

# Before Meds After Meds

*Complementary and Alternative Medicine  
for Anxiety & Depression*

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In memoriam of  
Ignaz Semmelweis, Linus Pauling &  
Abram Hoffer

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# Preface

It's been said it takes twenty years for medical advances to make their way from the first early journal articles to the conventional standard of practice.

Anyone who's ever been in pain and has had to wait a few hours or weeks to see a doctor, or get relief once they've seen one, is probably going to wonder about the wisdom of that delay.

In a time when information is increasingly free, it's also becoming steadily more clear that most of us can look forward to eroding standards of care thanks to continual cuts in coverage and physician reimbursement. Little known fact: docs now get about half of what they were paid five years ago.

That suggests to me that, whenever feasible, it's time to take matters into our own hands.

There is a time and a place for professional care. The materials and methods in this book are no substitute for the attentions of a good MD when that's called for, and especially the work of mental health therapists. MFTs and LCSWs often have practical, simple tools to share that can help those of us in mental pain untie our inner knots and climb out of our emotional pits.

But that climb goes even faster if we support the processes of change and growth by incorporating some of the tools presented in this work.

\* \* \* \* \*

Anyone who's worked hard enough for as long as it takes to be able to produce something like this book has a long list of people to thank. I've been inspired and healed thanks to the work of Albert Hoffman, Linus Pauling, Harvey Ross, MD, Ignaz Semmelweis, Ivan Illich, Richard Passwater, Ph.D., Eric Braverman, M.D., Udo Erasmus and others. I'm grateful to my mentors Jacques Mora Marco and Robert Newman. My parents offered their generous support during the production of this work, as did my friends Fay Dattner and Kalin Bracero. Mark Winitzky inspired the title. Lynne Azpeitia and Karen Wulfson of LA-CAMFT offered critical insights into what therapists needed most, and Holly Miller lit the fire that finally got this thing written. And of course I'd never be able to focus on this project or get anything else done without constant, patient and above-and-beyond the call support from my wife Shuying Lien and my long-time friend and assistant Gail Chikahisa.

This work is dedicated to Michael Steimer, my nephew—who seems privileged, as I am, to carry on the family tradition of rocking the boat.

# Introduction

The problem is fundamentally this:

We were never designed to eat industrialized food. We weren't even designed to eat farmed food.

We were designed as hunter/gatherers. We followed the herds. We learned where to dig and harvest in the forest and fields as we followed them. Food was seasonal. Everything was organic, well-mineralized, and for the longest time, raw. Most of it was fresh.

All that gathering and hunting takes a considerable amount of effort. Sometimes food is hard to find; some kinds of food can be very hard to find. Salt, for example, has to be obtained entirely from raw meat or the occasional mineral lick once one is more than a few dozen miles from the ocean. Sugar is found only in honey in most parts of the world and the attendant bees have a way of discouraging unprotected visitors. (It's also found in sugar cane and sugar beets, but the former doesn't grow in most places where humans live and the latter was unavailable to us until Napoleon's chemists figured out how to refine sugar from beets.)

But even though carbs and salt were hard to get, our bodies needed them so we evolved to crave them. They

taste good. The need for salt drove the first human traders; the first roman road was built to the closest salt flat. The human brain runs almost exclusively on blood sugar; that sugar comes most easily from carbohydrates. Before fire, before agriculture, we'd get our carbohydrates by munching on raw leaves, roots and berries. I don't know about you, but I'd have to be very motivated to wash off a raw root and bite into it.

Yet something on that order is just what we had to do, for the longest time, if we wanted to feed our sweet teeth. Except we didn't know about sweets back then. All we had were those roots, the wild grains we could gather and small, uncultivated fruits. Think rose hips.

At one time salt was precious enough to be used for money (that's why we're paid salaries.) Eventually trade and technology progressed to a point where sugar became more widely available—but only as a luxury reserved for royalty and the uber-rich.

Today our mastery of a few industrial processes lets us make all the salt and sugar we want. It sells for peanuts. The takeaway is this: *since humans were designed to crave sugar and salt, there's a natural tendency to overdo them. When we do, the neuroendocrine imbalances that result can set in motion a variety of health problems. The brain, by virtue of its high metabolic rate, is particularly susceptible.*

Another problem with farmed food, especially today, is that we've perfected the arts involved in making sure we don't flood the farmers every spring.

Wild plants absorb minerals from the soil beneath them. They cycle them through their bodies over the course of their lives, then release those minerals back to the soil when they die making them available to the next generation.

When we farm the minerals in the harvested plant parts are “mined out” and end up being flushed out to sea. The soil loses those minerals, essentially forever. The only solutions are remineralization (expensive) and flooding (dangerous and expensive.)

Now trace minerals are important parts of just about everything the body needs to keep itself running smoothly. They’re crucial to the replacement of worn out tissues, the strength of our bones, the regulation of blood sugar, the insulation around our nerves. Trace minerals are particularly important for the endocrine, immune and central nervous system’s self-regulating pathways. Without adequate trace minerals, the body can’t function at top efficiency—and particularly the brain.

B Vitamins are crucial catalysts. They break down in heat and wash out in water, so cooking and processing food destroys much of the Bs in our food. Essential fatty acids like the omega-3s, indispensable triggers of anti-inflammatory activity and cellular signalling, are even more reactive and fragile than the Bs. A shift from omega-3 rich grass-fed beef to factory-farmed, corn-fed and omega-6 rich beef in the 1950s signaled a massive shift in modern diets in a pro-inflammatory direction. This subtle inflammation attacks the brain and indeed all

body tissues. But because the brain is so metabolically active and because the biochemical state of the brain is so intimately involved with our moods and behavior, one of the first places this inflammation creates noticeable symptoms is often our minds.

Most mammals make huge amounts of vitamin C in their bodies, interconverting it from blood sugar, generating multi-gram quantities every day. Yet we're told humans need only enough to prevent scurvy. We now know that most of the chronic diseases of aging involve a mysterious low-grade chronic inflammation that we can treat with anti-inflammatories, pain medication, cholesterol drugs and the like. But these don't eliminate the sources of the inflammation. We also know that antioxidant status controls DNA expression, helping decide which parts of our ancient control systems get their way. Yet the recommended Daily Value level of vitamin C stays low. Disinformation is spread about the dangers of meaningful levels of vitamin C supplementation.

If we humans were making vitamin C in our bodies at the same rate as most mammals given our body weight, we'd be making 14-17 gms/day.

It's been said that vitamin C, the raw material for collagen, the body's connective tissue, is also the glue that holds our bodies together. If it wasn't for vitamin C, we'd instantly dissolve into puddles of cells on the floor.

Again, the brain is exquisitely sensitive to all these factors and more because of its high metabolic rate. It

takes lots of energy to think all our thoughts, register and make sense of all our sensations, feel our feelings. We need a strong, intact blood brain barrier—connective tissue—to keep toxic gate-crashers out of the metabolic party. We need strong and flexible cell membranes, sensitive and responsive receptor sites, the right conditions for optimal DNA expression. A delicate balance of stimulation, sedation, activity and rest must be maintained.

All these control systems need what they need to do the job they're designed to do. If they don't get the micronutrients they need to do the job, if they're chronically inflamed ... they get upset. And then we get upset.

There's more. Modern transportation has erased the seasons; we can now eat the same foodstuffs all year round—a set up for allergies, other immune disturbances and low- to medium-grade inflammation. If we're carnivorous we sit on top of a food chain concentrating the biocontamination of hundreds of years of industrialization. Much of that contamination can also contribute to chronic, low-grade inflammation. How does that feel?

Here's one answer. The ancient chinese said the body serves as a home for spirit. When the body is well-nourished, spirit has a good home to live in and can live in peace. If the body is poorly nourished or toxic, spirit is as unsettled as a squatter in an abandoned building with no heat, broken windows, no water.

Or think of the brain as billions of tiny soap bubbles. Fantastically complex soap bubbles, resilient bub-

bles, but very, very small bubbles. Now take a handful of sand and throw it into that mass of infinitesimal bubbles. What happens?

The bubbles start to burst, yes?

That's very close to the effect of chronic inflammation on the brain.

Disruption of the delicate workings of our brain cells damages our thinking and leads to damaging behavior. Over time those behaviors become habits.

A good therapist can help us find the insights we need to understand these behaviors. They can also teach us tools we can use to change. And all of this goes much, much better when we support our minds and mental health by giving our brains everything they need to run. We change the oil and tune up our cars when they need it. Where's the owner's manual for the brain?

Right here.

Give this book a few hours and you'll get:

- a much better understanding of how nutrition affects the brain,
- simple, safe tools to boost mood and mental energy using the kinds of substances normally found in the brain (and also at your nearest health food store,)

- clues about how to detect common food/brain problems and what to do about them,
- an understanding of and access to a variety of other brain/mind health-boosting technologies, including homeopathic flower essences, brain-wave technology, aromatherapy, meditation and more.

Close to 1900 citations from the peer-reviewed evidence base are also here, along with a clear-eyed take on the limitations of conventional research models when applied to the kinds of interventions characterizing best-practice holistic medicine.

Supplier websites are listed. The author himself doesn't sell anything he recommends. He remembers why doctor's offices are generally not also drugstores.

Pharmaceuticals can be miracles. Like any powerful technological development they can also be dangerous. A scan of the literature of psychoactive medication provides evidence for both positions.

This work is for those who, for reasons of personal esthetics, conviction or experience, desire to know more about natural alternatives to pharmaceutical medication. Surprisingly enough, some still hold that there's no evidence that nutrition has any influence on mental health. For those, please see Appendix E.

Before Meds / After Meds

Just because the right eye sees something different than the left does not mean that one of them is somehow mistaken.

Want to see things in depth? Use both eyes.

# Disclaimer

I haven't examined you. Therefore I can't prescribe for you.

The material in this book is meant to be educational in nature, not prescriptive. If you put any of the information in this book to use without professional guidance, don't try to hold us responsible. Take the information we provide for you here and do your own homework; verify our facts. These days a little googling will take you a long way.

Our job is to filter all that for you and point the way. Your job is to decide if you require medical attention.

If you have a medical condition, you probably do.

That said, we all know there are limitations to how much conventional providers can do these days, particularly for chronic conditions.

Anxiety and depression are among them. I know. I've climbed (more or less) out of my own deep hole of dysfunctional despair with the help of some good professional advice and most of the techniques listed in this book. I'll bet you can too. Just be careful, ok?

BE EXTRA CAREFUL  
IF YOU ARE ALREADY MEDICATED.  
STOPPING PRESCRIBED MEDICATION  
ABRUPTLY WITHOUT GUIDANCE CAN BE  
DEADLY.

That said, it is possible in some cases to slowly taper off prescribed psychoactive meds, especially when putting some of the tools presented in this book to work at the same time. But this should be done with professional monitoring and help.

Ask your doctor if they're open to helping you with this. If you don't find support there and you're determined, check out the Resources section in Appendix C—there you'll find directories of orthomolecular MDs and others trained in these methods. It's best to go with someone supportive who knows the terrain.

We are also available to offer training and coaching via Skype, phone and the web. This is most appropriate before one starts taking prescription meds, when one is not a danger to oneself or others, or if one's condition does not otherwise require medication. If you're merely tired, exhausted, discouraged and blue, we can help you. If you've been looking for the exit or running strangers off the road, it'd be best to be working with someone local. If that's the case, get in touch and we'll do our best to help you find someone qualified in your area.

**[www.naturalstresscare.org/Consult-Landing.html](http://www.naturalstresscare.org/Consult-Landing.html)**