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Our two young sons, Izaak and Max, were six and three years old at the time. Naturally, we took their health needs very seriously. We would never hesitate to go to doctors when a problem arose, and we would invariably follow their advice without question. Unfortunately, we were also in the midst of a medical crisis. Our younger son Max was inexplicably afflicted with autism. This tragic and supposedly incurable disorder dramatically limits a child's ability to communicate and connect with others. And for some reason, it is mysteriously striking more and more children each year. Given the limited options for treatment, we were coping as best as we could.

By January of 1999, only four years later, everything had changed. I was now the mother of two sons progressing nicely through grade school. Max was no longer autistic — he was bright, talkative, and sociable. His autism had been cured with a controversial medicine of the past — *homeopathy*.

There were other changes as well. After two decades of research work, I had left computer science completely. I was now a student, editor, writer, and promoter of homeopathic medicine. The rest of my family was healthier than they had been in years. We used homeopathy as our primary form of medicine and viewed conventional medicine as appropriate only in life-threatening or time-critical emergency situations. I would no longer dream of doing things I had done routinely for years — suppressing fevers with aspirin or acetaminophen, coughs with cough suppressant, skin problems with cortisone, or combating ear infections with antibiotics.

What happened?

This book will reveal to you my own journey of discovery and healing, as well as that of my family and many friends. My goal is to share with you some surprising and truly revolutionary information that I have learned about the medical philosophy and healing power of homeopathy. In general, I have found that most Americans know very little about this form of alternative medicine. Though many people have heard the term "homeopathy," most confuse it with the use of herbs or think it is some kind of catchall term for natural or holistic medicine.

CHAPTER I



HOMEOPATHY REVEALED

"Aude Sapere"
("Dare to Know")

—SAMUEL HAHNEMANN, MD

Title page epigraph, *The Organon of the Medical Art*, 1810 [Hahnemann]

IT MAY SEEM UNBELIEVABLE, BUT IT'S TRUE. MY SON WAS CURED of an incurable illness with a form of medicine that supposedly contains nothing — at least according to conventional scientific thought. But, as history has repeatedly shown, the accepted scientific and medical wisdom of an era can be wrong.

It all began in January of 1995. I was a computer scientist leading research projects for NASA. My husband Steve also worked in the computer industry, as a researcher for Apple Computer. I had done my doctorate work at Stanford University in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and since that time, both Steve and I had been active participants in the whirlwind of technology and innovation that is Silicon Valley. As we labored away in our cloistered research labs, friends and acquaintances were busy starting companies destined to become household names.

I also just happened to be a fairly knowledgeable devotee of modern medicine. An avid "Dr. Mom," I slept with a medical reference, the *Merck Manual*, on my night table. As I pored over this tome in the wee hours of the night, Steve would often ask, "Amy, why don't you just go to medical school?!"

Of course, homeopathy is holistic (i.e., it understands and treats disease as a whole-body phenomenon), and homeopathic remedies are derived from natural sources. But it cannot simply be equated with these concepts. Homeopathy is a very distinct and complete system of medicine based on a simple principle of healing called the *Law of Similars*. This law states that *a disease can be cured by a substance if that substance can cause, in a healthy person, symptoms similar to those of the disease*. In fact, that is what the word "homeopathy" literally means — similar (homeo) suffering (pathy). While other holistic health-care systems are based on different principles or on accumulated experience and folklore, homeopathy, by definition, is the system of medicine based on this one cardinal principle.

As a medical discipline, homeopathy is certainly much better known and better accepted in other countries than it is in America today. It is widely practiced in Europe, India, Pakistan, and Latin America. In France, it is estimated that 32 percent of family physicians use homeopathy [Bouchayer]; in England, 42 percent of physicians refer patients to homeopaths [Wharton]. Homeopathy is integrated into the national health-care systems of many countries, including Germany, India, Brazil, Mexico, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom. Indeed, homeopathy is one of the four most widespread approaches to medical treatment in the world, alongside traditional Chinese medicine, herbal medicine, and conventional medicine [Poitevin].

Homeopathy is also a proven medical system. Hundreds of double-blind, placebo-controlled studies have been conducted over the past few decades, especially in Europe and India. They have proven that homeopathic remedies are indeed effective medicine. Wayne Jonas, MD, former director of the Office of Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health, is one of the American medical researchers actively studying homeopathy. He has coauthored a book about homeopathic research studies [Jonas&Jacobs] and was also a member of a research team that analyzed 89 double-blind studies of homeopathic treatment; they found that homeopathy was, on average, more than twice as effective as placebo