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**THE TWELVE HEALERS** by Edward Bach, M.D.; and  
**E BACH REMEDIES REPERTORY** by F.J. Wheeler, M.D.

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Keats Publishing, Inc.



New Canaan, Connecticut

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This book is dedicated  
to  
all who suffer  
or  
who are in distress



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## ***Publisher's Introduction***

Edward Bach (1886–1936) believed that the ills of the heart and the spirit must be the focus of a healer's attention. The bodily ills are symptoms. He felt that it is “. . . our fears, our cares, our anxieties and such like that open the path to the invasion of illness.”

Historically, herbal medicine has offered means of cheering, consoling, quieting, uplifting, settling the mind and the emotions. Culpepper or Gerard might also have known what plant to prescribe for melancholy or mental indecisiveness. But Bach went further in making a medical connection between feelings and actual physical illness. He also developed a specialized branch of herbal medicine which employed only the flowers—the highly potent and vital seed-bearing organ—and only nonpoisonous ones (unlike the aconite or digitalis of herbal medicine).

Bach used his flower remedies to relieve mental distress until problems could be dealt with in the inner man; and also, in part, to actually heal such attitudes as remorse or lack of confidence. This was, however, only part of the cure, which also involved positive interaction and encouraging guidance from the doctor. A good doctor would be able to recognize disease—on the basis of certain moods and attitudes—before it became manifest as a physical breakdown. He could then, truly, practice preventive medicine.

No scientific explanation of how or why these remedies worked was offered by Edward Bach. Indeed, he was wary of the “trends” that science is prone to, and encouraged others to keep his remedies “free from science, free from theories.” If certain observable principles were operative in nature, there was no need to complicate the issue. Wild animals did not need an explanation of why certain plants helped them when they were ill. What Bach did offer was hundreds of successful case histories.

The remedies themselves are simple in their preparation. The materials required are pure water, sunlight, fresh blossoms and a clean glass bowl. Their action is always gentle and strengthening.

*New Canaan, Connecticut  
April, 1979*

# ***The Bach Flower Remedies***

A TALK WITH JOHN DIAMOND, M.D.

*The following interview appeared originally in The Health Quarterly magazine. We feel it is a clear and valuable explanation of how one doctor, among a great many in this country, has come to understand and use the Bach Flower Remedies in his own practice.*

**Interviewer:** It is difficult to categorize Dr. Bach into a particular discipline, isn't it?

**Dr. Diamond:** Dr. Bach came to develop the flower remedies through his work in homeopathy. He had perfected the more modern homeopathic remedies of bacteriological origin. The flower remedies are closer to homeopathy than anything else.

**I:** Two salient characteristics of homeopathy are extreme dilution and the Law of Similars—like cures like. Do these also characterize the flower remedies?

**D:** First of all, homeopathy requires more than dilution. It requires potentiating a dilution by means of working in a specific rhythmic method. The preparation of flower remedies does not require this, nor do they work according to the Law of Similars, necessarily. However, they are dilute, harmless, natural and gentle.

Dr. Bach also departs from homeopathy in believing that by correcting harmful mental attitudes you can stop the disease from becoming physical or, more probably, you can treat the disease when it is at an energy level rather than grossly pathological. Even when it is grossly pathological you can *assist*, because you can greatly alleviate the mental component which may be causative or reactive to the physical problem. (By the way, I think that his little book, *Heal Thyself*, is one of the best statements of proper medicine that anyone can make.)

The flower remedies have a great role to play in the more psychosomatic type of illness. In extremely pathological cases other remedies are needed as well.

Let's take a look at a specific flower to see what kind of application it has. The symptoms that call for Agrimony as a treatment are: hiding worries from others under a cloak of cheerfulness and good humor; restlessness; putting on a fair front but underneath tense and worried.

**I:** In diagnosing symptoms like these—a subjective matter—what would happen if the doctor misjudged an attitude and gave the wrong flower remedy?

**D:** These remedies can do no harm. But there are certain ways they should be used. There are certain flowers that the practitioner should start off with, for instance. Also, the need for a particular remedy changes.

Suppose that a man came in saying, "Nothing is wrong with me . . . I'm fine." And you can see that underneath he is tense and worried. You could very

well give him Agrimony. The next visit he might say, "You know, you're right. I now realize that there are things that are bothering me. I keep dwelling back on an old, unpleasant situation. And I can't seem to bury it." The appropriate remedy for this is honeysuckle, which is for overly retrospective people. The next week he comes in with another, entirely different problem.

Another interesting possibility with the flower remedies is the opportunity to do something for the relatives of the patient. In the case of an accident or acute illness, I might be giving the patient the rescue remedy [a composite remedy in addition to the 38 flower remedies]. At the same time red chestnut would be helpful for the anxious and concerned relatives. The Bach flower remedies comprise the only system which offers this kind of help.

Some of the remedies are deeper than others; some treat more superficial characteristics. Each one has a positive and negative aspect. During treatment we tend to look more at the negative aspect because this is what we are trying to overcome; we are trying to encourage the other side. The negative aspect of Wild Oat, for instance, is uncertainty about what to do and an inability to put down roots and grow. This often applies to talented people who can't decide on what their course in life should be. You are then trying to encourage the Wild Oat to settle down and grow—this is the positive aspect.

The usual diagnostic formula is to sit down and talk with the patient and to go through, in your mind, the particular remedies to see what applies. This is often

a dynamic and on-going process. As one mental attitude or layer settles, another layer is revealed.

**I:** Do you also check the person out physically?

**D:** Oh yes. You use all of your other techniques and add this last one to them. The flower remedies are very good in cases of chronic illness, but can also be used in acute cases. They usually work best over a period of time, although you can get very dramatic results too (particularly in psychotic patients).

**I:** Are the flower remedies lasting in their effects, or do you have to keep taking them?

**D:** Well, again, you have to understand the dynamic quality of a personality and what you call problems. You might deal with the initial problem, to some extent, and then find that there are others underneath which require different remedies. It is like psychotherapy in the sense that you can start where you like, finish when you like. In a case when a person does not want to become too involved in the therapy, we might give him the remedy for his immediate problem and tell him to take it for an indefinite amount of time to help him over that initial period. It is preferable to give the person the remedy and then to continue seeing him regularly. By the next week he may not be so bothered by the original problem, but another difficulty may have turned up. As each layer is dealt with, new layers emerge. It can go on and on. What was negative becomes positive, and growth takes place.

**I:** I am wondering if people go back to being bothered by the same problems, after they stop taking the remedies?

**D:** People do tend to repeat patterns, but they also grow and change. It also depends on what else the doctor does besides giving the remedy. He must work with the patient, helping him to learn to deal positively with situations. *There is no such thing as "take a pill and you are cured."* Curing is a lifelong process that ends when you die. [Italics are the editor's.]

Now, what I have described is the predominant way of working with the Bach flower remedies. People have added other elements, such as a psychic component, which I feel is unnecessary and wrong. It is just a matter of sitting down and listening to a patient and sorting out the remedy for the attitude at that time. To understand the remedies, the thing to keep in mind is simply that if the mental attitudes are treated, the physical problems—if they are in the early stages—will be reversed. Or at least the “psycho” component of the psychosomatic problem can be relieved. If the problem has become fully developed into the physical stage, then the somato-psychic element can be relieved, the feedback from the body to the mind (the mental distress that ill health causes of itself).

You can see that the flower remedies have particular value in terms of prevention. If you have anxieties and fears that could eventually lead to an ulcer, we can treat these quite easily. This is *primary* prevention. It does not require the remedial measures that medicine takes when a problem has begun but has not yet overcome the person (and which is usually called prevention); nor does it involve intense



psychotherapy. It is true that these remedies are more for healthy people rather than very sick people. They are not remedies for advanced cases of cancer and the like. These remedies are most helpful in preventing a physical illness that is about to attack. The thoughts or attitudes which create illness may be present for twenty or thirty years before they show up as physical disease. In that time they can be treated. One should not wait until the disease has become physical, and then try to change attitudes overnight.

**I:** But precisely how do these emotions affect the physical body? Take the strong emotion of “hate” as an example.

**D:** Hate and envy seem to rob the body and all the organs of energy, the kind of energy that is associated with acupuncture. The gland that seems to be particularly affected by hate and envy is the thymus. As long as the patient has an underactive thymus gland, none of the immune systems will work properly. Twenty years ago it was known that cancer, as a disease, comes about when the body ceases to be able to recognize abnormal cells, which is part of the function of the thymus. (I am stressing this aspect to illustrate one way that hate might, after a period of ten or twenty years, settle into the physical.) How does that relate, exactly to a specific biochemical sequence? . . . it is just a matter of time, and the answer is immaterial.

Bach had the further insight that illness, disharmony, imbalance are often a result of a gap between the inner state and the “face” that a person daily puts on to