

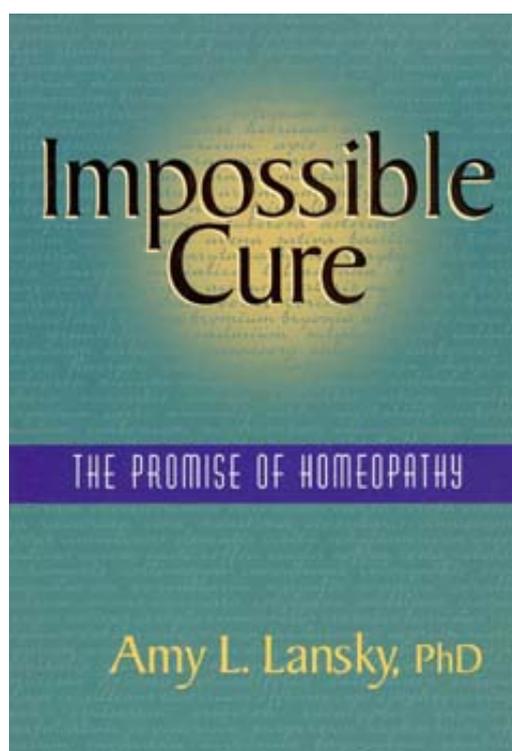
Amy L. Lansky Impossible Cure

Leseprobe

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Herausgeber: R L Ranch



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HOMEOPATHY REVEALED

"Aude Sapere"
("Dare to Know")

—SAMUEL HAHNEMANN, MD

Title page epigraph, *The Organon of the Medical Art*, 1810 [Hahneniann]

IT MAY SEEM UNBELIEVABLE, BUT IT'S TRUE. MY SON WAS CURED of an incurable illness with a form of medicine that supposedly contains nothing — at least according to conventional scientific thought. But, as history has repeatedly shown, the accepted scientific and medical wisdom of an era can be wrong.

It all began in January of 1995. I was a computer scientist leading research projects for NASA. My husband Steve also worked in the computer industry, as a researcher for Apple Computer. I had done my doctorate work at Stanford University in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and since that time, both Steve and I had been active participants in the whirlwind of technology and innovation that is Silicon Valley. As we labored away in our cloistered research labs, friends and acquaintances were busy starting companies destined to become household names.

I also just happened to be a fairly knowledgeable devotee of modern medicine. An avid "Dr. Mom," I slept with a medical reference, the *Merck Manual*, on my night table. As I pored over this tome in the wee hours of the night, Steve would often ask, "Amy, why don't you just go to medical school?!"

Our two young sons, Izaak and Max, were six and three years old at the time. Naturally, we took their health needs very seriously. We would never hesitate to go to doctors when a problem arose, and we would invariably follow their advice without question. Unfortunately, we were also in the midst of a medical crisis. Our younger son Max was inexplicably afflicted with autism. This tragic and supposedly incurable disorder dramatically limits a child's ability to communicate and connect with others. And for some reason, it is mysteriously striking more and more children each year. Given the limited options for treatment, we were coping as best as we could.

By January of 1999, only four years later, everything had changed. I was now the mother of two sons progressing nicely through grade school. Max was no longer autistic — he was bright, talkative, and sociable. His autism had been cured with a controversial medicine of the past — *homeopathy*.

There were other changes as well. After two decades of research work, I had left computer science completely. I was now a student, editor, writer, and promoter of homeopathic medicine. The rest of my family was healthier than they had been in years. We used homeopathy as our primary form of medicine and viewed conventional medicine as appropriate only in life-threatening or time-critical emergency situations. I would no longer dream of doing things I had done routinely for years — suppressing fevers with aspirin or acetaminophen, coughs with cough suppressant, skin problems with cortisone, or combating ear infections with antibiotics.

What happened?

This book will reveal to you my own journey of discovery and healing, as well as that of my family and many friends. My goal is to share with you some surprising and truly revolutionary information that I have learned about the medical philosophy and healing power of homeopathy. In general, I have found that most Americans know very little about this form of alternative medicine. Though many people have heard the term "homeopathy," most confuse it with the use of herbs or think it is some kind of catchall term for natural or holistic medicine.

Of course, homeopathy *is* holistic (i.e., it understands and treats disease as a whole-body phenomenon), and homeopathic remedies *are* derived from natural sources. But it cannot simply be equated with these concepts. Homeopathy is a very distinct and complete system of medicine based on a simple principle of healing called the *Law of Similars*. This law states that *a disease can be cured by a substance if that substance can cause, in a healthy person, symptoms similar to those of the disease*. In fact, that is what the word "homeopathy" literally means — similar (homeo) suffering (pathy). While other holistic health-care systems are based on different principles or on accumulated experience and folklore, homeopathy, by definition, is the system of medicine based on this one cardinal principle.

As a medical discipline, homeopathy is certainly much better known and better accepted in other countries than it is in America today. It is widely practiced in Europe, India, Pakistan, and Latin America. In France, it is estimated that 32 percent of family physicians use homeopathy [Bouchayer]; in England, 42 percent of physicians refer patients to homeopaths [Wharton]. Homeopathy is integrated into the national health-care systems of many countries, including Germany, India, Brazil, Mexico, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom. Indeed, homeopathy is one of the four most widespread approaches to medical treatment in the world, alongside traditional Chinese medicine, herbal medicine, and conventional medicine [Poitevin].

Homeopathy is also a proven medical system. Hundreds of double-blind, placebo-controlled studies have been conducted over the past few decades, especially in Europe and India. They have proven that homeopathic remedies are indeed effective medicine. Wayne Jonas, MD, former director of the Office of Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health, is one of the American medical researchers actively studying homeopathy. He has coauthored a book about homeopathic research studies [Jonas&Jacobs] and was also a member of a research team that analyzed 89 double-blind studies of homeopathic treatment; they found that homeopathy was, on average, more than twice as effective as placebo

[Linde]. Jonas's work, as well as several other research studies, will be discussed at length in Chapter 7 of this book. That chapter also takes a deeper look at just how homeopathic remedies might work. For now, though, let's take a closer look at what homeopathy is all about.

HOMEOPATHY'S PROMINENCE IN 19TH-CENTURY AMERICA

Ironically, homeopathy was quite familiar to Americans of the 19th century. In the late 1800s, there were more than 20 homeopathic medical schools in the United States. Homeopathy stood alongside *allopathic* (conventional) medicine and *eclectic* medicine (similar to today's herbalism or naturopathy) as one of the three accredited and accepted branches of medicine in this country. In fact, America was the world's leader in homeopathy at the time.

Where did homeopathy come from? Unlike many other alternative therapies that have become popular in America today, homeopathy is a Western medical system. It was developed by European physicians of the early 1800s who were discouraged with the results of the accepted medical practices of their time. A whole community of these homeopaths made their way to the United States in the 1830s and built strong practices and medical societies. In fact, the very first medical association of any kind in the United States was a homeopathic medical association — the American Institute of Homeopathy, founded in 1844.

Many of America's homeopathic medical schools still exist today, though all were converted to allopathy (conventional medicine) in the early 1900s. For example, the highly respected Hahnemann Medical School in Philadelphia was named for the founder of homeopathy, Samuel Hahnemann, MD. The study of homeopathy was still required at this school up until 1940, and homeopathic electives were taught until 1955. Other existing medical schools that began as homeopathic medical colleges include New York Medical College, the Boston University School of Medicine, and the medical school at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor [Winston].

The very first woman's medical college in the United States was also homeopathic — the New England Female Medical College, founded in 1848. Homeopathy was the favored medicine among educated women of that period, and most of the early women physicians in this country were homeopaths. Even suffragist and feminist philosopher Elizabeth Cady Stanton was a talented lay homeopath. She was probably introduced to homeopathy by her brother-in-law, Edward Bayard, MD, a prominent homeopathic physician. Stanton's famous colleague, Susan B. Anthony, was also a proponent of homeopathy, her personal physician being homeopath Julia Holmes Smith, MD, of Chicago.

It is amazing that a medicine that was such an intrinsic part of 19th-century America became nearly forgotten in the 20th. Pioneers carried homeopathic medical kits as they traveled across the continent. Indeed, homeopathic remedies were often the only effective medicine available to them. The first American domestic manual (a medical reference for use in the home) was a homeopathic reference — *The Domestic Physician*, published in 1835 and written by Constantine Hering, MD, the father of American homeopathy.

Several American presidents, politicians, and the social elite of the late 1800s and early 1900s also used homeopathy. It was particularly favored by members of the new Republican party that swept into Washington in the 1860s. To this day, a statue of Hahnemann stands in Washington, DC. — one of the only monuments in that city dedicated to a nonmilitary or nonpolitical figure. The statue was erected in 1900 at the intersection of 16th Street and Massachusetts Avenue, and its site was selected personally by President McKinley so that it could be seen from the White House. An avid supporter of homeopathy, McKinley was also the guest of honor at the monument's opening ceremony [*Homeopathy Today*].

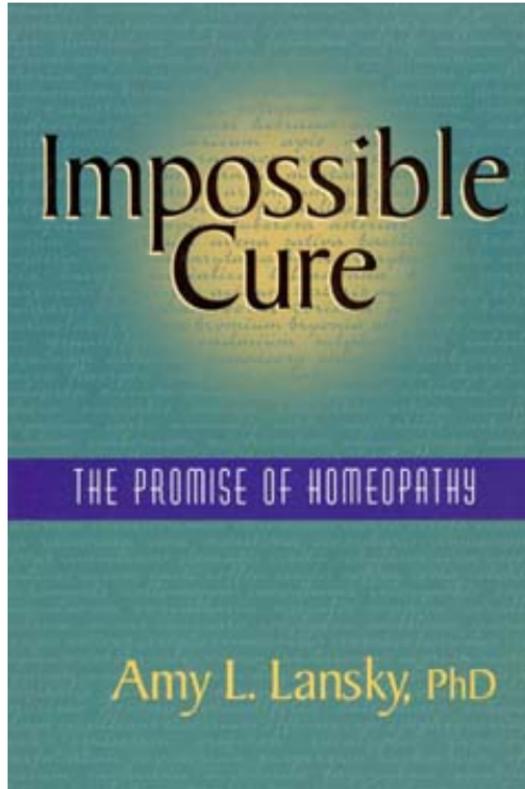
In the early 1900s, homeopathy was still sanctioned and powerful enough to merit official status within the armed forces. For example, during World War I, there was a homeopathic medical corps — U.S. Army Base Hospital No. 48 — staffed by 100 nurses, 22 physicians, and two dentists, nearly all homeopaths [Bautista]. In 1922, President Harding,

whose father served as a homeopathic physician in the Civil War, hosted a convention of homeopaths at the White House.

Homeopathy's popularity in the United States grew rapidly during the 1800s despite vigorous political and social opposition from allopathic physicians. This was largely because of its superior results. In the late 19th and early 20th century, homeopathic physicians and hospitals were known to have greater success in treating epidemics than their allopathic counterparts — for instance, in the 1832 cholera epidemic. In the deadly flu epidemic of 1918, the "Great White Plague" that claimed over 500,000 lives in America alone, homeopaths had a death rate of only 1.05 percent, whereas, overall, allopaths had a death rate of 30 percent — with reports of 60 percent not uncommon [Perko]. The charity hospital on Wards Island in New York City had the lowest percentage of deaths in that city. It was overseen by health commissioner (and later U.S. senator) Royal Copeland, MD, who used homeopathy for all cases [Winston].

Unfortunately, for reasons political, financial, and social, homeopathy was attacked and suppressed in the United States. The American Medical Association (AMA) was formed by the allopaths in 1847, partially in response to the threat of homeopathy. Its charter implicitly forbade members to associate either socially or collaboratively with homeopaths. Throughout the mid and late 1800s, the bans on contact with homeopaths escalated, and several allopaths were expelled from medical societies upon failure to comply. In his excellent book on the history of homeopathy in the United States, Julian Winston writes:

"By the mid 1850s all state medical societies except the Massachusetts Medical Society had purged their homeopathic members. In 1856, the American Medical Association resolved that homeopathic works should henceforth no longer be discussed or reviewed in allopathic periodicals. After this time there was no formal communication whatever between the two branches of the profession; allopaths were forbidden to consult with homeopathic physicians or to patronize their pharmacies... In 1878 a physician was expelled from a local medical society in Connecticut for consulting with a homeopath—his wife... One of the leaders in Washington was Tullio Verdi, the first homeopath appointed



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320 Seiten, kart.
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