

Considerations in Health Care

By Connie Hernandez, ND



When choosing between medical and health care systems and navigating within those systems, it is important to be clear about what you believe, what you need, and how you would like to be treated.

If, due to financial constraints, your primary need is to be sure that your service will be reimbursed by insurance, you will be limited to whatever is offered by your insurance plan. Generally, that will be conventional medicine (although complementary services may sometimes be partially reimbursed). Some conventional diagnostics and treatments may require pre authorization by your insurance company.

Another aspect to your choice has to do with your belief in the system or treatment you choose. If you firmly believe that nobody has ever helped you and that nobody ever will, it is probable that you will not be helped no matter what you choose. Cancer patients who come in to the office telling me that the chemotherapy prescribed by their oncologist will kill them do not do nearly as well as patients with the same cancer and recommended treatment who believe that the therapy will cure them. If you believe that double blind, placebo controlled, FDA sanctioned treatments are the hallmark of efficacy, you will not do well with complementary medicine. Likewise, if you have

a strong belief that energy medicine is make believe "woo woo" medicine, you will not be receptive to that kind of treatment.

Both receptivity on the part of the patient, and the strength and accuracy of the cure come into play in the efficacy of any treatment.

Personal preference is important, too. Even if acupuncture is well indicated for your condition, if you hate needles and wince and tense at the thought of them, acupuncture is probably not for you. If you simply want to suppress symptoms, rather than seek the cause of your ailment and engaging in the lifestyle changes that might be necessary to facilitate a cure, you probably wont want to work naturopathically. If herbal medicines make you gag, you wont want to work with Chinese medicine.

Whatever path you choose, realize that you need to buy in and participate in that system. Oriental medicine, Ayurveda, naturopathic, conventional and other complementary medicines are systems of health care that depend on certain assumptions and long held traditions. It doesn't make a lot of sense to mix up the dietary advice of a Chinese medical doctor with that of an Ayurvedic doctor. While it is a good idea to explore alternatives, at some point a choice must be made and a consistent path followed. One treatment here, another there, generally confuses and brings a person to conclude that nothing works.

Another aspect of your choice has to do with your resonance with your practitioner, and your belief in their ability to work with your condition within the system in which they operate. If a practitioner assures you that they can 100% cure your condition in a specified amount of time, my advice would be to run the other way. **The practitioner does not have the power to cure**

you. Your presence and participation allows a suggested cure to work its healing magic.

So consider your options, choose wisely, commit to a reasonable time frame, and then re-evaluate your options if you are not satisfied with your progress.