

☞ Bach Flower Assignment ☞

From a tender age, Edward Bach was filled with compassion for everything and everyone who suffered, whether they were people or animals. His dream was to find some form of healing which was simple, and yet could cure all kinds of disease. This ideal of his, together with his love of Nature persisted into adulthood, and were to become the basis for discovering the Flower Remedies.

After leaving school at the age of sixteen, Bach worked in his father's brass foundry from 1903 to 1906 to save up for medical school. While the work was difficult and unrelated to his true calling, Bach made full use of the opportunity to study human nature and the different types of personalities around him. He saw his fellow workers' fear of ill health, and also witnessed the inadequate health services afforded to them. Determined to find true healing, Bach enrolled into Birmingham University. From there, he went on to train and graduate from the University College Hospital in 1912.

While he was a student, Bach spent most of his time observing patients rather than studying texts. Through watching them, he learnt that not all patients who suffered from the same illness were cured by the same treatment. He observed that patients with similar personalities often responded to the same remedy, while those with different personalities required different treatments although they had the same disease. He realized then that "the personality of the individual was of even more importance than the body in the treatment of his disease."¹ This was to become his basic philosophy of treatment.

In 1913, armed with his qualifications, Bach first became the Casualty Medical Officer at University College Hospital, and then the Casualty House Surgeon at the National Temperance Hospital. However, ill health overcame him and he had to resign. He then set up a very successful practice, but Bach was discontented that while orthodox medicine relieved the symptoms of his patients, it did not maintain their health, neither did it benefit the condition of chronic cases. Looking for an alternative healing method, Bach turned to the Immunity School.

As a result, he became Assistant Bacteriologist at University College Hospital, hoping to find his ideal form of healing in bacteriology. His work here met with resounding success; he discovered vaccines that not only improved his patient's general health but also removed their chronic complaints. In addition, he discovered it was more effective not to repeat a dose of vaccine until the benefits from the previous one had worn off. Together these findings revolutionized the treatment of chronic disease, and were to reap such excellent results that the general medical profession all started using it. Nonetheless, Bach still felt unfulfilled; there remained cases that did not respond to the vaccines. He also found the conventional diagnosis method too tedious and wanted to improve upon it.

Next, he turned to Homeopathy, and held the post of pathologist and bacteriologist at the London Homeopathic Hospital from 1919 to 1922. He was delighted to find that not only were founder Hahnemann's discoveries of chronic disease and dosage very similar to his own, the treatments he prescribed were gathered mostly from Nature. Like Bach, Hahnemann also believed that "the principle of true healing was to treat the patient and not the disease."¹ Like him, Hahnemann knew it was vital to treat every patient as an individual, and that the guide to the remedy lie not in the disease at hand, but rather the characteristics of the patient.

In his efforts to replace injections as the administration method, Bach proceeded to prepare his vaccines using the homeopathic method, resulting in an oral form of medication. Once again, this discovery led to the treatment of even more chronic cases. During this time, Bach also worked on fine-tuning the diagnosis method. He concentrated on linking the different types of personalities to the diseases that affected

them. Soon, he was able to predict quite accurately the bacteria that affected his patients just from their type and their symptoms alone.

Nonetheless, despite his achievements in the vaccines and the oral form of administration, Bach was aware that they were still unable to treat all chronic disease. Moreover, he yearned to replace the bacterial vaccines with remedies from the plants of Nature. He also started to develop the idea that “life is harmony—a state of being in tune—and that disease is discord or a condition when a part of the whole is not vibrating in unison.”¹ In accordance to this idea, Bach started turning to his intuition even more in his search. Then in 1928, he had the sudden urge to go to Wales. Following his instincts, he went and found two remedies—Impatiens and Mimulus. In the same year, he also discovered Clematis. Using just these three herbs, he began treating his patients based on their type and was rewarded with excellent results.

Bach knew then that he was about to uncover a whole new system of healing. Towards the end of 1929, he abandoned all other forms of treatment and concentrated on using his three new remedies solely. Soon after, he left London altogether in search of world-types and the remedies that would heal all the diseases afflicting the various types. More than ever, he was prepared to give up all orthodox forms of treatment and return to the simplicity of Nature he so loved as a boy.

Although Bach embarked on his journey not knowing what might be in store for him, he was certain that the herbs that he was looking for would be non-toxic and pleasant to take; they would effect a gentle yet certain healing of both mind and body. He was also sure that a new and simpler preparation method was waiting to be discovered.

During this time, Bach also experienced a heightened awareness; his senses were increasingly developed and just by touching a plant, he was able to detect its vibrations. In fact, he was so receptive to these vibrations that his body would react immediately. With this new ability, he discovered the new method of potentiation he was longing for. He found that by picking flowers and placing them in a glass bowl filled with water from a clear stream, and leaving it to stand in the same field in full sunlight for several hours, the water was able to absorb the essence of the plants. Tapping into its vibrations, Bach confirmed the power of the water. He was delighted, not only was this preparation method simple, it did not cause any harm to the plants used, hence retaining the wholeness and potency of the plant essence.

By this time, Bach had abandoned the Western medical view that disease was a result of the invasion of pathogens, and concluded instead that disease is primarily caused by deviance in states of mind that interfere with the normal happiness of the person. He further indicated that physical disease was merely a symptom of an underlying disturbance in a person’s mood. These disturbing moods were the real guide in treating the individuals of their diseases. He knew then that the next step was to classify the temperament common to all types of individuals and to find the matching remedies for each of these types. He came up with 12 prominent states of mind: fear, terror, mental torture or worry, indecision, indifference or boredom, doubt or discouragement, over-concern, weakness, self-distrust, impatience, over-enthusiasm, and pride or aloofness.

From 1930 to 1932, during his explorations into the countryside of England and Wales, Bach succeeded in finding the corresponding remedies for each of these states, which he called ‘The Twelve Healers’. He prepared these using the sun method he had discovered previously, and he preserved them using brandy. Once again, the excellent results that he obtained from these remedies proved the value of his new system of herbal medicine.

Next, Bach went in search of remedies for those whose states of mind were even more entrenched than those of the first group. He discovered four of them, which he prepared in the same way, and named

'The Four Helpers'. By this time, Bach's herbal remedies had become very popular both in England and abroad. To further ensure that they would be accessible to everyone, Bach had even given entire sets of the mother tinctures to two big London chemists to distribute to the public as cheaply as they could.

From late 1933 to 1934, Bach succeeded in finding yet another three remedies. In 1934, he also prepared a combination of remedies to be used in emergencies, accidents, shock, unconsciousness, great pain, fear or panic. He called this mixture the Rescue Remedy. Having found the first 19 remedies, Bach felt it was time to pause in his research and to spend more time in spreading the knowledge and encouraging people to use the remedies. However, this was not to continue for long, soon after he found himself reenergized and eager to uncover new remedies for moods that were not part of the first grouping.

The second part of his search resulted in another 19 remedies. However, these he found in a completely new way from the previous batch. Before the discovery of each new remedy, he would be deeply afflicted by the state of mind for which that specific remedy was needed. These mental agonies were sometimes accompanied by severe physical illnesses as well. While the finding of the right remedy would stop the mental and physical torture, nonetheless, Bach suffered intensely for each of the 19 remedies, and at the end of the process, he was left very worn out and weak.

In spite of this, Bach remained ever ready to see his patients and to spread joy and happiness among them. For Bach, healing was never merely a profession, but rather a privilege entrusted to him by his patients. He viewed health as a birthright of every person, and was always more than willing to help his patients for free.

As mentioned earlier, his basic philosophy of treatment was "to treat the patient and not the disease." While he was trained in western medicine to prescribe the same remedy for all persons suffering from the same condition, Bach deviated from these teachings and forged instead to see every person as being individual. In his book *Heal Thyself*, he states "disease is in essence the result of conflict between Soul and Mind"² and "even if material treatment alone is apparently successful this is nothing more than a temporary relief unless the real cause has been removed."² He says that western medical practices by relieving the symptoms is in fact doing more harm to the patients as it hides from them the true cause of their illnesses, and hence from the true remedy that is required. In the meantime, "the real factor, being unnoticed, may gain in strength."²

As such, in his view, the role of the physician in the treatment of the patient is one of helping the patient to gain a better knowledge of himself, and to direct him to the fundamental causes leading to the conflict between his soul and his personality. The physician should also inspire hope, comfort and faith so that the patient will gain the strength and confidence to overcome his disease. Furthermore, according to Bach, the duty of the physician also requires him to then prescribe remedies to the patient that not only heal their physical bodies, but also uplift their mental states of mind, bringing peace and harmony to the whole person. This was exactly what he had in mind when he first embarked on his journey to discover the herbal remedies. Having witnessed the remarkable efficacy of the Flower Remedies, Bach had effectively accomplished his childhood dream of finding a simple cure to heal all disease. Not only that, he devoted his whole life to helping all around him attain internal harmony, always giving of himself and his knowledge freely, and for that, he was much loved by all he met.

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References

1. Weeks N, 1973. The Medical Discoveries of Edward Bach, Physician: What the Flowers Do for the Human Body. C.W. Daniel Company Limited, Essex.
2. Bach E, Dr, 1931. Heal Thyself: An Explanation of the Real Cause and Cure of Disease. C.W. Daniel Company Limited, Essex.