hepatic detoxification support and hormonal restoration supplements before bed as well. Chronotherapeutic botanical-based formulas attempt to optimize treatment-protocols in the following ways:

- By achieving balance and harmony between yin and yang, sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, cortisol and DHEA, and so forth
- By enhancing anabolic restoration
- By enhancing cellular and hepatic detoxification

These considerations are increasingly being taken into account in mainstream medicine, as can be seen in the emerging research on chronopharmacology and chronotherapeutics.

I ask myself these important questions daily because they are central to the relationships that make up the fabric of my life. These relationships exist within us, with others, with the universe, and with God. As we endeavor to understand and to live each of these unique relationships, we experience a harmonious balance of heart, mind, and spirit. These three aspects of our being are inextricably intertwined. Underlying it all, we must nourish faith to experience an understanding of our inner potential.

BEYOND SURVIVING: THRIVING

Aging is not about merely surviving. I truly believe that to be healthy in the wholistic sense of the word, we must consciously choose to live in accord with higher principles.

The endless pursuit of possessions in the material, physical realm creates a false sense of what we think we need or what we imagine will make us happy. As we shift our focus away from this futile pursuit, we recognize that to be truly happy and healthy we must live in harmony with ourselves, our planet, our understanding of the universe, and one another. We need to allow time to nurture intimate and important relationships and time to relax and replenish ourselves. As humans, we need to interact more with one another rather than with technology or electronics and the illusions they encourage. As we become more conscious, we can become resources for one another, supporting one another in resisting the negative effects of disconnected, stressful lives. Healthy aging is not merely a condition of the individual in isolation. It is influenced by multiple relationships and environmental factors as well.

I believe that life is meant to be a journey of change and healthy growth. May your journey be as rich and unique as you are as you learn the art of cultivating the kind of wellness that enables you to thrive. I believe you will find that this exploration will add not only years to your life, but also greater life to your years.

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Conclusion to Part 1



THE FUTURE OF MEDICINE

*If we water a root, it will grow and branches will sprout; these are the laws of nature.
The experienced physician, therefore, will always consider the source.*

LI ZHONGZI, YIZONG BIDU, 1637

As we look to the future, it is clear that the stress of ever-increasing demands will continue to challenge the human race as the pace of life becomes faster and faster. Despite the benefits we receive from technological conveniences such as cell phones, computers, and television, they also move us further away from the traditional lifestyles of our ancestors. As a result, the need for supporting healthy adaptation and for improving resistance has never been greater. As we have seen, herbal adaptogens bestow significant health-promoting benefits for all of us, whether we are currently healthy or challenged by some illness. Using these safe, effective botanical and nutritional compounds on a daily basis, in concert with a healthy lifestyle, provides powerful protection that can keep us healthy and thriving.

Viewing the spirit, mind, and body as one integrated system helps us understand how our response to and recovery from stress depend on the harmonious interactions within this complex network. We must recognize our current stress-coping strategies and choose to cultivate even more effective and healthy strategies, including a positive attitude toward life's challenges. Along with the support of a loving family and friends, this approach can improve homeostasis, uplift our adaptive capacity, increase our energy level, improve immune function, and give us years of high-quality living.

When formulating a treatment approach for cancer or any other complex disease, we must first address the root cause or source. Every stream on earth has a source, every plant has a root, and every person is a life force. This is the premise for working with any person in dis-ease within the paradigm of a holistic medical system. The future medical model needs to be one that harmoniously integrates traditional and modern medicine. Traditional medicine, according to the World Health Organization, is “the knowledge [I would say wisdom], skills and practices based on the theories, beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, used in the maintenance of health and in the prevention, diagnosis, improvement or treatment of physical and mental illness.”¹

Both Eastern and Western healing traditions have long known that strengthening vitality is the basis for improving health and recovering from illness or injury. Early American herbal systems such as the Eclectic tradition understood this concept as central

to healing. In my twenty-five-plus years of clinical practice, I've found that enhancing vitality, although often ignored in modern medicine, is essential for health. As such, the Eclectic model has provided me with a wealth of information that informs my healing practice today.

As their name implies, the Eclectics encouraged exploration of every system of medicine, regardless of its origins, to discover and apply the most useful principles for the well-being of humanity. Botanical medicine was the backbone of their therapeutic approach, but the Eclectics also promoted simple therapies such as dietary modifications, exercise, fresh air, hydrotherapy, and pure water. I listed the basic precepts of Eclectic medicine back in chapter 1, but I think they are worth repeating here because I believe that practitioners of modern medicine would do well to revisit these traditional principles and integrate them into their overall approach to healing.

- Nature is the great physician who, if permitted and not interfered with, provides for our physical requirements.
- Disease (dis-ease) of whatever nature is caused by a lack of equilibrium (an imbalance), the result of an abnormal condition in the body or the result of congestion due to poor elimination.
- These conditions of dis-ease can be truly cured only by the use of plants or other agents that conform to the laws of life and assist the powers of nature.
- Physicians are spiritually inclined; they love and live for their profession. Their feelings are always for those who suffer, and their intention is to bring as much relief to the ill as may be in their power.

At the turn of the century, the practitioner John Lloyd wrote the succinct motto that was adopted by the Eclectic physicians: "Sustain the vital forces." A core belief of Eclectic practitioners is that the most effective therapeutic change is one that accesses and supports the individual's innate capacity to heal. As noted in chapter 1, some of the clinical concepts from the Eclectic and Physiomedical traditions that I incorporate in my practice include the following:

- Enhance vitality by strengthening the person in a rational and nontoxic fashion.
- Balance the endocrine and nervous systems.
- Support and improve metabolism, digestion, and assimilation.
- Detoxify when and where needed with the indicated remedies as determined by observation of the blood, lymph, liver, kidneys, bowels, lungs, and skin health.

To the Western way of thinking, theology and medicine have little in common. Although some progress has been made in the past several decades in recognizing the interrelationship of the mind, body, and spirit, there is still the tendency to define a human being merely in terms of concrete, physiological attributes. In Eastern Christian ideology, however, just as in Eastern traditional healing systems of medicine, a human being is viewed as a spiritual, psychic, rational, and physical whole. By addressing the spirit, emotions, intellect, and body, Eastern Christian theology approaches healing from a wholistic, psychosomatic understanding of the individual. This is the approach that I embody in my practice.

I'm intent on helping people live fully, and I seek ways to optimize health, vitality, and well-being in every aspect of existence. The philosophies of conventional modern Western practices and Eastern traditions of medicine are usually at opposite ends of the medical spectrum. But instead of choosing one over the other, I've found that it is the synthesis of these two approaches that facilitates the greatest healing, by providing me with a wide spectrum of tools from which to draw.

The Eclectic Triphasic Medical System (ETMS) is a collaborative and wholistic approach to significantly improving quality of life and life span. The ETMS approach integrates traditional wholistic medicine with modern allopathic medicine, thus creating a custom-tailored approach for each individual that relies on scientific research, logic, common sense, and intuitive wisdom.

I have learned the importance of embracing the mystery in healing as much as applying scientific, evidence-based medicine. This synthesis provides a framework for developing novel therapeutic strategies

that incorporate the best of traditional, wholistic, and conventional medicines as supported by modern science. It is a living, adaptive, and personalized approach to diseases such as cancer, but it is also completely appropriate as preventive medicine.

The fundamental objectives of the ETMS philosophy are, first and foremost, to strengthen the individual (host) in a relational and harmonious way and to lessen the vulnerability to the development of disease, especially cancer. The other two objectives of ETMS are to assess and then alter the microenvironment (terrain) in order to make it favorable for optimal health and inhospitable for disease (cancer); and to assess and target the disease (cancer) itself.

The ETMS model contains and applies four major toolboxes: (1) botanical medicine, (2) nutritional medicine, (3) dietary medicine, and (4) lifestyle medicine. When treating a complex condition, such as cancer, it will usually be necessary to use a fifth toolbox as well—the pharmaceutical toolbox offered by modern medicine. The emergence of this model is the culmination of my nearly twenty-five years of clinical practice, which I consider to be my healing quest. Throughout this pilgrimage, I have learned the importance of embracing the mystery in healing along with applying scientific, evidence-based medicine. I use both in my practice—not as two separate healing approaches working side by side, but by integrating both of them into one interwoven system. Its fundamental basis is an interweaving of the facts, theories, and statistical findings of modern science with five millennia of objective experience and the constitutional, energetic, and spiritual philosophies of traditional medical systems.

The philosophical foundation of this healing model integrates six thematic elements: (1) traditional-classical, (2) modern-scientific, (3) analytical, (4) intellectual (common sense and logic), (5) intuitive-musical, and (6) contemplative-spiritual.

Branch 1 of the ETMS model is concerned with the patient's energetic processes and constitution, including the efficiency of endocrine secretion, diet, and lifestyle. Inward (yin, anabolic) and outward (yang, catabolic) metabolism should be balanced for good health. Branch 2 examines environmental factors, patient perceptions of them, and their impact on

health. Branch 3 considers intra- and extracellular processes, with pathology and blood chemistry providing clues to a cancer's etiology.

The ETMS model recognizes the ability of living beings to self-regulate through biological, cellular, immunological, and hormonal responses to challenges. The edict of "survival of the fittest" is interpreted to mean that survival is highest in those who fit best into their environment and adapt most fittingly to change. Clinical awareness of the contributions of environmental toxins and the degradation of air, water, and food; of personal relationships to others, to culture, religion, and humanity in general; and the biological stress that comes from disharmony at any level can only contribute to better-targeted wholistic health practices and treatments.

The ETMS model serves as a highly innovative practitioner's guide for developing personalized, patient-centered treatment regimens that can significantly improve patient quality of life and life span for those with chronic illness, especially cancer. This model integrates principles essential to the treatment of cancer from both traditional and modern medical systems and employs herbal medicine as the primary treatment modality. This foundation in botanical medicine derives from the American Eclectic and Physiomedical herbal traditions and East Asian healing systems, specifically traditional Chinese medicine. The underlying methodology of the ETMS model—that of interweaving modern science with the constitutional energetics and spiritual philosophies of these traditional medical systems—provides a framework for developing novel therapeutic strategies for the management of cancer, while incorporating the best of wholistic and conventional medicine as supported by modern science.

ETMS is truly integrative in its wholism. It acknowledges that all levels and dimensions are of necessity involved in all aspects of the system. Approaching ETMS requires a freeing of the mind from acquired perceptions and all other limitations due to differences of mentality and culture, as well as fear and ego, all of which cloud the truth and the pursuit of healing.

Within the interior of the ETMS approach is a reflection of the ultimate union, which is between heaven and earth, all the way to the vital end, which

is union with the divine. In order to see, believe, and benefit from such a system, the person, both generally and medically, must undergo a fundamental change and be transformed at the level of human nature itself. This change is at once both physical and spiritual: “As above, so below.” I believe that the essence of true healing is an outpouring and exchange of love and a quest to bring heaven to earth. ETMS is therefore a healing medical model in which inner prayer is applied in the quietude of the interior, while the synergism of the integrative treatment plan is applied externally.

In the ETMS model, every system or approach has merit and must be evaluated in relation to the individual patient and his or her unique condition. If the focus is on the cause of the symptom, medicine can give a person the means to activate his or her own healing processes. For instance, a person’s blood pressure may increase when he is trying to perform under stress. Teaching the patient how to meditate or breathe using the diaphragm helps that person break the pattern of stress response and improves the uptake of oxygen. When faced with a stressful situation, this person is stronger and is better able to deal with stress in a healthy manner. At the same time, breathing and meditation open the connection with the dimension of Spirit. It is important to acknowledge that it is not the physician who heals, but the patient. The physician merely provides the means.

I believe we must strive to put an end to the mistaken belief “out with the old and in with the new.” Let us not assume that what is new is better. Modern medicine should, in fact, complement traditional medicine, offering medical intervention where it can improve the health and well-being of those with cancer and other chronic diseases. We must carefully select drug therapies based on specific indications, weigh the toxicity-versus-benefit ratio, and recognize the beneficial effects of botanical medicine, using the ETMS approach as a way to increase the effectiveness of treatment while decreasing toxicity.

ETMS is a unique synthesis of spiritual and physical perspectives and is uncompromising in the quest for truth in both realms. My personal practice of ETMS, like the improvisations of a jazz musician, is infused by a spiritual force that harmonizes rhythm,

melody, and the artful expression of human science into the whole that it was meant to be. Through analysis of the objective experience recorded by millions of doctors and researchers and billions of patients over the last five thousand years, combined with modern scientific facts, theories, and statistical findings that comprise the basis of our modern biomedical system, the ETMS approach represents the culmination of the human potential for achieving a truly integrated medical system.

I firmly believe that applying this model in a specific, patient-centered format provides the best means to significantly improve patients’ quality of life and greatly contributes to increased longevity. My hope is that the ETMS model will become the future of medicine, that which removes ego and fear, replacing it with compassion, humility, love, and wisdom.

ETMS is an integrative healing model that has evolved from many healing arts and sciences and the clinical application of continual evolution of multiple systems within. ETMS, if applied, will make the greatest contribution to both the quality of life and the life span of those with cancer and other chronic diseases, as well as provide a system for the prevention of these conditions. The enhancement of quality of life has been shown to contribute to enhanced life span.² Caring for an aging population means managing an increasing burden of chronic age-related disease and dependency. We cannot continue with the present course of trying to treat so many sick people with an ever-increasing onslaught of expensive, often ineffective, and sometimes toxic pharmaceuticals and other high-tech treatments. I am not saying there is no value in drugs or other modern treatments, but we are misusing them by using them in isolation, rather than layering their use into a comprehensive protocol that includes the botanical, nutritional, dietary, and lifestyle toolboxes as well. This is what the ETMS is all about. By implementing the four main toolboxes of the ETMS—those that are based on wholistic medicine—for prevention, as well as treatment, we can fundamentally support good health, allowing people to live happy, healthy, productive, and active lives well into their older years.

So many people are using, or I should say misusing, the word *integrative*, claiming to be an “integra-

tive doctor” or someone who works at an “integrative clinic” or “integrative medical center.” But for the most part, they are giving lip service to this term, and other than incorporating some visualizations or perhaps the use of acupuncture, they are not being integrative in the least. The idea behind most such modern integrative clinics or hospitals is to be conventional and provide standard-of-care medicine, and then perhaps complement that with some massage therapy or visualizations. There is little or no room for botanical and nutritional medicine, or even dietary medicine in such a system, not to mention a total revamping of the pharmaceutical tools and uses of those tools. It is time we give a truly collaborative model a chance. It is what we need to do to add life to our years and years to our life, as well as to save our failing health care system, which is going bankrupt. The word *integrative* means “to make into a whole by bringing all parts together.” The word *collaborative* means “to work together with another or others on a joint project or goal.” Both of these words define ETMS; it is a comprehensive, whole system, a clinically practiced approach that unites botanical, nutritional, and conventional medicine in a new, enlightened, individualized way. It is the therapeutic model so many people are searching for, and it can revolutionize the health care system. It is an adaptive approach, meaning the applications and treatment protocols are adapted to the individual and are constantly altered based on the patient’s reevaluation and state of health. It is necessary to know and put to good use the exigencies and possibilities of the ETMS model so that it can acquire all its effectiveness. Meanwhile, botanical medicine is the soul of the ETMS approach, permeating and integrating into all three of its branches. Evidence for the potential health-promoting and protective effects of selected herbs and their compounds is supported by a great number of *in vitro* studies, animal models, and in many cases epidemiological studies, as well as a limited number of intervention experiments with humans.³ I believe medicine needs to embrace this comprehensive approach to living a healthy and long life, one that offers solutions to stress management and protection and prevention of chronic disease, as well as helping us all live a high-quality life of up to one hundred years of age on average.

The ETMS model is constantly evolving and improving itself day by day. It is not static, and therefore it seeks and is open to learning and applying anything that can help people, without prejudice. I believe plants are here to do more than merely support our physical health; they are here as our teachers, guides, and examples of our Creator’s love. When we take our herbal medicines, plants have the opportunity to communicate and interact with our genes, encouraging healing on a deep level.

I have integrated these healing concepts into my practice with excellent results. In compounding formulas for my patients I always begin with a base of adaptogenic formulations that help restore balance and vitality to the body. I then add other specific herbs to target specific symptoms or constitutional weaknesses. As my patient improves, I increase the proportion of adaptogens and reduce the herbs that were targeting the symptoms. This approach has led to a new system of medicine that promotes optimal wellness instead of merely attempting to fix what is broken.

Although ETMS is a new collaborative healing model, it is often revolutionary in its approach to collaboration. It sheds new light on the understanding and implementation of drug therapies such as chemotherapy and the surgical approach of conventional medicine. It revolts against established conventional medicine in order to rediscover conventional medicine on a deeper level, a level in which it makes more and better sense, where it exists in the best interest of the patient. The ETMS model investigates and accumulates all the clues before forming the protocol for each patient. This cross-pollination of medical traditions is harmoniously infused as one, rather than fragmented and “complementary,” as with many of the current models of so-called integrative medicine.

Finally, I believe love to be the greatest of all medicines, the true essence of all healing. God’s breath and silent presence is the light that shines throughout. My personal experience with faith, prayer, and healing is that healing depends not only on medical treatment and physical medicine, but also on faith in the source of life, and on the cooperation between the physical and the metaphysical. I believe energy and matter are

one and the same. The body as a whole is interconnected; each cell contains the whole in the same way that each grain of sand contains the universe. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and that is why we need to take a balanced approach to healing the mind, body, and spirit. Just as peace is not solely the absence of war, health is not only the absence of disease. At the same time, we must expand our view of health to include the entire web of life. We are interconnected with one another, with all living beings, and with all of nature. To enhance our own life force, we must consider the ecology of the universe in which we live. When we destroy nature, a part of us is impoverished.

In summation, a house is not built by beginning at the top and working down. You must first create a strong foundation; only then can you build a house. In the same way, people with health issues must return to their foundation, creating a solid base from which they can rebuild their health. In physical terms, this means supporting the body with optimal nutrition, rest, and appropriate exercise. This is where adaptogenic tonics can provide fundamental support. This special class of botanical and nutritional medicines works on a foundational level to sustain everything else you do to improve your health by nonspecifically enhancing and balancing the “whole”—the life force. In terms of the mind and emotions, we must learn to calm the mind, to forgive, to love, and to live with integrity in our relationships with others and ourselves. And in terms of spirit, we must nourish our connection to God through prayer and reflection. By attending to all of these aspects of our being, we can find our way back to true health.

Saint John of the Cross, a Carmelite priest and a

great mystic, taught the monks a humble exercise; to sit and contemplate where they could view the open sky, hills, trees, fields, and growing plants, and to call upon the beauty of these things to praise God. This simple meditation on nature reminds us of Divine Power, and the wisdom and goodness that exist in the natural world. If we stop for a moment to consider the origin, magnitude, beauty, fullness, activity, and order of all things, we cannot doubt the beneficence of God. May each of us be seekers of the light and shine it to the world; and to the humble healers, the plants—specifically, the adaptogens—I offer thanks for all you do for us, for the face of God revealed through your beauty and selfless love.

In parting, I offer this prayer to you and our world:

*Dear Lord,
Nourish us,
Shed your light upon all of our thoughts,
Breathe holy inspiration into our hearts
and minds,
Bring peace to the world and to us.*

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