

Tasting our own medicine: How taste is vital in sensing if something feels right.

So what's the right medicine for arthritis? Are lemons good for sore throats? What about steroids, are they good for lumbago? Anti-depressants, do they really work, and what's the alternative? Should I be taking this vitamin C or that vitamin B12? Which health guru should I go to for advice? Do they know what they are talking about? Who does?

Everyday questions like this appear in all kinds of medical clinics all over the world, from allopathic medicine to so-called "alternative" medicine. Interestingly, the western doctor or alternative medicine practitioner will very often say *"it's not about what is "good" for you, it's about understanding how it works"* and this catch-phrase seems to captivate most people who want to "know" what they are doing and who generally make medicine and therapy a cognitive process.

However there is another way. Medicine doesn't have to be about hearsay and ideologies of either mechanistic-Newtonian-dualism of Western medicine or even the energetic philosophy of the ancient practices or anything in between within the new-age "sciences". It can be more basic than all of these, it can be simply about feeling it, and attuning to the most profound connection there is, the simple taste of something.

There is a theory attached to everything for human being and in a way even if the theory originally comes from charted expressions of many years of instinctual sensing of populations, such as the indigenous medicines of China, India and Greece, in fact in the modern world ancient medicines are mere fossils of what they were originally. When we look at ancient medicine today we look at those practices as if they are old relics, dinosaurs of the past that have long since passed away leaving only an imprint behind in books, a passed on connection which is a kind of innate natural connection. But very often this has become about cognitizing medicine and making it theoretical, therefore this becomes more about "belief" than actual experience. What we actually experience is very simple, it is very natural and it has no words attached to it. It always occurs in this present moment and is nothing to do with theory, nor with morality or any kind of ideological system. It is not to do with past or future, it is only happening right now.

This is all we actually have, there truly is nothing else. Sure, we have the illusion that "I know what this grape is going to taste like" but we don't until we actually taste it. What something looks like can be deceptive and taste is far deeper than this, it is the whole of something, not just the surface. Taste isn't just about flavour it's about the connection of a quality of energetics, as Steve Gagné expresses it's about the most intimate of relationships (please see <http://www.stevegagne.com>). It is an actuality that "you" are what "you" eat because "you" become what "you" eat and what "you" eat becomes "you", so it is a merging of energetic qualities. Naturally animals want to gain the energetic of something, they like the shape and taste of the whole, this is the same with relation human to human. Why is it that some physical shapes and characteristics of energy attract more attention than others? Generally because there is a natural draw to this, not just a superficial thin but to the quality of the nature of something as a whole. There may be a very attractive/warm surface shape yet that person is cold-natured or there can be a person whose surface expression isn't so generally attractive/cooler but their nature is very open and expressive, warm, and this

can attract more easily. Often we are told one is better than the other, but this isn't the case, both are different energetic qualities, both will attract in different ways. Warm surface and warm insides will attract cool surface and cool insides, and vice-versa. The same is true of foods and medicines. Anything that we relate to or merge with will have this way about it. So with food and medicine just as with relationship, one doesn't need a guide book, one needs to feel directly in that moment, *that's really and truly all there is to it.*

Health Instinct is about the point that there is an innate connection to the ancient "maps" of sensing which is beyond the cognitive. It is making that point that the 5 senses are a gateway to truly experiencing what there is rather than what we *think* there is (please see the work of Douglas Harding <http://www.headless.org>). So why is it that we no longer connect to the tastes?

The problem is that humans have reached the end of the line as far as nature goes, there is an ancient saying, possibly from Greece: *"Those whom the gods wish to destroy they first make mad."* The "madness" of humans is the separation from the true nature of the animal and instinctual sense that allows there to be a non-cognitive connection to nature. Without this there is a total separation from everything around us, we are bound to be "taught" what to do by so-called teachers who in turn are bound to their teachers in a long and mostly male-dominated hierarchy of power and corruption. This is simply the blind leading the blind. If there is ever a truth it is that we have simply forgotten that which we are or what we exhibit, in favour of seeking what we should be or could be some time in the future "evolution". It is never about an adding on of knowledge, ideas or "wisdom", it is actually a letting go of what has been added on, to reveal that which is hidden beneath it. We are all children with an adult idea added on top, we believe the adult is better than the child and so we forego the childlike-ness and sensitivity for the adult's "knowledge", herein lies the problem.

Let's go back to medicines. Food is "medicine" and medicine is food, as Hippocrates explained, so if we blur the idea of food and medicine and call it all "input" or "consuming" then whatever goes into the mouth needs to be tasted, it is as simple as this, whatever goes in needs to be sensed, why give this basic expression up? So instead of asking questions such as: what do these pills do to me, do these supplements work, do I really want this ecstasy tablet, this oyster or this tofu, we need to simply *taste them*, which means putting them in the mouth and chewing a lot to get out all the juices as you would if tasting anything else, and then sense whether it's right to swallow.

In fact smell begins the process of connection, it is vitally important as it gives you a sense before you consume something. Some smells can be so toxic they can immediately make one feel nauseated, one sees dogs and cats very quickly running away from what people now call "carcinogens" such as paint smells, dogs don't think about it, they just move away. Even if something smells okay, sight is also important, for something may look okay but when it hits the taste buds it's too bitter or too sour or whatever. The next action is simply spitting it out which is the immediate response of any animal or child, there's no etiquette in nature.

This is simply the truth and the reality of it. It doesn't derive from any ideology of what food is good or bad for you, what is wanted or not. Taste begins in the mouth

and follows on throughout the digestive tract, so taste goes on throughout the whole body. If the taste is really and truly sensed it gives you everything “you” need to realise about the nature of the thing “you’re” eating and it will then become “you”, in fact the “you” dies to the food and becomes something completely new. For example, the Native Americans’ approach to food was to see an animal or plant whose properties they desired and wished to unite with. There was a realisation that when one hunts, kills and eats the stag one becomes the stag, and the stag becomes “you”. In this way, every time one consumes something one is losing one-“self”, thus forming something completely different.

Parents, especially the “health-conscious” ones who want their kids even from a very young age to “eat their greens”, are often very irritated if their kids don’t like whatid “good for them”, but instead prefer all kinds of other things. This is not about getting a taste for addictive sweet foods or foods with dramatic flavours that over-stimulate but also with normal natural foods, babies will only really go for what they like. This is very hard for the adult who wants their kids to “see their way to health” but actually the children actually know far better what they need, if allowed to feel it for themselves. Once again the process of the parent leading the child is about the colonialism of our times rather than anything to do with natural reality. Once connected to, children have senses that are instinctively far clearer than the adult’s cognitive processes, which are actually all superficial.

People who take alcohol or drugs in large quantity or even health food supplements and western medical drugs, will in all cases experience a numbing of the senses as to what is being consumed, smoking and inhaling substances is another expression of this. The process of actual connection to the drug, which is often a fine refined powder of some kind, is completely missed, it’s primarily getting it into “me” in order to feel “better”, but this is a completely detached and mechanical process. There is no connection to the drug, no feeling, no relationship, it involves taking something mechanistically, and this therefore constantly bypasses the sensory. This is how the bodyspirit gets battered by the colonialism of the adult-mind which takes over and overcomes the natural sensitivity of the child-body.

If one wants an experience, then have *all* of it...experience *all* of it, really know it, and feel it. Why does one drink alcohol? You don’t taste, therefore you don’t feel and so you can’t connect. Obviously doing this means that one is poisoning the system, and for many this is exactly the ideology, i.e. “I don’t want to feel”, “I want to be away from here” and that is honest. But the belief that one is doing something and that “I experience it all the way through and I want all of it”.... is not authentic, because for most people when numbness sets in yet they continue to consume the alcohol or drugs, then there is no longer any sensitivity to know if “I want more” or not. Once one starts down the road of bypassing sensitivity every next step is built upon illusion.

Taste your medication, no matter what it is, taste it. I know several very good practitioners of ancient herbal medicine who will suggest a patient smells the prescribed decoction or several different alternative decoctions in order to differentiate which one is most appropriate. This brilliant way of working involves true connection with the herbs. The old way was to boil up herbs so the whole house might smell of the aroma, which was also part of the process because the inhalation is

part of the engagement with it. People can take very bitter and very sour decoctions when they actually *taste right*, meaning this naturally means it is right for them in this moment, it creates the balance. Others given the same decoction would immediately feel nausea because physiologically it is not what they really want.

This is the deepest connection to herbs and foods that there is. When we smell and taste and feel, we know if a connection is good, if it feels “right” and this makes for an easy or not so easy connection. Engaging with life is via the 5-senses, without these life is dulled, it is not bright nor is it alive. Life through cognition and the assumption that “I know”, is life that is separated from the real, it is like living in a bubble, rather than when the 5-senses are engaged with because *they naturally become interesting*, instead of there being any ideological reason for doing so. When within the 5-senses there is a “losing of self” in the experiential, this is simply the natural reality for there is actually no-one who senses, no-one who feels, when life is allowed to just be what it is and no choices are made about what I should consume or what drugs to take, then everything is interacted with because life is just happening *as it is*. The only thing that believes it is making a choice is “me” but in the moment of connecting to the sense there is no “me”, there is just life happening, within this there is a spontaneous response towards or away from, and that's all there is.

I can hear the irritated voice: “but what about the people who need their medication?” To this we have to ask: what do they need it for? Also, why do we assume that those people must be treated as if they can't sense anything? This is all about control, power and ideologies of health which are not real. When there is an actual interest in sensing the whole by the patient or person, then health changes. Not only do we want to actually taste the medication we are consuming but in the same breath we feel what it is we need to do to change the situation, such as changing the inputs or outputs of expression and the natures of our lives. I am not saying that western medication will never be appropriate, but let the bodyspirit “decide” if it is. Let's do the *real* test, the one the doctors are afraid of, that the medication is rejected by nature and only idealized by fragmented mental processes. The clarity of the senses finds its way home to nature every time, you can't fool it, it's absolutely uncompromising and has no reason, cause or claim attached to it, interestingly just the same as relationship or connection to people when it's natural. It completely loses interest in that which is unnatural. The body sense is your guide, there is no requirement of people to “tell you”, to “teach you” or to “advise you”, when this is let go of then there are no crutches as UG Krishnamurti expressed. The revolution comes only through an interest that is not forced upon people but which is naturally realized to be *all there is*, when all the other illusions of the doctor's or practitioner's perceptions of “me” are realized to be always secondary to what it is that I naturally feel. Often cutting out the middle-man is the way one can get a sense of things. This isn't about self-sufficiency but about nature awakening from the dream of separation, sense is the threshold, the doorway of reality.

(Please see the brilliant article on the importance of taste from Sam Thayer:
<http://foragersharvest.com/why-god-put-those-bumps-on-your-tongue/>)

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