



## Naturopathic Physician's Oath

I dedicate myself to the service of humanity as a practitioner of the art and science of Naturopathic medicine.

I will honor my teachers and all who have preserved and developed this knowledge and dedicate myself to supporting the growth and evolution of Naturopathic medicine. I will endeavor to continually improve my abilities as a healer through study, reflection, and genuine concern for humanity. I will impart knowledge of the advanced healing arts to dedicated colleagues and students.

Through precept, lecture, and example, I will assist and encourage others to strengthen their health, reduce risks for disease, and preserve the health of our planet for ourselves, our families, and future generations.

According to my best ability and judgment, I will use methods of treatment which follow the principles of Naturopathic medicine:

First of all, to do no harm.

To act in cooperation with the Healing Power of Nature.

To address the fundamental causes of disease.

To heal the whole person through individualized treatment.

To teach the principles of healthy living and preventive medicine.

I will conduct my life and the practice of Naturopathic health care with vigilance, integrity, and freedom from prejudice. I will abstain from voluntary acts of injustice and corruption. I will keep confidential whatever I am privileged to witness, whether professionally or privately, that should not be divulged.

With my whole heart, before this gathering of witnesses, as a Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine, I pledge to remain true to this oath.



## Foreword

Naturopathy, which began as a reform movement, is now itself in need of reform. It is probably already too late to make such pronouncements as, “Naturopathy stands at a crossroads,” or, “Naturopathy is facing an identity crisis.” In embracing so-called “Evidence-based Medicine” (EBM), naturopathy has already, consciously or unconsciously, embarked on a new path and chosen a new identity that is in fundamental contradiction to and a negation of its historical roots and the vision of such founding figures as Benedict Lust and Henry Lindlahr.

EBM is a product of the mechanistic world-view. The most basic tenet of this world-view is that the human sense faculties and mind are inherently faulty and subjective, and the claims of all empirical traditions such as naturopathy must be dismissed until each, one-by-one, can be demonstrated by “valid research” as “hard facts.” In this view, only phenomena that can be measured with the so-called “objective” instruments of science are considered as real. Therefore, all ancient medical traditions must be considered as superstitions, as such basic concepts as Qi (Chinese medicine), prana (Ayurvedic medicine) and vital force (naturopathic and homeopathic medicines), among many others, cannot be measured and verified by external experiments and instruments. They can only be experienced, and experience is denied as a source of valid information.

Many critics and philosophers of science since the time of Goethe have pointed out the numerous flaws inherent in the mechanistic world-view and the scientific method. Although this is not the forum to enumerate these criticisms, it is worth noting here that the so-called “objective realm,” on which its judgments about what is real and not real hinges, is itself a product of the subjective mind, and therefore must also be subjective. It has not been discovered, but

rather invented. The holistic scientist and poet Goethe demonstrated that mechanism, materialism, reductionism or whatever name we choose is itself a system of belief rather than a set of facts. Its hallowed scientific method, revered and unquestioned for its success in producing the amazing advances we see in technology, produces not facts but hypotheses. If, as the critic and philosopher of science Karl Popper has pointed out, "Science is the set of hypotheses not yet falsified," then the evidence generated by EBM using the scientific method need not be regarded as real or of special merit. It is ephemeral, and as experience repeatedly demonstrates, bound one day to be discarded.

In his 1923 classic, *Philosophy of Natural Therapeutics*, Lindlahr specifically points (p. 16) to another way of knowing. He writes, "the simple pioneers of Nature Cure...refused to be blinded or confused by the conflicting theories of books and authorities," but rather that they, "applied common sense reasoning," and, "went for inspiration to field and forest," while studying, "the whole and not only the parts, causes as well as effects and symptoms." This is the way of holism, contemplation of nature in "field and forest," with the understanding common to Chinese and Ayurvedic medicines that the external and internal environments of humans are one and the same. This is a recognition of the essential "Oneness" implied in the word universe. In this view, human intelligence and the senses which inform it, although indeed prone to error, are formed of the Supreme Intelligence, and can therefore be refined to know and apprehend truth directly without the intervention of artificial experiments based on speculative theories. Furthermore, those who depend on such theories at the expense of their "common sense reasoning" wind up "blinded or confused."

The naturopathy of Lust, Lindlahr and others represented a movement toward a vitalistic and holistic science of western medicine that can perhaps stand one day with Chinese and India=s Ayurvedic Medicines as one of the great comprehensive systems of

natural healing. Lindlahr pointedly denounces what he calls the materialistic world view as absurd (pp. 23–4), and proposes rather that there is a vital force, a “supreme intelligence and Power acting in and through every atom, molecule and cell in the human body.” Matter, rather than being the source of life through its random and mechanical operations, is “but an expression of the Life Force, itself a manifestation of the great Creative Intelligence.” In this view, irreconcilable with mechanism and EBM, the universe is a product of Consciousness, and “All things in nature, from a fleeting thought or emotion to the hardest piece of diamond or platinum, are modes of motion or vibration,” and “If [the] supreme Intelligence should withdraw its creative energy...the entire material universe would disappear in the flash of a moment.” That is to say, all things continuously flow from the One.

In his 1902 publication, *The Naturopathic and Herald of Health*, Benedict Lust described naturopathy as, “the reconciling, harmonizing and unifying of nature, humanity and God,” and spoke of the “surpassing achievement of our world-wide purpose.” Lindlahr (p15) saw it as, “a complete revolution in the art and science of living. It is the practical realization and application of all that is good in natural science, philosophy and religion.” Surely these are grand visions of a holistic art and science of life and medicine. The embrace of EBM and the reductionistic approach to science by the profession effectively ends any possibility other than becoming an adjunct to the dominant system already in place. While this may seem desirable as offering a niche within the corporate Health Care Industry to our field, it abolishes the identity, tradition and promise of the profession. Although we cannot enter into a suitable discussion of the much-abused term “holistic” in this space, suffice it to say that the reductionistic method of EBM must separate and break down in order to isolate phenomena in its search for facts. This is a violation of the basic holistic tenet that phenomena can only be understood in the context of their environment, and that any

attempt to artificially isolate any phenomenon must of necessity change that phenomenon. I do not mean to imply here that naturopaths should discard all results brought to light by the laser beam of reductionistic science, but rather that those results must be illuminated in the sunshine of holism in order to be properly understood. I certainly do mean, however, that we cannot at once be holistic and reductionistic, and that if we are to consider ourselves to be truly scientific and holistic, we must work to produce a rigorous, clear and comprehensive holistic science of medicine that builds on the ancient traditions handed to us.

If naturopathy is to have any future other than that of generic complementary alternative medicine, it must reform. Our forebears in this profession provided us with a foundation of holism and vitalism on which to build. The *vis medicatrix naturae* is eternal and as strong as ever, and will be there for us when we are ready to again join forces with it. In this book, Daniel Block raises an impassioned voice imploring us to do just that. He offers us an updated view of the traditional naturopathic philosophy that speaks to our time, and a critique of our educational system that should be considered by everyone interested in the direction and future of our profession. Furthermore, he encourages us to face and lay aside the fear and insecurity that drive the profession toward a need for acceptance and credibility from mainstream medicine. Our forebears saw clearly that the mechanist philosophy is itself an illness, a delusion. How can we be part of healing if we ourselves have the disease?

George Savastio, ND