

Face of Business

Weiss mixes traditional medicine with homeopathy

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Sometimes it's what parents have done for others that influences a child's career decisions.

Stephen Weiss was 8 years old and selling chocolate bars door to door for a Little League fundraiser in Aberdeen, Md. A woman whose door he'd knocked on said she would buy one, and started conversing with the youngster.

"What's your name, little boy?" she asked.

"**Stephen Weiss**," he answered.

"You're not Dr. Weiss' son, are you?"

He answered that he was.

"Oh, my God," the woman exclaimed. "He saved my life. I'll take 10 of them."

“It was a seminal moment for me as a kid,” Weiss, now 51, explains. “It made an impression on me, and I’m sure it colored my career decision.”

Like his father and grandfather, Weiss became an M.D. But he went further. As a teenager entering college, Weiss was stricken with fatigue. He sought help from so-called traditional doctors, but none were able to help him. So Weiss began investigating alternative medicine. He entered medical school, but ended up taking a two-year deferment because of the fatigue.

“I was actually considering another career because of the fatigue,” Weiss says.

Then, at age 24, he saw a homeopath in England who worked up a personalized remedy.

“Homeopathy is very personalized. There are more than a thousand remedies for being tired,” Weiss explains. “He determined what I needed. Within a month my health had improved dramatically, and that really allowed me to go to medical school.”

Weiss isn’t entirely cured of the fatigue. He says he manages it with diet, exercise homeopathic remedies.

During medical school and his early career, Weiss kept his feet in both worlds. He was trained in classical homeopathy, and now offers patients a blend of the two types of practices.

And those patients appreciate it.

“I wouldn’t trade him for a million dollars,” says **Chester Baker**, an electrical contractor from Grants, who started seeing Weiss 10 years ago when he developed Parkinson’s disease.

The disease had been progressing, and at one point Baker, now 71, lost his driver’s license and the ability to dress and bathe himself. His wife had to do those things for him.

Now, though, Baker can drive, dress and wash himself, and he does some contracting work on the side.

The Bakers say Weiss is the most caring doctor they’ve ever met.

“Sometimes we have to call him when he’s on vacation. He’s given us his private phone number. It doesn’t matter to him,” Baker adds.

Baker’s disease ebbs and flows. Sometimes the symptoms intensify, and sometimes the remedies Weiss gives him need to be changed. During those periods of remedy changes, Chester can be disoriented for a few days.

“When he changes remedies, he tells us to call him and report the progress,” Baker’s wife Wannell says. “Sometimes we don’t, because we know this always happens when the remedy changes. Then we go in to see him in Albuquerque, and he chews us out for not having called him.”

Weiss, who first came to New Mexico in 1991, didn't always want to be a doctor.

When he was nine, the family moved to Geneva, Switzerland, and Weiss became enthralled with the United Nations and international politics.

“The U.N.’s European headquarters is in Geneva, and the politics of it all was fascinating,” Weiss says. “We went on these amazing field trips into the heart of Europe.”

Weiss became secretary general of the Student U.N. in Geneva, and thought he would become a political scientist. The Student U.N. operated like the regular body in that more than 300 students come to Geneva from all over Switzerland to discuss global matters. Each student represented a different nation, and each was steeped in that country's politics, economy and social structure, Weiss says.

But the pull of the medical profession was strong. When the family returned to the U.S., Weiss enrolled as a biology major at [Swarthmore College](#) in Pennsylvania. He finished his medical degree in 1987 at the [University of Maryland](#) and sought training in classical homeopathy. He came to New Mexico in 1991, practiced at an urgent care center in Santa Fe and had an integrative medicine practice there. In 2000, he came to Albuquerque to be the director of an integrative medicine center. He started his own integrative medicine practice in late 2000.

Weiss' patients and colleagues say he is an incredibly caring person. It might be that early bout with fatigue that partially fuels that compassion.

“He knows a great deal about compassion, and he understands suffering very well,” says Dr. **Erica Elliott** of Santa Fe. “He understands what it means to not be well and to feel bad.”

Moriah MacCleod, owner of the ISIS Center for Personal Development in Albuquerque, sends some of her psychotherapy patients to Weiss. Often, homeopathic remedies work for people who have adverse reactions to psychotropic drugs, MacCleod says.

“My patients adore him. He is a gifted practitioner,” MacCleod adds. “People like him are rare.”

Weiss has a five-week-long waiting list for new patients. That could be in part because he spends 75 minutes with each new patient on an initial consultation. He believes in treating the whole person and not just a symptom.

Weiss' patients are extremely loyal.

“I told him,” Baker says, “that if he ever moves, I'm moving with him.”

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