



What is Integrative Medicine?

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Several decades ago, while dealing with the forces in the world that control the rudder of this ship we call the American medical system, Andrew Weil MD was developing a program at the University of Arizona that blended different medical systems. Everyone insisted on the pejorative terms “complementary” and “alternative” medicine, and he knew that those terms were meant to forever subjugate the primary healing systems of the world to a second-tier status to Western medicine. So he coined the term Integrative medicine (at least he is the first person I know of to publicly and consistently use the term) and developed what became known as the Fellowship in Integrative Medicine along with a whole program at UA known as Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine.

Although I greatly respect Dr. Weil, and have met him, I certainly can't speak for him. This article conveys that Integrative medicine proves to be just **medicine** (medicine-healing-holism), something I'm sure that Dr. Weil would agree with. It is thanks to the efforts of Dr. Weil and many others that we don't use deprecatory terms like alternative and complementary any more. Yet people still don't know what I do, or what Integrative medicine is.

Let's cover some definitions, according to www.dictionary.com, because everyone loves prose with a staccato, drab, definatory tone! (yup, made up that last one)

- **Holism/ wholism/holiatry:** Care of the entire patient in all aspects of well-being, including physical, psychological, and social (and spiritual – my addition).
- Now here's my “favorite”, **Holistic/Wholistic:** identifying with principles of holism in a system of therapeutics, *especially one considered outside the mainstream of scientific medicine*, as naturopathy or chiropractic, and often involving nutritional measures: holistic medicine.

Notice how the definition of Western medicine is described: the mainstream of scientific medicine. Also notice why this definition is my “favorite” as it shows the rift between what I call holistic medicine and how holistic medicine is commonly defined! As wholistic medicine includes the whole, Western medicine must be part of it, not outside of it as in the definition.

Recall that Integrative medicine is just **medicine!** With MDs, our training for outpatient (not in the hospital) medicine is an indoctrination into the use of poisons (medicines) as the primary and only “valid” way to treat diseases and imbalances. We dis-integrate each person into organ systems and have specialists use their specific poisons for an organ system understood outside of the whole person. Do you see how

the long-term poisoning of your body, in a dis-integrative fashion for years and even decades as the “only valid” strategy for treating you is fundamentally flawed and cannot ever work? Western medicine treats diseases as if the person is irrelevant to the disease. Integrative medicine treats not only the imbalance/disease, but the person who has the imbalance. Western medicine assumes everyone’s high cholesterol or heartburn or whatever is a call for a new poison to disrupt your body’s ability to balance itself, and if the symptom or sign improves “you win” no matter what the long-term cost. Today’s poisons are among the best symptom and sign relievers ever, which allows the person to ignore their problems while focusing entirely on symptom relief. Thus today’s poisons dramatically relieve symptoms while the person ignores the disease, and also while the poison creates entirely new diseases for your body to deal with. This is the very business model of medicine that creates the poisoned walking wounded, ensuring greater disease and greater profit. The current business of medicine insures that you become more diseased because at least your MD accepts your insurance!

Holistic medicine has wrongly been described as “not science-based”. This mythology has been propagated to create fear and ensure that you, the patient, does not think. Do you know what the greatest predictor is for the use of Integrative medicine? Intelligence/Education. The more education one receives the more likely one is to seek the care of an Integrative medicine practitioner. Think about that. The human being always has a multifactorial reason for their dis-eases. Believing that science is isolating one pathway, a pathway we now also understand through genomic medicine to have multiple variations in different people, poisoning it and awaiting outcomes over decades when the clinical trials last a few months is beyond farcical. Western medicine has stolen away not just the art of medicine but stolen away the physician’s ability to use rational thought.

My practice, Middle Path Medicine (MPM) came about as my explanations to my confused patients about medicine in general would go like this: “Natural medicine says this, and Western medicine says this, and the truth is somewhere in the middle”. Thus the middle path! True Integrative medicine incorporates holistic medicine which should really be defined as that which restores wholeness. Symptoms and signs are our teachers. Simply suppressing a teacher prevents personal growth and evolution. Integrative medicine begins with lifestyle, and incorporates a variety of traditional healing systems if lifestyle alone is not enough. And holistic means drugs/medicines/poisons sometimes. The more severe the disease, the more likely I am to “throw the kitchen sink at it!” When someone is dying from a “heart attack”, the person “matters little” as the disease is primary. This is where Western medicine thrives, one doesn’t have to worry about long-term side-effects of poisons if the person can’t live without them! When the person is trying to prevent a “heart attack”, every aspect of their humanity is involved and you treat the unique person, not the disease. I hope I am making the difference clear.

Integrative medicine is just medicine! Treating people as the individuals they are, not as a collection of diseases. Medicine is both a science and an art, Western medicine stole away the meaning in medicine, Integrative medicine is stealing it back!

Your Journey to Health and Healing,
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