



# How can we bring compassion to the forefront of healthcare?

#### Dr Robin Youngson CoFounder of Hearts in Healthcare







Medical science: objective, materialistic, reductionist - we have become 'body mechanics', not healers





**OLD STORY...** 

Disease causes suffering...

#### Suffering causes disease





Pessimists

+++++

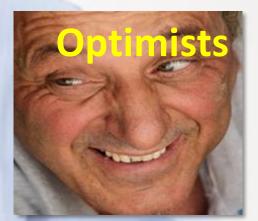
Bringing compassion to the forefront of healthcare

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## Suffering causes disease:

Long-term survival after heart attack:

- pessimists have 4 times higher death rate from cardiac disease and 3 times higher mortality from all causes of death



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## Suffering causes disease:

Chances of getting clinical influenza after a dose of 'flu virus:

- 3 times as many

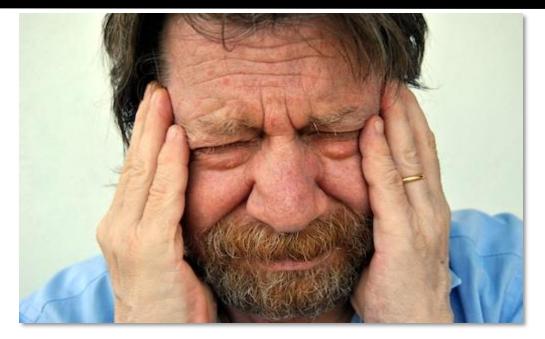
pessimists get influenza, as optimists











#### **Burnout!**

Burnout causes a 40% increased in heart attack and stroke – a bigger risk than smoking, high cholesterol or lack of exercise.





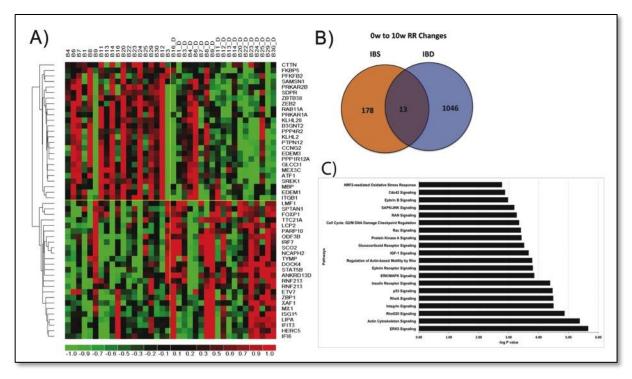


Suffering causes changes to gene expression:

Childhood abuse causes down-regulation of the gene for brainderived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). The resulting structural abnormalities lead to Borderline Personality Disorder. Psychotherapy can reverse the changes in gene expression and heal the patient.







9 week mind-body program in patients with inflammatory bowel disease changed expression of 1059 genes

Kuo B, Bhasin M, Jacquart J, Scult MA, Slipp L, Riklin EIK, et al. (2015) Genomic and Clinical Effects Associated with a Relaxation Response Mind- Body Intervention in Patients with Irritable Bowel Syndrome and Inflammatory Bowel Disease. PLoS ONE 10(4):

e0123861. doi:10.1371/journal. pone.0123861





Happiness and gene expression... CTRA genes modulate the stress/threat response: pro-inflammatory, increased risk of arterial disease, cancer, neuro-degeneration and suppression of viral immunity



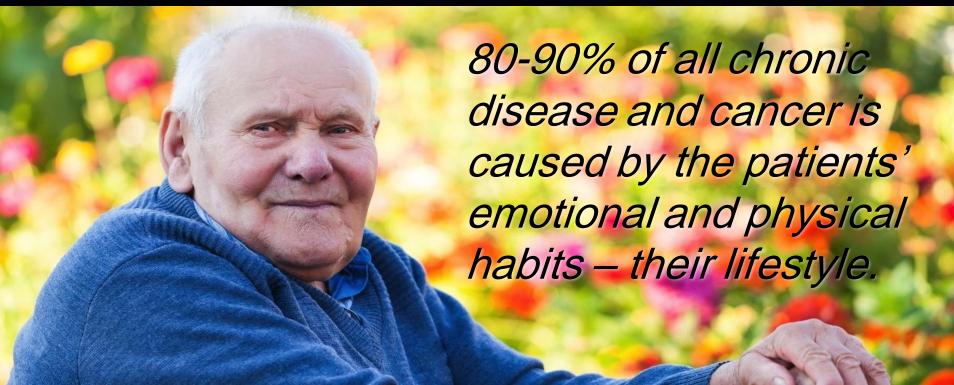
#### But there are TWO kinds of happiness:

 Eudaimonic happiness - from the joy of serving others, compassion, caring.
Hedonic happiness - from serving your own material desires

*Hedonic* happiness up-regulates CTRA genes – risk of chronic disease!









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#### So how do we help our patients heal?

Through compassion - it's our humane response to their suffering.



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Our patients heal when they transcend suffering and find true happiness.





If you want **others** to be happy, practice compassion. If **you** want to be happy, practice compassion.



If you want **others** to be **healthy**, practice compassion. If **you** want to be **healthy**, practice compassion.





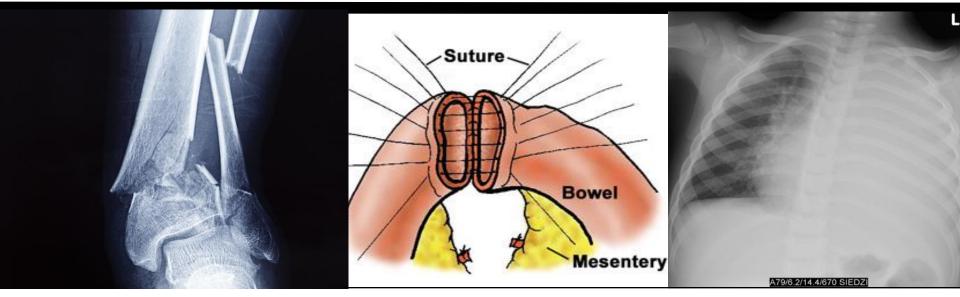
#### **OLD STORY... (body mechanic)**

Patient demand is overwhelming and uncontrollable...

Patients are an abundant source of resilience, healing and wellbeing ... NEW STORY (healer)





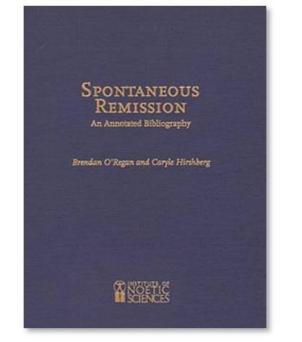


Doctors can 'fix' bones with screws and plates, connect bowel with sutures, and treat pneumonia with antibiotics.

But the fusing of the bone, the joining of the bowel, and the disappearance of pus from a lung solid with pneumonia, are all miracles of healing.







Spontaneous Remission me An Annotated Bibliography by Caryle Hirschberg and Brendan O'Regan

### Spontaneous remission/regression

*"SR of neoplasms occurs when the malignant tumor mass partially or completely disappears without any treatment or as a result of a therapy considered inadequate to influence systemic neoplastic disease." (Kaiser et al, In Vivo 2000 Nov-Dec; 14(6): 773-788)* 

*3,500 documented case reports in 800 medical journals, in 20 languages* 





#### But there is only one person you can change...



Health professionals can't change their patients, only themselves - giving lifestyle advice to patients doesn't work!

But health professionals who learn to find their own happiness and wellbeing, and practice with compassion, make an AMAZING difference to their patients

we have to be the change we want to see in our patients.







The science of healing connection







#### Cascading reactions in the healing response...

wellness genes up-regulated new protein synthesis tissue healing enhanced immunity lowered blood pressure positive emotions cancer genes activated stress hormones inflammation compromised immunity raised blood pressure negative emotions







Innlundu

Diabetic patients of high empathy primary care physicians had 42% fewer hospital admissions for metabolic crisis than patients of lowempathy physicians





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#### Compassionate, whole-person care in terminal lung cancer – early access to palliative care

- Fewer patients have depression, 16% vs 38%
- Fewer patients chose aggressive end of life care, 33% vs 54%
- Reduced overall cost of care
- But increased median survival, 11.6 months vs 8.9 months!



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Randomised trial of compassionate care for homeless patients presenting to ER -30% reduction in repeat visits in next month







### Supportive pre-op visit by anesthesiologist:

- Halved the dose of post-op



### Non-supportive pre-op visit by anesthesiologist:

- Length of stay 2.7 days longer

Harvard study 1964: Randomised trial of supportive / non-supportive manner in pre-op visit by anesthesiologist





#### OLD STORY... (body mechanic)

Doctors set the agenda for investigation and treatment of disease...

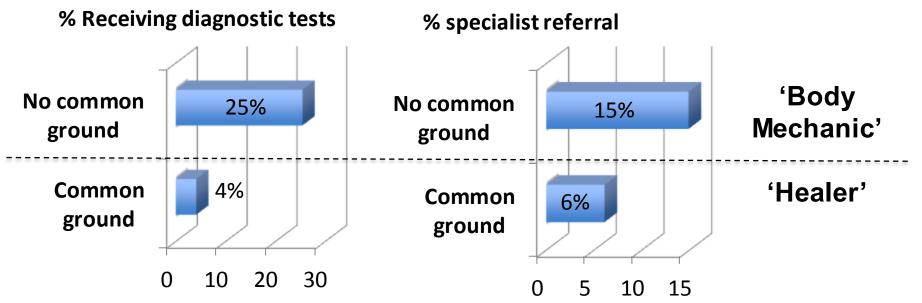
Doctors bring their knowledge, skill and experience in service of the patient's life

... NEW STORY (healer)





Dramatic reduction in healthcare utilisation as a result of finding common ground with patient, through compassionate, patient-centred primary care (Stewart 2000)



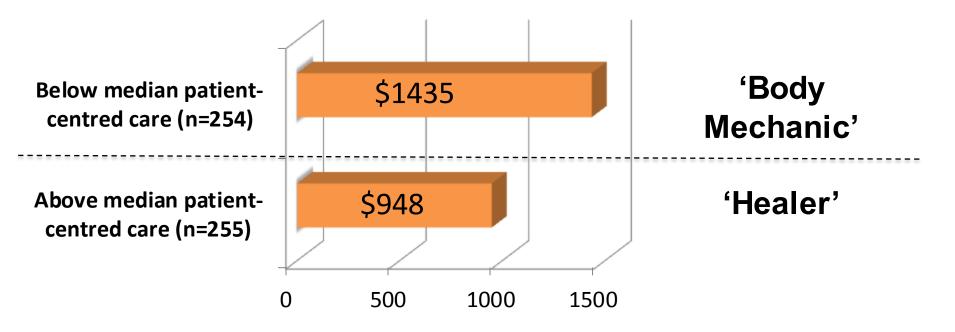
Patients who found common ground with their doctor also had better recovery from their discomfort and concern, and better mental health 2 months later





The percentage of interactions in family and general internal medicine that are patient-centred predicts the total cost of healthcare (Bertakis 2011)

#### Median annual cost of healthcare:







#### Drug therapy... ...or compassion?

#### \$29,000,000,000

- Annual expenditure on statins (drugs to reduce cholesterol level)



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#### The Influence of the Patient-Clinician Relationship on Healthcare Outcomes: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials

#### John M. Kelley<sup>1,3</sup>\*, Gordon Kraft-Todd<sup>1</sup>, Lidia Schapira<sup>1,4</sup>, Joe Kossowsky<sup>2,5,6</sup>, Helen Riess<sup>1</sup>

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#### Abstract

**Objective:** To determine whether the patient-clinician relationship has a beneficial effect on either objective or validated subjective healthcare outcomes.

But having a compassionate doctor reduces your 5-year risk of cardiovascular events more effectively than smoking cessation or prescribing a statin!





Compassionate caring is safer, more effective, satisfies patients, saves time, reduces demand, gives meaning to work, and costs less





#### Interview exercise in pairs:

"Tell me a story of one day you had an extraordinary connection to a patient or client"

A interviews B for 5 minutes B interviews A for 5 minutes

Then we'll share stories in the whole room





#### **OLD STORY...**

I am a helpless victim of 'the system'...

> I am powerful to change the world through my attitude, beliefs and stories ... NEW STORY





How to be a happy health professional? Choosing to love Practicing kindness, your work appreciation and gratitude Self-compassion Building positivity and resilience

Mindfulness





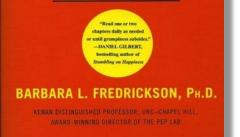
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THE NATIONAL BESTSELLER-WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR "Vaulted me out of my funk....so, fellow moderate possimists, go buy ---The New York Times Book Review MARTIN E.P. SELIGMAN, PH.D.

"Positively wonderful!...Offers surefire methods for transforming our lives from so-so to joyous." —DANIEL GOLEMAN, author of *Emotional Intelligence* 

### POSITIVITY

Top-Notch Research Reveals the 3-to-1 Ratio That Will Change Your Life



A PORTABLE FRIEND TO ALL READERS - -GLORIA STEINEM STOP BEATING YOURSELF UP AND LEAVE INSECURITY BEHIND





KRISTIN NEFF, PH.D.





## Five daily practices that can transform your life...

- 1. Choose your thoughts on your journey to work
- 2. Small acts of kindness
- 3. Making the human connection
- 4. Find out first your patient's concerns
- 5. Treat every patient like a family member

Photo credit: Lewishamdreamer







### in Healthcare

#### {the movement for human-centred healthcare}

heartsinhealthcare.com





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