



# THE NATURE OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

George Parker, N.D.

# **This is a BalanSoul Book**

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## ABOUT GEORGE PARKER

George Parker's interest in nature, the body, and the spirit began at a young age. Even as a teenager, he spent his free time exploring nature, horseback riding, practicing judo and kung fu, and studying spirituality and philosophy. With major influences from Stuart Wilde, Emmett Miller and Anthony Robbins, these early experiences continue to provide a foundation for the work and study of a lifetime.

This curiosity and passion led Parker to spend the past two decades collecting a multitude of skills, experiences, and expertise in all things natural, spiritual, psychological, and physiological. Over the years, he has studied and practiced a wide variety of naturopathic techniques, including various massage therapies, aromatherapies, Transcendental Meditation, Thought Field Therapy, Reiki, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Herbal medicine, and many others.

Fully embracing the concept of life-long learning, George Parker, N.D., continues to develop his skills and expertise, keeping up with current and cutting-edge developments in naturopathic medicine. Parker currently resides in Shepparton, Victoria, where he provides worldwide distance treatment through his website, BalanSoul. He also provides consultations locally.

# The Nature of NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

by George Parker, N.D.



BALANSOUL BOOKS  
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# The Nature of Naturopathic Medicine

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been an explosion of interest in all things natural. From the “green” initiatives to reduce ozone depletion, to increased awareness of the harmful effects of certain synthetic materials, to an overall desire to unplug and return to one’s more “natural” roots—nature is a hot commodity today perhaps more than ever before. Not surprisingly, this interest has expanded into the realm of medicine. People are becoming skeptical of and disillusioned with conventional medicine, and are looking for new ways of healing that seem, for lack of a better descriptor, more *natural*.



Given that you are reading this, you probably have an interest in what we might call natural medicine. But *natural medicine* is a non-scientific term, and has no distinct definition. So how do we know that we’re talking about the same thing when we say natural medicine? What do you suppose natural medicine is, anyway?





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## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Personally, I'm wary of the term natural medicine. It is prone to misinterpretation, and it vastly oversimplifies what I do, and what conventional physicians do. Medicines cannot be divided into natural and unnatural, nor does a seal of natural necessarily mean that it is safe or less disturbing to the body than conventional medicine. There are as many poisons in nature as there are in laboratories.



Sometimes I think it's all just a matter of language. If your doctor told you that she wanted to prescribe you a sleep aid called 5,7-dihydroxy-2-phenyl-4H-chromen-4-one, also known as chrysin, you might think that you were getting something highly synthetic and maybe even toxic. But in reality, that is a naturally occurring substance found in

chamomile. Likewise, if you were told that a Jimson weed extract could heal your sleep trouble, that might seem innocuous. Jimson weed is highly toxic, however.





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So, if not solely mixing potions of herbs and bark (not to say we don't do this at all!), what is it that a naturopath does, exactly? Well, I actually think this is a very good question. Many individuals and groups have tried to define the mission and ideology of the naturopath at large. But the truth is that each naturopath—like each conventional physician—has a unique outlook and personal preferences. So while there are some generalizations that would be true of *many* naturopaths *most* of the time, there are fewer unanimous agreements.

That said, I do happen to agree with this list of principles that has been passed around throughout the naturopathic community, none of which would likely raise much contest among naturopaths generally. Many of these principles would also appeal to conventional physicians, but others go largely ignored by mainstream medicine.



**Recognize that the human body wants to make itself well.** When you rip a sweater, it stays ripped until you mend it. When you tear your skin, it will mend itself over time. These facts seem obvi-

ous, but we often forget. Your body is constantly being damaged and repaired right under your nose (literally!), without you



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having to make any special arrangements. The trouble comes when your body's natural abilities are impaired, or it is faced with an injury or illness that it isn't equipped to repair alone. As a naturopath, my goal is to remove any obstacles impeding the body's ability to heal itself, and provide further assistance when needed, in harmony with a conventional physician when applicable.

**Minimize risk to the patient.** Many treatments, pharmaceutical or otherwise, have associated risks, like harmful side effects or potential injury. While all doctors are responsible for educating patients about risks and helping them weigh out the odds, naturopaths tend to be more cautious. Sometimes this means taking the "long way" when the short cut is too treacherous. And sometimes it means using the centuries-old proven treatment rather than the cutting edge experimental drug. We don't believe that your health is something to gamble with. The less invasive, the better.

**Educate patients about healing, which provides them with optimism and self-empowerment.** The decisions we make every day have a tremendous effect on our individual states of wellness. Naturopaths recognize that promoting wellness is about more than fixing what is broken: it's a matter of changing the way people think. We want to show patients the power and potential of the human body. We don't want them to rely on us—we want them to feel empowered to prevent illness and



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have confidence in their nature.



**Always aim to deal with the cause of an illness, rather than the symptoms.** While symptom control has its place, we always want to trace back the illness to its source. True wellness is not just the absence of symptoms, but rather a body

that is acting as it is designed to. We aim to make patients both comfortable and truly well, in mind, body, and spirit. We won't put a band-aid on a bullet wound. Prevention plays a large role in this as well. Preventing disease deals with the *cause of the disease*—not just the infection, for instance, but the conditions that allowed the infection to occur. This mindset gets to the root of illness. See my free e-book on [preventing cancer](#) for one example of this.

**Treat each patient as an individual, recognizing the complexities that we each carry.** While we all have a lot in common, considering we're all human with human bodies and brains, we each react to treatment in a way entirely unique to ourselves. As naturopaths, we keep this on the forefront of our minds. We pride ourselves on adaptability and individualized care and attention. You are not just a number to your naturo-





path—you are a community member, a real person, a friend.

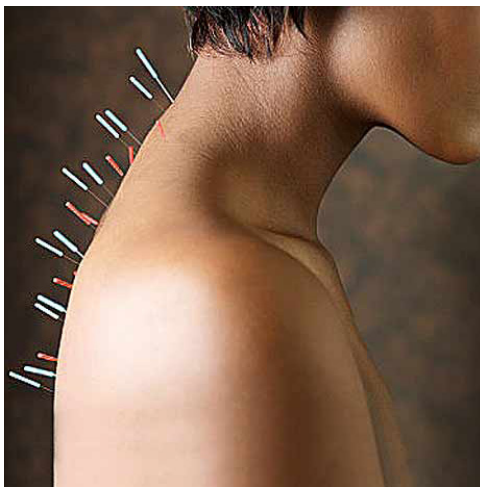
**Aim to prevent disease by promoting wellness on all levels, from the individual to the global community.** Wellness must be protected and encouraged on a large scale. The states of our communities, countries, and the world at large have complex interactions with each other. Just treating individual cases as they come along is like treating a symptom and not the underlying cause. As naturopaths, we make it our goal to promote wellness of the global community, the environment, and the collective conscious of all people. We will never say, “That’s not my job.” Every aspect of wellness in the world falls under our jurisdiction, and none should be ignored.



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## THE TERMS OF THE TRADE

You may have encountered any number of terms that you equate with “natural medicine” without knowing exactly what each term denotes.



I'd like to demystify some of these terms and practices so that you may better understand my own perspective on health and treatment, as well as the perspectives and practices of any number of other naturopaths. Language is deceptively ambiguous. Unless we confirm

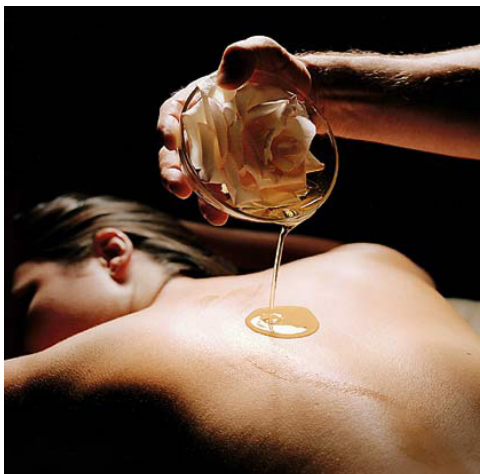
that we both agree on a definition of a word, all may be lost in interpersonal translation.

**Alternative Medicine:** This is the broadest category. In some ways, alternative medicine is a more accurate term than “natural medicine,” although it still isn't very descriptive. Basically, any medical practice that falls outside of “conventional medicine” is considered alternative medicine. So it is defined by what it is not, which is certainly not the best kind of definition. There are no other stipulations in this definition. Alternative medicines do tend to have other elements in common, however. They are



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often based on widespread historical usage and anecdotal evidence. While some of these treatments lack extensive scientific studies proving their efficacy, this is not always because they don't work. It may instead have to do with problems funding studies, bias against alternative medicine, and the limits of our current scientific understanding.



## **Complementary Medicine:**

Also called **integrative medicine**, complementary medicine is simply the use of both conventional and alternative medicines together. This is based on the belief that each can complement the other—that it's not necessary to choose

one or the other, but that both should be regarded as tools in the same toolbox. I believe strongly in this approach. The key is to find the right tool for the job. If that tool is a conventional pharmaceutical, I will not hesitate to utilize it for the sake of dogma.

**Naturopathy:** From the Greek words for “nature” and “disease,” naturopathy is defined quite differently depending on whom you ask. I think it's important to note that, by most definitions, the “nature” in naturopathy doesn't imply that all naturopathic treatments are plants or even natural elements in general.





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This “nature” actually refers to the nature of the human body to be a machine of healing. Naturopaths wish to aid the body’s natural healing abilities and potential rather than pursue more convoluted and invasive measures. We don’t want to work in spite of the body, but rather help the body to do what it is made to do. Most naturopaths utilize medicines derived from plants, but that is not exclusively what defines naturopathy.



## **Holistic (Wholistic) Medicine:**

Based on the idea that the whole of a thing is more than the sum of its parts, holistic medicine takes the perspective that one must understand the complex interplay between the

human body, mind, and state of existence in order to treat a patient. It is not as simple as one element affecting another, but is rather a web of interactions, with each patient possessing a unique system to work within. Holism is a key characteristic of naturopathy.

**Homeopathic Medicine:** While some people tend to think this is just another word for alternative medicine, these terms are absolutely not synonymous. Homeopathy is a type of alternative medicine, in which very dilute mixtures in water or alcohol called “remedies” are given to patients to cure illness. It works



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on the principle that if a high dose of a particular material can cause the symptoms of an illness, a low dose can alleviate those symptoms. You might think of it in terms of how vaccines or anti-venoms work, although the actual mechanics of how homeopathy works may be different. While homeopathy doesn't have a firmly scientific basis or proof, its widespread use and high anecdotal acclaim give it merit with naturopaths.



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## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A VISIT WITH YOUR NATUROPATH

Taking a holistic approach to your health requires a naturopath to take time getting to know the whole of you. When you first visit, a naturopath will record the history of your health, including lifestyle factors like diet, external stressors, and use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs.



The practitioner will ask why you're visiting and listen to you describe your symptoms or how you feel generally. He or she might seem to be asking questions that don't have anything to do with the illness you are seeking treatment for, but part of your naturopath's responsibility is to trace back the cause of discomfort to its source. This can be a meandering road to trace. See my

e-book on the relationship between the [gastrointestinal system and the brain](#) for an example of this.

Then, the naturopath will perform an examination and diag-





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nostic tests. You can expect this first visit to last an hour or more, with follow-up visits taking about half that time. Specific times will vary according to the methods indicated by your symptoms. This natural way to reach a healthy lifestyle requires sufficient time to ask questions and fully understand your personal health goals.

Naturopaths are knowledgeable of traditional medical diagnosis and treatment. In many ways, they use much of the same language as conventional medicine. They also, however, bring an arsenal of alternative medicines and therapies that a conventional physician would likely ignore. Naturopaths don't wait for disease to show up to explore treatment. Instead, they work hard to prevent illness before it happens.

Anyone—sick or healthy—can benefit from naturopathy. Qualified naturopaths have spent years in rigorous training and continue with ongoing training as part of their profession. They are educated in the same basic sciences as a traditional medical doctor. In addition to the standard curriculum of medicine, the naturopath completes training in fields such as (but not limited to) nutrition, botanical medicine, biochemistry, psychology, and counseling. In order to be licensed, a naturopath must pass comprehensive and rigorous professional board certification exams. Naturopaths can treat all medical conditions, including digestive issues, chronic pain, obesity, heart disease, breathing disorders, hormonal imbalances, allergies, infertility, cancer and all sorts of chronic fatigue symptoms. Their protocols are



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designed to identify and remove barriers to a healthful internal and external environment.

The ultimate goal of the naturopathic practitioner is to change the healthcare system from a disease management protocol to a system that fosters comprehensive methods for long-term health by incorporating the principles of naturopathic medicine.



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## THE GAPS IN CONVENTIONAL CONTEMPORARY MEDICINE

The technical advancements of modern conventional medicine are absolutely miraculous. I'm not here to tell you to stay away from conventional medicine, that it is evil or entirely ineffective. It's not. It can be endlessly wonderful and useful for promoting wellness and healing. But I am here to tell you that it's not perfect, and that alternative medicine and naturopathy can offer you a perspective not often found in the mainstream field.



You see, for all of modern medicine's priceless innovations, contemporary conventional medicine would seem flawed even by ancient practitioners. As far back as the 2nd century, China's Yellow Emperor

wrote in his *Classic of Internal Medicine*, "A doctor who treats a disease after it has happened is a mediocre doctor. A doctor who treats a disease before it happens is a superior doctor."

In fact, traditionally, Chinese doctors were paid to keep their patients healthy and were either dismissed or given no pay if





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the patient became ill. This philosophy created a health system—as opposed to an *ill health system*, which treats patients only after they’ve become sick.

A naturopath infuses these principles into the advanced research of modern science. And the treatment doesn’t just encompass the body. Naturopaths understand the power of the mind and its relationship to a collective social consciousness. Naturopathy fosters a purity of body, mind and soul, and empowers patients to take responsibility for their own health, as well as the health of the greater collective of life.

Naturopaths can provide primary or complementary treatment for just about all medical conditions, though it can pay to find a naturopath who specializes in a particular condition, just like with conventional physicians. Overall, the protocols of naturopaths are designed to identify and remove barriers to a healthful internal and external environment.

The ultimate goal of the naturopathic practitioner is to change the healthcare system from a disease management protocol to a system that fosters comprehensive methods for long-term health by incorporating the principles of naturopathic medicine.



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## THE BOILING POT

Imagine your symptoms of disease as a pot of boiling water positioned above a raging fire. Much of conventional western medicine gives you a drug that effectively neutralizes the symptoms of the boiling water by placing large ice cubes in the pot.



For a while, the symptoms are removed and your body feels much more comfortable. The relief is immediate and powerful. But soon, the ice melts and the symptoms return. You must take the drug again. For the symptoms of illness to remain

neutralized, the pot (your body) has to take regular doses of ice cubes (pharmaceutical drugs). Otherwise, the unpleasant symptoms of boiling (illness) continue. On another level, even if conventional medicine manages to put out the fire, that in itself is not necessarily a true success. As long as we live in a world where we leave pots unattended (so to speak), it will always be an uphill battle, and a battle in vain.

The approach that a naturopath takes is quite different. First, the naturopathic practitioner would take a step back to examine the entire system to identify what is causing the symptoms. In the



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boiling water anecdote, the obvious culprit is the raging fire, or even the maker of the fire. To help the water stop boiling, the naturopath will begin taking the sticks of wood from under the pot, one-by-one. With the burning sticks (causes of illness) removed, the water stops boiling and coolness (health) is restored. The naturopath likewise works to create a safe environment for the future, not just waiting for the boiling to be out of control.





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USE THE TOOLS AVAILABLE TO YOU!

While the many resources I offer throughout [BalanSoul](#) and [Mindivine](#) are meant to inform and guide you on your journey to wellness, they are not meant to take the place of direct contact with healthcare providers, conventional and alternative medical practitioners alike. Self-empowerment and self-treatment do not mean self-sufficiency. There is a whole community out there full of tools to keep you well. Use them! And use the tools offered by the global community—tools like the international history of medicine, tools like the articles and books you read here. And, at the risk of cliché, never stop learning.



Life is defined by change. Always be prepared to reevaluate and reassess your position as the currents take you this way and that way. Wellness is not an equation to be solved once: It's a perpetual game of balance. Naturopathy is about recognizing this and preventing

a tightrope fall before it happens—or, if need be, helping the fallen back up.

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## About George Parker



George Parker, owner of the websites, [BalanSoul](#) and [Mindivine](#), is a qualified practicing naturopath dedicated to helping people find wellness the world over. He offers worldwide distance treatments and consultations, as well as face-to-face sessions in Victoria, Australia. **Parker**

**specialises in the treatment of mental health disorders** including **stress, anxiety** and **depression**. He also has special interests in **cardiovascular disease** and **cancer treatment support** and also practices general naturopathy and preventative medicine. No matter how big or small your health concerns are, George Parker is ready to help you on your journey to wellness of body, mind, and spirit.

For more information, visit [BalanSoul](#) or send an email to:

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