

Longest established school in 'father and son' 25th anniversary celebrations

The School of Homeopathy in Devon is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, but there is an extra cause for celebration for founder and director Misha Norland – his eldest son Mani is set to graduate this summer. Here, Misha talks about the beginnings of the longest established school in the UK, and Mani tells of the journey that led him into his father's footsteps.

Misha:

When I was three, my parents, refugees to the UK, changed our name from Neuschul (literally New-Schule or school) to Norland. I remember that I protested vehemently over this change, as though I had unconsciously known the direction my life would eventually take.

But before teaching, there was the path that led to homeopathy, which began in 1970. Previously I had settled on a career in filmmaking, but then, after a stint in Hollywood, I got married and had a son. Returning to London, I fell back into the rut of my bread and butter work: the financial security afforded by directing TV commercials. I had grown to hate prostituting my art, as I was viewing it, and I began to search for 'higher truths'. That search for meaning had been inculcated in me from my childhood and was a legacy left to me by my parents.

I began informal study at John Damonte's fortnightly classes. He was in loco parentis as far as wisdom teachings were concerned, as well as providing a sound basis in homeopathic philosophy. At this time, the only education for non-medics in London had been his class in the North and Thomas Maughan's in the South. As lay homeopaths, we were an underground movement. I attended with my wife, who later upped and left

when our son, Mani was a little over one year of age, leaving me as a single parent overnight. When Mani began to talk, he called me, "mummy". I was totally dedicated to him and thus the final coffin nail was hammered home into my filmmaking career.

In 1975 my homeopathic practice took off. I became the barefoot homeopath of the North London hippy community. I gained much experience and saw homeopathy bring about miraculous cures, and long term healing too. Homeopathic philosophy was revealed to me by practical experience. I learnt that the similimum, over time, continues to provide the impulse which can change the direction of folk's lives, setting their sails into the wind of self forgetting (for what is more distracting than being taken over by one's suffering?).

In 1978 alongside a handful of Thomas Maughan's students, we founded The Society of Homeopaths, dedicated to practice according to Hahnemannian precepts, education, information dissemination and creating and maintaining a register. I was the first editor of the new Society's journal, 'The Homeopath'.

I began formal teaching at the College of Homeopathy in 1979, although I had been running fortnightly study groups from my home for some years prior to this. In 1980 I remarried to my beloved Brigitte, soul mate and friend. In 1981 we moved to Devonshire with our family, founding The School of Homeopathy, which, in 1984, moved to Yondercott House in



■ Mani and Misha at Yondercott House and inset, as they were a little over 30 years ago



Uffculme where our family and the school continue to be happily housed.

The school is run by a team of dedicated teachers, tutors and mentors. Our current faculty includes many former students who cooperate in creating and maintaining the family atmosphere and the ethos of the school for which we are nationally and internationally renowned. At the last count over 3,500 students worldwide had enrolled on the course with us. Of course I am delighted about this achievement, representing the consolidated efforts of many cooperating together to create student centred support and maintaining standards, but I am over-the-moon that Mani has opted to follow this path, to study with us and latterly to take over the running of Alternative Training

which supplies our home study courses.

Mani:

I grew up with homeopathy all around me. At the tender age of just one and half I was part of John Damonte's homeopathy study group in London. They were a lot of fun, I was delighted to have people to play with, romping around in my terri towelling nappy and discussing the finer points of Herrings Law of Cure. After John died the classes were always held at ours and as time went on I accidentally learnt more about homeopathy, rather like a child that learns two languages.

On one occasion, I was about three, I had taken a bump and I knew there was a good pill for that. I knew it was called Arnica

like a bee to a flower. In London I learnt about money, and what apparently made the world go around. Designer clothing was important as was going out. But I missed my friend, my father. I missed our chats, the tangled conversations of the mysteries of creation. The wonder of nature and how everything is linked. He had so much to share.

Increasingly I began to see my life as a journey, a path with blocks of knowledge, where I would learn and grow, taking what I had and building on it, everything seemed to be for a purpose. I felt I was collecting skills for a bigger plan.

In London I met my wonderful wife Amanda. I learnt to design, I learnt to give talks, hold meetings, to lead. I learnt about strategy, finance and business. The more I helped the Sycotic world of business the louder my calling grew and the more I reminisced back to those early homeopathy days. I wanted to help people not business, to give more back. I missed the people, the philosophical talk and the chocolate biscuits!

And then something beautiful happened. My father and I reconnected, our paths became one once again. We shared common goals once more, bigger ones, ones that didn't involve wiping snotty green candles from my nose, or choosing what to eat for supper. Homeopathy envisioned us. The way forward was clear.

Homeopathy shares all my values, I guess because I grew up with it. It is about compassion, love, helping people, making things better, life long fascination and learning. It is about being creative, free and aware. Wow, what things to be, what things to help others to be. What a thing to share.

And so it is. My father and I. My dream and his. May I one day

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■ Members of teaching group two (TG2) taking a break from their studies

share like he has. Teach like he has. Be how he is and be myself. Sing my own song, dance my own jig. Delight others in my own way. And continue to make my home a home of homeopathy.

homeopathy, and correspondence course in anatomy & physiology, pathology & disease and nutrition.

*Mani has moved back to the family home with his wife Amanda and both are set to qualify in June. They are also running Alternative Training, which offers distance learning courses in

A 25th anniversary reunion is being held for past graduates of the school over the weekend of April 29 and 30. If anyone would like to attend they should contact Patsy on 01792 700723 or gwrach.hapus@ntlworld.com



■ A group of students soak up the sun during a lunch break