Psychiatric Skin

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Marley MacAfee has doe eyes and a temperament to be reckoned with. Some might politely say she's spirited. But may I be frank? Marley has been known to have violent tantrums and can be a destructive drama queen. We're not talking about little anger fits, we're referring to slash-and-burn behavior—the kind of rage that would be grounds for neighbors to call the police. And Marley's only twelve!

But as her parents hasten to say, she wasn't always this way. Her mom can't help but turn this over and over in her mind as to what happened to her little girl. Indeed, she always had a temper, but the rage had lately become pathological. And, as if that weren't enough, Marley began experiencing despair during which she would hole up in her room for days.

Let's examine the timeline in Marley's life that led to her emotional illness. One clue is that around the time Marley became ardently aware of her appearance, things shifted in her conduct. She was embarrassed by her skin because she had always been plagued with eczema. Her mom thought that perhaps Marley was the target of ridicule at school because of her often disfigured skin. Yet, even that hypothesis didn't fit snugly because Marley seemed to have a lot of friends… up until she started her enraged hysterics. No one seemed safe from Marley's venomous temper.

And so because of all this, in spite of Mrs. MacAfee's natural

health standards, she took Marley to a dermatologist. Predictably, he prescribed steroid cream. The MacAfees had avoided such resorts because they knew of the reputed long term effects. But within short order after consenting to the cream, Marley's skin was clear for the first time in her short life. A temporary sense of relief visited the MacAfee household.

However, instead of being satisfied with this improvement, shortly after the skin fix Marley began to exhibit fierce fits of anger. Her parents chalked it up to her burgeoning hormones yet it didn't matter what time of the month it was. . . Marley was increasingly more demanding, fractious and recalcitrant.

One afternoon Marley's aunt witnessed a disturbing incident at school. There to take her niece shopping for new shoes, she found Marley screaming at the top of her lungs while biting, kicking and spitting at a small group of younger children. She hated to report what she saw but knew it was important for Marley's mom to know. And then she hung her head and sadly added, "She's not right; she ought to see a psychiatrist." Humiliated and troubled, Marley's mom had to agree with the assessment but hesitated, since, "All they do is hand out more drugs."

So, it was only out of desperation and her persevering temperament that Mrs. MacAfee beganto read the medical books that her grandfather, a homeopathic physician from England, had left in his library. The revered old books presented a kind of reasoning that no one else offered. One elegant, leather-bound tome contained a chapter on behavior in which two sentences rang like heralding bells of truth. The first read: "Removal of local symptoms results in a heightening of the whole disease." The second: "Almost all mental and emotional diseases are one-sided diseases in which the somatic symptoms have diminished and the mental and emotional symptoms have heightened."

What?! She scrutinized the passages again and again, pulling each word apart. The dermatologist had said Marley's skin was cured; in other words, the skin appeared improved, but according to this medical text, the illness was driven to a deeper state. Were Marley's skin eruptions removed only to be replaced by a deepening of this vile conduct? Could that be the reason for the behavioral problems? Mrs. MacAfee's next thought was, "My God! What have we done?"

She had known that all drugs carry side effects, but to think that this could happen to her daughter and, as Dr. Hahnemann stated in his books, that it was predictable, was an astounding epiphany. If indeed the drug had driven the illness to a deeper state, then it would make sense to halt its use immediately. As she read on, Hahnemann elaborated, "Homeopathic treatments can produce rapid and striking results in cases of mental and emotional disease." "That's it!" she declared, "I'm going to contact that homeopath mom uses on the East Coast."

The phone appointment went just as Marley's mom had hoped. Since Marley was already off the steroids by this time, they had a clean slate to work with. The homeopath reiterated what Dr. Hahnemann had written in his ground-breaking treatise on homeopathic medicine and quoted another statement that also rang true. "Violent allopathic means produce other maladies." Violent? The homeopath explained that anything that forces pathology to change direction by tinkering with the symptoms is considered violent because, "All medicines alter the mental and emotional state, each in a different way."

The homeopath assured Mrs. MacAfee that if the remedy she chose specifically for Marley was indeed well selected, she could expect changes within a few weeks, but the eczema would likely return. That would be cause for celebration, for as the eruptions returned, the behavior would subside and the old Marley would resurface. Then, and only then, could homeopathy offer the correct stimulus that would allow the skin eruptions

to disband.

The first remedy the homeopath chose was Nux vomica. She explained that another remedy would need to follow it within a few weeks to continue the work after Nux vomica's action was complete.

Just as expected, Marley's skin did indeed worsen. In fact, it become more prominent than ever, with pustules that enveloped her jaw line. It wasn't easy to witness this development, but Mrs. MacAfee held steadfast, even with Marley's protests. Yet the child seemed to comprehend the importance of this crucial step. In the scheme of things it was certainly better than emotional illness. And as much as they wanted to put soothing emollients on Marley's skin, the old bookand homeopath concurred: "Put nothing on it and allow it to liberate the pathology."

In the meantime Marley's complaints became mere whispers in comparison to her earlier outrages. It took about five weeks before her former behavior moderated.

On one occasion only, after the family had returned home from church, Marley threw a spitting fit on the front lawn that was quite embarrassing. Her father took her firmly to her room while her mother made feeble apologies to the neighbors. But this outburst was the last time Marley MacAfee acted like an out-of-control, frenzied, inept child.

After the second consultation with their homeopath, Causticum was chosen. A month later, the last vestiges of Marley's eczema disappeared. Like a choreographed pas de deux of the intellect and the corporeal, the human body displayed its harmonious response to intelligent prescribing.

Now Marley is free of skin ailments, liberated from the burdens of emotional illness, and her family is able to proudly attend any event.

And too, Mrs. MacAfee is a more learned mom. She recognizes firsthand that it's not the side effects of drugs that are the scoundrels, but the fact that the drugs drive illness to a deepened state, and this is the seed of chronic physical and even mental illness. Marley and her family are more convinced than ever that they will remain drug free.

THE LEGACY OF DR. HAHNEMANN

When we remove the signs of illness, such as skin eruptions, we will be obliged to suffer a more serious illness. The word "symptom" in Latin means "sign." Hence symptoms are merely the outward manifestations of a more deeply seated imbalance. Had Marley's mom used homeopathy to uproot her eczema from the outset, or given her high-density nutrition to support it, the eczematous skin might well have only been a brief, vague memory. It's the tampering of symptoms of a lesser illness that brings pathology to a thunderous and more serious state. Isn't the logic of nature flawless?

The treatise of Dr. Samuel Hahnemann—the Father of Homeopathy—is still taught in homeopathic medical schools throughout the world, and is the reference in which Marley's mom made her discovery. The Organon of the Medical Art stands as a beacon of light directing great medical minds towards an understanding of genuine human health. This book and its previous editions were written in German nearly two hundred years ago, so I reference an annotated edition by Wendy Brewster O'Reilly, PhD. The numbers after each statement indicate the interpreted aphorisms. Here are some of the aphorisms Marley's mom studied:

- "Removal of local symptoms results in a heightening of the whole disease"(202).
- "Removal of local symptoms is a common practice of the old school [modern medicine]
  because their internal medicines do not cure" (203).
- "All medicines alter the mental and emotional state,

each in a different way” (212).

- “Violent allopathic means [drugs] produce other maladies” (38).
- “Find out about the patient’s somatic disease before it degenerates into a mental and emotional disease” (218).
- “Homeopathic treatments can produce rapid and striking results in cases of mental and emotional disease” (230).

It is noteworthy to observe that Hahnemann’s work is not mere theory but reflects proven laws of human health. These truths have been proven in hospitals, university research, clinics and private practices around the globe. Homeopathy is honored by history, science and a proud standing in the world community of medicine.