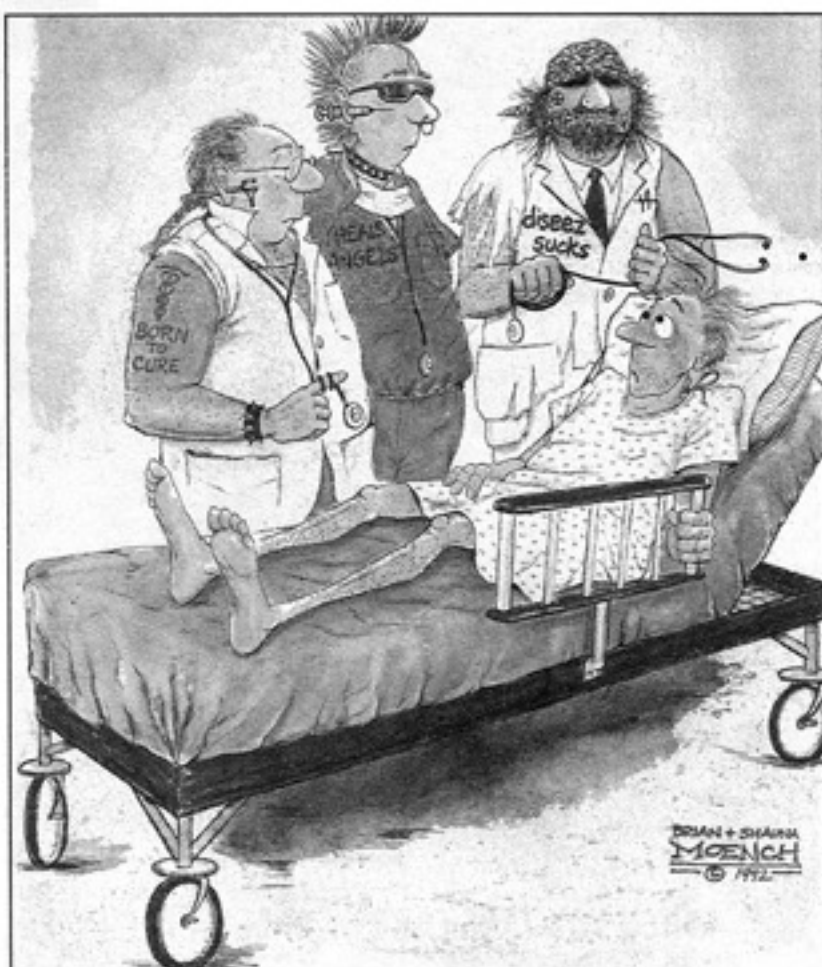


if you haven't already, maybe you should start

## taking control of your health and well-being

by Georgianna Donadio



**D**o you ever wonder why, in spite of all your good intentions, you just cannot seem to take control over your health and wellness the way you really want to? The answer to that question can be found in the words of Albert Einstein, who reminded us "you cannot correct a problem with the same thinking that created it." In other words, you cannot change old behaviors without new information.

In a world exploding with health information, especially on the internet, we are caught in the dilemma of having abundant amounts of information, without a context through which we can understand and utilize this information in a way that is appropriate for our own unique personal health needs. There is, however, good news. Making its way into the mainstream of health care is an integrated model of health information and education that provides a "whole picture of health" perspective, allowing each of us to discern and create our own unique approach to taking charge of our health and well-being.

Whole Health Education, developed over the past 28 years, in cooperation with Boston physicians, nurses and educators, is an approach to understanding the cause and effect our behaviors and choices have on our state of health. Demystifying the five major factors which influence how sick or well we become, Whole Health Education provides a perspective on human anatomy and physiology, bio-chemistry, psycho-social, environmental and spiritual aspects which allows for an authentic understanding of what we need know to resolve chronic health problems or to stay healthy.

For example, Mature Onset Diabetes affects approximately 18.2 million Americans and is the leading health concern in our culture today. As all chronic conditions are, Mature Onset Diabetes is a multi-dimensional disease state and the unique Whole Health Education perspective, can facilitate the restoration of health for those with chronic diseases such as diabetes.

### PHYSICAL/STRUCTURAL

What happens on a physical and structural level with Mature Onset Diabetes? The

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specialized beta cells of the pancreas, which produce insulin, become incapable of producing adequate amounts of the critically necessary secretion. This happens over a period of years and can begin in our bodies, over time, by eating large amounts of insulin-provoking foods.

### EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL

Diabetes is associated with a form of malnutrition on the nutritional level, but there also exists with this condition a *lack of emotional nourishment, as well*. This is evidenced through the dynamic relationship between carbohydrates, over-eating and a chemical our body produces called serotonin. Serotonin is a neuro-transmitter that provides, in the brain, a feeling of



well-being. Current bio-behavioral research demonstrates a direct relationship between what our body is doing chemically and how we are feeling emotionally.

### WHAT ARE THE EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF DIABETES?

Often, it can be a poor sense of self-esteem and fear of not belonging. The chronic anxiety that stems from these emotions often leads to the self-soothing behaviors of over eating and elevated starchy carbohydrate consumption which produces Mature Onset Diabetes.

### CHEMICAL/NUTRITIONAL

On the nutritional side, the treatment for people with Mature

Onset Diabetes is to decrease the stress on the pancreas by making changes in their diet—decrease starches and sugars and decrease calories. The popular lowered carbohydrate diets can be very helpful in reducing mature onset diabetes as well as other forms of blood sugar problems stemming from hyper insulin secretion.

### ENVIRONMENTAL/INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

How do the environments that we work and live in, have an impact on the way that we feel in our bodies and how we feel about ourselves? Dr. Abraham Maslow brilliantly pointed out that human beings are herd animals—interdependent beings that seek the safety and comfort of the tribe. When we are living or working in environments that do not value us, do not reflect back to us our contribution, or embrace us as belonging to the group, we suffer from alienation and a sense of loss which in turn often leads to self-soothing behaviors such as starchy carbohydrate over consumption.

When we physically slow down and listen to what our body's

internal dialogue is telling our conscious self, we know when we have eaten too much or too little of the wrong foods, when we need to rest, relax and take time for self-care.

One of my patients recently had a transformational experience using this listening exercise. A devoted environmentalist, Linda would become angry and upset whenever she saw someone throwing away bottles or cans instead of placing them in available re-cycle bins. She would pick up the discarded container and boldly put it in the re-cycle bin, glaring at the offending stranger as she did this. Unfortunately, her anger and frustration would leave her with an emotional and physical "hangover"—upset stomach, aching head and a strong desire for chocolates and anything starchy.

In facilitating Linda's process of understanding her pattern, she was invited to explore the question "what does it FEEL like when I see someone ignore re-cycling efforts?" The answer surprised Linda because what she felt was

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### Put these dates on your calendar

#### September 14th (6:30-9:15) USING DRAMA TO REFLECT STRESS

Sometimes Stress can seem like a monster whom we deal with in random maneuvers. In this workshop we will identify what is masquerading as randomness and explore the habitual ways we respond to Stress. Garnering wisdom from all the various ways we deal with Stress, we will create together a new relationship with Stress.

Fee: \$25-40 sliding scale.

#### September 21st (6:30-9:30) EQUINOX ASTRODRAMA

Through dramatic roleplay we will learn about the astrological influences effecting all of us this fall.

Fee: \$25-40 sliding scale.

#### September 28th (6:30-9:15) TRANSFORMING SHAME THROUGH DRAMA

No matter what the source of our "original shame," situations can trigger the feeling that we are "bad," as opposed to an acceptance that some of our behavior needs to be altered. This experiential workshop will offer an opportunity to challenge patterns of self-criticism, blame, and judgement. We will replace shame with feelings of acceptance, effectiveness, and personal power.

Fee: \$25-40 sliding scale.

#### Begins October 5th (6:30-9:15) DRAMA, PLAY and HEALING:

#### A Seven Week Psychodrama Therapy Group.

No experience in acting is necessary. Limit of 6 participants.

Fee: \$250.

FMI call Kippy Isham Phelps, MA at 413.625.2166.