The Terror of Everyday Life

Many of us take for granted the demands, challenges, and uncomfortable moments that we face throughout the day. Fears are an inherent part of life in the world, though they are usually manageable. Whereas, during childhood, fears tend to be many and out of proportion; as we mature into adulthood, they are more manageable or we simply learn to cope, compensate, or hide them from the rest of the world.

Not so with the 11% of the population that suffers from panic attacks, often recurrent. These individuals, two and a half times more likely to be women than men, experience a kind of ongoing terror. Events and circumstances that might cause the rest of us a twinge of fear, or go unnoticed, often run the very lives of those individuals with panic attacks. They go out of their way to avoid situations or circumstances that are frightening. This may mean plotting alternative driving routes free of bridges or freeways, avoiding airplanes at all cost, or making excuses anytime there is a social event involving a crowd. Their lives become more and more narrow as the perceived threatening situations assume ever greater proportions.

Different Strokes for Different Folks

In homeopathy, no two individuals experiencing panic attacks are the same. Common symptoms of the experience are heart palpitations, chest pain or discomfort, sweating, chills, numbness and tingling, abdominal discomfort, difficulty breathing. In conventional medicine, one of several anti-depressants or anti-anxiety medications is prescribed. A homeopath is much more interested in what the patient with panic attacks experiences that is not characteristic of the diagnosis. It is by delving more deeply into the unique experience of each person with panic attacks, that a homeopath finds that each is distinct.

Two of the most common medicines for this condition, for example, are Aconite and Argentum nitricum. In the first case, there is a tremendous, global terror of so many potential circumstances, including crowds, pregnancy, music, leaving one’s home, accidents, airplanes, death, falling, ghosts, heart disease, closed-in spaces, air raids, shadows, tunnels, and trains. Aconite is a plant (monkshood) and the key feature of those needing plant medicines is sensitivity. Members of the Ranunculaceae (buttercup) family, including Aconite, have a diffuse sensitivity to almost everything. Hence the unlikely fears, found in patients needing Aconite, along with those mentioned above, such as fear to turn over in bed, of being touched by others passing by, of crossing the street, and even to go out of doors. Just imagine how terrifying and threatening life would be for someone in such a state.

Those needing Argentum nitricum (silver nitrate), can have quite intense preoccupations and dread, but, as with all minerals, of a more limited and less global scope. The objects of fear are more spatial, such as heights, bridges, elevators, crowds, airplanes, falling, and small spaces. Issues of failure and losing control are also prominent, hence the fear of examinations, failure, anticipating an event, or undertaking a new task. Those needing this medicine have a different manner of speaking, interests, careers, and way of being.

So it is with each person needing different homeopathic medicines. One of our patients was a prominent politician so limited by his terror of flying that traveling long distances was a terrific ordeal. His tremendous claustrophobia, of being like a rat trapped inside a wall, led us to prescribe Rattus, which alleviated much of his anxiety. There are over 2,000 homeopathic medicines, so any one is fair game for each individual. The well-indicated medicine has the potential of freeing the individual in a much more permanent and universal fashion than a conventional drug. It has been quite rewarding for us to witness how much calmer, more relaxed, and freer many of our patients with panic attacks often become with homeopathic treatment.

A Tightly Wound Investment Banker

Jack, a 38-year-old investment banker was very pleasant and immaculately dressed. Married with four children, he had worked for two prominent banking institutions over the previous 16 years. "I've simply become way too wound up. My sleep is erratic. I actually went to consult a psychiatrist about a year ago because I felt like my wheels were going off the track. I had a horrible experience with Prozac derivatives. My system is sensitive and I reacted terribly. I guess I found out what I didn't want to do."

"This year has really brought things to a head. I'm very accomplished at what I do. But when I sit down with a prospective investor, my stomach begins to bubble and my heart races. It feels as if I'm losing control of the situation. My whole sense of calm and self-confidence dissolves. I get short with the kids and I'm almost too stressed to enjoy sex. The stress spills out all over my life. I know the wounds are
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Aurum metallicum (Gold), Rhodium, and Niccolum (Nickel), he bounced out of bed and was ready to go without ever needing a caffeine boost. In fact, caffeine "destroyed" Jack. Self-critical by nature, Jack was extremely demanding of himself and his accomplishments. When gripped with tension, Jack's breathing became shallow, his back and neck constricted, and his stomach felt tight. His psychiatrist likened him to an A student who always had to keep up his grades. Losing was always a big deal for Jack. As far back as grade school, losing a baseball game had been a serious matter. He just got used to winning in everything. Honest and believable, he had always excelled in business. Yet he felt overwhelmed by a fear of being unsuccessful.

Jack's bottom-line feeling was being out of control. No matter how large an account he was able to secure, he continually fixated on "screwing up." Indulging in frequent cramps typical of those needing this medicine, but did incur muscle cramps of falling from a very high place. "I'd always wake up drenched in perspiration, his heart raced, and he had to sit down. That incident instilled in him a fear of looking stupid, out of control. What if the situation repeated itself? Over the years it did, so frequently in recent times that he had to find an answer other than antidepressants.

In Jack's case, it took a little over a year to find the medicine which had the most profound effect on him. We first gave him Nux vomica (Quaker's button), the classic homeopathic medicine for an overstressed, irritable, hard-driving, Type A personality. No success. We then ascertained that Jack needed one of the medicines made from metals. These individuals place a very strong emphasis on performance, success, and reaching a great height in their career. Highly responsible, they are usually high achievers but experience a great fear of falling from the position they have worked so hard to achieve.

Jack's case was a challenge for us. After trying Titanium, Aurum metallicum (Gold), Rhodium, and Niccolum (Nickel), some of which had a partial effect in helping Jack, we arrived at Cuprum metallicum (Copper). Just as with conventional medications, it can take time to find the very best homeopathic medicine for an individual.

The main feature of someone needing Cuprum is a firm desire to maintain control. Serious, conscientious, responsible individuals, they push themselves very hard. They make excellent leaders and can be depended upon to follow through with their commitments. Like the other metals in homeopathy, these people can have a great fear of heights, which was true of Jack. As a child his most vivid dreams were of falling from a very high place. "I'd always wake up before I would go splat." Jack did not suffer from the muscle cramps typical of those needing this medicine, but did incur an injury to his calf muscle which inhibited his running routine.

After taking the Cuprum, we didn't see Jack again for five months. A busy, practical man, he didn't feel a need to come see us since he was doing so well. The notion of losing control had rarely even occurred to him. He felt like his old self who didn't get wound up about meetings or presentations. The sensation of observing and judging himself had disappeared. Sleep had also improved. Jack came back to see us because after drinking coffee at a friend's birthday party a month earlier, the anxiety had begun to return. A meeting with a high-powered client was scheduled the following week and he needed to feel himself again. It was evident to Jack and to us that the coffee interfered with his progress and we repeated the medicine. He continued to visit us yearly for the next couple of years, then felt well enough that he did not need to continue treatment. We have received word of Jack now and then since, and he continues to do well.

What Can You Expect from the Successful Homeopathic Treatment of Panic Attacks?

- If you seek the care of an experienced homeopath, we estimate at least a 70% likelihood that you will be a minimum of 70% better. It may take up to a year to find the best medicine for you, but, most likely, one of the first several will help you significantly.
- The correct homeopathic medicine will alleviate not only your panic attacks and anxiety, but whatever physical complaints that you may have. This is not the case if an organ has been removed or previous surgery has made full recovery of function impossible.
- It is highly likely with panic attacks, that, once the homeopathic treatment is clearly effective, you will no longer need conventional anti-anxiety medications. You can discuss this with the prescribing physician.
- Your overall energy and vitality will improve as will a general feeling of calmness and acceptance of life.
- Your thinking will be clearer and more coherent.
- Creativity, self-confidence, and your sense of well-being should improve noticeably. A common report that homeopaths hear after the simillimum (best-matching homeopathic medicine) is "I feel like myself again" or "I have my life back."

Homeopathy Can Be Highly Effective for Much More than Panic Attacks

Whether you may be suffering from panic attacks, phobias, anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or other mental and emotional problems, do consider homeopathy. While homeopaths also treat most physical conditions, we have found, with nearly 30 years of mental health experience and over 20 years as homeopaths, that our form of medicine offers great hope for psychiatric problems, and, in many cases, an alternative to psychotropic medications.
