

Richard's Lecture: 'Finding meaning in health and sickness'

Richard stood in front of the Sputnik's Hub audience feeling much less nervous than when he'd spoken at conferences in London, Edinburgh and Cambridge, and for the 'European Association of Complementary Health' organisation seminars in Brussels, Frankfurt and Lyons.

As Vanessa watched him prepare to speak, she felt a sense of pride - in his ability as a physician and his sensitivity as a complementary health practitioner, as well as in his engaging manner with every audience he faced; however, as she waited, she also felt disappointment that The Mother was once again absent from the 'lunch 'n' lectures'; she understood their teacher's reasoning, but couldn't help her regret at being unable to share the pleasure of her handsome husband.

She knew that the older woman often kept away from major gatherings, believing that her absence allowed her students to listen, learn and express themselves freely without the perceived constraints of her being there; although many, like Vanessa, felt their teacher's guiding presence.

Vanessa quickly dismissed her wandering thoughts when she heard Richard's familiar cough in readiness for his talk...

"Welcome everyone," he beamed, "I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to you this evening... I probably need to introduce myself to just a few of you: my name is Richard, Richard Taverner; I work with my team at The Matthew Hubbard Centre," he nodded into the audience, "sharing my practice with Dr Michael Scott...

I'm sure most of you are familiar with the philosophy and methods of our Practice," he looked round at their attentive faces, and grinned, "in fact I feel as though I'm speaking to a sea of experts in psychoneuroimmunology – the mind/body connection...

Nevertheless, I was delighted when The Mother asked me to speak, as the subject benefits from open debate – and I hope you'll interrupt me, so that this, as usual, becomes a discussion rather than a lecture!" He paused to sip water, and then cleared his throat before launching into his message:

*"For our body to remain healthy - being its natural self – **every** system needs to flow freely; **physically** this means:*

*the free-flow of blood through circulatory system,
the inward and outward flow of uninhibited breathing,
the digestive cycle of nutrients in, and excrements away,
the cleansing cycle, and elimination of toxins,
the constant regeneration of healthy cells,
the growth, and cutting back of, for example, hair and nails,
the feminine (and masculine) cycle;*

*And free flowing, **subliminally**, which means:*

*the free-flow of universal energy through the body;
the healthy cycle of reciprocal giving and receiving;
the expression of emotion;*

the free movement of thought;

*As well as, free flowing, **spiritually:***

which is a constant awareness that we are forever in a relationship with a power, a Consciousness, that supports us, and that we make creative by the moving tide of our being..."

"Aww, that's beautiful!" Maria murmured, her eyes wide in awe, "I love what you just said; will yer say it again?"

*"Yes!" he smiled, "We all live and move **within** a flow of energy, and as a **result of the exchange** of that same energy through us, making us – whether we know it or not – amazing expressions of Pure Consciousness."*

*"But **knowing** that this is what we are, is crucial," Malcolm volunteered.*

"Indeed, yes! Because, without awareness and acceptance, we block or interrupt any of the avenues of flow; and wherever the flow is blocked or interrupted, there will be physical disease – minor ailments or serious illness - as well as psychological disorders.

So... At the Matthew Hubbard Centre all of us are taught how to keep ourselves fit... But when we inevitably become dis-eased, our team is ready with essential expertise so that the natural flow, in all areas, can resume."

He paused and grinned to himself, "I like to think of the clinic's intervention as a healing 'club sandwich': healer/physician - meditate - massage/therapies - exercise - meditate - healer/physician."

"So what happens if I come to see you...if I'm one of your patients?" Gabby's expression showed a serious searching as well as her bright inquisitiveness.

"Good question! First, you'll be expected to be a frequent meditator..."

"Frequent, means every day?"

"Yes, for say two short periods - aim for just five minutes, morning and evening."

"I keep trying!" she laughed.

He grinned, "Around here - and with healers at the Centre - we're asked not be daunted by 'trying'! In fact, I've used the word, 'flow', quite a lot already today - so think of meditation as letting yourself flow with each breath..."

"That's good advice, thank you! What else would you expect of me?"

"As a patient at The Matthew Hubbard Centre, you'd be expected to use our facilities: for regular exercise, we have a small swimming pool and gym; for complementary health, you'd be required to have sessions with massage therapist and other appropriate practitioners; and, of course, you'd be required to meet regularly with one of our healers."

"What if I come with an immediate illness?" Gabby persisted.

"You're doing well, leading me with questions!" he laughed, "I like it!"

"Talk about your work with me, Richard," Maureen's voice, from the back of the room, was emphatic.

He paused and looked over the heads of his audience to meet her gaze; she was easy to spot with a bright hat perched jauntily over her fluffy new-growth of hair.

His eyes narrowed, thoughtfully, "Sure?"

"I'm sure."

"Me too," Laura's voice was as clear and positive as her friend's, "I've also become one of your 'cancer patients'."

Richard responded softly, as though talking to himself, "In my work, there are times when I must reach deeper into my heart for compassion, love, wisdom...strength..."

Treating and supporting patients - often youthful, seemingly healthy people - who bravely accept a diagnosis of cancer, and stoically walk through treatment, is both a privilege and a personal challenge...

...Thank you, Mo...Laura."

He waited for the spontaneous, supportive ripple of applause to quieten, sipped some water, and then distantly gazed up at the corner of the ceiling, "So, what must I tell you?"

He took a deep breath, "When my patient receives a diagnosis of breast cancer, she and I immediately welcome action in every way possible:

Good communication with expert consultants, doctors, technicians, nurses;

Understanding the analysis of the nature of the tumour;

Advice on the most appropriate forms of medication and treatments, including chemo, radiation, surgery;

Pharmaceutical support for side effects from invasive treatments;

Dietician advice for specific foods and nutrients;

Physiotherapist/trainer support for guidance about exercise and rest;

Inclusion in our yoga groups for rest and sleep aid...

And with our meditation groups, for supervision of emotional release and relief;

Prayerful support from our community;

Healing sessions.

In fact, every patient can expect total coordination of these involvements, including overall monitoring..."

"It's your commitment to everyone," Maureen interrupted, "Actually, it's the complete love you have for all your patients," her voice loudly resounded across the room.

"We feel it from the moment we walk into the Centre," Laura added.

Richard nodded modestly, and cleared his throat, "It's a team approach: our patients expect to be in partnership with our clinicians, receiving information and support so that they are in control of their well-being, and are encouraged to make informed decisions..."

He took a deep breath, gazed eagerly around the room, and spoke enthusiastically, "It's our intention to bring back wellness through physical intervention, emotional and mental discovery, and spiritual certainty... As I said..."

"Wait!" Malcolm called out, "Could you say that again: 'your intention is'..."

With a broad smile, Richard repeated, "It's wellness through physical intervention, emotional discovery, and spiritual certainty!"

"Got it, thanks!" Malcolm looked up from his note-pad, "Your work differs from 'normal' doctors because it puts the mind and emotions to the fore, taking account of how they directly affect the body."

"True. As I said at the beginning: we work together to address the various blocks in the flow of our patients' energy systems - physical with subliminal..." He frowned, reflectively, "Yes, you're right: it's often said that I don't work as a 'normal' doctor... Actually, I trained in Vedic healing modalities at the same time as qualifying through med school..."

"Richard's a modern day Aesculapius," Michael muttered wittily.

They laughed.

"I didn't mean to be amusing," he sounded disconcerted, and quickly stood up to justify his remark: "I was a med student with 'Doctor Taverner'...had great respect for him then, as I do now; his work really does take us back to the healing temples - like that on the

island of Kos; and yet, Richard, having established our centre with all its methods coordinated towards wellness, is way ahead of his time."

He grinned through their brief applause and jauntily bowed before sitting down.

"What were those ancient places like?" Sophie asked, shyly.

"Like The Matthew Hubbard Centre!" Frank chuckled, "...patients then were encouraged to seek healing alongside the work of early physicians, right?"

"Right!" Michael folded his arms with satisfaction, enjoying his interruptive praise of his practice partner, "It's good to enthuse about you, Richard! Though I seem to have got you off track!"

"It's a habit you have!" Richard chuckled, "I'm used to your jibes, even though you too proudly follow in the footsteps of Aesculapius!"

"...So," he settled their amusement, "we were noting how the variety of healing modalities work together for our patient with cancer..."

You can see...as well as helping her through the physical treatment, we also strive to address unhealthy thoughts and negative emotions which block the steady flow of mind and spirit...causing the physical disease to manifest."

"That's the hardest part for me to get my head round," Betsy blurted, and then followed Michael by standing up to boldly face the audience, "...I'm a nurse at the Centre... I like it there, and I'm proud to work with Dr Scott and Dr Taverner..."

"...but, to be honest, I don't quite get the idea that cancer can come because of the way we think and feel."

"We're always ready for your honesty, Betsy... We appreciate it – together with your dedicated work in our team," Richard smiled at her, warmly, "Thanks for being here today, and for speaking out!"

Let me explain: our health is affected by the environment, and life events - we're all clear about that..."

She nodded, "Carcinogens are scientifically proven, and feelings such as grief have been shown to make patients ill..."

"Right. But the connection between the mind and body is a constant and consistent interaction; for example, think about how you feel when you're on your way to the dentist."

"Aw, Dr T, you know I don't like to go there! ...I sweat and feel sick at the thought of opening my mouth."

Her audience laughed.

"You're responding according to psychoneuroimmunology," he chuckled, "...simple, understandable behaviour, such as an anxious reaction to fear of the dentist - even for a nurse! - illustrates how our body feels dis-ease as a result of thoughts and feelings."

He stroked his chin as he prepared a deeper explanation:

"The spirit/mind/body question is where physicists, mystics, Hindus, and healers converge; though I don't think particle physicists would be very impressed with the way I try to describe this!"

Everything consists of the same 'stuff'- vibrational waves and particles of energy - originating from one source. There is only a difference in degree of vibration between the matter of our body, the energy of our thoughts and emotions, and the frequency of our spirit. Since this is so, it does not seem valid to say that only some physical 'dis ease' is a result of thought and emotion; every dis ease which sediments into the body is a result of mistaken thought or blocks in emotional flow, with little difference between a broken leg or a sore throat; and every illness has the same healing potential..."

Contagions too... We know that not all people catch a cold when influenced by its virus; our susceptibility has to do with the state of balance of body/mind/spirit, together with external care and environmental factors - which are also determined by spiritual connectivity.

Our Spirit functions as a vibrational field, carrying around our physical body; and within this our emotional and mental capabilities function. All these 'aspects of our self' are created of the same stuff, but they are of different vibrational frequencies – different levels, not superior, nor inferior; indeed, body needs spirit and spirit needs body; and both function with thought and emotion.

Spirit's aim as a presence with the body is to have itself recognised as Pure Consciousness. Paradoxically it knows itself to be this, but..." he paused, thoughtfully, "it's like a gym workout - a life adventure - for it to know itself..."

When our Spirit, our soul, is in a phase to make huge leaps in its self-exploration, it revels in its adventure..." he laughed, "I imagine it's excited by meditation, with the prospect of experiencing mystical union!

Our thoughts and emotions are tools, giving spirit an opportunity to go out on a limb to explore itself – sometimes, when life experiences take us to the edge, it is spirit going really far out...to discover Reality.

However, when such challenging thoughts and emotions are not addressed, when there's a struggle to find meaning, and when our spirit is not synchronised with the Universe, then the dis-used or disappointed energy sediments...from thought into emotion, and then into physical matter...as illness and disease.

Our sick body then becomes a messenger, a spiritual messenger, telling us: 'Hey! There's things in your life you need to look at, behaviours you ought to change'..."

"Your explanation is rather complex," Frank interrupted, "some may think, a little far-fetched. Yet, I like what you say; it feels...comfortable."

"But what about accidents? Falls and such like?" Betsy argued, "If I twist my ankle, is that really a spiritual dis-ease?!"

"An accident may, or may not, have a linear connection to spiritual wellness..." Richard explained, gently: "I may trip and fall because I was not walking straight, or because I was not paying attention to the ground beneath me, but neither of these would have happened if I had been in tune with everything around me...in effect, spiritually balanced.

I hope you can see," he continued, patiently, "the cause of disease may be environmental or genetic, but fundamentally has to do with a mistaken belief about ourselves: we need to be healthy emotionally, mentally and spiritually, and pay attention to our body – thus validating the wisdom of psychoneuroimmunology..."

The way I see it," he paused and stroked his cheek, "energy is working - either with me, or against me - showing me each spiritual lesson that comes up to be addressed."

"What do you mean – energy working for or against you?"

"Well... I want to be in synch with the Universe – it's the way I feel comfortable throughout each day...being spiritually aware; and meditation sees to that for me!

Then, whenever there's something I need to do to be a better person, to enhance my spirituality, energy will see to it, creating situations for my good; where I'm not in tune with the best way of being, my body will give me a nudge, making me take stock, making me take time and find an opportunity to look deeply at myself."

"That's what breast cancer has done for me," Maureen murmured, "Discovering the lump made me look at life – and death – directly, face to face; then treatment took me away

from the busyness of work and the mindlessness of everyday life so that, really, I was forced to take time to reconsider, appreciate and...and love much, much more."

They sat in silent appreciation of what she'd said.

Richard quietly continued, "A life of lots of physical illnesses is one where great spiritual learning can take place. A life of ease is when nothing much is growing for the soul. Actually!" he brightened, "As some of you know, my wife likes to use the term, 'wholeing'! She says, a healer's work is to bring us to an understanding, an active realisation, of who we really are, and what life is really for.

In fact, as our healers work with us they help us find the connection between the issues in everyday life that show unhealthy emotion, uncertain thought, and forgotten spirit, and the particular physical illness.

Then they use their expertise to move energy through our body, in a sense loosening the vibration of the illness, readying it for release, and, at the same time, they encourage us to let go of detrimental thoughts and emotions so that the unhealthy energy dissipates...

She and I have had many discussions as to why healing is not consistent. For example, you may attempt to self-heal every day around your skin condition; you may receive healing with little or no relief. Then, one day, the skin is clear. You are cured. The cure may take place completely detached from your healer's room or from your own attention..."

His gaze met Vanessa's, with a slight smile of mutual connection, "We think the healing event has to do with readiness, it's about **the** moment when we are completely done with the need for the physical reminder; and very often the epiphany is not consciously known."

He looked around at his silent audience, "I've talked a lot!" he coughed, nervously, "But I'd like to go on, just to clarify:

The healing agenda is to uncover the underlying cause or reason for the presence of a disease, to accept and integrate lessons from that wisdom, and thereby acknowledge and affirm that the illness has no further place in the patient. So, the disease is done with!"

"I'm done with cancer," Laura spoke up, firmly; she looked lovingly at her husband, and continued, "We've gone over every mistaken thought and emotion we feel; we've drawn closer as a couple, and as a family; we've come through a terrible ordeal and learned how to appreciate every moment of every day..."

"You've shown us how to be brave, and how to love..." Maria spoke with fervent cheerfulness, "...you and Frank."

"Indeed!" Richard breathed deeply, "I've only recently become Laura – and Frank's – physician, but I totally empathise with all that they've been through together, and I too salute their loving determination! In fact," he scanned the faces of his audience, "The room is filled with courageous people who, every day, bring great meaning to my life."

He gulped water, and gently cleared his throat, "As I think I've made clear: at the Matthew Hubbard Centre the **fundamental** work of health and well-being is with our healers – Jonnie and my wife, Vanessa; and here, at Sputnik's Hub, we lean heavily on the loving dedication of The Mother..."

Their gifted work – I know they dismiss the word, 'gifted', but I think it's appropriate – their gifted work activates healing energy, stimulates the natural flow of universal energy through every part of body, mind and emotional self...and touches our Spirit...

That spiritual healing accompanies medicine and science: where surgeons skilfully do their work with the matter of our body, scientists discover drugs that latch onto disease and

create an effect of 'zero'; the body is cured, though it needs help from our therapists to return it to its healthy balanced state..."

"So that I am returned to 'wholeness'," Maureen murmured.

"Yes, my dear, Mo... Our work together is not just the connection of mind and body, but rather a mind, body, soul interaction – it is indeed the work of Love."

As he paused to gulp water, Laura noted the silent connection between them, and tentatively commented, "It's been strange, but good, to listen to a medical doctor talk about important ways of keeping well. I really want to thank you so very much!"

And, may I ask: Why is your clinic named, The Matthew Hubbard Centre? Who is he? Does he work in clinic too?"

Richard beamed, "Mr Hubbard was professor of obstetrics at City; he had a philosophy about the importance of relationships in medical practice, well before his time.

He taught us," he glanced at Michael, "his med students, to know ourselves, to be in touch with our senses, our feelings – our intuition..."

He practiced what he preached until the day he died," his eyes met Vanessa's teary gaze, "When with patients, he listened, and spoke with them, treating each as a partner in their wellness, a partner in their experience of childbirth; he totally respected women, knowing and showing his students how each patient understood their body.

He was a man of vision, working in mainstream medicine, though often upsetting departments and colleagues, he never stepped aside from his philosophy, his principles.

His wish was to bring together relationships, partnership and practice, with all other aspects of the human search for wellness.

It was my honour to know him, to be trained by him, and I'm proud to carry forward his tradition," he smiled at Vanessa, "Indeed it's a privilege to work under the 'umbrella' of his name at our centre, having used his amassed estate – bequeathed to my wife – towards the clinic's development, so that together...our family...are able to carry forward his philosophy, his dream, and make it our own."

Malcolm stood up, seemingly ready to offer his thanks to Richard, but then he hesitated, "I think there's another question I should ask... Maybe there's good reason for me to do so: Would you tell us - what is the fundamental reason for what you do?"

"The short answer," Richard laughed modestly, "I love it! I admit to being somewhat obsessed with my work, with helping my patients, creating a family environment at MHC, like you here, at Sputnik's Hub, and in your school... I strongly believe in partnership, and in our greatest strength of using the wisdom of listening to each other and of considering ourselves as One.

Vanessa taught me four words to focus on how to be; they are: **authentic, integrity, clarity, inspiration.**

In my work I've learned to put them together like this: I hold on to being authentic, which keeps my integrity and brings clarity, thereby opening me up to inspiration."

"That's beautiful!" Malcolm stood, resting his hand on his heart, "We should do that together... Please will you repeat it for us?"

"Yes!" Richard waited as the audience got to their feet, "Hand on heart: **I hold on to being authentic, which keeps my integrity and brings clarity, thereby opening me up to inspiration."**