

## **A Day in the Life of Misha Norland**

**An interview by Linnie Jenkins first published in "The Homœopath" (Issue No. 76)**

*Misha, I'd just like to ask you about a typical day.*

Different days are different. A typical weekend day, I'd be involved with the school, most probably teaching, or seeing students, participating in our team meetings, or making sure that things are running smoothly, which might include cooking lunch for folk. A typical weekday depends on the day. Because I work most Saturdays and Sundays, I try to keep Mondays and Tuesdays as if they were the weekend, so they're free of diary commitments, which means everything else that needs to be done falls into them. Of course there's a lot of fall-out from the School that gets picked up on a Monday. I try to keep my practice to afternoons, Wednesdays, Thursdays and all day Friday. My idea of keeping at least four mornings a week free was to give me a chance to do some writing, which was a great idea. The reality, however, is that there's little time for that.

I try to end my day at a reasonable hour so as to be with the family. I love to cook supper for everybody - this is my primary practical contribution to family life. It's probably the only time the family gets together, gathered round the evening meal-table, so it's a special time.

*So there isn't a typical day, then?*

Not really.

*What was today like?*

Well, today's an atypical Friday! Since there are no students here, there was no need to have a practice day for the video clinic which I usually run on Fridays. So I kept it free of appointments, apart from ours. In the morning I wrote five letters, sorted out a couple of e-mails, and was on the phone between 9 and 10, because that's my daily call-in hour.

I took the dog for a walk. I got up to the top of the hill when it started to rain, so I lingered in the woods and then came down again, which is why I was late. I'm sorry. The dog is a wonderful part of my life, partly because he needs a walk every day, just as I do. That hill is absolutely fantastic, you can go up it fast, which, from the point of view of exercise, is probably the best there is, going up a hill fast. I just wish it was a bigger hill!

*How do you find it, having your family live here, and the school? That must be quite hard in some ways for you. Is there an overlap?*

My personality divides into two distinct parts, one of which delights in having people in my home, while the other is very private. I need to spend some time on my own, or maybe with one other trusted person, soul-mate. Because these two parts of me move in contrary motion, I have to allow a space for each.

*Do you manage to make that space consciously and deliberately, or does it just `happen`?*

Well, dog-walking gives a space to me on my own. The dog is my soul-mate! We have great conversations. Seriously, my wife is my soul-mate and I delight in the time that we are together. I retire to my room and fiddle around with words. As you know, I write poetry, as well as writing articles here and there. Poetry is certainly a way of being in one's interior place.

*Are you saying that there's a part of you that brings those two together by being in nature, walking, and being 'grounded', and also by being creative? Does that make a bridge for you?*

It brings the private world into the public arena. Any form of expression does that, agreed. I love philosophy - that's another way in which the inner world gets abroad, as the private space allows for those thoughts to arise from the depths, and the public space is where they are put out.

*What about mundane things like telly?*

Oh no, I don't do much of that.

Something else about a typical day is that I may be away from home, I may be abroad. I have a commitment to North America, so that involves my going over there twice a year, regularly. I go to the School on campus in New York, and run workshops in diverse locations for students who've been studying homeopathy intensively on the Correspondence Course. Other members of the School Faculty also take part in this. As things are growing in America, more of us are getting involved.

*This doesn't take you away, in terms of where you're going - your commitment to homeopathy, your philosophy and your Self. It's actually very typical of how you are. You're travelling inside, with your ideas and your themes and your life, and you're taking these to another place.*

Yes. Very true. And I also like travelling other places as well. I've often thought that being a Homeopath is quite Jewish. As I'm half Jewish, I can say it is like that: Jews are everywhere, and homeopaths are everywhere. They are both religions, and specialist religions at that, belonging to the 'tribe'. I use the term religion in its original sense of 'binding back', as a gardener would a stray rambler rose. When you travel amongst homeopaths, you are treated as a brother/sister - it's a lovely way to travel. So, I may be going and teaching within the framework of my own school, or travelling as a guest into somebody else's school, or simply be giving an occasional seminar, or be a speaker at a conference. In any and all of these cases it's a wonderful way of finding out about folk, of being a part of their world. I've also enjoyed doing some work in Central and Eastern Europe. I'd love to do more.

I wish the Gemini in me had two bodies, then the one could go off and do these things and the other could stay at home! Like Phosphorus and Calcarea!

*Do you have a yearning for the 'travel thing'?*

I'm not struck with the physicality of travelling - for me this is hassle of tickets and luggage and being squeezed into seats for hours. Some people enjoy that: being on the road. Yet I love the contact with other people, and other cultures ....and, wild places, wherever they are ...

*In your daily life, do you get tangled up in the mundane things, fed up with them, or do you just accept them as they are ... the realities of washing-up, or mending your socks?*

I don't specifically like those things. Yet diversity is the spice of life, and I'm happy doing almost anything. I can get overwrought in the sense that I can suffer from the delusion that there are too many things, too many demands, too much expected of me at any given moment.

*What helps to get out of that space?*

The trick is not to get into it in the first place, and this is easier than getting out of it. But you've asked, how to get out of it? Well, I arrange to take a break, a few days off combined with a few

days teaching. I blank out some spaces in my diary, well in advance and book in some lectures abroad: it's a busman's holiday. The most useful tip I can give about how not to get into it, is to create compartments in your life and keep the boundaries, especially time boundaries, clearly stated. You have a phone-in hour, when patients know they can get you, and you know when you're not going to be got because then your answer-machine is on.

*And those annoying and niggling, practical things ... the car's broken down ... that combine with your patients on the phone ...*

Yes, sometimes it's all too much. One cannot control things like the car breaking down, so clearly there has to be enough latitude in life in order for you to handle the extraordinary without freaking out.

There is an annual religious gathering of Hindus at the confluence of the two great rivers that meet to become the Ganges. One time I went, and I was very struck by it. It really is touching the heart of India to be at an event like that. One gets to meet many holy men, 'Sadhus', who have made this pilgrimage. One of these Sadhus spoke good English, and, in traditional way offered me a very sweet 'sweetie', a cardamom and a clove. He asked me what my practice was, and I said I practised homeopathy. When I asked him what his practice was, he exclaimed, "Oh, my friend, I am practising contentment!" So I've tried to take a page out of his book, and now, if people ask me what I practise, I say, "I practise contentment ... and homeopathy!" Both are equally rewarding, and to master both one needs less and less!

*My experience as an ex-student from this School, is that you try to model, from the heart, the impartial observer, both in the classroom and in your relations with all of us. I have picked up that there is a degree of jealousy or envy towards this stance that you have taken, that the School has taken.*

*I'm interested in knowing how you deal with that, if you feel that it is actually there. Also how you deal with the 'fall-out', not only the academic problems of students, but their personal difficulties and challenges? After all, you care about them. There are two questions in this: What about this 'guru-Misha' stuff that other people may see you as, and also, how do you hold the space here (at Yondercott) with all your students?*

There are not so many ways of being with, staying with, the guru projection. A traditional way is to return with regularity to one's private space and practice of contentment. Which really means being okay with yourself, which in turn means doing as little as possible counter projection. People who are much in the public eye tend to have escape routes, certainly gurus do, at least traditionally in India. They spend a lot of time in a cave somewhere ... a lot of time alone. They come out to be with their followers, to teach, and then retire again. Regarding envy, that's one of the human shadows that arises in us. We can be jealous or envious, or wish to have the qualities that other people have. It's dark if it leads to destructive thoughts, and it's positive if it leads one along the pathway of emulating. For example, if you have a figure who exemplifies some quality that you wish to have yourself, then that's useful, because you could choose to spend time with them and absorb from them the qualities that they have on offer. I've personally been enriched and privileged, and privileged and enriched by some of the contacts I've had with my teachers in life, and I thank them. I thank them so much!

Sometimes this School seems like a little island, very different from other ways of teaching. Maybe, 'out there', there's a misunderstanding of how things are in this School, the provings, etc., accusations of being 'ungrounded'.

Well, it's a homeopathy school, so what we teach is homeopathy! The outward form of the teaching has a function, because its purpose is to enable healers to be effective in their work. The inner form of the teaching is related to its outer function. The inner form is to encourage and allow people to discover what is intrinsic in their own natures, and to bring it into realisation. That's finding out about yourself, and using it, using yourself for "the higher purposes of your existence" to quote Hahnemann.

*What is your favourite aphorism?*

Oh, it is number 9. My first homeopathy teacher, who passed on to me so much about healing, was John Damonte. He suggested that we begin our studies in homeopathy without philosophy books. Books on Materia Medica were fine, because they were pure fact. His suggestion was that we just discover the inner teachings from our own observations, rather than receiving knowledge from other people's vision. So I had already experienced homeopathic cures happening before I read the 'Organon'. When I did come to read it, I was running through 'Wow! That's amazing! Here's this guy, he knew all these things before I did! It really IS like this!'

Aphorism 9 really tickled my fancy, because it's not only something you see in the healing process, it's also something you experience from your very first breath. That's how it is. Aphorisms 1 to 8, beginning with the physician's "high and only mission" are specifically about homeopathy, then you get to Aphorism 9, and that's general, that's about life.

*Mind, body, spirit?*

Yes.

*The whole thing?*

Yes.

In terms of your practice, is there a 'typical' way? Would you say, for example, 'today, with this patient, I'm going to try ascending potencies', or, do you have ways of experimenting with homeopathy, with your healing, that are not 'typical'?

John Damonte taught a straightforward homeopathy in the context of a confused picture of medically oriented homeopathy on one hand and radionics, that is dowsing for remedies and 'broadcasting' influences, on the other. John primarily practised what we might call constitutional prescribing - finding the remedy that suits the person's state. After John died, I had various other teachers, and they had different styles of practice. Some of them believed that that approach was intrinsically the one, perhaps supporting it with other things, flower remedies, tissue salts, drainage remedies and so forth. Some of them practised other 'homeopathic' approaches that had less in common with the constitutional way. So I tried out all the tricks I was being taught, and got mightily confused! Thus I had to go back to first principles, which is where reading 'Organon' and Kent was really useful. I also started reading other books, Roberts, Stuart Close, etc. My view of homeopathy clarified and I obtained much better results, furthermore I could understand how I'd got them. That view of homeopathy is the one that I still adhere to. In my practice, I'm on the same Holy Grail quest for the simillimum that classical homeopaths have always been on.

Classical homeopathy has now become such a wide hold-all of lots of concepts.

The quest for the Holy Grail makes the journey simple. From the peak of the mountain you can see how others paths are configured. The idea is, and I'll use Hahnemann's model, that the individual

that comes to you with his suffering, is intrinsically and potentially perfect. The task is to return him/her to this state. What is required is to understand the nature of the suffering, to have a recognisable picture of it. Then the homeopath's quest is to find something in nature which survives by those self-same qualities that the disease is manifesting in the suffering person. The suffering person is only able to act out in one way, they are stuck in the form of that thing in nature which is their remedy. If you can find this thing, give its 'code', its 'picture', which is recognisable to the dynamis in the sufferer, then the person will be healed. This is so because the thing in nature has been manifesting itself for millions of years and the greater adding its dynamic to the minor (the disease) enables the vital force to extend itself into an extreme position (albeit for a fraction of a moment) from which it has no option but to rebalance itself and in this process throw off the disease. According to the Holy Grail quest model that I am propounding, there aren't a multitude of core diseases in simultaneous operation within one individual - only one core disease with a multitude of expressions. There's only one primary imbalance in operation at any given time, only one leitmotif, one script playing itself. As I've suggested, this motif has a dazzling number of expressions. Life (and disease) is endlessly creative. The style of practitioner that you are depends very much on what level you are working. If you're working on the basic core disturbance then there is one issue and one remedy. And the reason that we often struggle is that many times those remedies are not known to us. As rapidly as we are proving remedies, we still cannot assimilate all that information. So we're always lagging behind what is potentially possible for us. In many of the folks that we see, we only relieve part of the suffering, and therefore I call the one disease, one remedy model the Holy Grail quest. Regarding posology: selecting potencies is of less importance. One thing is absolutely clear to me: when pathology is chronic, or is acute, either physically or psychologically, then it's necessary to repeat the remedy. In chronic cases repetition should follow relapse, in acute cases repetition should be frequent until alleviation of suffering has been demonstrably established.

*Is that because it gets `used up` by the pathological process?*

One discovers from taking remedies, and certainly from provings, that the influence of the substance is instantaneously, there, and instantaneously gone. So it's not exactly that the influence has been used up. Perhaps a better analogy would be to image it as a signpost in a wilderness. When you are sick, you don't know which way to go. Then the remedy is like a signpost that says, `Go that way`. So off you go on that journey, yet after a while you lose your way again, so you need another peek at the signpost.

*What about this 5th and 6th Organon stuff? That Kent took his philosophy from the 5th, but by the time Hahnemann was working in Paris, he was mixing remedies, repeating remedies, etc.?*

He was always experimenting.

So, `Dare to know`?

Aude sapere.

I'm sure Hahnemann must have meant this science to grow and blossom and put forth more fruit, which you're a part of doing by virtue of having this School and the one in the States. So I'm just wondering how easy it is for you to hold the principles, and go `out` from the principles in new directions. Does that happen in your prescribing?

I don't know what to say. Basically, once I had sorted myself out of the confusion of my salad days in homeopathy, nothing has changed. The underlying principles are the same. I didn't invent them. Hahnemann didn't invent them. They're just there.

*So it's deepening, rather than anything else?*

That's a very good way of putting it. It's deepening, or broadening, or widening, not actually changing.

*So it's becoming more itself, bigger, more expanded?*

Absolutely. I could imagine that something as static as central principles, could lead some folk into a state of boredom from a philosophical point of view. Yet, from a practice point of view, it manifestly does not, because each person, each individual, brings to me, their unique expression. So I'm forever fascinated. Humankind is unbelievably creative, and, as I've commented, we're as creative in our diseases as we are in anything else. The stories that one hears are more 'true' than most of the drama on T.V. T.V. can be false and repetitive, whereas people, when they are revealing themselves, aren't. There are some themes that may repeat, of course, but the individual variations do not. And then, there's the aspect of relationship, which is forever a new thing, with each new person. So one's forever challenged. We don't need to have changing principles to be a fully functioning and not bored or burnt-out, Homeopath.

Hahnemann was not changing his principles. He was experimenting on the periphery, with things like dosages, and what would happen if he gave everybody Sulphur to eradicate the Psora. He's not changing his principles, he's just trying this Psora theory out, using Sulphur as the means whereby. And it's quite manifest from the Journals, the Notebooks that Rima Hanley translated, that his strategy was most often not working, yet he kept on trying it, and died on the job, you could say. He was a very old man.

In the 6th edition, there's also talk of laying on of hands, mesmerism. Mesmer was around, and impressed Hahnemann - so he writes about other healing methods. The man was at the beginning of a revolution, was part of that revolution, forever innovative. And all of this while maintaining his basic handle on principles. What I'm trying to say is, at the centre of the turning world, there's always a still point. So the advice that one would give to any seeker is, seek the still point at the centre of the turning world, because it's universal. And it takes you to that place where you can find contentment!