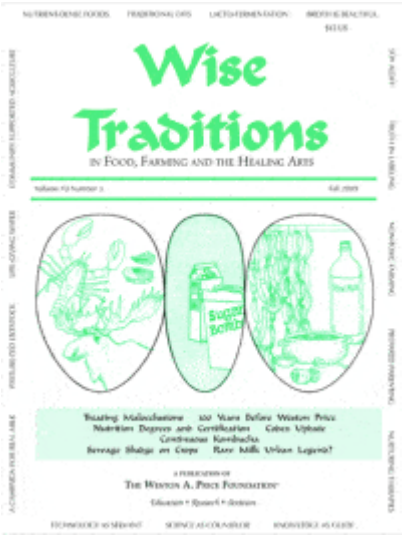
Maniac Mom

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"Mom! Mom! Stop driving so fast. You're scaring us!" The van was bobbing and weaving in the late afternoon traffic. Colleen, the driver, was on the verge of cutting off the Jeep ahead because he just wouldn't yield. She hollered out the window, "I've got a roast in the oven that will soon be nothing but char, an orthodontist appointment at seven, and those insipid cookies to bake for tomorrow's meeting. What the #!%#* are you doing ahead of me?"

One hand grasped the wheel; the other clutched her fourth latte of the day.

"Mom, I know you're overwhelmed, but you're going to get us all killed," breathed the voice of reason from the back seat. It was Colleen's fourteen-year-old who always saw things clearly. "Overwhelmed?!! Overwhelmed?!! That's an understatement!"

Ever since Colleen had returned to her old decorative painting business, she found herself forever in a rush, bad tempered and argumentative. With four kids, how did she think she was going to run a business too? But that wasn't all. She awoke every night at 3:00 a.m. to plaguing thoughts that were like a virus scan on a computer, going over every detail of the herculean list of tasks the following day. "This is maddening. I can't even get a good night's sleep! What's the point of staying in bed?" She'd lug herself up and do some bookkeeping

or laundry done.

And so was the life of Colleen Ewens. She knew her fits of anger were inexcusable for her kids to witness, particularly because she sensed her cursing had become a second language. But it seemed her increasingly toxic, even derisive thoughts were beyond her control. Finally, after some persuasion from her business partner, Colleen sought the help of a homeopath. Her friend had probably noticed the impolite tone of Colleen's voice when she spoke to someone at the bank, to clients, and to her own children. Her combative approach was relentless.

Colleen's homeopathy appointment was scheduled on Skype, but not without Colleen cussing at her computer to get the connection set up just prior to her appointment. As usual, she was late and annoyed. Unfortunately, or perhaps providentially, the homeopath was already on the line and witnessed Colleen's mini, self-indulgent tantrum.

"Hi, Colleen" said the homeopath. She actually sounded empathetic. But Colleen's reply was barbed. "How irritating. Did you just witness my behavior? Well, that puts it all on the table, now doesn't it? Here's the rest of my list: I eat too much, get nauseated with cramping in my right abdomen regularly, I'm exhausted every day, can't sleep, work too hard, and take antibiotics like candy for my urinary tract infections. Oh, and add this in, too: I don't believe for one bloody minute that you can do a thing about any of this. But what have I got to lose?"

The homeopath was nonplussed. Her first inquiry was to ask Colleen about her work. "Certainly, I paint with toxic stuff. It's the only way to achieve the look I'm known for. In addition to oil-based paints for durability, I also use gold and silver leaf, and then shellac to give an aged look. I see where you're going here. Don't for a moment suggest that I give this all up because of toxins. I can handle it."

The body has only so many reserves, is the way the homeopath explained it. It wasn't only the paints and related products, but also the antibiotics, not to mention the years of birth control pills. "How many toxins can the liver and other organs of elimination take in without showing signs of breakdown?" she asked rhetorically. Further, when the liver is stressed by these unnatural substances, what we often see is an inability to handle life, resulting in irritability, fatigue, insomnia and more. In fact, three a.m. is the most common time for the liver to process all of this stress, so it's not unusual to wake up at that time when the liver is so active.

The homeopath explained that in the medicine of homeopathy, we don't use a remedy for each of these symptoms, but rather for the summation of all of them. Colleen's symptoms were likely a representation of the toxicity of her liver, particularly because of the tenderness in the right quadrant. The remedy she chose was Nux vomica, which is known for its ability to soothe a stressed liver and all signs that accompany that condition. Colleen found this explanation annoying because she was confident that nothing was going to change. But she took the "stupid little pills" anyway, just to prove the homeopath wrong.

But it was Colleen who was proved wrong. Yet after having taken Nux vomica for several weeks, it didn't even make her angry to admit that she was wrong. This was a lesson in humility. She even smiled on the Skype screen when she reported the changes to the homeopath two months later. Her flagship sarcasm was appreciably missing.

Perhaps she felt better because she was no longer waking at three a.m. and was therefore sleeping better; perhaps because she had lost a few pounds since her appetite had normalized. But whatever the reason, she felt lighter and happier. She even made an acquiescing and smart decision to work only with milk paints on her jobs. Oddly enough, her clients had been complaining about the chemical odors anyway, but she hadn't

cared enough to make the change in the past, delighting in showing them who was boss. Now, with this new approach, she was willing to accommodate other points of view.

Even the constipation she'd forgotten to mention to the homeopath during her first consultation had vanished. And so far, no urinary tract issues had returned.

"What happened to the abdominal pains I used to get? Do you think my liver might have been inflamed?" The homeopath answered that the liver certainly was taxed, but once the symptoms are no longer present—not because they've been masked, but because the pathology has been addressed—we can assume that what was wrong has been righted. Symptoms that are unencumbered by drugs never lie. If you feel well, you probably are. Even so-called "silent killer" maladies manifest symptoms that can be discerned by an expert in such details. And that's what homeopathy is known to accomplish: by rooting out the most detailed symptoms so as to disclose all that must be considered, the homeopath can match them to the corresponding homeopathic remedy.

The most striking aspect of Colleen's recovery manifested in her attitude towards her kids. She barely reacted to the bickering and the messy bedrooms that would have sent her into a rage previously. One day her fourteen-year-old felt safe enough to speak out, "Hey, Mom, remember the time you whacked the car ahead and then the one behind, back and forth to get out of that parking spot, cursing the whole time? You were Maniac Mom."

Colleen muttered, "I was a maniac." And that's when she knew how venomous she had felt before, compared to how different her life was now, only three months later. Small homeopathic pills had stimulated and then transformed Colleen, the Manic Mom, and had painted a new mother in a softer hue. Now she colored herself Colleen, mom and artist. Her combative days were washed away like milk paint from a fine, mink brush.

LIVER TOXICITY AND NUX VOMICA

Homeopathy treats the entire person, not just the liver, not just the brain. That's why it's always paramount that the chosen remedy represent the person's unique personality. And Colleen's certainly was one to be reckoned with! The remedy also needs to address the chief complaints, which in Colleen's case were insomnia, fatigue and repeated urinary tract infections. Peripheral symptoms such as abdominal tenderness and nausea needed consideration, as well as the keynote of most cases of liver toxicity, the psychological symptoms. These, of course, included Colleen's compulsion to profanity plus her angry outbursts and impetuosity. The liver is one of four major organs that eliminate toxins from the body. The other three are the kidneys, intestinal tract, and skin. The liver detoxifies harmful substances whether they come from internal sources or from external sources—such as medications, synthetic hormones, chemicals, and so on. Colleen had been poisoned on three levels. First was the use of antibiotics that tinkered with, but never resolved, her infections, as well as the strong hormones in her birth control pills. Her second level of chemical exposure came from the paint products used in her work, and the third was in her overuse of stimulants in the form of copious amounts of coffee. Colleen's life was one of constant compensation for inadequacies in one way or another, and it is no wonder her liver was overworked and toxic.

Nux vomica was an excellent remedy choice for Colleen. Since its scientific proving from the early 1800s it has been shown to uproot the problems that occur from poisoning. In fact, many homeopaths find that since we live in such a toxic world, particularly in relation to the amount of medications we've been subjected to, Nux vomica is a good choice with which to "open" many a case. Indeed, the interpretation could be that the liver is taxed. Nux vomica is a leading remedy in hepatitis, either infectious or alcoholic conditions, as well

as for chemical sensitivities. Yet Nux vomica is also of great aid in poisonings of other sorts, such as from spoiled food, MSG, street drugs, and alcohol. The trick is how and when to administer the remedy and to be certain that the symptoms the person is suffering match the remedy to a tee.

According to Dr. Roger Morrison, “Nux vomica is useful for liver disease with fatigue and mental strain.” Franz Vermeulen says, “When ‘all medicines’ disagree, Nux vomica will often cure the morbid sensitiveness and other troubles with it.” These are the kind of results that some have come to only hope for in today’s world. Yet homeopathy has been shown consistently to uproot liver ailments, regardless of cause as long as the symptoms address those in the remedy picture.

As a mother of teenage sons, I’ve warned my boys that if we ever learn that they drink alcohol illegally I will not give them the remedy that will save them from a hangover. It’s a mother’s way of making sure that their livers remind them of the dangers, rather than depending upon relief through a kindly remedy. That’s how powerful a remedy I know Nux vomica to be. I know that withholding Nux vomica from a teen exhibiting reckless behavior will teach him a timely lesson, and when used for liver toxicity truly beyond his control it will act like an answered prayer. Whether to assist an overwrought mother who has mistakenly accepted a drug-for-every-ill mentality, or for inadvertent toxicity, Nux vomica can offer a welcome second chance to clear the liver. Is there any other medicine that can offer such an opportunity?

SOURCES: Concordant Materia Medica, Vermeulen, Phatak, Boger, Pille, Allen, Pulford, Cowperthwaite, Kent, Clarke Vermeulen: Merlijin Publishers, Haarlem, the Netherlands, 1994, page 716; Desktop Companion to Physical Pathology, Morrison, Roger, M.D. Hahnemann

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