



HEALING AND CURING

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These words are often used as if they meant the same thing. They do not.

Curing is a term that refers to the rare situation in which a condition can be eliminated by medical care. For example, if a person has an infection and is given an antibiotic, and the infection goes away and leaves no lingering symptoms, then it is fair to say the antibiotic 'cured' the infection (or at least helped the body as it fought off the infection).

But suppose someone has a great tendency to develop bronchitis or pneumonia? Each time they get sick antibiotics rescue them, and they are "cured". Are they really well? No, because the underlying tendency has not been addressed. If stressed again, they are likely to develop another respiratory complaint.

Most chronic conditions or inherited tendencies can't be cured. However, often the underlying tendency can be controlled so that the person feels and functions well most of the time. Now they can take charge of themselves, be healthy in the largest sense, and live as normal a life as possible. Such a person is **healed**. Conditions such as arthritis, diabetes, migraine headaches, asthma, irritable bowel syndrome, alcoholism, multiple sclerosis, bipolar disorder, and psoriasis are examples of conditions that can be controlled but not cured.

A medical practitioner who is interested in *healing* takes this observation very seriously. Instead of saying "you'll just have to learn to live with that" or stating "you'll need this drug for life" the *healer* will try to get at the deep cause of the condition, and help the patient find ways to control their symptoms so that *most of the time* they are well.

A *healer* will not make sweeping statements, especially not depressing ones! Instead, he or she will say "Let's see what we can do to help" and then remind patients that *they too must do homework* in order to take good care of themselves. Thus a *healer* is interested in motivating patients, in empowering patients, and in making life as comfortable as possible for patients. *Healing* cares for the whole person, so it might be just as important to help a person find a better job, or get help for a difficult child, as to directly reduce physical pain. *Healers* know that happy people are also healthy people, even when they are living with a condition that cannot be cured.

Healers also know that *how medical care is offered matters*. Medical care that is presented in a cold and isolating environment and without attention to the person is not nearly as effective as medical care that is offered in a warm and safe environment. *Healers* know that the patient-practitioner *relationship* is as much part of the healing equation as the acupuncture, manipulation, herbs, drugs, or dietary suggestions. People who feel *cared for* are more likely to get well...and *healers* know this.

So what are YOU seeking? Curing? or Healing? *My goal is to offer healing.*