

## SEVEN TIPS FOR HEALING YOURSELF

Contributed by Bernard Siegel, M.D.

1. **ACCEPT YOUR ILLNESS:** Being resigned to an illness is destructive, allows the illness to run your life, but accepting allows energy to be freed for other things in your life. Acceptance is like saying, "I'll leave it to God." You know that the illness is there, but you also know that the future will be something you can handle, so it's no longer a burden.
2. **SEE THE ILLNESS AS A SOURCE OF GROWTH:** The symbolism I often use here is the salamander. If the salamander loses its tail, it doesn't get emotionally involved, it simply regenerates a new one. I think our primitive nervous system tells us that if you have a loss you grow something to replace what was lost. If you begin to grow psychologically in response to your losses, then you don't need to have a physical illness or growth anymore.
3. **VIEW YOUR ILLNESS AS A POSITIVE REDIRECTION IN YOUR LIFE:** This means that you don't judge anything that happens to you. If you get fired from a job, for example, you assume that you are being redirected toward something that you're supposed to be doing. Your whole life changes when you say that something is just a redirection. You are then at peace. Everything's okay and you go on your way, knowing that the new direction is the one that is intuitively right for you. After awhile you begin to feel it. And, of course, fewer and fewer misdirections begin to occur in your life because of the person you become.
4. **UNDERSTAND THAT DEATH OR RECURRENCE IS NOT A FAILURE IF STEPS ONE, TWO, OR THREE ARE ACCOMPLISHED, BUT A FURTHER CHOICE OR STEP:** If staying alive is your sole goal, you have to be a failure, because you have to die someday. When you begin to accept the inevitability of death and see that you only have a limited time (including the only time you really have, which is right now) you begin to realize that you might as well enjoy where you are at the moment to the best of your ability.
5. **LEARN SELF-LOVE AND PEACE OF MIND AND THE BODY RESPONDS:** Your body gets what I call "live" messages when you say, "I love myself." And that's

not the ego talking, it's just self-esteem. It's as if someone else is loving you, saying you are a worthwhile person, believing in you, and telling you that you're here to give something to the world. When you do that, your immune system says, "This person likes living, let's fight for his or her life."

6. **DON'T MAKE PHYSICAL CHANGE YOUR SOLE GOAL:** When someone comes to our groups saying, "I've come to get over my sickness," I tell them that's the wrong reason. Come to obtain peace of mind, acceptance and forgiveness. Learn to love. In the process, the disease isn't totally overlooked, but we look at it as one of the problems they are having and perhaps one of the fears. Learn about hope, love, acceptance, forgiveness, and

peace of mind, and the disease may go away in the process.

7. **ACHIEVE IMMORTALITY THROUGH LOVE:** The only way you can live forever is to love somebody - then you really leave a gift behind. When you live that way, as I have seen with people with physical illness, you literally have a choice of when you die. You can say, "Thank you, I've used my body to its limit, I have loved as much as I possibly can, and I'm leaving at two o'clock today." And you go. Then maybe you spend half an hour dying and the rest of your life living. When these things are not done, you spend a lot of your life dying and only a little bit of time living.