

GETTING YOURSELF BETTER 1

Once you get sick, of course you want to get yourself better. But it is not always such an easy step. Sometimes you need to retrace the processes that got you sick in the first place, and you always need to learn the lesson behind the illness. Otherwise there would be no advantage in getting sick.

Sometimes getting better can be easy. You have a cold or flu, and allow yourself a few days off work, to stop and think, and to get out of the rat race. You may then be a bit more objective about your everyday behaviour and obligations.

Sometimes you can rely on the goodwill of others to get you better, without much effort on your part. You go to the doctor and get some antibiotics, to a practitioner to get some herbs, or the Homoeopath to be given a remedy. If you are lucky, especially with Homoeopathy, the remedy will resonate with your whole being, and cause an improvement in your mind state, and as well as getting physically better you will also adjust your thinking and attitudes, and reset the tendency that led you to getting sick in the first place.

But in a way the more awareness you have, the more it is your responsibility to make the changes that are required for getting better. You can go to see a practitioner, and receive a medicine or remedy or whatever, but unless you actually make changes to the processes that led to the illness in the first place, you will not get any better, or once you do get better the improvement will not be sustained.

This is why some Homoeopaths say that after the constitutional balancing of the remedy comes the automatic adjustment by the body's healing processes, and then the obligation of the person to take up the slack by working on attitudes, thoughts and emotions.

Of course, it is often difficult to know where to turn your attention in order to get better, or to produce your own healing. After all, any adjustments that are easy will have been already made, and it is sometimes your basic assumptions that are in the way. You may have to change some aspects of your basic world view and definitions of yourself.

Sometimes you need to go back and look at ideas, attitudes, stresses and behaviour that you had at the onset of the illness, or immediately before the illness commenced. It is said that the mind can create illness, but even if this is not so, any tendency towards ill-health will be accentuated by excessive emotional and mental stresses.

Other times you will need to look at the symbolism behind the illness. Much of our language is symbolic, and for good reason we all have a lush subconscious and are connected to the universal mind and collective unconsciousness. There are various psychosomatic lists [of mental causes of illness], but it is best to use them only if they seem relevant, and otherwise just listen to your own interpretation of the symbolism.

But how can you actually tap into the meaning of your illness, and listen to the messages from your subconscious?

First of all, you have to want to change and get better, and want this so much that you are willing to face any grizzly realisations of yourself that may emerge, and to change your view of yourself and your life, if that is required. Then you have to put aside all the anxieties that are associated with the illness, all the self-righteousness that it had nothing to do with you, and all the determination that you want to get better only if nothing else has to change.

Then you have to get still, relax, and pay attention to the thoughts and feelings that come to

you. It will often be the ones that just pop into your mind before you habitually push them aside that are the most relevant. You need to stay with these ideas, examine them objectively, and give them air time until they stop popping up. Similarly, you need to stay with your emotions in as objective a fashion as possible, until they just dissolve. Often it is fear that holds us to the past, and it may be necessary to stay with and experience that fear until it is defused.

And then you can start to be free. You will often see quite easily how a certain thought, or group of attitudes, or aspect of behaviour is related to your current health problem, and you then have the option of unravelling or changing that situation. You may need to sit with some confusion for a while, until your reality changes, but it is important to stay grounded in everyday reality.

But watch out. As you start to realise how freeing it can be to work with energy by changing your thoughts, feelings or behaviour, you will want to use these techniques to produce more aliveness and well-being, rather than [use them] just when you've trapped yourself into having to deal with illness.

And it is the basic process that is important. Anything that increases self-awareness, be it exercise, walking, meditation, massage, sunbathing, music, gardening or martial arts, can lead to healing and a sense of well-being.

Another concept that can be hard to grasp is the concept of illness as a message, as an opportunity to learn. Often when people look back on an illness, they can actually feel grateful for having had that illness, because of the lessons they've learnt in coping with the illness or in getting better from it.

In every situation, illness is an opportunity for growth and change, an opportunity that can be taken or not, according to the decision of the individual. Sometimes it seems that the illness comes to stop you from a planned or actual activity or lifestyle. If you are on a path that doesn't resonate with who you are, you may first experience uneasiness, or tiredness, or irritability, and this may lead later to emotional changes or physical illness. The earlier you listen to the messages, the less severe the illness needs to be, in order for you to hear the messages and make the changes required.

Other times the illness seems more of a jolt, that can help shift you from one reality to another. It can produce the opportunity for learning, self-discovery and wisdom that wouldn't have otherwise been accessible. It is interesting that this learning and growing can occur whether or not you get better on the physical plane. The real meaning and usefulness of illness is in the opportunities it gives for growth, and it is almost as if the physical healing is a byproduct of this, admittedly a highly desirable one.