

THE DR. EDWARD BACH REMEDIES

A talk given to the British Society of Dowsters
by Nora Weeks

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Will you, for the next half hour or so, turn your thoughts from the healing of the sick body to the healing of the sick person, for Dr. Edward Bach, after many years of research, gained the knowledge that our physical health depends upon our way of thinking, our feelings and emotions.

Good health is harmony, rhythm, when we think positively, constructively, happily. Ill-health when we think negatively, unhappily, destructively.

Such is the power of thought, the power man has over his body which is, after all, only the vehicle, the car, he uses on his journey through life on this earth.

As some of you may not know anything about the Bach Remedies, I would like first of all to tell you about Dr. Bach himself and how he developed this method of treatment and found the Flower Remedies.

The family came originally from Wales, so the name should be 'Bach', but his medical colleagues always called him 'Batch', and we have done so ever since.

Edward Bach trained and qualified at University College Hospital and gained the Diploma of Public Health (D.P.H.) at Cambridge in the early 1900s. He was rather an unusual medical student, for he soon became more interested in the patients themselves than in their diseases. He would sit by their bedside and let them talk to him, and listening to them he found out the real causes of their ill-health. For instance, the woman with severe asthma was a very frightened woman. She told him her only son had taken a job in the north of England over three months ago and she had had no word from him in all that time. She was terrified that he had met with an accident, was badly injured, even that he had died. But one day he came to see her and told her he had found a job nearer home. Within a *few days* she lost her asthma completely. She no longer needed to hold her breath for her son.

Then the man with suspected duodenal ulcer was a very worried man. He had lost his job, his wife was unable to work and he had two young children. Later, when he heard he had been reinstated in his work, he regained his health. He gained a job and lost his ulcer. The medical profession these days does say that worry is often the cause of gastric and duodenal ulcers, but it was quite a new idea in those early days.

Dr. Bach began to feel then that treating the physical symptoms was not enough. The body was a mirror reflecting the thoughts in the mind. It was the sufferer himself, the person, who needed treatment and help to overcome his worries, fears, depressions, hopelessness. He felt that a completely new method of treatment was needed, a practical one, for words were not enough; it was of little use to say to a worried man, 'Don't worry, be happy'.

But first of all the Doctor wanted to prove and test for himself other methods of orthodox medicine and he became a bacteriologist. He was well known for his research work in this branch of medicine, but it did not satisfy him. He was still treating bodies and not people, and he much disliked the injection of the products of disease back into the human body. However, these years were not wasted, for he was studying his patients, his friends, everyone he came across and watching their reactions to all the experiences of daily life, at work and at play, in good health and ill-health, and this knowledge of human nature was to stand him in good stead later on.

Then it was he came into contact with homoeopathy, and was delighted to find that Hahnemann, the founder of homoeopathy, had said 'The patient is the most important factor in his healing'. Also, that homoeopathic remedies were prescribed for the personality of the patient, his characteristics, his idiosyncrasies as well as the physical symptoms.

Dr. Bach worked for some time in the laboratories of the Royal London Homoeopathic Hospital, and it was there that he became interested in the relationship between intestinal toxæmia and chronic disease. I want to tell you about this briefly, because the result of this research brought him a big step forward to his final work.

He isolated seven groups of intestinal flora and prepared nosodes from them homoeopathically, giving them to his patients by mouth. Their purpose is to cleanse and purify the intestinal tract. I say 'is', for these nosodes, the seven Bach nosodes, the seven bowel nosodes, are still being used today. They were most successful.

Then he made a most important and significant discovery. It was this: all the patients suffering from the same emotional difficulties needed the same nosode, irrespective of the type of physical disease. Those patients who were subject to violent emotional outbursts, brain storms, all needed the same nosode. Those who were nervous, apprehensive, again all needed another but the same nosode, no matter from what physical complaint they suffered.

From then onwards he prescribed these nosodes according to his patients' temperamental difficulties only. There was no need for a physical examination of the patient, laboratory tests were unnecessary and treatment could begin at once without delay. The results were excellent.

This confirmed his opinion that physical disease was not of physical origin, but that it was, as he said, 'the consolidation of a mental attitude'. Dr. Bach now felt he could devote his time and his life to the search for the pure remedies which would help the sufferer rise above his unhappy thoughts. The new remedies he knew must be there for the finding in nature, amongst the trees and plants, for all our needs are provided for in nature by our Creator.

He already knew the principle of the new method of treatment:
'Treat the patient and not his disease,'

for when the negative thoughts had been overcome, the body would also respond.

So in 1930 he gave up all his work in London without a backward thought and went to live in the country.

Throughout all those years of medical practice he had been seeking for scientific proof of all his findings and using his intellect, but now a change occurred in himself. He became very sensitive both in mind and body. You, as dowsers, will understand this, as you have the same sensitivity. If he held his hand over a flowering plant, or the flower in the palm of his hand, he could sense in himself the properties of that flower, just as you are sensitive to water radiations through your twig or pendulum or whatever instrument you use. Some of you, I know, have no need of a twig but just use your hands.

Before finding a particular flower, he would suffer in himself, and very acutely, the negative state of mind for which that flower was needed and, at the same time, he was privileged, as he said, to suffer from some physical complaint. Then he would wander about the fields and lanes until he found, or was led to find, the flower which would immediately restore his serenity and peace of mind, and within a few hours the physical complaint would also be healed.

In this way he found 38 flowers to cover the 38 negative states of mind from which mankind can suffer. These flowers, with three exceptions, are all the simple wild flowers of the countryside. He prepared the flowers only, for they grow above ground in the sunlight and the air and contain in their hearts the embryo seed, the continued life of the plant. You will know, of course, many of them – gorse, heather, honeysuckle, wild rose, chicory, agrimony – and the flowers of our well-known trees – oak, beech, willow, larch.

Before describing some of these remedies and their uses, I would like to tell you how Dr. Bach prepared them and how they are still prepared.

The flowers which bloom in the summer when the sun is at its full strength are prepared by the sun method. A small plain glass bowl is placed on the ground in the field where the plants are growing and filled with fresh cold water; if there is a clear stream nearby this is better still. Then the flowers, from as many of the same plants as possible, are picked just below the calyx and quickly floated on the water until the whole surface is completely covered. Then nature takes over. The bowl and flowers are left in full sunlight for three hours. By the end of that time the water is sparkling, full of tiny bubbles, vibrant. We call it 'living water', which it is, for the sun has imparted the life-force, the vital force of the flowers, into the water. The flowers are gently lifted off the water with a stem of the same plant, the water bottled and preserved. This is the first preparation; the Essence.

The flowers which bloom early in the year before the sun has reached its full power are prepared by the boiling method. These are mostly the

tree flowers. The flowers are picked with a small piece of the stem and young leaves and placed in a sterile saucepan until it is about three-quarters full. The saucepan is quickly carried back to the house, the flowers covered with cold water, placed on the stove and boiled for half an hour. Then the flowers are removed with a twig of the same tree, the water filtered, as there may be some sediment, bottled and preserved in the same way as the summer flowers.

Dr. Bach placed the 38 remedies in seven groups. Those for fear. For uncertainty and indecision. For loneliness. For insufficient interest in present circumstances. For over-sensitiveness to ideas and influences. For despondency and despair. For over-care for the welfare of others.

In his little booklet 'The Twelve Healers and Other Remedies', he describes very simply the negative state of mind of each of these remedies.

Let us take one or two remedies from some of these groups and describe their uses, but first of all I would like to emphasise once more that it is the patient, the person, who is being treated, not his physical condition.

First a remedy from the group 'Insufficient interest in present circumstances'. The remedy is White Chestnut, the flower of the White Chestnut tree. It is for those people who suffer from persistent worrying thoughts, mental arguments, mental conversations which are so difficult to stop and leave them very tired and prevent concentration on work and other interests. Dr. Bach called this remedy the 'gramophone record remedy', for these thoughts go round and round in the mind like the needle on the gramophone disc.

This patient had been going through a time of great strain and disagreement with his relatives over a certain matter. He said that all day and most of the night his mind was full of all the things he was going to say to them, arguing with them, trying to persuade them differently, wondering how to solve the problem. He was exhausted from lack of sleep, had lost his appetite and some weight and could not concentrate on his job, which was a responsible and important one. He was given White Chestnut, and to his surprise and delight he responded quickly. When he came again, he said he was now able to control his thoughts and look at the problem calmly. His sleep and appetite had greatly improved, but what pleased him most of all was that he could now concentrate on his work and enjoy his weekend golf. It was as if the needle had been lifted off the gramophone disc.

Now a remedy from the group 'Loneliness'. Heather, the Scotch heather, ling. Dr. Bach called this remedy 'the button-holing remedy', which is an excellent description of the people who suffer in this way. They are great talkers, like to come close to you, talk into your face. They also like to touch you, nudge you, hold your arm to keep your attention. They talk of nothing but themselves, their ailments now and in the past, and give you their symptoms in great detail. They dislike being alone and

are unhappy and depleted when they are, for they live on the vitality of others, sap their strength and leave them exhausted. For this reason other people tend to avoid them. They are of the vampire type.

A man in our village was a 'Button-holer'. He was a middle-aged man with reasonably good health. If he saw you coming down the lane he would get off his bicycle, prop it against the hedge, and settle down for a good long chat. He would tell you of his catarrh, his varicose veins, his indigestion, and, if you tried to move away, he would grip you by the arm and say 'But I must tell you this . . .' Eventually he did come and ask for treatment: he had a rash on his hands. He was given Heather, of course, but it took some time to work. However, in the end he changed. His rash went quickly, but, most important of all, he began to take an interest in other people, listen to them instead of talking about himself. He turned his big garden into a market garden and was so happy digging in it and looking after his plants that he had little time for talking. People began to like him.

Another remedy from the same group, Loneliness. This is Impatiens, a balsam with a mauve flower, a water plant growing in streams and on damp ground.

The people who need this remedy are very active both in mind and action. They talk quickly, walk quickly, do everything quickly, without hesitation. They know their own minds, are very clever and capable. They prefer working alone in case those who are slower than they are should delay or hinder them. They are inclined to be very irritable and impatient with those who are slower. If you do not pass a thing quickly enough they may snatch it out of your hand, and if you speak too slowly they will finish your sentence for you if you don't get there first.

We have a friend who is a very deliberate and slow speaker, and I am afraid I used to finish her sentences for her until one day she said 'No, I was not going to say that'. That taught me a lesson and showed me I was not intuitive!

This man was a good example of the Impatiens type. He was very quick in all his reactions, extremely efficient and capable and very impatient. He would lock his door when occupied with his research work, so that no one could disturb him; he had to be alone to work at his own pace. He also lectured to students, I forget his subject, but he told us he did not suffer fools gladly and when the silly students asked him questions about something he had already explained he became intensely irritable and lost his temper. When he lost his temper a very irritating rash would break out all over his back. Could the remedies help him to become more patient? he asked.

Impatiens brought him that help and to his own astonishment he said he had only lost his temper once and was becoming really more tolerant and understanding of those silly young men. He had had no more rash. He asked to continue with the remedy to consolidate the improvement.

You will see from these two patients that, although they both suffered from some kind of skin rash, they each needed a different remedy according to their different personalities. Also, one was afraid of loneliness, the other preferred it. One was learning self-forgiveness, a great quality, the other, patience and tolerance.

This is a remedy from the group 'Uncertainty and Indecision'. *Scleranthus*, which is a very small plant with a tiny greeny-white flower growing in wheat fields. It is for those people who cannot make up their minds between two things, the 'weather-vane remedy' as Dr. Bach called it. They think 'shall I do this or shall I do that', 'shall I go today or shall I go tomorrow', 'shall I take this job or not'. They do not ask advice from other people and they suffer greatly through this indecision and waste so much time trying to make up their minds that they may lose a good opportunity through their hesitation.

This patient said that all her life she had suffered from indecision. She never could make up her mind and in consequence she suffered from indigestion. She told us of one instance that had happened that morning. She was passing a shop and saw a dress in the window. 'I would like that', she thought, then, 'No, I don't need it', and she walked away. Then she came back again. 'It's such a nice dress . . . no, I can't afford it', and she walked away again. She did this two or three times, once even putting her hand on the handle of the shop door. Finally, she did buy it but all the way back she still felt she should not have done so, but it was such a nice dress. And after luncheon she had bad indigestion. She said she had wasted all the morning trying to make up her mind. *Scleranthus* was her remedy and gradually she found she could come to decisions much more quickly. She is now a very determined and decisive old lady of 87.

Under the heading of fear, there are five remedies for the five different kinds of fear. I will describe them briefly.

Rock rose, the delicate little yellow flower which grows on bare hill-tops. This is the remedy for extreme fear, terror, panic and those horrifying nightmares which both children and adults experience.

The second fear is the fear of the known cause. Fear of people, of animals, of the dark, of pain, of accidents, fear of going to the dentist or the doctor, nervousness, shyness, fear of speaking in public. The remedy for this is *Mimulus*, the monkey flower, another water plant with beautiful golden flowers.

The next fear is the fear of unknown cause. Its remedy is the catkin of the Aspen tree. This is a most distressing fear, for which one can give no reason or explanation. The goose-flesh fear, the look-over-your-shoulder fear.

Then there is the desperate fear, the fear of losing control over one's emotions, of the mind giving way, of insanity and of the impulse to harm other people or oneself, suicidal tendencies. The remedy for this is the white flower of the hedgerow bush Cherry Plum.

The last fear is the fear for other people, and its remedy is the flower of the Red Chestnut tree. It is the fear or anxiety, for instance, of the mother when her little son is late home from school; she thinks he may have met with an accident and been badly injured. Or the anxiety and fear one feels for a relative or friend who is about to have a serious operation.

The people who suffer from fear are truly very courageous, for they cope with things as best they can and struggle on in spite of their difficulties, and this shows great courage. Always tell them so.

Beneath all the negative states of mind lie the great positive qualities which we have come to strengthen and develop.

Thinking back to Dr. Bach's words that physical disease is not of physical origin but is the 'consolidation of a mental attitude' reminds one of a striking example of this in the First World War. There may, of course, have been many similar cases. This man was sent to hospital from his training camp because he could not hold a rifle. His right arm was flexed at the elbow and the fingers clenched. It was muscular contraction and under a general anaesthetic the arm relaxed and the fingers unclenched, but as he came round the arm resumed its former position. It was found out that he hated, loathed, his sergeant, who was a bully, and longed to knock him down. Of course, he could not do this, but the desire to do so and the hatred in his mind was so strong that his arm took up 'action stations' as it were. If the Bach remedies had been found then I know that *Holly*, the remedy for hatred, would have helped him greatly.

The prescribing of these remedies is, as you see, quite simple. All that one needs is a knowledge of human nature and an understanding of people's difficulties, also the quality of listening.

Let the patients do all the talking, for as they talk they reveal so much about themselves. It does not matter what they talk about, they will probably tell you all their physical symptoms, but as we are all unique individuals we react differently to the same thing, the same disease. Take two or three people with a stiff knee. One will say, 'I get so annoyed with my knee, it prevents my doing all I want'. Another will say, 'I am so frightened of pain and I am too nervous to go out in case the knee lets me down'. Another, 'I feel hopeless, I have been told I must learn to live with it'. This is a shocking thing to say to a sick person; one should never take hope away.

Then ask them a few questions: 'Do you worry about little things as well as big things? Were you nervous of coming to see me?' Then when they know you are a friend and want to help them they will open their hearts to you. It is not a violation of their mental privacy, for so many say 'I have never told anyone about this before but what a relief it is, it's like a load off my mind,' and they relax both mentally and physically. We consider this the beginning of healing.

For those of you who want to know how a state of mind can react on the body, it is this: the involuntary nervous system, (the autonomic

system), the ductless glands (the endocrine glands), are extremely sensitive to the thoughts going through the mind. If their normal functions are disturbed, then the fine chemical balance in the body is interfered with and the normal functions of the body are also interfered with. Then the natural resistance of the body to disease is lessened, the soil of the body is, as it were, in a poor state and the door is opened to the entry of any disease, any infection. Germs, bacteria, viruses, can live in poor soil; they cannot survive in good, healthy, sweet soil.

Take fear, for instance. We all know how it sets free adrenalin in the blood stream, how the heart beats quickly, the breathing is shallow, the mouth dry, there are butterflies in the tummy, the hands shake and the knees feel weak. In extreme fear people are paralysed, rigid. But when fear has gone completely, everything returns to normal again.

Now, if there are a few minutes to spare, I would much like to tell you about the Bach first aid, or emergency, remedy. It is a combination of five of the remedies:

Star of Bethlehem, for shock. The shock of bad or sad news, after an accident, a burn or cut, a sprain or fall, for even in minor accidents there is always a certain degree of shock.

Rock Rose, for great fear or panic.

Impatiens, for mental and physical tension when the sufferer cannot relax.

Cherry Plum, for loss of emotional control when the sufferer screams, shouts or becomes hysterical.

Clematis, the remedy for that bemused, far-away feeling which precedes a faint.

In severe accidents, of course, this does not take the place of the doctor, who must be sent for immediately. But after making the patient as comfortable and warm as possible, the remedy helps greatly in calming and quietening the sufferer.

Dr. Bach first used the 'Rescue Remedy', as he called it, in the early 1930s, when a small ship was wrecked off the coast of Cromer in a great gale. The two men on board had to strap themselves to the mast, as the lifeboat had gone to another ship in distress. They had to stay there for some hours, and when the lifeboat finally brought them ashore, the younger man was unconscious, blue in the face, stiff with sea-salt. As they carried him up the beach, Dr. Bach moistened his lips, behind his ears and his wrists with the remedy and as they carried him into a nearby house, he regained consciousness, endeavoured to sit up and asked for a cigarette.

Another man and his friend climbing a mountain in Scotland were overcome by the cold, for the weather had worsened and they could only cling to the rock face. Then one of them remembered he had a bottle of the Rescue Remedy in his breast pocket. With great difficulty he took it

out and had a sip from the bottle and passed it to his friend. After ten minutes they had recovered and he said they finished the climb in record time. He also said they would not have survived without the Rescue Remedy.

Then a patient told us she had slammed her car door on her fingers. If you have ever done this you will know how agonising the pain is. Fortunately she always carried a bottle of the Rescue Remedy in her bag; she took a good sip from the bottle, as she felt faint, and poured some over her fingers. She said almost immediately she felt better and the pain lessened. She hurried indoors and put her hand in a basin of water with a few drops of the Rescue Remedy in it and took another dose internally. In fifteen minutes the pain had gone and, apart from some redness in the fingers, all was well. The next morning there was no sign of the injury and her nails were intact; she had feared that she would lose her nails.

And now to end this talk, I would just like to say that the Bach flower remedies raise our vibrations and help us, through our own efforts, to become happy, healthy, whole people.