

Eating Disorders: The Epidemic of the Times

Homeopaths treat the state and the cause, not the outcome of a disorder.

I am constantly amazed, and saddened by the number of young and middle-aged men and women who are caught up in this obsessive self-destructive problem. Whether it involves anorexia or bulimia, the problem is one of self-image and meeting impossible standards and is epidemic today. While conventional medicine tends to focus on the forcing of food into deathly ill people, (as they should in emergency situations) as well as the use of anti-depressants to lift the hopelessness, I see the problem as being one of self-image as a result of trying to meet what are perceived to be oppressive outside forces and standards over which one has no control. There is often a connection between a feeling of failure in some life pursuit coupled with lack of control over surroundings and a self-punishment component. In some cases, abuse of one form or another can leave the person feeling like they are dirt, that they don't matter and in an effort to deal with their environment, they overdo the self-destructive acts.

The severe limitation of nourishment to the point of ill-health also reflects a certain hatred of the way one's life is going. Whatever the cause, it usually begins around high-school age, sometimes younger. The peer group is everything at this age and sensitive young people can be shattered by one hurtful comment regarding the way they look. The intense conquering and high will-power it takes to severely limit one's food intake whether by starving oneself or by repeated purging and vomiting, speaks of a highly developed sense of control and strong will. **It is ironic that in order to gain control, there is loss of control in the end.**

Speaking homeopathically, the body forever seeks to balance and harmonize that which is out of order. If a person misuses laxatives, the body will hold back, protect itself and often constipation is the result. In the case of severe eating disorders, this is only a manifestation of the real problem which is one of self-hatred and resulting image

manipulation to compensate. Even in this, each individual has his or her own reasons for beginning this harmful lifestyle. **As such, treatment is focused on the reasons behind the actions.** Homeopaths treat the state, and the cause, not the outcome of a disorder. The eating restrictions are the outcome of feeling so out of control and seeking to fit in, be loved. But the image one creates of the thin woman or man as the answer to finding the love and control over one's life is misplaced. It is a solution based on a misperception of what it takes to feel loved, feel less down on oneself, feel in control.

I mention this feeling of loss of control over oneself because it comes up time and time again today. So many people feel out of control of their lives. We work incessantly, drive ourselves and often take on the impossible. It is as if there are bonuses or rewards for this kind of self-destructive behaviour. Obsessive-compulsive behaviour is one way to take control of things which seem beyond our reach. If that thing which seems beyond our reach is image, then eating disorders can be the result. It is all about personal and individual susceptibility. Not everyone who seeks to control one aspect of their life will develop eating disorders. They will develop pathology which is suited to their own inherited and acquired weaknesses and susceptibilities.

What can homeopathy do? By treating the cause, and going deep into the mental and emotional state, homeopathy goes after the distorted image one has of his or her life. The goal is peace, emotional happiness, a feeling of hope and most of all, not the creation of some new being but the re-emergence of the true healthy self as it was meant to be. Our bodies and minds seek pure health but the images we have our strong and can override our own compensation mechanisms.