

The Myth of the Magic Bullet: Understanding the Allopathic Paradigm in Medicine

By Barry Taylor, N.D.
Pathways #40, page 34



Talking Points

- ❖ Barry Taylor sees our current culture desiring and being sold “magic bullets” for pain because of a belief that pain should be cured. This desire leads us towards a drug, a vitamin, dieting, exercise or any “single thing we imbue with the power to get us out of pain and discomfort.” (34)
- ❖ But Taylor asks us to consider another way to understand pain – as “a signal that carries important information about the state of our health. “ (34) We often consider pain as bad, something to get rid of. This is what Taylor defines as the “allopathic paradigm of medicine.” Examining the Greek roots of the word, allos means “other” or “different” and pathos means “feeling” or “suffering.” It is “to feel something other than what you currently feel.., but is rarely sufficient for true healing or for sustaining good health.” (34)
- ❖ In allopathic medicine, symptoms get classified as diseases or illness, which receive a name. This act of naming our illness, in Taylor’s mind, is what moves us towards identifying with our disease. This leads to a focus on mitigating the symptoms of that disease. The thinking becomes: no symptoms = no disease.
- ❖ Taylor explains that “allopathy has profoundly valuable techniques to offer in the service of improving human life, but as the dominant – and for many, the singular—medical paradigm in the U.S., it leaves little room for a candid discussion on the true causes of illness and the processes that support optimal health and healing.” (35)
- ❖ By looking across time and discipline, Taylor argues for inclusion of paradigms, not exclusion. Throughout the history of medicine, physicians have used countless paradigms and worldviews when treating patients. From the humors of the Middle Ages to Traditional Chinese Medicine (still in use today), Ayurveda, homeopathy, naturopathy, osteopathy, chiropractic – “these paradigms of health and healing have deep roots in human cultures and can offer profoundly useful techniques in helping you create a life of joy and longevity. Each paradigm has different strengths and no single paradigm is sufficient for treating every individual’s health.” (35)

Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

The New York Times recently published a few articles on the increased prescriptions for things like ADHD in children that I thought might be interesting in the context of Dr. Taylor's article –

Maggie Koerth-Baker. "The Not-So-Hidden Cause Behind the ADHD Epidemic." *New York Times Magazine Online*. October 15, 2013. www.nytimes.com/2013/10/20/magazine/the-not-so-hidden-cause-behind-the-adhd-epidemic.html?_r=0

Alan Schwartz. "The Selling of Attention Deficit Disorder." *New York Times Health Online*. December 14, 2013. www.nytimes.com/2013/12/15/health/the-selling-of-attention-deficit-disorder.html

Revisit Dr. Jeanne Ohm's article, "Shifting the Paradigm: Insight on Germ Theory" in *Pathways* 36 Winter 2012. pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Holistic-Healthcare/shifting-the-paradigm-insight-into-the-germ-theory.html