

Chapter 1 – Your Map to Better Health

I met Karen after one of my speeches. She was in her early 50's and in generally good health but with a few chronic problems the doctors just couldn't seem to get a handle on, frustrating both her and them. One doctor had told her to "just learn to live with it" and simply walked out of the examining room in a rush to his next patient. I told her I knew exactly how she felt because I'd been there too. When the doctor says there's nothing more he can do for you, it's a very lonely, even scary, place to be. Where do you go now? What can you do?

She was resigned to her health problems but still held on to a thread of hope, one that she was eager to grow into a rope so she could climb out of that unhappy place and into a healthy life. I told Karen that I'd learned that just because doctors can't do anything, that doesn't mean there isn't anything left to do! There are literally hundreds of complementary and alternative therapies available today that have been proven safe and effective for decades, hundreds, even thousands of years. She smiled.

She began to tell me her symptoms expecting that I could instantly tell her which therapy would work best for her condition. I explained to her that I could show her the map of my path to better health but she would have to find her own path because she was a unique and very special human being, different from me and everyone else on the planet.

I added that finding the real source of our health problems is the first step and it's different for every person. Using an example from my radio appearances I told her that if there are three people in the doctor's office with allergy problems they may each have a different source of their health problem. While the doctor may prescribe the same drugs to treat their symptoms it wouldn't deal with the source of their health problem.

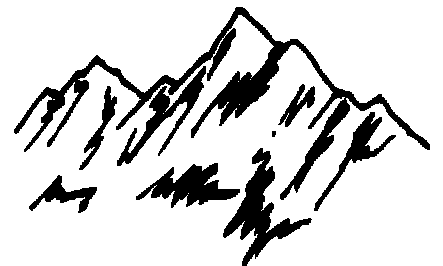
Let's say the first person is a hard-working guy in jeans, flannel shirt and boots and his allergy problem may, in fact, originate in his body. In his case a therapy like NAET would be best because it's based on chiropractic and acupressure principles so it's a body-type of treatment.

But the second person is a petite woman in a stylish, professional outfit and the source of her allergy is in her subconscious. That means a Body therapy wouldn't do her any good at all. Because I'm a former PSYCH-K practitioner I told Karen about a client of mine, a woman who would get severe migraines every time she ate Mexican food, to illustrate the problem. Using PSYCH-K we discovered a relationship she'd had with a Mexican boy more than 10 years earlier was the source of her food "allergy" and with a few balances we corrected the problem. Today she eats Mexican food without any headache at all!

However the third person with an allergy problem is a young man, a student, and the source of his problem isn't in his body or his mind, it's in his energy system/spirit, so a body or mind therapy wouldn't help him. He would need acupuncture, EFT or some type of energy therapy to solve his problem.

Karen looked at me with surprise, you could almost see the light bulb go on above her head. "I've never heard illness described that way but it makes so much sense!" she said. "Now that I have a better idea of what I'm looking for I can begin to imagine myself finally getting better health."

She spoke with both understanding and yet uncertainty, unsure of what her next step should be. What could or should she do, how could she find her path to better health? I offered her a blank piece of paper and told her this was the beginning of her very own map to better health. With a frown she protested that there was nothing on it. I agreed but explained that's because she had always relied on others



for her health. She would fill in her own map as she discovered the truth about her health, her life and her own unique path to better health. By reading her way through this book she would learn all about the features of her own life and what benefits different therapies had to offer her, a necessary first step to finding out where you want to go. She would discover for herself what would work and also what wasn't very effective. In other words, she would draw her own map in the colors of her life and find her own unique path. Once again, she smiled with understanding.

I wrote this book just as if I were talking with Karen about how to find her own map to better health. Just imagine that all of these therapy listings are like newspaper clippings, magazine articles and notes from a friend to help you, along with a few comments and suggestions of course! Because I've been the one sitting in the doctor's office after being told there's nothing more mainstream medicine can do to help I wrote a book so others would have a map to find hope. Now I know there is *always* hope.

There's an old saying that religions are just different paths up the mountain to the same destination. In many ways the different types of treatments and therapies available today are like different paths up the mountain of your life to the pinnacle of health. Some paths may be smooth and easy while others may be rocky and challenging (but possibly more rewarding). Perhaps one path is a straight line for a particular health problem, other times that particular path may become winding and indirect. The most important thing to remember is that no matter which path you choose, you are the only one who can walk it. Nobody can live your life for you and no one else can walk your path to better health. We each enjoy a unique life.

Like Karen, you were probably hoping for a nice American-style book where you can just look up your condition or disease and find all of the complementary and alternative therapies for it. Sorry, but as I explained to her sitting in a corner of the meeting room that afternoon, that's not how your health works and it's not how most CAM therapies work either.

In order to unbreak your health you're going to have to find the path that works for you. Before we had satellite-based GPS navigation systems people used maps to help them find their way. For thousands of years we figured out where we were, where we wanted to go and the best way to get there with paper maps. From flat to folded, from simple to full-color, civilization moved forward with maps. However to use a map effectively requires an understanding of its elements and how they must all work together to be useful.

Did you know that paper maps are better for you than GPS systems? You've probably heard news reports of crashes caused by GPS navigation but they've caused other problems like having a house in Atlanta demolished by mistake. It turns out our brains need the mental exercise of maps. In London, one of the most confusing cities in the world, cabbies spend two to four years learning "The Knowledge" of the city before they can start driving. Tests have shown the hippocampus in the brain of these cabbies is substantially larger than the average population. Scientists are concerned that reliance on GPS may even cause earlier onset of dementia in the years to come because we simply aren't exercising our brains with maps.

We learn to navigate with maps using either a spatial strategy that involves learning relationships between various landmarks or the stimulus- response approach that encodes specific routes by memorizing a series of cues. If you have no sense of direction you may suffer from developmental topographical disorientation or DTD. The good news: it can get better with practice. So even though you may not know your way around the world of complementary and alternative medicine now, reading this book will help you learn and find your way.

This book can be your map to better health. The 3 sections in the book - Body, Mind and Energy/Spirit - correspond to the functions of a map. The Body section represents the physical world, the landscape of our lives. There are rivers and mountains, plains

and plateaus, terrain that presents different degrees of difficulty. Finding your best path requires recognition of these challenges and their opportunities.

The Mind section corresponds to the man-made order we create to better understand the world around us. We created longitude and latitude, name countries and cities; we live in a world of artificial labels developed to help us navigate through life.

The Energy/Spirit portion of this book deals with the unseen world of magical energy. Is it really so different from the "magic" that makes a compass work? The unseen force of magnetism makes a compass point North so we can determine which direction we should go to reach our destination. There are magical energies our science is just beginning to understand that can help us find our way to better health.

To use a map effectively you need all of these features to determine where you are, where you want to go, and the best way to get there. Finding better health is your most important journey and this book will help you find your way. To accomplish your goal you'll need to recognize the landscape features that shape and color your world, the mental creations that identify your world, and finding your own compass to discover which direction you're headed. Finding better health also requires unlocking the unlimited healing potential of the Body, the Mind and Energy/Spirit.

You are responsible for your own health because no one else has as much to gain or lose from your health as you do. You can't blame your doctor, or your parents, or anybody else. It's your life and you choose to live it the way you want every day. You make the choices that produce the health you have right now. Did you choose a path for long health with good diet, daily exercise habits and deep religious convictions or regular meditation? Or did you choose to eat fast food and put off worrying about your health until later (probably until something broke)? Taking personal responsibility for your own health is the first step towards finding your path, your opening your own map. Next you have to empower yourself with knowledge so you can make the most informed decisions possible about your health care and that includes all of your options, even the world of complementary and alternative therapies.

You have many different pathways to choose from for your health and you're the one with the ultimate responsibility of choice. For one health problem you may choose mainstream (allopathic) medicine. For a different health problem you may choose some type of complementary or alternative therapy (CAM). Your constantly changing health may require you to change direction depending on the changing terrain of your condition. You can even walk with a foot on different healing pathways to reach your destination. For example you can add a complementary therapy path alongside the steps you're taking with mainstream medicine. The good news is you have free will and can choose whichever path you want at any time, changing direction as you desire.

One possible path you can choose is standard Western medicine, a popular choice for Americans because it also involves the least amount of personal responsibility and the largest amount of insurance coverage. Here the symptoms of your health problem will be taken care of with prescription drugs or surgery and you're back to your old life. For many this is the tollway of health: fast and easy but expensive. (Fortunately for most people the human body has unlimited healing abilities.)

Other times the path of mainstream medicine may be more complicated, requiring you to go from specialist to specialist to specialist. When that happens this path can turn scary, strange and dark as you try to feel your way around without adequate information. Too often the current medical system fails to treat patients as people, but instead simply a number on a form.

This path can even become quite rocky if you try to share it with some type of complementary or alternative therapy. Most doctors are given little, if any, education in CAM and virtually no training. Doctors do not need any education in complementary and alternative medicine to get a medical license in America today. Most of us fear and dislike what we don't know, regardless of its benefit, so it's no surprise that doctors

usually discourage patients from straying from the path of Western medicine. You should always talk with your doctor about your involvement with any type of CAM so he's aware of your complete health situation, but don't expect a sympathetic or even informed response.

A nearby path is called Integrative Medicine, a new type of medicine that tries to capitalize on some of the CAM therapies to find the best solution for an individual's health problem. These doctors are promoting an integrated model of health care in America that incorporates body, mind and spirit. These progressive folks realize that Western medicine doesn't have all of the answers to our health problems today. In general Integrative Medicine doctors are much more open to discussing CAM options even if it's outside their scope of experience. Currently there are 44 member organizations of the Consortium of Academic Health Centers for Integrative Medicine leading the way for better health in this country.

There are also paths that involve what I consider crossover therapies like Osteopathy, a unique American medical innovation. In my podcast interview with Dr. Philip Slocum, the Dean of the Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine at A. T. Still University, we talked about how D.O.'s treat the whole patient instead of looking at them as simply a series of systems to be fixed. Osteopaths are fully-trained medical doctors with additional specialized education and training in the body's neuromuscular-skeletal system. Manipulation of this connected system to permit the body to function correctly is critical for the body to heal itself. *(Dr. A. T. Still developed Osteopathy and opened the first college of its kind in the world. Podcast interviews on this and many other therapies can be found at www.unbreakyourhealth.com.)*

One of the first things you'll notice that's different about pathways for complementary and alternative medicine is that they're for all of you, not just for one part or symptom of you. These therapies recognize that you're a unique individual of mind, body and spirit and every health problem is going to involve all of you. CAM therapies also look for the real source of your health problem instead of simply treating symptoms; they have a different perspective about your health.

Do you remember the old joke about the three blind mice and the elephant? One mouse is holding on to the tail and says "An elephant is long and skinny with hair on the end." The next mouse is touching the leg and he says, "No, an elephant is big and round." The third mouse is on the trunk and he says, "You're both wrong. It's not too thick or too thin, but watch out for all of the hot air!" It's similar when you're trying to figure out what's causing your pain or health problem; you need to look at your whole being for the source of your problem rather than just dealing with the individual symptoms.

Just because you may have a name for your condition doesn't mean it's the source of your problem, you have to see the whole elephant. Let me give you an example: let's say you have a pain in your shoulder so you go to your friendly allopathic (mainstream) medical doctor. He checks it out and finds there is nothing broken or torn so he gives you a drug for pain, maybe one for muscle relaxation and possibly another drug to reduce inflammation. (Remember the problems caused by Vioxx?) This is simply to mask the uncomfortable symptoms while your body (hopefully) heals itself.

A practitioner of a complementary or alternative therapy is usually going to look at you as a whole system to see what's causing the problem. Perhaps you're moving the shoulder in an awkward manner which is causing the strain and pain. A Rolfer or Feldenkrais practitioner is going to realign your body so it moves correctly, removing the strain which eliminates the pain without drugs. *(There are free podcast shows on Rolfing and the Feldenkrais Method too at www.unbreakyourhealth.com.)*

Or perhaps there is a problem with an organ or body function that has changed your body's energy system causing the muscles to tighten in an unusual way which puts a

strain on the body. A therapy like acupuncture, EFT or BodyTalk would realign your body's energy flow allowing the body to repair the problem.

The Alexander Method would teach you how to move with efficiency to prevent the wear and tear and pain. Or perhaps it's stress that's literally beating you down and putting your body into awkward positions. Tai Chi, yoga or meditation would help relieve the stress before it produces a physical problem like hunching your shoulders into a painful position. (Doctors now say that up to 80% of our physical problems could actually be stress-related.)

An example of finding the source of a health problem comes from my own life and it involves Rolf Structural Integration therapy. A few years ago I hurt my back doing yard work and when my chiropractor couldn't resolve the situation I decided to try Rolfing. As one of the structural integration therapies the first thing the practitioner had me do was walk back and forth so she could see how my body moved as a whole. The first thing she said was that I must have terrible pain in my knees. I explained to her I'd had pain so bad for over twenty years that at times I couldn't even walk across our local mall. I'd been to orthopedic specialists, neurology specialists ... I'd been all up and down the alphabet of medical specialties looking for help. The only one who did me any good was a podiatrist who sold me an expensive set of custom orthopedic inserts which helped with the symptoms but didn't solve the problem.

The Rolf therapist just waved her hand as if to say "don't worry about it, we'll take care of it" which I found amazing. Now Rolfing began with their Basic Ten series of treatments and true to her word after the third session I took the insoles out of my shoes and haven't worn them since. Today I'm able to hit a treadmill without pain thanks to finding the source of my problem.

This is just an example of how CAM therapies treat the source of the problem, not just the symptoms. Practitioners of complementary and alternative therapies look at the whole person to find what's wrong so they can correct the problem where it begins rather than where it ends. There are many paths to choose from but you're the one responsible for finding the right one (therapy) for your unique health problem. No one else can do it for you any more than someone else can eat your dinner for you. You're the only one who knows what feels right and what doesn't, what makes sense to you for your situation.

This book organizes CAM therapies into three categories: Body, Mind and Energy/Spirit. After careful consideration, each subject is classified based on my opinion regarding the primary goal or operating principle. For example, Energy Medicine can be found in the Body section. This subject is based on the incredible discovery by Dr. Bjorn Nordenstrom of a new circulatory system in the human body for electrical energy called the Biological Closed Energy Circuit (BCEC). Since it deals with the physical system of moving energy through the body it's classified as a physical subject although it deals with the body's energy system, which some consider a spiritual life force.

Acupuncture, on the other hand, is found in the Energy/Spirit section even though it also deals with the body's energy system. Developed 5,000 years ago the ancient Chinese called this energy Chi, or life force. They described it as being a balance of Yin and Yang forces in the body, while Dr. Nordenstrom calls it positive and negative ions of electrical energy. These two listings may, in fact, be talking about the same system but they're classified into two different categories based upon my opinion of their focus or intention.

In an effort to help understand each subject as well as possible similarities to other therapies I often include a little history or perspective with a description of each listing. As you read through this book you'll begin to see many common features and concepts.

User Comments have been included at the end of many listings for a better understanding of each therapy. These are anonymous comments from people who've actually experienced the process. Comments from different people are marked with a diamond-shaped bullet. These testimonials have been collected from a variety of sources

to give you a more personal perspective on each therapy. Please remember results are unique to each individual. Because of our uniqueness a process that works well for one person may perform very differently for another. This feature will at least provide a little human color to the black-and-white definitions and descriptions.

Most listings offer websites for you to begin your own research into selected processes. Remember these are just a place to begin your own process of exploration, there are many websites available.

This book is a map to begin your journey to health and happiness, not a quick fix. You have to read the whole map to figure out where you are, where you've been, and where you want to go. Only then can you determine the best path to reach your destination given the terrain, roadways, etc. Even if you're just looking for shortcuts you'll want to know all of your options in order to choose the best shortcut. Reading this whole book will be the first step in taking responsibility for your health.

So how do you unbreak your health and restore its original condition or better? You take responsibility for your own health and take careful steps to improve it by the path you select with each day. You create your own map to better health one step at a time with the choices you make. Starting with a blank page, you fill it in with your own experiences, good and bad. Step by step you'll recognize what helps and what you should avoid. It's nothing new really because you've taken prescription drugs that had side effects you didn't like and drugs that simply didn't work but you kept trying until you find what worked for you. Now we're going to do the same thing with more natural, holistic therapies so you can find a better way to health.

When meeting with any type of healthcare practitioner remember to take your common sense and intuition. Ask questions, lots and lots of questions, because empowerment is the key to understanding your personal map to better health. Remember, it's your life we're talking about!

Please read this book with an open mind and pay attention to your big picture of health, not just to find a magic bullet answer to your current health problems. All of this information will filter deep into your mind and you'll discover that you're naturally drawn to certain subjects. Just as I've discovered new ways to better health, so can you. Welcome to the map to find hope, the path to UnBreak Your Health!

