

CCFA Support Group “Savvy IBD Living” - Thought List, August 2008

Finding meaning in IBD: A holistic approach I

- I. Illness from an Eastern philosophical perspective:** Eastern systems of healing center on finding balance and harmony with our oneness thus reflecting the universe itself; the major focus is on achieving inner freedom by moving beyond suffering to the experience of one’s own divinity or being in touch with our *life-force* or universal source of energy.
- II. Illness of spirit:** A disease may have a biological basis but also have at its root an illness of spirit. If we don’t hear the wisdom of the body it is likely to retaliate. Rather than primarily focusing on getting rid of the disease, treatment from an Eastern perspective centers on restoring a balanced energy flow, finding meaning in illness and realizing how the disease relates to that part of our being which is cut off from the wellspring of our soul.
- III. Conceptualizing illness:** Illness can manifest when we resist our transitions rather than seeing it as a process in our development as becoming aware of, and integrating fragments of experience and memory as means of understanding oneself and the world. What is required of us is learning to understand the intention of the illness. During periods of illness, we are asked (or required) to slow everything down, including our mind, thus opening us to potentially higher levels of consciousness. Illness can also enhance our level of creativity because we are asked to confront issues around life and death, serving as a foundation for a sense of renewal and vitality.

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IV. Viewing illness as a stage in our development: Illness seen as giving us the time for reflection, so we may come further into our potential. Disease can occur when we are not able to sense our body or cannot hear the wishes of our deeper essence. When we reframe the condition or dis-ease into the totality of our life, the healing process is affected. We may ask ourselves the following:

- What is the intention of my illness?
- What may I have overlooked in my life that needs integration so I may actualize? What needs further exploration in my life so I may become whole?
- What are my symptoms asking? What is the relationship between my symptoms and my life?
- What am I missing in my life? (Restoration of balance)
- What shifts do I need to make so I may be free? What is no longer serving me?

(Willingness to change; embracing new ways of thinking and being; surrendering to the control one is accustomed to; confronting social impressions and stigmas e.g., one's worth and idea of “healthy” being dependent on what one accomplishes)

“...The symptoms tear you open so the things you need can flow in...it is the task of the soul to expand itself”. . The disease always carries its own cure and also the cure for your whole personality”.

(Barasch, M. Book- *“The healing path: A soul approach to illness”* ‘93)