

Perspective by Peter Glickman

Before a friend of mine's daughter left for college this year, my friend had a father-daughter talk with her. He did not like Bob, the boy she was dating at school. Bob did not have a job, was not in school and had no plans for the future. The other day, he received a letter from her:

Dear Dad,

This letter may be hard to take, so please sit down and have a cup of coffee while you read it.

I know you don't like Bob, but if you would get to know him you'll like him as much as I do. I certainly hope so ... because I've decided to move in with Bob. It means I'll be further from the college, but that's something else I want to tell you ... I'm going to drop out of school and get a job to support us. I know how much you value education, but you also taught me to think for myself. And right now, that's what I think is best.

Anyway, both Bob and I hope you'll take the time to get to know him because we've decided to get married. He's really great and I'm sure you'll like him when you get to know him.

And the best news of all? I'm pregnant! So, I'm sure you'll agree our getting married is the best thing to do.

Love,
Your daughter, Amy

At the bottom of the page was "Please turn over." I wondered what could possibly be next and quickly turned the page.

Dad,

I'm sorry to have put you through all that. I'm not pregnant and we're not getting married. I'm certainly not dropping out of school for Bob; I broke off with him a couple days ago. You were right, he was a jerk.

However, I did get a D in chemistry and wanted to put it in perspective before I told you.

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The story is not true, but it does make an important point: perspective is *very* important.

Much has been said, published and broadcast about America's health care system, the medical advances we have made and that it is the best health care system in the world. I would like to give you a different perspective.

Current Health Care Statistics

Cancer:

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), since the War on Cancer began in 1971, the cancer rate in America more than doubled to 2001.¹ This was in spite of the National Cancer Institute's *annual* funding increasing *thirty* times from \$150 million in 1971 to \$4.6 billion in 2005.² "40.77% of men and women born today will be diagnosed with cancer at some time during their lifetime."³

Heart Disease:

One person in three suffers from some form of heart or circulatory system disease, including high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. One out of every three people dies from these conditions. That is more than 2,400 deaths each day, an average of one death every 37 seconds.⁴

Diabetes:

"The United States saw a 136 percent increase in the number of people with diabetes between 1980 and 2007."⁵

Obesity:

The number of adults who are extremely obese and thus likely to have serious health problems increased 600% from 1961 to 2006 according to the CDC.⁶ The extremely obese have more than twice the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure *and* diabetes than normal weight Americans.⁷

Cost of Health Care:

Although America spent 36 times as much money as Cuba on health care in 1997 according to the World Health Organization (\$3724 vs. \$109), an American male was only expected to live one month longer than a Cuban male. Worse, a Cuban male could expect to remain healthy for one month longer at the end of his life than an American male. Even worse, the World Health Organization ranked Cuba's health level 36th in the world, while America's ranked 72nd out of 144.⁸ By the way, who spent more than any other country in the world for health care? America.

These statistics clearly demonstrate there is something modern medicine does not know about these diseases that is important for their prevention. Why is this?

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Ideas in Conflict

Modern medicine is built on the concept of symptoms and disease. The modern medical doctor is taught to observe the patient's symptoms, run diagnostic tests and compare that information to symptoms of known diseases. After that process of diagnosis, he prescribes the currently accepted treatment to cure that disease and the patient hopefully gets well—meaning the patient no longer has those symptoms. This method works well for infections, measles, etc. But heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, Alzheimer's and cancer are another matter and a very serious matter because together they were the cause of death for more than half of all the Americans who died in 2006 according to the CDC.

However, the medical disease concept is not the only concept of healing. There are others: chiropractic, acupuncture, traditional Chinese medicine and naturopathy. Naturopathic doctors teach their patients to use diet, exercise, lifestyle changes and natural therapies to enhance their bodies' ability to prevent and combat disease. This definition comes from the American Assn. of Naturopathic Physicians website. (Note the wording "doctors teach their patients ..." above. The word "doctor" actually comes from the Latin word *docere* meaning to teach.) These alternative models of healing base their practices on the fact that *the human body will heal itself* if given the chance and the patient is taught how to do that. For example, when you cut yourself, the wound heals provided you keep it clean and protected from being reopened again.

Diagnosis is not as important to these other schools of healing because it is recognized that if you give your body enough nutrition and exercise, detoxify it as needed and eliminate negative mental influences and stress, the body will heal itself. This was the foundation of modern medicine as developed by Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, 400 BC. However, medicine has not always stayed true to its roots.

Challenging Established Authority

Because other healing models accept other causes for lack of vibrant good health and happiness, they are often dismissed or even fought by medical societies. A historical example of this is Sir William A. Lane (1856 - 1943). He was a distinguished member of the British Royal Society of Surgeons. He is still known for three surgical procedures he invented including the use of plates and screws for repairing fractures that otherwise wouldn't heal correctly. During the First World War (1914–18), he opened a branch of Queen Mary's Hospital, which pioneered plastic surgery to repair facial birth defects.

"Lane was regarded at his peak as the best abdominal surgeon in England and was called on to operate on Royalty, politicians and many society figures of the Edwardian era."⁹

His vast experience in surgery led him to realize that long-term un-eliminated waste in the colon putrefied and therefore caused many other diseases. Lane referred to it as autointoxication

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(literally, self poisoning). The modern word for it is endotoxins (endo = internal, toxins = poisons). For example, such are created when protein is acted on by certain bacteria. In his first misguided attempt to remedy this, Lane, being a surgeon, performed total colectomies (removing the entire colon).

In 1926 after observing the failure of surgery as the treatment, Lane “started promoting exercise, fruit and vegetables and bran cereal as the answer to bowel problems. Using his many royal and society connections he set up The New Health Society [in England in 1925] to promote ... health education... [and] ... wrote columns in the newspapers, held public lectures and improved the distribution of fruit and vegetables.”¹⁰

The medical establishment fought his effort to improve health with non-medicinal, non-surgical means. They were so vehement that in 1926 Lane “in order to promote the New Health Society..., asked to have his name removed from the Medical Register to avoid being disciplined by the [British] General Medical Council.”¹¹

Sir William A. Lane, addressing the Johns Hopkins Hospital and Medical College said:

“Gentlemen, I will never die of cancer. I am taking measures to prevent it... It is caused by poisons created in our bodies by the food we eat... What we should do, then, if we would avoid cancer, is to eat... raw fruits and vegetables; first, that we may be better nourished; secondly, that we may more easily eliminate waste products... We have been studying germs when we should have been studying diet and drainage. . The world has been on the wrong track. The answer has been within ourselves all the time... Drain the body of its poisons, feed it properly, and the miracle is done. Nobody need have cancer who will take the trouble to avoid it.”¹²

By the way, Lane lived to be 87 years old and died from being run over during the Second World War in London.¹³

Modern medicine does not classify a growing lack of energy and enthusiasm toward life as you age as a disease. So, if you experience a growing lack of energy and enthusiasm, do not expect a conventional doctor to be able to help you. Some even mislabel it, call it depression and prescribe drugs with dangerous side effects. It is not that he does not care. It is that he has not been taught the name of a disease to match those symptoms and he does not have a drug or surgical operation to treat your condition. What other options are there?

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Support for Alternative Medicine

Although modern medicine may have a poor view of it, fasting and severe calorie reduction is the *only* method proven to extend life uniformly for all members of a species and this has been proven in numerous scientific experiments since 1935. In that year, Dr. Clive McCay at Cornell University reported that rodents fed on a 30% reduced calorie diet increased their life span by 40%—that would be almost 30 more years for a human!¹⁴

In addition to increased longevity, most age-related diseases, such as kidney degeneration or tumors, were also reduced. A later study published by the National Institutes of Health found monkeys on a 30% reduced calorie diet lived 15 years longer. And like the rodents, the monkeys avoided much of the usual diseases of old age.¹⁵

Stephen R. Spindler, Ph.D. of the Univ. of California Riverside has proven in his experiments that calorie restriction partially restored liver function in mice and reduced inflammation.¹⁶

Allan Cott, M.D. was no stranger to the benefits of fasting. He wrote the 1975 bestselling book, *Fasting — The Ultimate Diet*.¹⁷ The cover of his book quotes the New England Journal of Medicine as saying, “Fasting is a valid experience. It can benefit any otherwise healthy person whose calories now have the upper hand in his/her life” His book cites 329 references on fasting; 158 are scientific or medical journals. In his 1977 book, *Fasting as a Way of Life*, Cott includes an entire chapter on the resistance shown by many in modern medicine who have not actually any first or second hand experience.¹⁸

Dr. Cott, a psychiatrist, got interested in fasting when he learned that the Russian psychiatrist Dr. Yuri Nikolayev had successfully treated 7,000 neurotic, psychotic and schizophrenic patients with fasting alone after they had not been helped by drugs or other means.¹⁹

Carlos Garcia, M.D. and Elson Haas, M.D. are two contemporary examples of medical doctors who have discovered more natural ways to help the body heal itself. More are doing this every day.

America’s Health Care Crisis

Much has been said in health care reform about the millions of Americans not covered by health insurance. The mistaken assumption is that our current health care system just needs to be expanded to give more people access to doctors, drugs and hospitals. More money, more drugs and more days in the hospital are not necessarily the answer to better health. If you doubt that, reread the comparison of Cuban health with American health above.

Your health is *your* responsibility. Learn what works for your body. Consult with health care experts, do your own research, but *you* choose what to believe and act on.

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 - ² *Cancer-Gate: How to Win the Losing Cancer War*, Samuel S. Epstein, M.D., 2005
 - ³ National Cancer Institute statistics website, <http://seer.cancer.gov/statfacts/html/all.html> accessed 6 Oct. 2010
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 - ¹⁰ Ibid.
 - ¹¹ Brand, Richard A. M.D., “Sir William Arbuthnot Lane, 1856–1943,” *Clinical Orthopedics [spine and joint medicine] and Related Research*, Aug. 2009
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 - ¹⁶ “Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences,” Dec. 2001
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