

Naturopathic Roots

By Dr. Connie Hernandez



For the past two years, I've been collaborating, as chief medical consultant, on the development of an integrated holistic healing center in Makati, on the outskirts of Manila. Our holistic MD is devoted to natural therapies. Founder Elaine Kahn is expansively involved in bioenergetic healing and health coaching. Our staff is trained in vegetarian cooking, massage, lymphatic drainage, immune stimulation and detoxification therapies. Doctor supervised in home and residential protocols range from overnight to 3 or 4 weeks.

I am so very pleased at the degree to which we are able to integrate traditional medicine with functional and vibrational medicine (in other words, to practice naturopathy). **Naturopathy has its roots in Nature Cure, in functional medicine and in vibrational medicine. Modern day practice of naturopathy has expanded into complex and technologically rich testing and therapies, many of which are now utilized by medical doctors trained in *Functional Medicine*, an approach that looks for the cause, and treats with innovative patient centered scientific approaches.**

This functional medicine approach is in alignment with the core naturopathic principles taught throughout naturopathic medical school, though functional medicine per se is only one aspect of naturopathic training. Naturopathy celebrates the healing power of nature (*vix medicatrix naturae*), looks beyond the symptoms of disease and attempts to discern the underlying cause. Naturopathic doctors are committed to the admonishment to "first do no harm". Treatments are focused on the overall health of the whole person, and on wellness and disease prevention. The doctor functions as a teacher, educating patients as to how to achieve and maintain health.

While Dr. Marcel was suggesting we write about things we've learned this past year, my thought was to remind us all that the principles of naturopathy and the health benefits of traditional naturopathic medicine hold true. Here in Silicon Valley, there are several challenges to overcome. **It becomes ever**

more difficult to lease appropriate space and obtain the permits necessary to integrate many of our natural healing modalities.

In addition, many of our tech savvy clients, understandingly fascinated with biochemical pathways and fixes, microbiomes and genomic evaluations, have become more inclined towards pills than potions and lifestyle practices. In busy and stressful Silicon Valley lives, patients often forget that health and wellness begin with lifestyle choices that support them as a whole person having physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual needs.

When economic or other circumstances seem to necessitate working out of alignment with personal values or continuing dysfunctional relationships or unsustainable lifestyles, it is difficult for any medicine, conventional or alternative, to work its magic. It is akin to taking poison with one hand and attempting to antidote it with the other.

Health and wellness begin with time honored and simple principles and practices. Celebrate nature. Exercise. Eat well. Sleep well. Eliminate well. Value and develop healthy relationships with friends and family. Meditate. Connect with a higher source.

Within that context of health promoting practices, medicine can bring in testing to uncover underlying imbalances and causative influences, and therapeutic modalities to bring you back to balance. The basics come first, the complexities follow.