

And The Lion Laid Down With The Lamb

In homeopathic medicine, we are blessed with literally thousands of different remedies which can be used to treat the gamut of physical, mental and emotional disturbances which afflict humankind. These remedies are able to heal deep, long-standing disturbances gently and often rapidly. One of many areas where homeopathy excels is in disturbances of mood and behavior. A remedy which has had a tremendous impact on my patients is Stramonium. Although the following cases are both pediatric, all age groups can benefit from this remarkable medicine.

The plant has been called many names by many cultures. Alternately known as, and I kid you not, thorn apple, jimson weed, devil's trumpet, devil's weed, stinkweed, locoweed, devil's cucumber, mad seeds and hell's bells, it does not take a PhD to figure out that the people requiring this substance are in need of serious help. The central theme of this remedy is violence, which is all too pervasive in our world.

The violence of Stramonium often occurs abruptly and uncontrollably, very much like a seizure. It is often triggered by fear or panic. Fear of the dark and of the unknown are the primary fears of the Stramonium patient, but they often have many fears including fear of dogs and other animals, death, water, reflecting light, being alone, claustrophobia, illness, injury and many more. It is often the first remedy I turn to in children suffering from night terrors, with amazing results.

Billy's Mom first brought him to me in June 2000 when he was a mere 3 ½ years old. Although he initially presented with a rash, his behavior was quickly deteriorating in an alarming fashion. He scratched his mother's neck, and asked her, "Do you want to fight?" Extremely restless, his Mom described him as a "monster" when he visited his grandmother the following month. His bedwetting was getting worse, and he developed several Strep throats and ear infections. During one of his consultations, he became completely uncontrollable and unruly. He started to run wild in my office, climbing repeatedly on top of my exam table and jumping to the floor, inflicting pain on his younger sister and laughing about it. His mother burst into tears of utter frustration and helplessness. I was mortified, and very concerned about the well-being and safety of his adorable younger sister. A month before, "he had a fit," Mom reported. "He began screaming. He hit me hard in the face several times." The night before the appointment, Billy had a scary dream about a black ghost who sucked him up. He was afraid of monsters, thunderstorms and the dark, and extremely defiant. I referred him to a child psychiatrist, but his parents did not want to start him on medication, so they never went.

Over the course of 2 years, I gave Billy several remedies which helped, but the improvement only lasted a few weeks or months. 7 months after Billy's 1st dose of Stramonium his mother exclaimed, "Everything got better after Stramonium—rash went away, bedwetting stopped, his behavior mellowed out. He stopped hurting people." Billy's transformation has been mind-boggling, very much in line with the names of the remedy. Now a very calm, handsome, well-behaved 14 year old, his Mom describes him thus: "He is very affectionate, my most affectionate child. He loves to snuggle. A major hugger. He loves his sister. No longer hyperactive at all. He is much more focused. He has no fears. In sports, he is described as courageous. In fact, he lives

his life courageously and is very confident. He just won a coveted soccer award. Youth Leadership is one of his many passions.” During the first 27 months before prescribing Stramonium, I saw Billy 26 times in the office. Over the next 7 ¼ years he was seen a total of 9 times!

Jacob was also 3 ½ years old when his parents first brought him to me. Both he and his Dad developed a cough 4 months prior, but Jacob’s cough never resolved, and was triggered by his emotions. He was diagnosed with asthma. He had many fears—flying objects, things falling on him (e.g. boulders), cars crashing, severe fear of being alone, insects, the dark, natural disasters. He was overly cautious and aloof. He needed his personal space, and became angry if someone invaded it. Jacob didn’t like many kids and would not share his toys under any circumstance. He was very jealous of his 16 month old sister Melinda, and bit her when she was only 4 months old. “Now he’ll get in her face and freak her out. He seems to have a dark vibe,” his father said. He was waking up screaming every night. When he was 2 ½, his parents had to pull him out of preschool because he would scream when his parents would leave.

The first remedy I gave him was Nux vomica. At his 2nd follow up, Mom said, “Things are going well. Definitely. Cough is much improved, very rare now. There’s an opening that’s happening—he’s more open to sharing with others. I used to feel despondent almost every day before we came to you—now this happens very infrequently. We have so many good and fun days now.” I didn’t see him for a whole year. When they returned, his asthma remained very well controlled, but emotionally he was struggling. He had been diagnosed with Sensory Processing Disorder, and was very sensitive to loud noise. He was developing OCD symptoms. “Still has the evil eye, but not as bad as before Nux.” Then his parents said something that really caught my eye: “Melinda had an apple in her hand, and when Jacob caught wind of it, he screamed. He’s very hostile to the apple. He is afraid of being poisoned if he eats a piece of fruit. He wants to be the bad guy. It’s creepy.” His parents had to pull him out of kindergarten because he was being ostracized by other boys (some of whom would undoubtedly benefit from a few doses of devil’s weed themselves).

Stramonium has literally changed Jacob’s life. 9 months later, after only taking one dose of the remedy on two separate occasions, his mother emphatically stated: “He has made tremendous progress compared to 1 year ago. The fact that he’s in school again, and the fact that he’s adjusting to it. He has the ability to handle things more easily than in the past. The dread and the uncontrolled fear are improving.” After one more dose of the remedy, 14 months after the original dose: “Making friends at school, it’s happening organically, naturally. Fear is still there but attenuated. Fear of the dark now mild. Fear of being alone is hugely attenuated. OCD is quite a bit better. He’s more balanced.”

There are hundreds of remedies in homeopathy which can help violent or antisocial behavior, as well as eliminate childhood fears, but only 35 which treat the fear of being poisoned, and Stramonium is one of them. The key is to find what makes each patient uniquely themselves, and to find a remedy that completely matches their uniqueness. I haven’t seen Jacob in 16 months. An apple a day does indeed keep the doctor away!