

Foreword

If you have ever watched an Italian waiter hold a tray of drinks high in the air as he moves between tables and throngs of people in an outdoor café, you will understand that finding balance is much more than a matter of Newtonian physics. He swivels the tray under his fingers, testing the very edge of equilibrium and teasing us with split second tilts in and out of a seemingly dangerous lack of equilibrium where all might crash. He makes it appear as if his attention is on those who require his service and that the silver tray stacked with drinks and biscotti might as well be weightless. In his accomplished poise, impeccable timing, and skillful attention to other's needs, the waiter reminds us that balance is both an art and a science.

This book is about both the art and science of finding balance in one of the most precious arenas of your life, your health. Because good health is so important, when something goes wrong, we tend to accelerate in one direction or another to find a solution, either focusing on alternative approaches to medicine or conventional (allopathic) approaches, instead of seeking a balance that combines the best of both worlds. The search for the remedy, and in some cases the cure, can lead us into a seeming labyrinth of options that run the gamut from medical systems that sometimes offer more technologies than treatment, to alternative approaches that may not distinguish hype from healing. Dr. Altshuler offers thoughtful and practical direction on finding this balance for yourself, and, in the process, achieving optimum health and well being.

When you are not well and you feel most vulnerable, you are often more susceptible to making rash choices. In addition to finding the right balance between alternative and conventional approaches, this book encourages you to research, research, research before making decisions regarding treatment. Once you commit yourself to such a quest, you may be shocked to discover that there is often more research available on complementary and alternative approaches than on areas of standard conventional medicine. But be forewarned: Research can be contradictory and confusing on both sides. And, yes, as Dr. Altshuler points out, isolated studies with dramatic findings may turn out to be corporate advertising in disguise, so ask lots of questions and do your best to separate fact from fiction.

You can be thrown way off balance when you're not well, and you can be deeply and dramatically tested. Sometimes a change of health is sudden, catastrophic and the result of injury or exposure to exotic disease. On the other hand, you might suffer from chronic

health problems that affect you gradually, over many years. Whatever the cause of ill health, *Balanced Healing* will help show you that the most potent place of renewal emerges out of your own psychological and spiritual strength. When you combine your own energy with the knowledge, skill, and loving support of others, the potential exists for remarkable healing. In struggling to heal, you can, paradoxically, experience a greater level of wholeness by discovering your own incredible inner resources.

Your mental strength and the power of your mind to affect your body is so remarkable that it can dissolve the harshest experiences of victimization and, in some cases, even check or reverse the path of virulent disease. In fact, the history of your life, literally how you have lived and what you have been exposed to, is evidenced in your body. As the Taoist Master Mantak Chia suggests, you should practice smiling into your heart, lungs, liver and kidneys every day; they are the intimate recorders of love and compassion, as well as of torment and self-neglect. We are still learning much about the nature of healing, but this we can say with safety: Extraordinary healing powers can be activated from within. As we gain more evidence concerning the nature of the healing process, including exceptional human capacities, the power of prayer, and subtle energy, your conscious participation in the healing process remains a critical dimension of true healing. You cannot leave to others what can only be generated from within.

An inner confidence, openness, trust, and even peaceful acceptance are crucial for true healing to occur, and these qualities can be cultivated. Indeed, it seems if we really learn to reach in, we can also learn to reach out more effectively and experience the nature of human interdependence. The prayerful and caring support of others can play a significant role in accelerating the healing process and the vital knowledge and skill of professionals is often absolutely critical.

I am reminded of a conversation I had with the director of the Menzhekang hospital in Lhasa, Tibet, a few years ago. Menzhekang is the premier institution for traditional medicine in Tibet. We were discussing plans to assist the hospital in developing a modern surgical center for cataract surgery:

“I am interested that you are open to integrating some aspects of Western allopathic medicine into your traditional practice,” I commented.

For a moment he looked puzzled, and then he smiled. “Like Western medicine, traditional Tibetan medicine is based on a great body of knowledge and on a science developed over hundreds of years. We have always been open to the discovery of the most appropriate and skillful means in furthering our work. In the case of cataract blindness it is quite clear that Western ophthalmic practice has developed the most skillful means to restoring sight to those blinded in this way. Scientists must always remain open.”

I was executive director of the Seva Foundation at the time of this conversation and on a subsequent visit to the region, met with Nepali health workers who were working with traditional healers, found in almost every village of this captivating Himalayan king-

dom. In this case, the healers had been trained to recognize cataracts and give advice on where to send patients, rather than attempting to use thorns or other homespun practices to remove them. The healers continue to work with emotional and spiritual issues and leave the surgery to others. They have found balance.

Dr. Larry Altshuler's book is offered in this same spirit and with the same wisdom.

You are like the waiter with his tray trying to move with poise through a complex dance of daily life, with things to carry and people to serve. Sometimes you are as fluid and graceful as a whirling dervish, and sometimes things fall and even crash. To regain your balance, you must turn inward to touch the deep wellsprings of compassion and energy that source your being, and then reach out with discernment and knowledge until you find wisdom. *Balanced Healing* will help show you the way.

— James O'Dea
President, The Institute of Noetic Sciences