

The background of the cover is a photograph of a sunset over the ocean. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow that reflects on the water. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and light blue. The ocean is dark blue with white-capped waves breaking on a sandy beach in the foreground.

How We Stopped Rheumatoid Arthritis, Using Natural Healing

A True Story

**By
Patrick and Barbara Parker**



- Patrick & Barbara Parker in 2007

Introduction

We have been married 30 years. Originally from Ohio, we moved to Florida in 1999. Neither of us is on prescription drugs, nor do we have a family medical doctor. Yet, together we have had tremendous success in reversing the severe and debilitating symptoms and effects of Patrick's Rheumatoid Arthritis, through the use of Natural Healing. We chose to write this book as a means of explanation to the many people who approach us asking, "How did you do it?", and because we feel a strong desire to help others who are suffering as Patrick was. If this book - written from the heart - can help even one person, it will have been worth it.

As you begin to read this book, notice how pain and stiffness were present throughout Patrick's life, even when he was younger. This is not common for most people. We feel that perhaps he was fighting R.A. his whole life. Also, notice the way in which Patrick was always "pushing" himself in his work, and even at home. This constant drive, and pressure to "do more" often contributes to inflammatory conditions. By observing the role these two elements played in Patrick's life, you can see how they helped to contribute to his deteriorating health

Chapter 1

A History of How it All Began - The Patterns

Strong and well-built, Patrick was always a hard worker. The jobs throughout his life were always very physical ones. He was a delivery driver for a county library system for 30 years. During this time he hauled 70 lb. bins of books, daily, and jumped in and out of his truck a countless number of times a day. Right from the start, his body was constantly sore and tight. A part-time job at a car wash, during this time, also required a lot of physical, strenuous movement, adding to his stiffness and soreness, and taking aspirin for the pain became a daily habit. Naturally, all the pain and stiffness was attributed to his physically demanding work. But, being only in his early 20's, was this true? By the late 1970's, Patrick quit the car wash job.

In the early 90's, an accident at work resulted in Patrick seeing a chiropractor for the first time. It was a very good experience, and enabled him to keep working instead of going on disability, but never quite removed the pain or stiffness, completely. In the late 1990's, after retiring from his delivery job, he took a job working for a car rental company. This required a drastic change of hours. Instead of a 9-5 job, as he had for 30 years, he was now working 3 - 11 p.m..

Right away, he began to notice that his feet and ankles were becoming particularly sore, which he attributed to the long hours of standing that the job required. Two years later, we moved to Florida. Keeping the same job, the new hours were slightly better. He got home at 7, but he regularly ate dinner after coming home, which meant he was eating quite late - usually meat and potatoes! Much later, we learned how eating later than 7 P.M. can have adverse effects on health and digestion.*

* See Glossary

His body wasn't used to eating this late. Besides adjusting to these new hours, he found that the new job was more stressful, and this only added to the stress he already felt by the move, itself. Soon, a resentment began to build - along with the pain

Conditions at home began to deteriorate during this time, as Patrick was angry and resentful (of work) most of the time, and feeling more pain than ever throughout his entire body. Eventually, the car rental company changed hands, and Patrick lost his job. More stress! Fortunately, he found another job, quickly, at Lowe's. But, things only got worse!

His hours at Lowe's were not good. He worked the closing shift, quitting around 11, as he did years before. Add to this his 40 minute drive home, and it meant that most nights he wouldn't get home until nearly midnight! Hurricanes were hitting Florida during this time, and people were flocking to Lowe's. He was racing all day long, in a stressful environment. During working hours, he had to walk all day on concrete flooring, climb ladders to get stock down, and smell the fumes from the lawn and garden dept., filled with fertilizers, etc. On his days off, Patrick kept pushing himself by continuing to do physical work at home, such as hours of mowing, and yard work, with little, or no, rest. Pain in his legs and feet were becoming unbearable. He tried new shoes, gel soles, etc., but nothing worked for long. His resentment grew as he was constantly ranting about how awful work was. Soon, bouts of depression began to surface. Stress, frustration, resentment, anger, depression, overwork, and pain filled Patrick's life. One day it all came to a head as Patrick's body exploded with pain, swelling and inflammation. He couldn't walk. What was happening?

Over the years, Barbara had become a Natural Healer, and Certified Herbalist. She could see that Patrick was on a road to self-destruction. She spent years trying to get him to eat in a more healthy way. Always a "meat, potato, salt, and butter man", he scoffed at her mention of veggie burgers, fish and vegetables. Suggestions to rest more, or meditate, were barely even acknowledged. Yet, these two things, alone, could've made a difference. Barbara also knew, from reading various studies, that Patrick's years of built-up anger and resentment also played a major role in his inflammatory problems, and arthritis. But, Patrick's mind had always been closed - until now!

The years of over-work, stress, diet, resentment, anger, and a toxic environment overflowed to cause the devastating results that we've come to call "Rheumatoid Arthritis". It seemed to come out of nowhere, but as you can see, it was building all along

Chapter 2

Reversing the Process -The First Steps

For the better part of the next year, Patrick was a victim of random attacks of pain, swelling, and inflammation that left him a near-cripple. He began to run out of sick days, so the days and weeks he couldn't work, he didn't get paid! When he could work, he needed to use a motorized cart to get around. Often, co-workers had to help him get into his car to go home, and we'd help him out of it once he got home. Many times, he would sleep nearly 24 hours straight, and found that when he did, the symptoms subsided - only to come again days or weeks later. Emotional upsets often triggered a flare-up. He was losing weight, (25 lbs) strength, and muscle tone at a rapid pace. There "seemed" to be no pattern and it was frightening! The stress was unbearable for the entire family. Though practicing and understanding Natural Healing, Barbara felt that this was beyond what she could tackle, especially being so emotionally tied to the situation. So, together, we began to seek out other Natural Healers that we knew, to help with solving the problem. (at this point, we had no idea that the problem was Rheumatoid Arthritis!).

Seeing a "Network Chiropractor"* in the area was the first step. This very gentle form of chiropractic treatment was good for Patrick - being so stiff and in pain. This Chiropractor suggested the possibility of "leaky gut"* syndrome. We looked it up on the web - you can, too - and saw that, indeed, some of the symptoms of this condition matched many of Patrick's! The fact that he had been taking several aspirin a day for years, possibly damaging the lining of his stomach and intestines, made this seem like a distinct possibility. But, before we could address this condition in depth, more flare-ups occurred which needed to be dealt with.

Patrick went to an acupuncturist a few times, for immediate relief. It worked, but it was too expensive for any long-term solutions.

* See Glossary

We tried a second chiropractor we knew who could do extensive testing for allergies. Patrick also had hair analysis done. The findings showed some allergies to peanuts, and nightshades (tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant, and peppers). Nightshades have been known to promote inflammation, so again, it seemed to “fit”. The hair analysis showed a lot of Benzene in Patrick’s system, plus some Formaldehyde. Benzene is found in gasoline, so the years of driving the truck, working at the car rental place, and using the riding mower and gas-powered weed-eater for hours at a time, might have been the source of this! Formaldehyde is found in fertilizers. Patrick was near the Lawn and Garden Dept. at Lowe’s, smelling fumes from the fertilizers all day long. Perhaps this was the source of the Formaldehyde? Who can say? Both Formaldehyde and Benzene are linked to inflammation.

As a result, Patrick gave up all tomatoes, peppers, eggplant (never ate it, anyway!), and potatoes (no more French fries!). Fortunately, he could eat sweet potatoes. He limited the time spent mowing - taking a break in-between - and began wearing a mask when mowing. He stopped eating all peanut butter, and looked carefully on labels to be sure that peanuts were not lurking in the products he ate.

After making these changes, we noticed a slight improvement. The flare-ups were not coming as frequently, but they were still showing up. More was needed to stop this from happening, completely, ...but what?

Going to other Natural Healers, and sharing knowledge and information with them, made it possible for Barbara to take the emotion out of the situation and feel that she could finally try and deal with it, herself. At this point, she had a feeling that the problem was Rheumatoid Arthritis, but she couldn’t know for sure. Not knowing precisely what they were dealing with was the main issue at hand. As a result, Barbara suggested that Patrick see a Rheumatologist to get a “diagnosis”. Then, they would know better what they were up against, what options they had, and what course to follow.

Chapter 3

The Beginning of the End

In December of 2005, a visit to the Rheumatologist showed that Patrick had an R.A factor (sed. rate) over 240. A sed. rate around 60 is the indicator for R.A.. He was told, at that time, that he had R.A. throughout his entire body. X-Rays showed that his hands and feet were already becoming deformed. The prognosis was cut and dried... unless he began drug therapy immediately, - including low-dose chemo - he would soon become wheelchair bound, and it would eventually affect his heart and brain.

Barbara felt overwhelmingly intimidated and powerless as the doctor proclaimed Patrick's possible fate as if it were already "in stone". Neither of them was used to hearing healers speak in quite this way, and it was frightening! The Natural Healers they dealt with always spoke in positive ways, about the means of healing, instead of focusing on the negatives! Wondering what Patrick would do, Barbara decided she could only support, love, and comfort him throughout the process. What followed was a total shock to her as Patrick said, without a second thought," thanks, but no thanks" to the doctor, and made a decision to treat this debilitating disease through "natural" means! Always a rebel, this was, literally, the most rebellious - yet wisest - decision of his life.

The weight of this choice - "Nature vs. R.A." - rested squarely on Barbara's shoulders, as Patrick turned to her expertise for his healing, promising to cooperate, fully.

Natural Healing is a slow, steady means of reversing an ailment (symptoms) step by step. It is NOT an IMMEDIATE solution, with IMMEDIATE results. This problem manifested, over time, in a natural way, and reversing it through natural means will work, over time, in a natural way. Think of peeling the layers of an onion. The center of the onion is the "root cause" of the problem, the layers are but symptoms that appear as a result. The job of a natural healer is to deal with and eliminate the symptoms, while at the same time working to identify and eliminate the "root cause".

Chapter 4

The Battle Begins

Nearly all ailments of this type begin with a weakness in the body. After reading several reports and information on Rheumatoid Arthritis, Barbara found that the consensus of opinion seemed to be that the “root cause” centered in the areas of - the adrenals *(stress and overwork), the digestion (leaky gut, non-absorption of nutrients), and hormones (depression). By this time, we could see a pattern leading up to the flare-ups,...overwork, depression, anger = flare-up. It was time for a game plan.

Patrick had already taken some steps to change things on his own. First, he altered his diet even more. No longer did he eat any nightshades (as previously mentioned). He chose to eat onion rings instead of fries. No more spaghetti sauce! Now, he put basil pesto on his whole wheat pasta. He limited red meats to 1-2 times a week, at the most. He ate more chicken and pork, but never ate meat more than two days in a row. He began eating fish (salmon, and fillets) twice a week, and really began enjoying meatless products, such as veggie burgers, chicken patties and sausage links! Patrick was changing!

Next, he asked to have his hours changed at work to those more geared to the natural “body clock”, so that he could eat before 6, and be in bed before 11.* Lowe’s was wonderful in accommodating him, in this regard, by giving him the hours of 8 - 5.

Finally, he worked on changing his thinking and getting rid of the anger and resentment. He happened upon a book at our Network Chiropractor’s office that turned his thinking around. Small, and easy to read, the book is called “ How to Transform Your Life” by Barbara Goosen Shelby. By practicing the methods in this book, Patrick began looking at life in a whole new way. He felt gratitude instead of resentment,...even at work...and he learned to trust life and go with the flow. What a difference!

Along with the changes that Patrick already made, we chose four main methods to attack the problem - diet, supplements, meditation, and Energy work.

*See Glossary

DIET

As for diet, Patrick already had a good start on modifying this area, yet he changed a few more things. He found that corn, and turkey caused him some pain, so he eliminated those. He limited coffee to 1 cup a day, and drank both Green, and Chamomile tea, regularly. Everything has a thermal nature, and that of coffee is “heating”, so drinking a lot of coffee can heat up the system. Heat can lead to inflammation, or make it worse. Green tea is cooling, and Chamomile is calming, plus it helps with digestion and cleansing the liver. He still ate his beloved bologna for lunch, but only chicken bologna.

SUPPLEMENTS

We still needed to address his stomach/digestion, adrenals and hormones. We mostly used supplements for these issues. The supplements we use, and prefer, are “Standard Process Whole Food Supplements”*. Most, if not all, will NOT interfere with any prescriptions, as they are just made of FOOD! Many chiropractors use these products (this is where we first learned of them), and you CANNOT get them over the counter. Call Standard Process at 1-800-558-8740 for a referral to a chiropractor, or naturopath in your area who uses these products. In our opinion, they are the best!

As a Natural Healer, Barbara uses a method called “muscle-testing”* to determine Patrick’s weaknesses and needs. She was trained in this, but you can find many Chiropractors or Naturopaths that do the same thing. Ask, or look for one who does “Applied Kinesiology”, CRA, or AIT. Muscle-testing Patrick showed that he needed products to strengthen his adrenals, to address “leaky gut”, and an inflamed stomach lining, which was causing non-absorption of nutrients. This would explain fatigue, some weight loss, and mineral deficiency, which plays a role in Thyroid function, and depression. His system was too acidic, and we had to rebalance his PH levels. Acidity* causes inflammation. Eating too much red meat and sugar makes the body acidic. Uric acid can build in the body, causing pain. Changing his diet was already helping in this regard, but if the stomach, itself, is not operating properly - as was the case with Patrick - you need to do more, as we did, with supplementation.

* See Glossary

Patrick's hormonal system* was also not balanced. Problems with stress and the adrenals*(glands which are activated during times of stress) will ultimately affect other glands, causing hormonal imbalances. In Patrick's case, the Thyroid was affected, and played a major role in his depression. (The immune system can also be affected.) We used SP supplements for this, as well. In addition to stress, sometimes eating too much bread, which Patrick also did, can cause an iodine deficiency in the body which can also trigger Thyroid problems, leading to depression. Supplements can reverse all of this. But, because no two people are exactly alike, you need to find out just what your weaknesses are to determine which supplements you need.

For inflammation and joint repair, we chose different supplements. Our daughter told us of a wonderful product, recommended by Dr. Weil,* for inflammation, called Zyflamend (by New Chapter). Basically herbal, this over-the-counter product is fabulous! Look it up on the web! Along with this, we added a Triple Strength Glucosamine *- Chondriton* - MSM* product from "The Vitamin Shoppe"*. We chose their own brand. We buy the Zyflamend from there, too, since we find their prices are the most reasonable. Go to "vitaminshoppe.com" and check them out, or you may have a Vitamin Shoppe store in your area. (or request a catalog, at 1-800-223-1216).

Patrick's system was out of balance in so many areas! Yes, he was on a lot of supplements, but we decided to attack this problem with as many tools as possible. Today, he only takes a minimum of SP supplements, for basic maintenance. He has remained on the Zyflamend and Glucosamine products, and takes them daily.

MEDITATION

We also needed to find a PROVEN way to balance Patrick's stress and hard work. Meditation was the answer. Ten minutes of simple meditation can wash away hours of stress and its harmful effects. Even Western Medical doctors acknowledge this, after conducting several studies! Not knowing "exactly" what to do, Patrick used a Meditation CD to help him. We STRONGLY recommend "Beginner's Meditation" by Meditation teacher, and expert, Jim Malloy*, at the Online Meditation Center.

* See Glossary

Along with this, Patrick made sure to get a full 8 hours of sleep a night, going to bed before 11. (the hours of 11 - 3 are when the body regenerates itself). Finally, we had to address Patrick's energy system, and meridians, to make sure all of his organs were working at full capacity. To do this, we used Energy Medicine techniques.

ENERGY MEDICINE *

“Energy Medicine” is a book written by Donna Eden. In it, she explains how energy work - dealing with the energy pathways in your body, called Meridians - can not only move blocked energy, thereby giving you more energy, but in doing so, helps your body to begin reversing many health problems. The techniques in the book are combinations taken from many sources of energy therapies, including some that were used, successfully, hundreds of years ago. Donna, herself, overcame many serious health problems, including an auto-immune disease, by incorporating the “thumps” and “taps” of Energy Medicine. Being trained in these techniques, Barbara chose, primarily, two of them for Patrick to do on a daily - or, at first, twice daily - basis. “The Daily Routine” and “Connecting Heaven and Earth” were the two she chose. We suggest buying the book, or at least going to “innersource.net” to learn more, and find DVD's and other Energy Medicine products. We feel Energy Medicine techniques had a huge impact on improving Patrick's health.

Chapter 6

The Results

So, we put all of these changes into motion - change of hours, change of diet and eating times, change of thinking process, change of sleeping patterns, taking supplements, doing Energy Medicine techniques, and Meditating - and we waited, and waited, and waited. Nothing happened.

* See Glossary

But, ...”nothing” was a GOOD THING! Days, weeks, and months went by with no flare-ups! Instead, Patrick was re-gaining his weight, strength and muscle tone! His hands were no longer as deformed! What had been happening weekly had apparently “vanished”! Still, we waited and watched.

To make a long story a bit shorter, it’s been over three years, and we are still waiting! The real “miracle” is that Patrick is actually stronger than he was 20 years ago! He can walk, climb ladders, dig and haul gravel, open jars, etc. During the first year, some VERY MILD swelling and pain appeared, only a few times. We modified his supplement intake and it went away by the next day! Gradually, these episodes ceased, resulting in Patrick taking only one sick day in the past THREE YEARS!

Using Natural Healing has not only helped to rid Patrick of the symptoms and effects of R.A., but has actually helped to build up and support his entire system, making him stronger and healthier than he was years ago! We don’t know if we’ll ever REALLY “breathe easy” regarding this problem. Personally, we feel that the R.A. is always lurking, just waiting until Patrick overuses, or abuses his body again, to come back with a vengeance. Maybe some people, like Patrick, are more prone to it than others? But, whatever the case, we seemed to have won THIS battle, with a lot of effort on our part, with the help of others, and with God’s help.

Will this exact protocol work for everyone? Probably not. Everyone is an individual, and unique. What works for one may not work for another. However, somewhere there IS a protocol that WILL WORK FOR YOU! A Natural Healer can help you determine what it is. They can do what Barbara did for Patrick, and discover what your weaknesses and imbalances are, and give you the right tools for bringing your body back to health.

Natural Healing isn’t for everyone. It requires active participation in your own healing, and many don’t feel up to the challenge. It helps to remember that our bodies don’t want to be in pain, or have dis-ease. The body naturally wants to heal itself, and is designed with the ability to do just that! By helping it along with natural healing, and a good attitude, you can work miracles!

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who helped us during this ordeal, especially Dr. Jeffrey Smith, our Network Chiropractor, Dr. Jim Barrass D. C., who discovered, and dealt with Patrick's allergies, our daughter, Victoria Wells, for giving Patrick his first bottle of Zyflamend, Shirley Hull, for giving Patrick his first sample of Glucosamine, Chondriotin, and MSM, our friend, and massage therapist, Marie Brazis, for both her physical and emotional support, and to the staff and management at Patrick's Lowe's for their understanding and co-operation.

We'd also like to thank Jim Malloy for his help and encouragement in making this book a reality!

We are so lucky to be surrounded by such wonderful people!

Please understand that the information in this book is not meant to take the place of diagnosis and treatment by a qualified Health Practitioner. In fact, we strongly suggest that you work with a Natural Healer.

Our recommendations are for educational purposes only. No guarantees can be given, nor liability taken.

Remember, to always use herbs, and other natural products, in moderate doses. "More" is not necessarily "better"!

Glossary

1. Each organ is said to have a time of day when it is the strongest, and weakest. 7 p.m. begins the stomach's weakest hour. Eating at, or after, this time often results in the stomach having to work harder to digest food. Over time, this may cause the stomach to weaken, leading to sluggish digestion, which is often the cause of many common health problems, including acid reflux.
2. Network Chiropractic - Also called Network Spinal Analysis. Founded by Donald Epstein in the early 1980's, it involves gentle techniques that help teach the brain and spinal cord to better cope with life's stresses. Easing away the tension allows the breath to flow more easily, helping to promote and sustain good health.
3. Leaky Gut Syndrome - An intestinal dysfunction in which the walls of the intestine develop spaces between the cells, allowing bacteria, toxins, and food to leak in. This can lead to many problems, including inability to absorb nutrients, allergies, infections, and auto-immune diseases, such as R.A. It has many causes, including antibiotics, NSAIDS, and contaminated foods and beverages.
4. Adrenals - Part of the hormonal system, these glands are involved in a number of health problems, including allergies and inflammation. One of the main hormones produced by the adrenals is Cortisol. Cortisol is a powerful anti-inflammatory agent. Stress can cause adrenal fatigue. Adrenal fatigue can cause many inflammatory reactions in the body that lead to the release of more and more Cortisol to handle the inflammatory response taking place. Over time, the fatigued adrenals can no longer produce enough Cortisol and allergies and inflammations take control.
5. When the body can sleep between the hours of 11p.m. - 3 a.m., it can heal, and regenerate more quickly.
6. Standard Process - Founded in 1929, this company produces supplements in a "whole food" state. They grow the food used in their products on their own Certified Organic Farm. They have won many awards for the superior quality of their products. They also offer an herbal line of products, called MediHerb.

7. Muscle-testing - Based on a premise that a strong muscular response shows health and strength, and a weak response shows a deficiency or problem. There are different methods of testing, but all center on the same premise. It is a very accurate indicator of illness/weakness even before symptoms appear.

8. Acidity - Certain foods produce acids in our system (body). This over-acidity can cause pain and inflammation. Good health thrives in a more alkaline environment, so its always best to avoid acid-producing foods.

9. Hormonal imbalances - When one of the glands of the hormonal system (Ex. Adrenals, Thyroid, Thymus, etc) becomes exhausted, it may cause one or more of the other glands to speed up or slow down to maintain balance in the body. The hormonal system is the “thermostat” of the body, always adjusting and regulating body functions.

10. Dr.Weil - Dr. Andrew Weil M.D. is a renowned author and medical expert, with degrees in biology and medicine from Harvard University. He is known for his expertise on alternative medicine and other natural therapies.

11. Glucosamine - Studies have shown that it rehabilitates cartilage in the joints, which is often destroyed by arthritis, causing pain, deformity, and restricted range of motion. It is a natural substance which can be found in our body.

12. Chondroitin - A major component of cartilage. It slows the free radicals that attack the cartilage in joints. It also increases blood flow to the joints. It is often paired with Glucosamine for effectiveness.

13. MSM - Methylsulfonmethane. A byproduct of dimethyl sulfoxide. Used for arthritis pain, and is nontoxic. Often combined with Glucosamine and Chondroitin for effectiveness.

14. Vitamin Shoppe - A very reliable source of many natural healing products. It offers customers discounts on nearly all major brands, plus their own brand of products, which are very high in quality.

15. Jim Malloy - Has over 30 years experience teaching meditation throughout the Western U.S., Florida, and England. He has studied with some of the world's most renowned meditation experts, including Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Swami Muktananta, and Roshi Joshu Sasaki. His website www.meditationcenter.com has won many awards for excellence.

16. Energy Medicine - According to the book "Energy Medicine", by Donna Eden, - "Energy medicine is...the growing number of approaches where an understanding of the body as a system of energies is being applied for promoting health, healing and happiness." In energy medicine, energy IS the medicine!

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Barbara Parker is a professionally trained and certified Western & Chinese Herbalist. She received her Chinese Certification through the Institute of Chinese Herbology, in Oakland, California. Her Western certification came from the Australasian College (now known as the American College of Healthcare Sciences) which is known throughout the world. She learned Energy Medicine Techniques by training under Donna Eden. Barbara is also a Reiki II practitioner, and Natural Healing Consultant, working with nutritional, botanical and energy therapies.

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