

A Few Thoughts about Receiving the Case

Misha Norland

The beauty of the homœopathic system is that it is intrinsically non judgmental. It asks of the practitioner no more than to accurately take note of what is presented to the evidence of the senses. Then to subtract the common from the idiosyncratic and to evaluate the latter in relation to provings of substances according to the principle of similarity. On the face of it nothing could be simpler. Why then do not all folk benefit at all times from treatment?

It seems to me that there are two major stumbling blocks to therapeutic effectiveness once the basic tenets of homœopathic treatment and case management have been met. The first Hahnemann speaks about when he cautions us not to indulge in transcendental speculation. The second stumbling block is prejudice, this is the one I wish to 'shake hands with' in this article. There are at least two aspects to it: prejudice based upon a more or less conscious attitude, a copied behaviour pattern, and that which psychologists term projection, a subconscious, automatic function. The former is amenable to conscious scrutiny and eventual correction, while the latter is far harder to change, for projection superimposes personal meanings upon statements and allusions of the patient which are based upon 'complex' driven prejudice. These complexes are the results of unprocessed, unintegrated experiences, often shocking, or repressed because they are unacceptable. Such projection distorts what is understood. It may lead the practitioner to prescribe upon a more or less fictitious case – in fact his or her own case superimposed upon that of the patient.

In the field of analytical psychology and psychoanalysis it is supposed that the practitioner, through their personal analysis, has 'arrived' at a place in

which they are no longer driven by compulsion or neuroses and therefore do not project their psychic needs, aversions and so forth upon their patients. Quite an assumption, it seems to me, indeed one which together with the setting up of the transference immediately leads to a hierarchy of power such that the therapist is at best a benign parent and at worst a punitive tyrant.

The concept of having special powers, in this case a healer's clear slate, automatically leads to an imbalance in relationship. This tends to reproduce the very patterns of infancy, the childhood family dynamics, which the patient is presumably wishing to move away from. A similar stumbling block to healing may exist whenever a doctor/patient, guru/disciple dynamic is sustained beyond the initial or acute phase of the therapy. It is surely more honest to speak not of patient and practitioner, rather of fellow sufferers. This non-hierarchisation of the therapeutic relationship is preferable if compassion is to arise and healing eventuate. As all homœopaths daily experience, it is through the resonance of similar suffering that healing occurs.

The question of 'right attitude' to case receiving may be simply expressed and possibly even engendered, thus:

1. When i am with another in a therapeutic setting I stay outside the consulting space, so that i am present, little 'i' referring to that aspect of self which is actively and non-intrusively aware and large 'I' to that complex of memories and prejudices from which opinion and projection arise.
2. i listen to all that i am told without knowing any answers, homœopathic, moral or other. Should evalua-

tions arise then I have entered the room! This tells me more about me, and less about the fellow sufferer.

3. Should my attention drift off, then I am drifting and i have left the therapeutic setting. It is of value to make a note of this and aspects of prejudice (2) for future self reflection, supervision and analysis.
4. At such times as the telling drifts off, loses psychological integrity or is devoid of information useful for a homœopathic understanding to arise, it is a good idea to honestly express this opinion with the intention of steering the session back into appropriate therapeutic territory.
5. I like to image a session as being like going for a walk with the other into their territory so that we are both experiencing this event together. This allows for empathy to coexist with objectivity, for they are showing me the sights, yet, if the going gets tough i am there alongside them.