

**A
Successful
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Into
Nourishing the
Malnourished
Mind:
or, 'How My
Cat Got
Ticked Off at
Vitamins'**

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Wellness Task Force:
(dedicated to the
vision & courage of
David Romprey)

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

by Chris C. Foulke

In the last 2½ years, the fascinating world of nutritional medicine and psychiatry has opened before me. It is a rich landscape of health, diversity, and natural input for our body and brain. Learning about natural and 'alternative' therapies for alleviating illness is educational and empowering. I've used therapeutic nutrition for my physical, emotional, and behavioral health ever since—with some major successes & remaining challenges...

After being diagnosed with Schizophrenia and other Latin conundrums at age 21, I have confronted periodic symptoms and ravages of depression as well as infrequent

energy highs and lows for over 30 years. It's been a long, interesting, tough, and colorful road replete with joy, sadness, surprises, great friends, vexing challenges, blasé days, incredible times, beautiful people, stress beyond the pale, ups, downs, struggles. Life is tough, not just for the cerebrally-upset, but for everyone at times. Ask your parents.

Having taken psych meds almost non-stop since 1971, I am familiar with an entire lexicon of pharmaceuticals most people would rather forget, not list. Starting with earlier 'junk' tranquilizers Trilafon & Mellaril, then a potpourri of drugs spanning the pharmacological alphabet from Abilify-Zyprexa, I've been very good to the drug industry.

I won't forget spacey, detached Thorazine; dreamy Stelazine; the incontinence, memory loss, and thyroid damage of Lithium Carbonate; Clozaril and Agranulocytosis; and then nifty 'atypical' antipsychotics like Seroquel (rapid heart beat, disabling muscle spasms, internal tension, leaky bowel), and Lamictal (leg cramps)—the last attempt at an antipsychotic fix. With friends like those, who needs diagnoses?

Of course, most drugs had some beneficial effects in terms of 'reducing symptoms', easing conversation, and facilitating P/T work, but all carried multiple minor (bothersome), moderate (disturbing), and/or major (disabling) side-effects. 'Side effects' are anything but tangential to one's health, functioning, and social interface. So, I researched side-effects to figure out what was going on with the 'meds and I'. My doctor would basically sign off on my suggestions as my medication level was gradually reduced over several years. In 2005, I was on a low dose of Seroquel, mostly for sleep.

The side-effects were so disturbing, though, that I finally decided to deal with things through natural, non-drug means—diet, lifestyle, and other personal resources--to 'launch out into the deep.' At one point, my doctor scribbled some mega-doses of vitamins, minerals, and fish oil on a drug company notepad. I began taking these regularly like medication and researching their use. I first found a wonderful book by a savvy Eugene nutritional writer, Eva Edelman. This outstanding resource should probably be required reading for medical students, especially those of psychiatric bent.

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 whole bunch more. Loads of facts and commentary about vitamins, minerals, fats, amino acids, and plant medicines are neatly presented. She explains the physiological functions of natural substances, with good food & supplemental sources for each nutrient or herb. Focus is on enhancing brain health naturally to alleviate thought/perceptual/behavioral issues and enhance overall health.

Being somewhat unschooled, this was eye-opening and almost breath-taking. From Ms. Edelman and others, I learned that a large percentage of 'mental illnesses' are in fact biochemical in nature: vitamin or mineral deficiencies, food-based brain allergies, and pollutant/food additives/chemically-derived symptomology. Sugar metabolism also weighs in heavily with 'brain metabolic disorders', a term used by Abram Hoffer, M.D. to describe schizophrenia, bipolar, etc.

Hoffer is an Orthomolecular Pioneer and Father of Vitamin Therapy for work done with Niacin, triglycerides, and schizophrenia. In my opinion, Edelman's honesty and

professionalism in [Natural Healing for Schizophrenia](#) deserves a well-carved niche in historical medical literature. Highly recommended. She is publishing a similar in-depth resource on *natural healing for bipolar disorder* in December 2008. For ordering and other information, go to www.boragebooks.com or call (541) 683-8720.

Since mid-2006, I have intensively practiced this natural, nutritional method for building physical and mental health. Sharing this little-known school of nutritional healing has been motivating and energizing. It is like coming back home after decades of frustration and futility, only to learn that most everything we need is here and that we just need to learn about how to use it.

Earth to Mental Health System!!—“Time to go back to basics”

Let's use stuff that's been here for millions of years, first. Like food, water, air, sunshine hormone, good protein & healthy **FAT!** As I applied supplemental nutrients and healthy food choices, my health improved dramatically. My life is now pregnant with new hope. Since my Father was a physician, one brother a doctor, and another a mental health counselor; my entering the field of nutritional therapy has the ring of destiny.

Learning about nutrition for brain health was like finding a chunk of **prismatic beryl** right outside the door or hanging in a living room window. It's always been there. I just know it was there. It's would be similar to discovering 'the birds and bees' at age 48—you just wonder what would have occurred if you 'knew it' 35 years ago. Still, I'm very glad to discover the gem of nutritional ('orthomolecular') medicine at any age. You can't keep a good thing down. For background, fundamentals, scientific back-up, and practical guidelines, go to www.mercola.com, www.orthomed.org, or <http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/>.

I have witnessed the incredible effectiveness of nutritional therapy in my own life as my physical health, energy level, and emotional healing have buoyed up—I could run three times as much (until my left calf muscle mutinied). I feel livelier, mentally sharper, and better coordinated. Supplying my body and brain with the necessary nutrients for better functioning has also helped with confidence, creativity, and productivity.

I can better accomplish short-term and lifelong goals—things like writing articles, performing poetry, finishing projects, organizing my time, traveling, and recreating. Prioritizing comes more naturally. Issues still exist, but new friendships 'happen' almost daily—life is often 'quite a party'. I must still prioritize work, sleep, eating, social, exercise, clean-up, time, & daily plans, but it is much easier while using robust nutrition.

Friends and family are incredibly important. Having recently had a close partner as well as a supportive family has been invaluable in supporting my overall well-being, including brain health. I don't think personal health is extractable from the greater environment, natural or human. Healing flows from Nature. With good nutrition, starting with a healthy diet (food-wise), and adding targeted megadose nutrients (vitamins, minerals, fatty acids, and amino acids), disease prevention and optimal health can become accessible to many who feel trapped on the medication bandwagon. Major progress or total recovery from bio-behavioral conditions can become commonplace.

In the last few years, I've snatched up over 30 books on alternative health at various bookstores in the Valley. They are gold mines of readily available, healthy, cheap, effective, and little-known information on treating, reducing, or curing disease. Most

deal with vitamins, minerals, herbs, and traditional or Eastern knowledge bases. Some classic works on nutrition and brain health are [Brain Allergies: the Psycho-Nutrient and Magnetic Connection](#) by William Philpott, M.D. and [Nutrition and Mental Illness](#) by Carl Pfeiffer, M.D. Also highly useful are the likes of [The Green Pharmacy](#) by James Duke, Ph.D., [The New Vitamin Bible](#) by Earl Mindell, and [The Mood Cure](#) by Julia Ross.

After examining this field using logic, intuition, science, personal insight, and assessing with an academic acumen, I would say without hesitation that nutritional therapy for bio-behavioral conditions is fundamentally and scientifically sound. It is really the pre-eminent biological approach addressing underlying bio-chemical issues, going beyond symptom management, and focusing on the sources of our various ills. Orthomolecular doctors use natural elements native to our food supply and internal systems to treat illness. They regularly claim 80+% success in treating major depression, schizophrenia, anxiety, ADHD, Alzheimer's, autism, and other vexing bio-behavioral illnesses.

These seasoned nutritional doctors also use medications in their practice when helpful—as tools, but not the ‘tool bag’ But before thinking about stopping one's medications—it is not recommended unless done in a wise, intentional, well-informed, and guided manner. Healthy eating will certainly help most folks. Yet large salads, non-gluten bread, quality meat and poultry, eggs, organic fruit, and medicinal tea are good, and can alleviate some conditions, but orthomolecular (nutritional) psychiatry as practiced by Abram Hoffer, M.D, can utilize both nutrient therapy and medications.

Dr. Hoffer, ‘Father of Vitamin Therapy’, combines both components in an integrated approach to bio-behavioral health. Nutrients provide natural support for all forms of therapy, but are also a very effective stand-alone biochemical therapy in many illnesses. This is common sense. Things our bodies routinely ingest, know how to process, & are in short supply should be provided up front, at least in a sane health care system.

That medicine and psychiatry have not acknowledged this highly successful, fundamental approach to correcting neuro-chemical and behavioral problems is no small tragedy. Rather than an indicator of weakness with natural biochemical treatment, this deficiency is more a symptom of the historic resistance, unnatural predisposition, and not-so professional prejudices that have hampered medicine historically, powering ignorance of nutrition and other ‘alternative’ forms of therapy.

Throw in a dollop of in-group protectionism, a side of pride, and a whiff of arrogance, and you understand why practitioners in a field where some claim schizophrenia is ‘not understandable’ would be reluctant to acknowledge naturally-oriented doctors who routinely claim 80% success with first-time patients (within 1 year of initial episode). Success to Hoffer and his compatriots is roughly defined as helping patients become symptom-free (‘much improved or well’), have functional relationships with family and friends, and ‘pay taxes’—or do volunteer work.

The lack of nutritional training in medicine/psychiatry is a strategic deficiency in the systemic healing arts. This deficiency needs our attention at a time of widespread recognition that our health care system needs drastic reforms. If we want to develop a sound, cost-effective, and top-notch health care system, we must acknowledge realities knocking at the door or already inside, needing recognition. Many doctors, therapists, and administrators personally use nutrients or alternatives to counter disease but not be able to use these apparently effective practices on patients.

What Medicine and Psychiatry do well is focus on disease and calm, quell, or overpower it with drugs. This dominant therapeutic regime is allopathic—wielding powerful medications to ‘knock out disease’. Doctors are intelligent, but often secondary agents in an increasingly pharmacological and commercial trade. Dominant in medicine, allopathy surely helps in many everyday and life-and-death situations, but is widely seen as ineffective, shifting the burden, or creating worse, even life-threatening conditions.

Integrated medical doctors try to use a holistic approach, but drugs have become the dominant biochemical intervention. Drugs unfortunately are unnatural (toximolecular) and often crude or misguided attempts to suppress symptoms rather than treat underlying disease. Drug side-effects are rampant. Many doctors regularly admit these problems, but feel their hands are tied by their trade, practicing medicine at the margins of health, offering late-stage intervention. Not in all cases; signs of reform are cropping up.

The nutritional, or orthomolecular, approach is already being used by thousands of health care professionals and doctors nationwide. It continues to expand in scope as patients, public, and providers learn the theory, application, and phenomenal results associated with nutrition and integrated care. Stopping one’s medications abruptly can be dangerous, though. If one desires or intends to reduce/withdraw from medications, it should be discussed carefully and hopefully done along with a medical professional or other trained health care provider. Some doctors are more familiar with nutritional therapy and reduction/withdrawal from medications than others.

In Your Drug May Be Your Problem, Dr. Peter Breggin presents well-researched practical guidelines for people considering the possibility of withdrawing from medications. It provides extensive education, supportive planning guidelines, & wise warnings to help insure success. Abrupt reduction of medications is not recommended. Gradual withdrawal with strong support is much preferable. Doctors need to learn how.

Dr. Abram Hoffer, aforementioned vitamin therapy pioneer, has written many excellent books and articles explaining his revolutionary findings for treating classic ‘diseases of brain metabolism’ nutritionally. Highly recommended books by Hoffer include [Naturopathic Nutrition: A Guide to Nutrient Rich Food & Nutritional Supplements for Optimal Health](#) and [Healing Schizophrenia: Complementary Vitamin & Drug Treatments](#). The latter provides a well-supported theory for a metabolic pathway in the development of Schizophrenia.

His style is logical and scientific, yet readable. He dispels myths, provides diagnostics, and explains the biochemical and perceptual changes of Schizophrenia. Best of all, he includes specifics of vitamin therapy for a whole panoply of illnesses. Counseling, occupational/recreational therapy, and family supports are also covered. His knowledge and discoveries from over 50 years of cutting-edge research and clinical application with nutritional and conventional medicine is profoundly significant today.

Many of us have been taught that our conditions are permanent like oak flooring, Mt. Everest, or the Bible. Yet with nutritional therapy, we will find the ground shifting, even vibrating underneath. But instead of cracks to fall through, these friendly vibrations will expose fault lines in the current system and hidden opportunities all around us. The tremors of funding crises and rumbles of increased disease should drive us to find firmer ground and alternate routes forward—up and out of the valley of disease and dysfunction.

Sensible routes like nutrition will inevitably take us into progressive foothills of positive prognosis, then into the airier heights of hope, holistic health, and wholeness. New routes are opening up right now, such as with informative workshops at [Alternatives 2008: Creating Community Through Active Citizenship](#), the annual national mental health gathering (in Buffalo, NY this year). Native Americans wrapped up loose ends at the gathering with soulful, earth-friendly, and life-affirming prayers.

Corvallis' on-call Nurse and celiac disease educator, Nadine Grzeskowiak, and I put on a workshop titled **Food, Vitamins, and Alternative Grains: The Firm Nutritional Road to Health and Recovery**. It was well-received. Numerous other consumer-run workshops provided fun, exciting, and informative times for learning and communicating. Pertinent areas of recovery, building community, configuring services were fleshed out. I participated in workshops covering cooperative research, healthy transportation, alternative health, story-telling, and powering system change. Alternative routes to recovery are developing. They've merely been covered with brush, insufficiently mapped, not yet constructed, or not well traveled. They're there.

It's time for interested folk to 'get their boots on'. We need to train to head out, even if only initially as scouts or hearty individuals seeking new health and brighter days. Later, cohorts and savvy providers can co-lead this group expedition into sunnier climes. This is real and happening right now. We must train new leadership and develop trip plans. Certainly, using peer-run approaches (personal, nutritional, wholistic)—'recovery' should be not only 'possible' but expected, '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 savvy nutritional doctors Dr. Hoffer, William Walsh, Hyla Cass, M.D., John Gambee, Marcia Liberatore, and thousands of nutritional peers. We can help each other. Other community and societal resources will become available. My life has been transformed in good part to the natural power of putting simple nutritional building blocks into my body and brain. Our system knows exactly what to do—no metabolic counseling needed.

It is clear to me that recent changes in my life are due in good part to super nutrition and adequate supplementation. In some respects, I feel like a 'different person'—more confident, assertive, creative, organized, mentally healthy, active. I eat really well and take a panel of megadose supplements identified from research and applied therapists.

Noteworthy: I can type ~ 2x faster than before. That's not incidental. It feels almost like I didn't do it myself: this new person inside of me did it without asking. Fewer fears and foibles now present, yet some persisting paranoia. Overall, much improvement. *Frankly, my mind just works better.* I am confident significant improvements can happen to others using a similar nutritional program, adapted to individual needs and wants.

In February 2008, I stopped eating gluten, the protein found in wheat, rye, barley, and some lesser-used grains. Within days, I felt a modest but definite (and continuing) pleasurable high—more energy, too. Relieved of the dietary onslaught of problem-causing gluten grains—which are chemical 'exorphins' (structurally close to natural endorphins), I believe my body's native endorphins are connecting again. Endorphins are pain-reducing compounds in the body and brain.

Another possible explanation of these changes is alleviation of ‘brain fog’. This is an oft-mentioned benefit of going gluten-free. Celiac disease is an auto-immune disorder caused by indigestible gluten proteins leaking through the gut into our bloodstream, leading to inflammation in varying areas. Hypoperfusion (limited blood flow), may be affecting many of our brains. Surely, organs need good circulation. I may have Celiac disease of the brain, but since I am off the toxic, disease-causing gluten grains, my brain feels GREAT! Recovery isn’t an adequate term. I feel better than before “I got sick.”

Nutrition—the staff of metabolic life—is what constitutes our cells & our brain tissue. It’s what our bones, skin, organs, hormones, proteins, enzymes, antibodies, blood are built with. If you don’t think these body constituents are important—or that quality and quantity of essential nutrients isn’t critical for health, you could probably get a job as a nutritional quack such as a prominent doc (quackwatch.com) who downplays any significant role for nutrition in reducing disease/improving health beyond ‘three squares’.

Some doctors want to make commercial vitamin dosages extremely low (thus non-therapeutic) and closer to radically-deficient amounts listed as ‘RDA’ levels. Many also support more strictly regulating vitamin manufacturers to insure quality but also want to make the sale of vitamins by prescription only. This sort of authoritarian, control, and ignorance-based mindset is all too real in medicine and some regulative bodies.

Tragically, most doctors are nutritionally illiterate---by training, that is—or lack thereof. The situation hasn’t changed much in 60 years. My Father went to medical school at Case-Western University in Ohio in the late 1940’s. He received only ½ or 2 clock (not credit) hours of nutrition in 4 years of medical school. Ray Strand, M.D., author of **What Your Doctor Doesn’t Know About Nutritional Medicine May Be Killing You**, reports that only 6% of doctors today receive any substantial nutritional education. This is changing, gradually, yet Medicine is still 50+ years behind in this area.

Warning: There Are Side-effects To Nutritional Therapy!!! Be prepared! Inevitably, ‘side effects’ do occur—nasty things like ‘loss of symptoms’, more energy, clearer thinking, and finding new personal potentials, not to mention ‘The Niacin Flush’ (uncomfortable hot sensation with ‘straight’ Niacin), colorful urine, extended evenings—and, Abram Hoffer wryly warns, “longer life”. On your toes! Seriously, new-found health is both empowering & unsettling.

Major life transitions are akin to entering a new land—the terrain changes, things ‘feel’ different; opportunities and risks appear. It is a time of great growth and potential pitfalls, yet with perseverance, guidance, and time, it offers a rich milieu for rewarding experiences, new friendships, and—going after those DREAMS!

Americans increasingly realize the dire consequences of ‘the modern diet’. Lousy diet choices and nutrient-poor food have profound effects on our physical and mental health. We need to spread the good word and practice of nutrition for ‘bio-behavioral health’. Its stellar effectiveness, phenomenal safety, & huge cost savings will sell themselves as more and more folks use food & supplements to treat illness/boost 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 rocks, 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. There's only one way to climb---TOGETHER.

Like our Oregon HEART & Mind Wellness Task Force so proudly led by peers and DHS workers in the spirit of our fallen comrade David Romprey, who did not die in vain but left a rich legacy of courage, a creative vision, rascal humor, and a "hurricane of hope". David built connections so deep...that we are inspired to walk and talk and struggle to bring about that vision he nobly fought for. I feel his spirit still burning strong and bright inside—among us, inside us, a flame circulating around and up.....

This is a call to Peace with Strength—to fully utilize the most powerful arsenal on Earth--which comes from the Earth directly and from what we have learned with our creative, logical minds--about Nutrition and Natural Medicine—to physically solve these puzzles of body, brain, and behavior—and move onto higher ground..

Call to Natural Arms—►» Study & Use Nutritional Therapy-► healthy foods & megadose nutrients, along with medications and other 'alternatives'. Healthy physical inputs will underpin recovery. They will become a friend and long-term companion. Your health will improve. Dependence on medications will likely reduce over time. *Warning: people may get jealous, like one friend who dumped all my vitamins out in good-humored disgust.*

Even your pet could get 'ticked off'. My cat, seemingly perturbed, used to appear regularly at my desk around a certain time as I powered past his bedtime using my new-found creative energy. I will listen and go to bed, though, since he is on-site counselor — and a superb one—heart-based, holistic, cheap. I get 'therapeutic intervention'—he gets fish nuggets, rubs, & vitamin-rich cat chow. The better deal? It's great for both of us.

Alternatives 2009. I hope to see some of you there for a new round of ground-breaking and dynamic, consumer-driven workshops. The rapidly-expanding nutritional route effectively turns the lights on from inside the system. The system I refer to is our physical body with brain—an integrated whole. Nutrients provide cheap alternative energy for a plush metabolic upgrade. Nutrition rocks! Vitamins roll! Start using them!

Begin to supply your body with the building blocks of good health to dramatically reduce disease and disabling conditions. Our bodies and brains automatically know what to do when we supply them with raw materials for health. After all, they've been doing it for millions of years! Talk about reforming and empowering the system! The physical body is the most important 'system' of all. Our biological self yearns for better days!

Our native body and intelligent brain instinctively create homeostasis and health when given the chance. In this 'natural behavioral system', counselors are our DNA and consumers are our cells, tissues, and organ systems living in our inner biochemical milieu. Co-equal participation. **Structure and function.** As an organism, Homo sapiens is extremely wise inside. **Trust your inner self!** **Vitamins, minerals, enzymes, fats,** and **proteins** naturally interact in our cells to perform **miraculous functions.** It's been an equal and dynamically evolving program since Day 1. All essential elements needed—whether in small or large quantities. One missing element retards the process.

Time to get motivated, people! Alarm Bells and the Liberty Bell are both ringing! An intentional peer-led path can only head upward. **As motivated peers seeking health and**

‘recovery’—we can be unstoppable. Folks, it’s time to get serious about getting well. We need a coordinated strategy, to develop sound organization, then to communicate, coordinate, plan, train climbers and leaders, and procure the necessary supplies for ascent.

We should realize: this is a joint venture and we need to help each other. **Some can tie knots. Some can cook. Some can prepare gear, or get supplies.** Others can inject the necessary knowledge of hiking, climbing, scrambling up rocks, ascending pinnacles, and other skills. I can help teach the braiding of strong internal ropes— metabolic mainstays to guide functional moves onto greater heights. Things previously unimaginable will become possible. ‘Recovery’ could become a milepost rather than a destination.

The progressive heights I refer to are long-term health, wellness, support, community, freedom of spirit, vital activity, understanding, and respect. Don’t hesitate to contact me or other nutritional/alternative therapists around you for ‘equipment, maps, technical know-how, foul-weather gear, or expedition planning’ **on this, the climb of our lives.**

Conventional providers may come along as they learn the ropes. They can also lend assistance if they understand and subscribe to the overall goals of the expedition: to achieve the safest, least cost, most expeditious, and harmonious ascent. Some may have old-fashioned ideas or outdated techniques. **Others are great allies already.** Some will say the whole expedition is fruitless—‘just stay in the valley’. Counseling for them and others will be required. **Base camp is where it’s at for now. See you there!**

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**WORDS CARVED ON STONE MARKER BY CREEK NEAR
OREGON STATE DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES (DHS), BARBARA ROBERTS BUILDING:**

**“The Essence of Geology is this: the top of
Mt. Everest is made of marine limestone”**

[—Our efforts at the bottom are substrate for a great uplift event (now happening) that will fundamentally and forever change the natural bio-behavioral landscape for all—]

Have Faith! Mountains Move! Keep looking up!