Birds of a Feather Need Ignatia Together



In twelve-year-old Penny's case, it started with seemingly innocent hair twirling.

At first, her parents thought it was cute but soon enough, it wasn't cute anymore; in fact, it became downright frightening.

The problem that began with Penny wrapping and twirling strands of hair around her fingers progressed to strands of hair she would absently suck on, or even worse, pull out. Penny's parents started noticing that as Penny struggled with math homework, the pages of her textbook and notebook would be littered with pulled hairs.

For a while, they were able to persuade Penny to twist a ring that her mother bought her to wear in lieu of pulling out hairs, but Penny's mother was troubled by the fact that the anxiety still remained, regardless of whether the outlet for it was relatively harmless or not.

For ten-year-old Patrick, skin picking was the problem.

Patrick could leave no scab unpeeled. The poor boy's cuticles were a bloody mess from his pulling and biting at the skin. If he had chapped lips, he picked at the peeling skin with both his fingers and teeth until his lips became more and more cracked and irritated. As a result, Patrick seemed to have chronic chapped and torn lips because he never gave them a chance to heal.

Pat's parents tried having him wear gloves, but he found the urge to pick so irresistible, he'd remove them, and then feel even more guilty and anxious afterward. No amount of reasoning, scolding or nagging seemed to make a difference.

Unfortunately, in Patrick's case, his parents agreed to attempt treatment with an SSRI (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor) drug before the disastrous side effects made them abandon that course (under their doctor's supervision) and look for a solution that was less harmful.

Both repetitive hair pulling (Trichotillomania) and repetitive skin picking (Dermatillomania) can be related to either impulse control disorders or obsessive-compulsive disorders; sometimes both. At any rate, each condition is often linked to anxiety.

Both Penny's and Patrick's cases reminded me of another case I dealt with many years ago; that of Poppie. But Poppie was not a pre-teen … Poppie was a parrot.

Some 23 years ago, an exotic parrot was brought into my office.

Poppie remained politely perched on her owner's knuckles throughout the entire 45-minute appointment. Even though her owner whispered in her partially exposed ear that she was a pretty bird, it was a little white lie. Poppie was not a very pretty bird because about a third of her feathers were

missing, which left her with noticeably bald patches of exposed skin. To make matters worse, the feathers that remained were tattered and shredded.

It looked like Poppie had fallen into a Vitamix.

Poppie's owner explained that she had been pulling her feathers out for about a year … in fact, it all started around the time the family had moved.

Assuming that some kind of emotional condition related to the move was the catalyst for Poppie's problem, I suggested *Ignatia* 200, which was administered every three days. The next time I saw Poppie, about two months later, she looked more fully dressed. Not exactly *pretty*, but certainly healthier and a little fuller.

Two months after that, she returned once again. This time, Poppie was a genuinely pretty girl!

Ignatia was halted after about the third month and she remained well.

About eight months later, Poppie commenced pulling her feathers again and the owner reinstated the *Ignatia* schedule. In short order, she settled down once more. That was the last time I heard from Poppie's family, so I assume all is well.

Ignatia would be my first choice for both Penny and Patrick's cases above as well. We would use *Ignatia* 200C twice a day and assess after eight weeks. Although we typically think of *Ignatia* for grief, I have found it covers a wide range of emotional ailments and the various types of symptoms associated, including anxious behaviors like hair pulling and skin picking. And, I might add, even if anxiety is not identified.

But homeopathy is a generous medicine, and there is more

than one potential option. Even though *Ignatia* would be my top choice, I might also consider *Stramonium* or *Tarantula hispania*. *Stramonium* might be indicated if one were to observe restless sleep, fearfulness, fear of the dark, temper tantrums, violent or aggressive behavior, etc. *Tarantula* is another great remedy for restlessness and hair pulling or skin picking, especially when the person complains of painful pins and needles sensations, or the feeling that bugs are crawling on the skin.

I'll be delving into an in-depth discussion of anxiety, grief, and mental and emotional conditions in my new, highly-requested course, *Mindful Homeopathy: Practical Protocols® for Mental and Emotional Conditions*. If you are interested in learning more about cases such as Poppie's, or if your family is dealing with anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, OCD, learning disorders, brain fog, PTSD, addictions or dementia – this course is for you. Homeopathy has a history of uprooting these conditions! Download this free infographic illustrating remedies for nine common conditions and receive more information about the course.