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Unconventional Wisdom – And Starchild Abraham’s Choice

by Susan Bonfield
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 September 2006

Unproven. Worthless. Quackery.

As a natural-medicine consumer for the past 20 years, I've heard all the pejoratives used to describe medicine that has existed for thousands of years.

I consider myself most fortunate. Unlike Starchild Abraham Cherrix and his family, I did not have to battle government to receive the natural medical care I thought would save my life. The Cherrix family, however, faced trial in Virginia last month over their decision to seek alternatives to the conventional medicine Abraham previously received to treat his Hodgkin’s disease - treatment that has failed to cure the disease and has created disabling complications.

The Cherrix case, however, is not only a fight over one patient’s right to choose his preferred form of medical treatment. This case exposes the conventional medical community’s continued unwillingness to understand and respect the roots of all medicine.

My journey with natural medicine began in 1986, when I developed an extreme, crippling asthma - a form of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. At that time, conventional medicine offered me these prospects: (1) An extremely poor quality of life, where performing activities of daily living would be arduous even with the use of multiple conventional pharmaceuticals; and (2) death at an age far earlier than I would have preferred. From my perspective, such unappealing limitations offered me only one option: find a cure.

Using a partnership of natural therapies, I have cured this deadly lung disease. Upon completion of my journey, in which I partnered non-force chiropractic, traditional Chinese medicine, and traditional naturopathic therapies, I will have cured about a dozen major and minor medical issues that conventional medicine claims cannot be cured, including hyperthyroidism, Bell’s palsy, vertigo, and allergies, among others.

As a patient who has used natural medicine successfully, I am alarmed over government’s intrusive attempts - instigated by conventional medical doctors - to force upon Abraham medical treatment he considers harmful. This young man has researched and explored other treatment options. He has discussed

alternative options with his family. He and his family have chosen treatment they feel offers more success. His choices must be respected by his oncologist and the courts. Abraham - not his conventional medical doctor or the courts - owns the rights to his body.

I understand the skepticism expressed by Abraham's oncologist towards "alternative medicine." She is trained in her particular specialty within conventional medicine, making her an expert in that specialty. This does not make her an expert, however, in forms of medicine in which she is not trained. Nor does her method of treatment guarantee Abraham a cure or free him from harsh side-effects and complications.

Unfortunately, the conventional medical community misguidedly views natural medicine through the constrictive lens of conventional medicine. Natural medicine is a **system** of medicine that approaches healing differently than conventional medicine. That natural medicine is different from conventional medicine does not make it magical or undecipherable - it just makes it different:

- Natural medicine defines "healthy" differently than conventional medicine. In conventional medicine, you are "healthy" so long as you are not sick. In natural medicine, however, you are healthy when your body is balanced physically and emotionally.
- Natural medicine is not one-size-fits-all medicine. Unlike conventional medicine, natural medicine tailors remedies and treatment specific to each patient, using information provided by the patient's body - the ultimate form of "personalized" medicine.
- Natural medicine does not treat just a disease, but examines and treats the patient's entire body. Conventional medicine looks only at the specific disease and the specific body part affected by that disease, ignoring the whole patient.
- Natural medicine heals the body through a process that occurs over time because it taps the body's own ability to heal. This process requires patience from the patient.
- Natural therapies are most effective when used in partnership with other natural therapies, especially in patients with chronic or life-threatening medical issues. This creates a synergy that enhances the ability of each therapy to succeed in its healing task, while strengthening the body's ability to heal.
- Finally, the body's electromagnetic energy can be tapped to pre-determine the safety and effectiveness of herbs, homeopathic remedies, vitamins, and other supplements prior to ingestion. These energy-testing methods customize herbs, remedies, and supplements for each individual patient. Energy-testing: (1) Confirms the herb, remedy, or supplement most beneficial to an individual patient; (2) assures that an herb, remedy, or supplement is safe for that particular patient; and (3) enables a consumer to spend healthcare dollars wisely and cost-effectively. Simply stated, "Do not ingest unless you energy test."

My journey has not been free of extraordinary challenges. Seven years ago I nearly died from a Chinese herb formula, an herbal remedy not energy-tested on

me by the practitioner who prescribed it. I was paralyzed, comatose, and on a respirator. Despite conventional physician’s grim prognoses - brain damage, permanent physical disability, even death - I was nearly fully recovered within seven weeks of hospitalization. I had to relearn to walk, talk, and perform activities of daily living. My longtime use of natural medicine was instrumental to my survival and recovery.

Two years later I proudly served as a Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Torchbearer. In what was a joyous celebration of life, I ran up a steep hill while carrying the Olympic Torch.

Conventional medicine does have a role in consumer health. Patients such as myself and Abraham turn to natural therapies, however, after conventional medicine fails to address health issues successfully.

And with more studies showing conventional medical errors responsible for thousands of deaths and injuries every year, alternative medical care becomes even more appealing to patients - and looks quite natural.

The conventional medical community seeks to impose its biases upon a young man facing the gravest fight of his life. The way in which Abraham chooses his fight is exactly that: his choice - one the courts must accept, affirm, and protect.

*Susan Bonfield is a natural-medicine policy and consumer advocate in Washington, DC. She was chosen by the Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Committee to serve as an Olympic Torchbearer, highlighting her use of natural medicine. An issue and electoral campaign consultant with over 25-years’ experience, Susan is the founder of **Advocates for Natural Medicine**, which offers public policy, political strategy, fundraising, and communication services on natural medicine and healthcare issues. Susan can be contacted at: protectnaturalhealth@yahoo.com.*

