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It's an average Monday morning for me. I have, spread out on my desk, the array of cases still unsolved and left over from the previous weeks practice days. Its carnage. I am pulling my hair out. There is a man with insomnia and IBS. There is a woman with absent libido after a termination. There is an 11 year old with eczema on his wrists. What is characteristic about these cases is that I have prescribed at least 6 remedies to them over the past year. There have been some changes and movements. But they are all unresolved. Its hardly aphorism two; gentle, rapid and permanent. There comes a time to admit that the strategy you have adopted in a certain situation has to change. One of the things I have clarity about in these three cases is that I have been prescribing remedies on a still unclear profile of the totality of the patient and the symptoms. There is still a lack of definition in the case. It's like wearing someone else's glasses while looking at an archery target and trying to nail the gold. My strategy today involves reaching for Jon Gambles new book.

My first experience of Jon's clinical work was a case in 1998. I had successfully treated a woman for her asthma. She was moving back to the UK but her child came down with an ear infection. Qantas was refusing to allow the child to fly. I gave this and that over the next week. Nothing. In desperation I sent her to the Children's Ear Clinic and the mother later mailed me from London thanking me for the referral. The ear had resolved immediately with a therapeutic medicine prescribed by Jon on the basis of the pathology.

In Mastering Homeopathy Jon has provided a therapeutics book which addresses so many of the presentations into a busy homeopathic practice. There are chapters on children; ears, tonsils, headaches and others: women; candida, mastitis, cystitis and others: general conditions such as allergies, chronic fatigue and glandular fever, skin conditions, hyperthyroidism etc. The practical advice and the remedies suggested are beyond useful. I am thinking of the cases of pterigium which came to my practice and went unresolved, of cases of warts which came and went that could have benefited from the suggestions made here. What is also presented, and before any suggestions for medicines, is information on the clinical presentations of each condition and a differential diagnosis.

But what excites me most about the book are the immediate things it does better than other therapeutic texts. First is Jon's clarity in describing what we are doing when prescribing therapeutically. In

some cases, we are looking to create change in the health, structural and functional change, through understanding the pathology of the symptom and prescribing accordingly. It is identifying those pathological changes which may have come about due to the chronic disease that will help us begin and quite possibly complete the cure.

The next useful thing in this book are tables laid out for quick reference in many therapeutic presentations. The section on posology and the reasons for the choice of specific potencies is really valuable. It's especially valuable for a practitioner like myself who was not trained or versed in any of the more therapeutic and pathological systems. The practical advice, nutritional and otherwise for acne, preventing ear infections and asthma are excellent. There are clear influences from the files and teachings of Parimal Banerji in India and Alan Jones, but this remains original and creative work. It runs to 176 pages, burst bound and soft covered.

What about what's not there? In the Men's health section we have just benign prostatic hypertrophy. I want more. What about the rest of the conditions that our gents turn up in the clinic presenting. It begs for a volume two. For me the only things missing from the book are those things that are beyond its brief. For example the section on anxiety is limited to the possible pathological causes, when we know that there are many other different ways to examine the condition – say psychodynamically.

I have loved reading and reviewing this book. It's a book that says what is going to do and then delivers it. We know that therapeutic protocols are not successful every time. But what they do provide is another tool and a measure of flexibility in practice when one approach is failing you. Its value lies in that it represents a different strategy to employ when you have had no success with another strategy. Its value is when there is not the opportunity to, in a leisurely way, delve into a larger totality of symptoms; or where the indicated remedy has failed you; where you are attempting to establish a ball park of possibilities for your patient. Its value is often in needing to establish a result quickly. Such a swift result is almost always followed by the return of your patient. In terms of building a busy practice this is an invaluable strategy. It's crucial also for that certain percentage of your patients, especially men, anxious and reluctant patients who don't want to spend 2 hours doing homeopathic archeology on themselves.

One of the things Jon Gamble I have in common is a frustration at the current levels of confidence in our homeopathic colleagues. Good practitioners and great new graduates are never busy enough

quickly enough it seems. One way to build a practice (but not the only strategy) is to ensure you keep your patients while you go hunting for that grand simillimum. What has clearly helped Jon develop his busy practices has been to master some therapeutic protocols which, when employed well make an immediate impact on the patients presenting symptoms.

This book of therapeutic protocols is intended to assist the practitioner to have the patient improving rapidly whilst the practitioner has time to familiarize him/herself with the case and find that constitutional remedy.

So the value of Jon's use of these therapeutic protocols is twofold; by using them you have the flexibility of method when another one is not successful, and also to make an impact immediately with the patient's symptoms while also hunting for the chronic simillimum.

I can think of twenty philosophical reasons why therapeutics books have their limitations. I can't think of one practical reason. And I know for sure my patients don't care. They want to get better. I can think of plenty of sinusitis cases or herpes cases that were resolved by remedies other than the therapeutic suggestions made here. Therapeutics alone is not enough to run a successful practice, but a hugely beneficial tool to have.

Mastering Homeopathy is not high brow philosophy. It's therapeutics suggestions are not necessarily curing our patients aphorism nine style, 'for the highest purpose of our existence'. But it is practical, accurate and useable and user friendly. It's on my desk now. The therapeutics texts of Lilienthal, Dewey, Morrison, Kansal and Clarke are in danger of being relegated back to the bookshelf.

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