

Optimum Health and Healing: Balancing Body, Mind, and Spirit

Mathew Maniampra

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Western medicine appears to be at the height of its powers—impressive technology, huge building complexes dedicated to its practice and pursuit, a mind-boggling pharmacopeia—but preoccupied with curing, it appears to have lost touch with the art of healing.

A pastoral counselor and family therapist, author Mathew Maniampra, CMI, has integrated his experience in such alternative fields as naturopathy and homeopathy, as well as psychology, spirituality, and Eastern philosophies, to create a holistic approach in his work with patients. His thesis is simple, yet quite revolutionary in the eyes of Western, or allopathic, medicine: heal the problem instead of battling the symptom.

The human being, says Maniampra, occupies several realms—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual—that interact and inform one another. Health problems not only affect each dimension, but often originate in levels different than those upon which they manifest. Therefore, though we may exhibit the same symptoms, every problem is custom to us, with unique underlying causes. Even infections have different antecedents, for they are the result of a weakening in our immune system caused by imbalances or disturbances on mental, emotional, or spiritual levels. What we think, feel, and believe affects our bodies for better or worse.

This has not been understood, much less incorporated into Western approaches to medicine. On the contrary, allopathic medicine, says Maniampra, works with a template approach, treating people with the same symptoms the same way. Every problem is battled on the physical level, ignoring underlying causes or individuality. Patients can be trapped in a spiral of diminishing—even deadly—returns as the body reacts to treatments and then is treated for the reactions, which causes additional reactions calling for different treatments, ad infinitum.

Maniampra has done his homework and the book is well researched, providing an impressive array of stats and a view of modern medicine that reveals things are not as concrete and assured as one might think. Information on the life span of drugs all by itself raises some provocative questions. He provides practical tips to good health and describes in clear language various alternative modalities, including their methodology and best usage. Maniampra does not deny allopathic medicine its just due, but rather advocates a tandem approach.

The only caveat to be offered is that Maniampra is at times repetitive, and thoughts are occasionally disjointed to the point of creating confusion. This has more to do with the monolithic size of the subject he has tackled than any lack of relevance or intellectual shortcomings.

As our medical model grows not only more complex but equally more expensive and unwieldy, the idea that we have more influence over our health than we realize is tantalizing. This book is an excellent resource for anyone interested in taking back some responsibility for their own healing. It is thoughtful, intelligent, balanced, and above all, offers the hope that we need not surrender our power either to our problems or to a medical care system that is growing inhuman in focus and scale.

ROBIN IRELAND (November 27, 2006)

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