



Medicine for Managers

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500 UP

When I started writing items with Roy for his world renown blog, I had no idea that I would still be doing a weekly item nearly eleven years later. But I am, and this is the 500th! I have written about anatomy, diseases, notable clinicians, medical success and failure and the indomitable spirit which pervades the profession to ameliorate and to cure. Today, I pause to consider our forebears, and their thoughts on health and care.

Hippocrates is a hero of mine. A real person but one who has around himself a mythology based largely on admiration and belief that all disease can be managed, treated and cured.

Hippocrates was born in around 460 BC on the island of Kos in Greece.

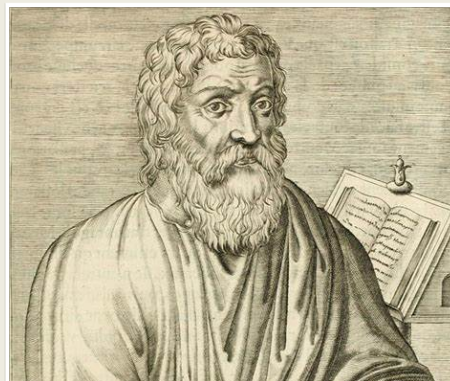
He was a physician during the classical period in Greek history and came to be regarded as the Father of Medicine.

Much of his notoriety is probably because of the reverence and regard for him by succeeding generations, as a man of huge skill, vision and ethical standards.

About sixty documents about medical topics have survived and bear his name, although it is certain that not all were actually written by him. Indeed, it is suspected that the **Hippocratic Oath** itself may have been inspired but not written by him.

There are many quotes attributed to Hippocrates, some with questionable provenance. Below are a few of his greatest attributions, but, **remember**, he said these over two-and-a-half thousand years ago.

"The greatest medicine of all is teaching people how not to need it"



"The wise man should consider that health is the greatest of human blessings"

"Before you heal someone, ask him if he is willing to give up the things that make him sick"

He repeatedly wrote of the importance of good nutrition.

"Positive health requires a knowledge of the power of food . . . and of exercise. . . If there is a deficiency in food or exercise the body will fall sick"

"As food causes disease, it can be the most powerful cure"

"Our food should be our medicine; our medicine should be our food"

"Leave your drugs in the chemist's pot if you can heal the patient with food"

He appreciated the importance of fitness

"Walking is the man's best medicine"

"If we could give every individual the right amount of exercise, not too little and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health"

"Sport is the preserver of health"

"Rest as soon as there is pain"

"If your mood is bad, go for a walk. If it is still bad, go for another walk"

He was outstandingly a carer

"Make a habit of two things; to help or at least to do no harm"

"Cure sometimes, treat often, comfort always"

"Flowers always make people better, happier; they are sunshine food and medicine to the mind"

Alas, forgotten now in hospitals.

He did appreciate the value of the physician . .

"Where there is love of medicine, there is love of humankind"

"Life is short, but the physician's art and craft is so long to learn "

"The skill of the physician is to declare the past, diagnose the present, foretell the future"

. . . but also its limitations. . .

If you are not your own doctor, you are a fool"

"The natural force within each one of us is the greatest force in getting well"

"Everything in excess is opposed to nature"

Some of his advice was very popular

"Wine is an appropriate article for mankind, both for the healthy body and for the ailing man"

"To do nothing is sometimes a good remedy"

Some advice was more creative

"Eating and exercise alone is not enough for health. Proper attention [must be] given to the season of the year, the changes of the wind and the situation of his home"

"Anyone wishing to study medicine must master the art of massage"

Hippocrates was not vocal about deprivation and social class. Indeed many have addressed that shortcoming since and here are a few

"Let us be the ones who say we do not accept that a child dies every three seconds, simply because he does not have the drugs you and I have. Let us be the ones to say that birth must not determine the right to life. Let us be outraged, let us be loud, let us be bold"
Brad Pitt

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"

The World Health Organisation

"Contentment is the greatest wealth, faithfulness the best relationship and health the greatest gift"
Buddha

"Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise"
Benjamin Franklin

"Living a healthy lifestyle will bring deprivation of poor health, lethargy and fat"

Jill Johnson

"If investments in banks fall, it is a tragedy and people say 'what are we going to do?', but if people die of hunger or die of poor health, they say nothing"

Pope Francis

"There is no such things as an acceptable level of unemployment, because hunger is not acceptable, poverty is not acceptable, poor health is not acceptable and a ruined life is not acceptable"

Hubert Humphrey

Finally, there is the profound and the funny.

The Profound

"The greatest evil is physical pain"

St Augustine

"I am dying from the treatment of too many physicians"

Alexander the Great

"The doctor sees the weakness of mankind, the lawyer all the wickedness and the theologian all the stupidity"

Arthur Schopenhauer

. . . . and the Very Profound

"The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease"

Sir William Osler (another hero of mine)

"The art of medicine consists of amusing the patient while nature cures the disease"

Voltaire

The funny

We must laugh at and with medicine. It is not all death and disaster. So many do get better and however daunting the untreatable, the catalogue of things we can treat gets thicker all the time.

"When I was born I was so ugly that the doctor slapped my mother"

Rodney Dangerfield

"I became faint and nauseous during even very minor medical procedures, such as making an appointment by 'phone"

Dave Barry

"I was going to have cosmetic surgery until I noticed that the doctor's surgery was full of paintings by Picasso"

Rita Rudner

"A scared look and a 'let me go and Google that' is not what I want to hear from my doctor"

Anon

And the old favourite . . .

"What is the difference between God and a surgeon?"

"God doesn't think he is a surgeon!"

Thank you for all your support over the last eleven years. It has been both a pleasure and great fun to write. After getting on for fifty years as a doctor, I can truly say I have felt privileged every day of my professional life.

Keep safe, stay well, and until next week . . .

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