

Understanding Chronic Fatigue:

Chronic Fatigue like Glandular Fever springs from a string of circumstances, which compromise the individual's emotional and physical vitality. The set of symptoms that define chronic fatigue can be found in those who were previously highly energetic and vital or can develop in those who always seemed to have been low in vitality. These two groups are very different and require very different understanding and treatment.

Chronic Fatigue Type I:

A previously vital Chronic Fatigue sufferer is very much like a Glandular Fever or a Post Viral Syndrome patient in that there was an identifiable point in their lives when they began to go downhill. In the Chronic Fatigue patient there is normally a series of emotional shocks over a year or so, which individually, they may have seemed to cope with well. However, the cumulative effect of these shocks has resulted, like the last straw, in breaking the back of the camel.

Chronic Fatigue is very much a condition where the physical, emotional and nervous system strength, which can be seen as residing in the back of a strong and capable individual, has broken.

This crisis very much catches such a person by surprise. It is not as though they have not dealt with shocks, trauma, operations, family deaths and crisis before. They have, and have usually coped well. It is not as though they have suffered from chronic illness, depression, or poor resistance to infection, they usually have not. They have been, and have expected to remain, busy, full of vitality, active and healthy, pursuing their lives which, are often centred on their family or helping and caring for those less capable than themselves.

Everyone however, has his or her own 'Achilles Heel' which is like an entry point through their own personal energy force field. If there are a series of stressful and or shocking events in a person's life which follow one another without sufficient time to be resolved internally, if the effects of these shocks have been put aside or pushed out of sight because of the need to continue to cope or to carry on, they can accumulate. If this series of unresolved stresses and shocks are of the type which profoundly affect the particular individual they can penetrate their very being and attack the "Achilles Heel". It is almost as if, on a particular day, usually when the pressure has finally eased, the vitality of the person takes a dive. As if to say "I have had enough, I have supported you through thick and thin and I have set aside my needs for nourishment, loving, grieving, resolution, relaxation and all the rest, and I am now going to collapse to bring this matter to your attention".

The history I take in a consultation will draw out a series of dramas, which the individual has not necessarily linked with their illness. "Well, yes last year my uncle Max died of bowel cancer and my partner's custody battle was pretty draining." "My sister and her two kids were killed in November in a car accident when a bull broke out of a cattle truck on the freeway and went through the windscreen." "Mum was very ill for the last half of the year following her gall bladder operation and the

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hospital staph she contracted. Sandra's death was almost more than she could cope with." "Christmas was a nightmare as you can imagine." "My partner and I went on a holiday after getting married in February and taking Sandra's ex to court in New Zealand over property matters. I got sick in Bali, and fell in a heap."

This patient shows up 3 or 4 months after she fell ill. By then she has gotten rid of her weekend work organising conferences, given up tennis and has barely enough energy to drive the kids to their weekend sport. She has reduced her working hours to 16 a week down from 40. She is finding she has no energy at all, must take a rest in the middle of her vacuuming and finds herself giving up hope of ever getting well again.

After I have taken all the history and looked into all other health, wellbeing and metabolic indicators I play back the drama of the previous two years to her and explain that it would be impossible not to have collapsed following what she had been through. Only then, will she often acknowledge properly for the first time that she really knew deep within herself, that she was stretching her reserves well beyond their limits at the time. She knew she was on thin ice, but saw herself as the strong one and the one who had to support the others because they weren't coping.

To treat this patients energy body I would prescribe Rescue Remedy for all those shocks, which were not properly resolved and with the Bach Flower remedy Oak for that metaphorical broken back. This particular patient's vulnerability is in the area of taking on responsibility for what is happening in her immediate family so she needs Red Chestnut and Elm in the Bach Flower remedies as well.

To treat her physical systems I would recommend that she drinks masses of Rosehips Tea to begin to rebuild the Vitamin C, Iron and Adrenal reserves, which have been depleted so savagely. I prescribe Maritime Pine antioxidant to protect the bottom end of the immune system so that she does not go on to produce within herself cancer or some nasty auto-immune condition. I would provide her with a herbal formulation supporting her general constitutional and nervous system requirements. In her case I would probably recommend a Reiki practitioner to work toward properly resolving and balancing her aura or energy field which will be grossly out of balance in the lower chakras which relate to family and personal responsibilities. Maybe she would benefit from massage as well if she has the tendency to soldier on through stressful times by tightening up on her neck and shoulder muscles. Massage would also be a useful lesson in taking time and spending it on self-care, a lesson which she needs to learn.

I would encourage her to use the returning vitality 'selfishly' by taking up tennis again and to delay her return to 'super-woman' status for a good six months after she has completely recovered.

Such a life crisis will often bring to the fore realizations about how one has been compromising ones own dreams, hopes and destiny in the service of others or because of the expectations of others. Recovery from Chronic Fatigue can often signal a re-arrangement of priorities and relationships or an examination of ones spirituality and inner needs and I always encourage and support my patients along all these paths over the 3 to 4 months it takes to fully recover.

Chronic Fatigue Type II:

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This type is very much more dangerous often leading to Multiple Sclerosis or Lymphatic Cancer in the end. The person involved is also very very different.

The type II chronic fatigue patient is one who's whole posture and the energy they radiate is passive / poor me / negative. They are often intelligent, talented, artistic, sensitive, well-read and well provided for. They are however, black holes in the vitality sense. They draw energy from their surroundings and from all those who help and care for them. It wouldn't be so bad if they blossomed through the energy they took in, but they don't. They seem never to get up to happy, and joy is not a word you could ever use to describe a single moment of their lives. They often live in the past or yearn for the future, never trusting that the present moment is what it is all about. Underneath it all, they are often afraid of life, and resentful of those who live with energy and with joy.

We all know people like this, we know that they can't be helped and we suspect that it is something to do with not wanting to change or to help themselves.

As a person I have difficulty in dealing with someone who will always say "Yes but ..." I feel the same about those who, in response to the question 'how are you?' will sigh first and say "Ahh well ... I suppose ... as well as I can expect to be ..." and then launch into a list of reasons why they cannot be well or happy or whatever.

As a vital and active person myself, and as a practitioner, who has learned not to pour too much of my own precious energies into such black holes, I don't look forward to these patients. For them, Chronic Fatigue is a named condition they embrace happily to provide themselves with a reason for not having the energy to carry their own share of the loads in this life. These are the ones who most often populate the blossoming support group networks. They are there, not looking for a way out of their situation, but to find fellow sufferers who will help justify their own inclinations.

I know this judgment sounds very harsh and uncaring but as a healer, those who go to almost any lengths not to heal themselves disturb me. I also feel deeply for those who put their own lives on hold, in the service of such people.

My personal observation is that these energy vampires only begin to change when they are forced to support themselves for example when their career or those who they had co-opted into supporting their dependency, dies or leaves (usually full of guilt) and they are left to do their own fetching and carrying. Once they do get moving and begin to find the joy in just getting on with the business of living they can turn around. This does happen, but it is often very late and after doing an enormous amount of damage to those whose energies they have lived off for so long.

As a healer I do try, for a time, with each such patient. I support their blood pressure, which is often but not always, low. I support their spleen function, which is often out of balance and can be carrying a whole lot of hatred at very deep levels, and be behind the whole syndrome, in these cases. I look deeply but objectively into their circumstances and I look for leverage points, which may be accessible to trigger them into self-responsibility.

To support their energy systems, the Bach Flower remedies Pine, Chicory and Water

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Violet are often called for. Maybe also, Holly, Honeysuckle and/or Crab Apple, for the more complex cases. I do make up nervous system and constitutional herbal mixes for them. I recommend reading, such as Carolyn Myss's book 'The Anatomy of the Spirit', in attempt to at least put in their hands the tools they could use to break out of this mould of their own making.

My experience is, that mostly if they do begin to feel better under a herbal, nutritional or lifestyle change, they discontinue with these changes and revert back to their previous state. They sometimes come back to attempt to justify to me their not continuing on the path I laid out, but mostly they just go looking for a more 'empathetic' healer.

If I am treating members of the Type II Chronic Fatigue person's support net work I do what I can to encourage them toward the understanding that the only real way to help is by withdrawing the self sacrificial levels of support which they are providing. This can sometimes provide a way to break into the pattern. I always hope that the carer will start to demand a life for themselves and to do so in the knowledge that this is the only way to force a change.

Usually however, these carers are so trapped that they don't see how they could possibly leave, and it all drags on until some sort of natural resolution occurs. Either the Type II patient develops Lymphatic Cancer and dies to break the cycle, or the carer dies, forcing the person, maybe, to take responsibility for their own living and being.

Robert McDowell
Herbalist
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