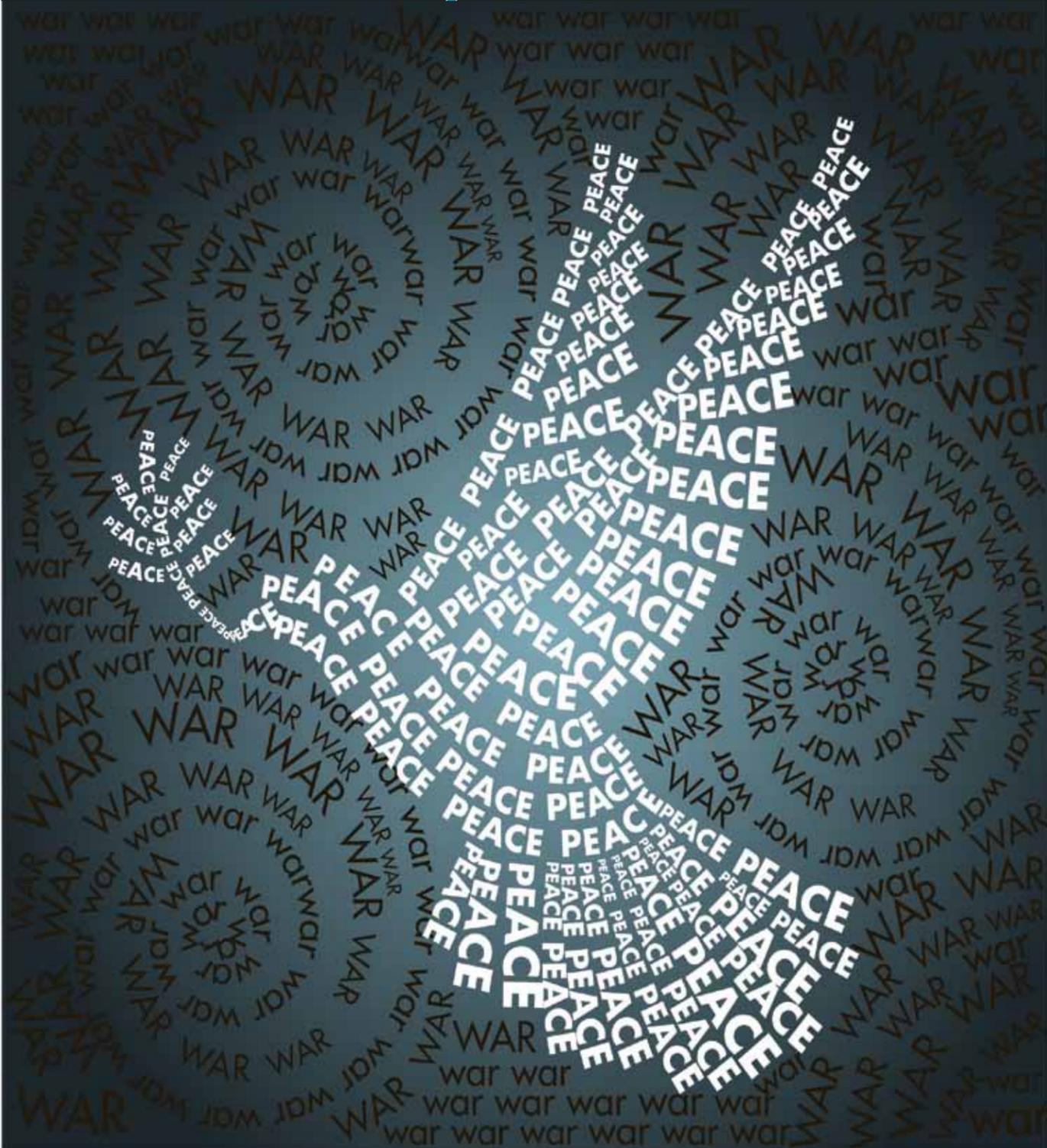


FROM POLITICS, MEDICINE, AND WAR TO INTEGRITY, HEALING, AND PEACE



Elson Haas, MD

Let's continue last month's exploration of this philosophy of politics, war and peace and how it permeates many parts of our life where an "attack and conquer" mentality may prevail, which includes our relationship with others and most importantly with our one and only self. I believe we can each improve in this area and practice kindness, acceptance and understanding for all people and life on Earth, especially when they appear very different from us.

I might also note here that over our planet's history, many wars have been fought in the name of religion. We may want others to believe as we do and find them wrong or "heathens" if they don't. Even currently, there are religious struggles going on throughout the world. We will do better and have more peace if we can trust everyone's right to believe as they choose and pick the religion that suits them best, rather than make any "non-believers" our enemies. The key is that our individual rights do not impinge on or cause harm to others.

Farming as War and Food Production as Earth and Body Toxicity
Modern agriculture has a similar "attack and conquer" approach as modern medicine when it comes to protecting growing foods from pests and weeds. Strong chemicals are used and they may do the job, at least in the short term, but they often negatively impact the plants, the soil, the waters and our Earth, and ultimately animals and humans as well. Organic practices are now shown to work sufficiently well to produce better quality and healthier foods with the added benefit of a healthier Earth.

Big business and multinational corporations have had huge success with "modern" foods, which refers to processed and packaged foods and includes companies that make candies, cereals, baked goods, and much more that I call "treat foods," which are often high in sugars and fats and low in nutrition. This quick, cheap food has led to the successful fast-food industry and has spawned annual worldwide sales in the trillions of dollars. However, this approach to food, and I question the idea

that it is any kind of "advance," has undermined the health of millions of people and especially children.

The whole idea for the four basic food groups came out of "special interest" groups like the dairy and meat industries that proposed and taught the overconsumption of these foods in the American diet. Many believe that there is continued corruption in having special interest groups imposing their will on government and industry related to both agricultural practices and food production, labeling, GMOs, etc. For example, it has recently come to light that 50 years ago the sugar industry quietly paid scientists to point the blame at fats as the culprit in causing heart and other diseases resulting in years of misleading dietary guidelines (NPR 9/13/2016).

Luckily, our knowledge has advanced and many have shifted their attention to new food pyramids and the awareness that fresh vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and other non-meats should be the largest part of our daily diet.

For a more in-depth look at such agricultural and food production issues, check out this recent article by well-known food activist and author, Michael Pollan, *New York Times Magazine* 10/5/2016.

Big Picture: How Do We Move Towards Integrity, Healing And Peace?

Rethinking Patriotism for the Planet Earth

Patriotism can be a source of division and conflict, or one of unity and peace. The weeks following the election make us ask which will it be for our nation going forward?

Being a Patriot means different things to different people, but it is typically defined as someone who loves, supports, and defends his or her country and its interests with devotion. The origin of the word is the Latin Pater, which means father. When the US government created a new agency after 9/11 to defend the country against terrorism, it obviously couldn't be called the

Department of Fatherland Security (too many echoes of Hitler?) nor of Motherland Security (a reminder of the USSR?), and they chose the word Homeland. Perhaps we need to look beyond the limits of the nation for a deeper meaning of Homeland—perhaps look both closer in and much, much further out. In fact, we have two real homes and both of them need our love and support—the first is our body, the only one we have,

Fortunately many of the wise choices we can make for our personal health and what we consume can also benefit the environment. For example, eating more local and organic foods means avoiding the produce of factory farms and the use of fertilizers and pesticides with their toxic residues and damage to wildlife. It also means using less gasoline and trucks for food to travel. Eating less fast or packaged food has a similar



and the second is Planet Earth, from which our body is made and without which we cannot survive. Both of them need our attention and our care. So, I propose that we become Body Patriots and Planet Patriots and I believe we can do both at the same time.

If we wish to create peace and health in our body, we must develop some devotion to conscious and conscientious care that enhances our energy and vitality. This can be simple and it starts with good food and a sustainable fitness program as well as getting proper sleep and learning to minimize stress and how we create it in our body and life. That's where I suggest we can begin to stop generating internal struggle and war that manifest as symptoms and disease. When we learn to care for our selves in this way, it can carry over to our work and personal relationships and we can be part of creating peace in all areas of our life. This is the message of The 5 Keys to Staying Healthy which can be found on the HEALTH page of my website, www.ElsonHaasmd.com.

I also believe we need a broader perspective about our lifestyle and its effect on the health of the planet as a whole.

result and also reduces landfill-bound waste. Meat production is a major contributor to climate change and deforestation, so a diet with less meat is also doubly beneficial. There are many such examples that I discuss in my Staying Healthy book trilogy: *Staying Healthy with the Seasons*, *Staying Healthy with Nutrition* and most recently, *Staying Healthy with NEW Medicine*.

At a time when our country seems so divided, maybe we could reconsider what we mean by "Homeland" and begin to take actions that will promote the peace and health of our small home, our body, our local communities, and our big home, Mother Earth, at the same time. Become a Body Patriot and a Planet Patriot!

Of course, there are various types of strife, conflict, and war—and much of this starts from inner turmoil and affects our inner peace, our personal relationships, and our overall health. Much is based on our attitudes and approach to life. This article looks to tie together political and medical aspects and the approaches we take to resolve issues or treat health conditions.

Politics, Medicine, Farming and the Environment—are all examples of ways in which the "traditional attack and conquer"

mentality has had negative consequences and where a more integrative approach has more likely long-term positive results. This is also true in our personal relationships and is a core concept for this article.

It is we who create war, or develop the concept of war as a solution to conflict, and this often begins as children from our parents' attitudes towards the world as well as the environment we are exposed to with the media's onslaught of violence from movies and the everyday news—and this affects our own behaviors, messages, and attitudes to life and relationships. Most of us have problems or challenges in our personal alliances at home with family members, at work, and in love. Our programming, once developed, is difficult to change.

Our upbringing deeply affects how we relate to the world and how much of a fighter we are as mature adults. When we are blessed and supported with love and care, and we feel "privileged" and comfortable in life, we are likely to be more content and accepting of the world as it is, with a positive outlook. Although we may have more chance for happiness, that's not always the case. Many "privileged" and wealthy people are also unhappy and turn to drugs, even suicide.

Of course, when we grow up being denied good food, shelter, a comfortable bed, peaceful surroundings, and caring parental guidance, or even worse, when we are hurt or abused or have embattled or divorced parents who hold resentment towards each other, or have a parent in prison, or we live in a neighborhood with crime and guns—it's more likely that we may not embrace the world so positively and want to claim our piece of the earth and acquire enough money for the comforts we see others experiencing.

On the other hand, many less privileged people who grow up in poor and deprived or struggling families and neighborhoods rise up and do great things with their lives. The key is both self-acceptance and belief in our self along with the fortitude to persist in achieving our dreams.

So, it starts with each of us, with such questions as, "Were our parents peaceful, or were they fighters, angry, and mad at the world? What makes us want to give, help others, especially those less fortunate?"

Whatever and wherever our life is at the moment, it can get better, and it starts NOW! It is based on how we care for our own health and body/mind and heart every day. We do not have to be embattled with our current life, and for most of us, we can always do better. Is it with our diet and dependent habits, drugs we rely upon, or taking the time to exercise, sleep, relax, and be creative and do some good things for our family, neighbors, and community?

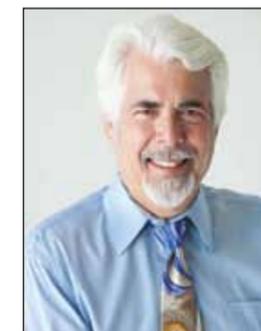
When we take this positive approach to our lives, we stay away from the battle, the struggle that fights with symptoms and physical/emotional complaints that are often managed with superficial "Band-Aid" approaches relying on prescription and over-the-counter remedies that aren't really true remedies. This is where we can work on our first level battleground, to stay out of the "attack and conquer" medical approach, and this can affect many other areas of our lives, especially our personal relationships.

One of my favorite parts in my recent book *Staying Healthy with NEW Medicine* is in the section on Stress and Relationships and is entitled "The Art and Practice for Peacefully 'Not Getting Along' with Others." It's about "fair fighting," listening and caring

to create peace. Ideally, we can understand the difference between a reaction and a response. We can learn how to healthfully disagree with others and resolve conflict with attentive listening and caring, and finding the cooperation in the midst of any struggle. There is almost always a way to resolve conflicts if people take this compassionate approach. When we can achieve this, it makes a huge difference in the stress we experience in day-to-day life. We need to be able to hold our inner core stable and not have it be disturbed by our external surroundings and events, both personal and worldly. There are always things going on that are concerning and stressful. Just watch the nightly news and see the latest murders, serious accidents, hurricanes, fires, and such. Of course, these can be devastating for those involved, yet, when they do not affect us directly, it should not alter our inner strength and stability. We can care and even shed tears, but we hold our inner selves solidly centered in being who we need to be and what we need to do.

In conclusion, if we wish to get beyond the external and internal fighting, beyond an "attack and conquer" approach, we need to explore our deeper selves to understand why we might feel conflicted about a particular issue or a person and his or her comments or activities. Likewise, for health issues, we should ideally address any underlying causes, which often relate to our lifestyle habits; to me, that's the first place to look for answers to any health challenges, be they acute illnesses or chronic problems. Taking this more integrative, healing approach in medical care would make a huge difference in our nation's health and especially with the costs associated with treating chronic disease.

Our path to healing lies within each of us in taking primary responsibility for our own health and finding simple, safe and inexpensive ways to undo or reverse medical problems as they occur. Ideally, we find a peaceful way to coexist with our body and with our life's activities and our relationships and follow some Hippocratic guidelines, such as "First, do no harm," "Let food be thy medicine," and "Pay attention to the seasons of the year and the effects they have upon us and our health." ■



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(Rodale 2015) and the just self published *Staying Healthy with NEW Medicine: Integrating Natural, Eastern, and Western Approaches for Optimal Health*. Learn more at ElsonHaasMD.com. Dr. Haas, as Dr. Sun, creates entertaining educational products for children and families, including The Anatomix Comix™ with CD of songs and also available as Apps at www.seasonsstudios.com.