A Successful Sortie Into Nourishing the Malnourished Mind
and How My Cat Got ‘Ticked Off’ at Vitamins

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In the last 2 years, I have discovered the fascinating parallel world of complimentary and alternative medicine (CAM). Learning about CAM and its natural alternative approach to conventional Western medicine and psychiatry has been educational, energizing, and empowering. I have been learning about and using this broad approach to addressing my own brain/behavioral health issues.

After being diagnosed with Schizophrenia and other Latin conundrums at age 21, I have dealt with the symptoms and ravages of ‘mental illness’ for over 30 years. It has been a long, interesting, tough, and colorful road replete with joy, sadness, surprises, great friends, vexing challenges, blasé days, incredible experiences, beautiful people, stress beyond the pale, ups, downs, lots of struggles. Life is tough, not just for the cerebrally-upset, but, really everyone. Experience comes through trials. Ask your parents.

Having taken psychiatric medications since 1971, I am familiar with an entire lexicon of pharmaceuticals most people would rather forget, not list. Starting with the earlier, ‘junk’ tranquilizers Trilafon and Mellaril, then a potpourri of drugs including Neurontin, Lithium, Celexa, Periactin, Abilify, and finally anti-psychotics Clozaril, Olanzapine, & Seroquel—I have been very good to the pharmaceutical industry.

Most drugs had some beneficial initial effects in terms of ‘reducing symptoms’ and easing social interactions, but all carried minor (bothersome) and/or major (disturbing or disabling) side-effects. These ‘side effects’ are anything but tangential to one’s health, functioning, and societal interface. So, after working with my doctor to gradually reduce my medications over several years, in 2005, I was taking a fairly low dose of Seroquel, mostly for sleep, but probably receiving some other calming/thought dampening effects as well.

Its major side-effects were so bad, though, that I finally decided to deal with things through natural, non-drug means—diet, lifestyle, and other personal resources. At one meeting, my doctor scribbled some mega-doses of vitamins and fish oil for me on a drug company notepad. I began taking these regularly like medication and researching them as therapy for my ‘mental illnesses’. I first found a wonderful resource by Eugene’s Eva
Edelman which perhaps should be a standard text for all medical students, especially the psychiatrically-inclined.

**Natural Healing for Schizophrenia** and Other Common Mental Disorders by Edelman is a goldmine of sound, neatly-put, and documented information about the nature of Schizophrenia; how nutrients help; biotypes; allergies; free radicals; sugar imbalances; fasting; toxic metals; neurotransmitters; toximolecular drug effects; herbs; psychological treatments; and a bunch more. Loads of info about vitamins, minerals, fats, amino acids, and plant medicines fly by. She explains physiological functions of natural substances and highlights good food & supplemental sources for each, especially in correcting mental problems and enhancing brain health. It has some great appendices with further educational and therapeutic tools.

**Knowing little, this was engrossing** and eye-opening for me. Her book’s smoothly readable style, sidebars with case histories and fascinating facts, plus her honesty and professionalism as a researcher made the text both enjoyable and reassuring. I would highly recommend it. Nutritional researcher and writer Edelman has a new, in-depth text coming out in late 2008 on natural healing for bipolar illness. Contact [www.bORAGEbooks.com](http://www.bORAGEbooks.com) or (541) 683-8720 to order.

**Since mid-2006, I have intensively** studied and practiced this natural, nutritional approach to improving my own, interconnected physical and mental health. Sharing this largely-unknown orthomolecular school of nutrition, medicine, and psychiatry with other people has been inspiring and motivating. You can’t keep a good thing down. For background & fundamentals, see [www.orthomed.org](http://www.orthomed.org) or [orthomolecular.org](http://orthomolecular.org).

**I have seen the incredible effectiveness** of nutritional therapy in my own life as my physical health and energy level have increased dramatically—I could run twice as far (or more—if my muscles and joints would allow it), am naturally livelier, more responsive, confident, creative, and productive in terms of writing, organizing my activities, doing odd jobs, and recreation. Prioritizing comes much more easily and naturally. Friendships seem as easy as pie and life has actually become quite a ‘party’, but obviously I still must pay attention to the basics of work, sleep, eating, cleaning up, time management, planning, not doing too much, etc.

**Friends and family are incredibly important.** Having recently had a close partner and supportive family was invaluable in supporting and
helping improve my overall well-being, including brain health, which I
don’t view as separate or extractable from the greater environment around
me, especially including nature. Naturally, with good nutrition, starting
with a healthy diet, food-wise, and adding on megavitamin/mineral/fatty
acid/amino acid therapy for optimal health/disease prevention, big
improvement or total recovery should become the norm.

**I have found the natural, nutritional** approach fundamentally and
scientifically sound. Indeed, it is the pre-eminent biological approach
addressing underlying bio-chemical issues, going beyond symptom
management and focusing on the various sources of our ills. But before you
stop taking your medications and just scarfing salads, non-gluten bread,
healthy meats, organic fruit, and herb tea (good things in themselves),
nutritional psychiatry as practiced by Abram Hoffer, M.D, utilizes both
nutrient therapy and medications. At least initially.

**Dr. Hoffer, who put Vitamin Therapy** on the map, uses both as major
components of an integrated approach to behavioral health. As do other
orthomolecular doctors. Nutrients provide natural bedrock for all other
therapy. This is just common sense—things that our bodies know how to
process, routinely ingests, but are in short supply need to be provided up
front.

**That medicine and psychiatry** have not acknowledged or learned this
highly successful, fundamental approach to correcting neuro-chemical and
even behavioral issues is not an indication of any inherent problem with
nutritional therapy, but has more to do with western medicine’s disease-
based and unnatural, commercial orientation. Honest doctors regularly
admit this strategic deficiency in their trade and say they have their hands
tied or are only practicing at the margins of health.

**The nutritional approach** is actually being used by scores of health care
professionals and doctors countrywide. It continues to expand in scope as
patients, public, and providers learn about nutritional theory, application,
and its phenomenal results. Stopping one’s medications abruptly can be
dangerous, though. It should be discussed carefully with your medical
professional. Some doctors are more familiar with nutritional therapy and
reduction/withdrawal from medications than others.

**Dr. Peter Breggin’s book,** *Your Drug May Be Your Problem* is a superbly
researched, well-written primer on the subject. It gives good practical
guidelines if considering the possibility of withdrawing from medications,
with extensive education, supportive planning recommendations, and wise warnings to help insure success. Abrupt reduction of medications is not recommended.

The aforementioned vitamin therapy and orthomolecular pioneer, Dr. Abram Hoffer, has written many excellent books and articles explaining his revolutionary findings for treating classic ‘mental illnesses’ with megadose nutrients. Highly recommended books by Hoffer include Naturopathic Nutrition and Healing Schizophrenia: Complementary Vitamin & Drug Treatments, which explains a plausible, well-supported metabolic pathway for the development of Schizophrenia. This excellent book covers this much-misunderstood ailment: it’s symptoms, causal factors, development, and recommends a highly effective integrated treatment.

His style is logical and scientific, yet eminently readable. He dispels myths, provides diagnostics, and explains the psychological and biochemical changes in Schizophrenia. Best of all, he includes specifics of vitamin therapy for this and many other illnesses. Also, counseling, occupational/recreational therapy, and family supports are covered. His knowledge and discoveries from over 50 years of cutting-edge research and clinical application of integrated nutritional therapy and conventional medication is profoundly significant today.

Many of us have been taught that our ailments are permanent like oak flooring, Mt. Everest, or the Bible. Yet with nutritional therapy, we will find the ground shifting, even moving harmoniously underneath us. Instead of cracks to fall through, these friendly vibrations will expose the fault lines in the current system. The rumbles and shakes of funding crises and increased disease pathology can and should drive us to find firmer and more prospective alternate routes—up, out of this valley of disease, despair, and dysfunction.

Sensible routes like nutrition will inevitably take us through the pre-mountain foothills of progress and positive prognosis and then into the airier highlands of hope, holistic health, and happiness. These routes are appearing right now, such as during Alternatives 2008—they have only been covered over with brush, insufficiently noted, or incompletely traveled. They’re there. It’s time to get our boots on and begin moving out, even if only initially as scouts or hearty individuals seeking healthy experience. Later, cohorts and savvy providers will become co-leaders of this group expedition into sunnier heights. This is very real and is happening right now. We must develop new leadership and trip plans.
With nutritional, wholistic, and alternative approaches, ‘recovery’ should not only be considered ‘possible’ but inevitable and even commonplace.

**As we face these stark statistics** of reduced and morbid life spans for those of us with psychiatric diagnoses, we can gain real HOPE AND CRITICAL HANDHOLDS from nutritionally-savvy doctors like Dr. Hoffer, William Walsh, Hyla Cass, M.D. and nutritional peers. We can help each other. Other community and societal resources will become available over time. Americans increasingly realize the dire consequences of our extremely lousy diet on physical and mental health. Now we must spread the good word and the firm strategy of the practice of nutrition for ‘bio-behavioral health’. Its ‘amazing’ effectiveness, phenomenal safety, & cost savings will sell themselves over time as more and more folks use quality foods and targeted supplements to treat illness and improve overall health.

**We must trust and challenge OURSELVES** on this group climb out of the dead-air valleys of co-morbidity and early demise. We will discover new chutes, clamber up unique rock formations, rest on outcrops, ascend intermediate peaks, and maybe ‘summit’ someday. For now, let’s get base camp going, gather equipment, train up, and build group cohesion and infrastructure. Assaults aren’t easy. But there’s only one way to get there in the long-run, that’s ----TOGETHER.

**Like our Oregon HEART & MIND Wellness Task Force** so proudly and nobly led by workers and peers in the spirit of our great comrade David Romprey, who did not die in vain but left a legacy of hope, courage, vision, creativity, and passion and who built love and connections too deep to erode...we must walk and struggle to bring about the vision and reality he so nobly fought and worked for. I feel his spirit burning stronger and brighter each day—among us, in us, like an eternal flame circulating and burning inside each of us.

**A clarion call:** study and use nutritional therapy—megadose nutrients along with medications or other ‘alternative therapy’. Healthy physical inputs will underpin recovery and become a friend and long-term companion. Your health will improve and the need for medications may reduce over time. Warning: other people may get jealous, like one good friend who dumped all my vitamins out in disgust at my apparent progress.

**Even your pet could get ‘ticked off’**. My cat, seemingly perturbed, appears regularly at a given time beside my desk as I power past his
bedtime using my new-found creative energy. I will listen and get to bed, though, since he is my only on-site counselor now—and a superb one, at that—heart-based, holistic, cheap. I get ‘therapy’—he gets fish-nuggets and cat chow (w/ vitamins). Who do you think gets the better deal? Actually, it’s great for both of us.

See you at Alternatives 2009. The nutritional way turns the lights on from the inside our system—cheap alternative energy to light up our bodies and brain from within. It works! Start learning about it! Supply the body with the building blocks of good health/disease reduction. It knows what to do!

Get motivated, people! Bells are ringing! The peer-led path is heading up from here. Viewed as an expedition of motivated participants—we are going to be unstoppable. Folks, it’s time to get serious about getting well. We need to rope up. Help each other. Some can tie knots. I can teach the internal braiding for strong ropes. Don’t hesitate to contact me either, or other nutritionally-oriented therapists in your area for ‘equipment, maps, foul-weather gear, and expedition planning’.

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BARBARA ROBERTS BUILDING:
“The Essence of Geology is this: the top of Mt. Everest is made of marine limestone” (i.e. our efforts at the bottom will someday be the substrate for a great uplift event that will forever change the natural landscape for all—Have Faith!)

JUST WHAT DOES NUTS MEAN NORMALLY?
Sometimes it takes somebody who’s ‘nuts’ to make the rest of us ‘normal’, but who defines ‘nuts’? Relative to nuts, are the ‘normals’ abnormal? Maybe, we’re normally a little nuts, and maybe really nuts, but the really nutso people are those pretending to be normal but going nutto inside. In other words, who’s nuts and what’s on second? If I’m ‘nutty’, does that make someone else relatively less nutty or fruity by comparison, or just—meaty, perhaps? When you get to the meat of this whole nutty affair, our flesh is pretty much all soft, succulent, and securely sequestered inside our soft serviceable shell—a true nutshell. Perhaps our skull is really a modified descendant of the nutcase. And how can someone who is not nuts certify someone who is? It’s anathema to normal logic…and the greater underlying issue of whether we should notify the normally unnutty of their alleged non-nuttiness? Perhaps we need a professional association of, well, Nuts—like us (non-exclusive). But how should we nutify everyone about this involucre possibility? Encapsulate it in a nutshell in the normal body of an email? Or, nut? I would have to disagree, I’m not nuts, just really nut-ty, adjectival—and bordering on dangerously normal at other times. If we could all be declared nuts, though, that would solve a lot of problems. Congressional legislation, anyone? Bill Sizemore, do you own a filbert orchard? Most people just go nutty trying to say the Oregon Governor’s name, not to mention distinguishing it from the previous inhabitant of the hard stony encapsulated structure providing protection for those soft internal organs whose bleached chambers constitute our state’s fruiting political body. I mean government, whose fruits are hopefully distinguishable at the state level from the homogenous pulp of Corylus cornuta californica. I give up, let’s declare the Hazelnut as Oregon State Nut and Nuttiness as the Official Norm (i.e. that we’re all slightly nuts—on average, or we wouldn’t be normal).

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