

Alternative/Blended/Complementary/Integrated Healing

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1. It is called alternative because the technique/drug/herb has not been or cannot be adequately tested, or has been found ineffective or dangerous. If it were a safe, tested treatment, it would not be in the alternative category. Many cited studies to support these methods are flawed, short-term, based on anecdotal evidence, conducted by believers in the techniques, & often are not published in a peer-reviewed medical journal. The terms complementary, blended, and integrated are now being used as well since alternative treatments are being combined with traditional medicine. This makes it more difficult to test the alternative methods or to know what is really working when the patient improves. It should be remembered that the placebo effect accounts for 30% or more for a person feeling better.

2. Proponents of alternative medicine are often hostile to the medical establishment and/or what is called "western thinking," that is, rational thinking. There is often a bias against science or belief in a conspiracy amongst physicians. This prejudice prevents them from objectively viewing the evidence against alternative healing. More doctors are now allowing or advocating these treatments because of patient demand so they can stay in business. But remember, doctors can be deceived, too.

3. Many of the new healing techniques are being called **energy medicine** since there is an assumption that one is dealing with channeling, transferring or altering energy. This energy is not measurable or biological; it is believed to be the energy of a universal force/life force pervading all. The belief in this type of energy is foundational for sorcery, pantheism, monism, some Eastern religions, many New Age-related beliefs, and most of the occult. Sometimes this energy is seen as being an impersonal God, a god-force, or an innate divine intelligence which infuses all parts of the universe and our bodies. These are spiritual, not medical, views.

4. Many techniques such as **acupuncture, acupressure, tai chi** (not a medicine but often prescribed for people recovering from illness) are based on the belief that a universal force called chi (also spelled as qi, ki or ji) which pervades everything and everyone must be flowing to achieve good health. There is also the belief in two universal energies, yin and yang, which must be balanced. If anything is blocking the chi or unbalancing the yin and yang, then illness results. The chi is believed to flow through invisible channels in the body called meridians. In this case, treatment is

based on a spiritual belief system, not on medicine or scientific fact. So far, no medical or biological basis as been discovered for acupuncture. There are theories that the needles trigger the release of endorphins or affect a neural pathway, causing a temporary relief of pain. If indeed this is what is happening, then it is no longer actually acupuncture, since acupuncture is not based on the physiology of neural pathways or endorphins.

5. **Homeopathy** is based on the belief that a vital force in the body has been disrupted. Treatments which would produce the symptoms of the illness in a healthy person are used to treat the sick person. However, since these treatments often contain poisonous substances, they are diluted until nothing of the original compound is left. It is believed that when the mixture is shaken, some of its "energy" transfers to the water in diluted form. Homeopathic doctors do not apologize for being unable to explain how these remedies work. Treatments vary from person to person.

6. **Therapeutic touch** is not touching at all, but holding the hands several inches above the patient to feel for "warm" or "cold" spots which indicate a problem. The healer is working with "energy" and removes the bad energy and transmits "healing energy" through their hands. This technique comes directly from the occult and the New Age, and is similar to both psychic and witchcraft techniques for healing.

7. Other New Age/occult healing techniques include: **Reiki** (transferring a healing energy), **polarity therapy**, **touch for health**, **acupressure**, **ayurvedic remedies**, **iridology**, **reflexology**, **applied Kinesiology**, **muscle testing**, **magnetic therapy**, **shiatsu**, **most massage therapy**, and **rolfing**. The magnets in jewelry and belts worn for healing are similar in size & strength to refrigerator magnets which cannot penetrate beyond 10 sheets of paper, much less the skin and tissue of a person's body. (Washington Post, 9-8-99, p. H3, by Robert L. Park, professor of physics at the U. of MD, author of *Voodoo Science*). Massage therapy, as practiced in the United States, is more than massage, as it is based on the belief that certain parts of the body relate to areas of the person's past and life, and massage supposedly releases old hurts, rejections, anger, etc. This is determined arbitrarily and is based on magical thinking. Massage therapy schools are notoriously New Age in their thinking and training.

8. The basis for "**natural**" **remedies** comes mostly from New Age thinking which views nature as pure and/or sacred. There are "natural" remedies which are ineffective and which are dangerous. Most herbs and potions are unregulated, untested and inconsistent in quality and potency. There is no way for the buyer to determine how much of an active ingredient is present (which varies from bottle to bottle), and there is no way to know if the label is even accurate. In addition, one does not know how the herb or potion will interact with other medications that are

being taken. Long term effects of many herbal products and large doses of vitamins remain unknown. A California Dept. of Health Sciences study tested 243 Asian patent medicines, finding that four contained lead, 35 mercury and 36 arsenic, "in levels exceeding those allowed in drugs." About one-third of the supplements contained "heavy metals" and other "adulterants" (The Washington Post, 9/17/98, p. A3). Scripture tells us that nature is fallen just as man is (Gen. 3:17; Rom. 8: 19-22). Although traditional medicine can be misused or overused, there is nothing inherently better about "natural" remedies as opposed to regular medication. Buy and take at your own risk.

9. **Yoga** is a part of Hinduism and comes from a Sanskrit term which means to unite with. Hatha yoga, as one of many yogas, was devised to aid the practitioner in transcending his body, identity and mind in order to unite with the Hindu godhead. The yoga positions, asanas, combined with breathing techniques, are designed to induce a meditative trance state. Hatha yoga is based on the principle that putting the body in various unnatural positions will help the person, once he/she has perfected it, to become aware that his/her body is not reality so that he/she will no longer identify with it. Then one works on the breath, pranayama, to develop mental discipline; then come concentration, meditation/contemplation, and absorption, called samadhi, which is the realization that there is no distinction between self and other or self and God. Yoga originated in ancient India where yogis developed it as a technique to prepare for death. The purpose of yoga was never relaxation, flexibility or exercise. There are other methods available to achieve flexibility and toning.

10. Terms and phrases which may indicate a New Age or occult belief: **life force, universal force, energy, cosmic force, creative force, divine force, chi (qi, ki, ji), aura, energy field, auric field, meridians, chakras, energy points, channels of energy, psychic energy, psychic centers, cleansing of toxins, balancing, polarity, prana, divine breath, yin-yang, energy healing, healing powers, intelligence/wisdom of the body, Spirit** (as opposed to Holy Spirit), **the God within, consciousness, Christ consciousness**. Some teachers/writers in the health & psychology fields who endorse alternative/New Age healing, in whole or in part: Dr. Bernie Siegel, Dr. Deepak Chopra, Dr. Andrew Weil, Dr. Carolyn Myss, Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, John Bradshaw, Dr. Brian Weiss, John Kabat-Zinn, and Dr. Christine Northrup.

11. What is **Pilates**? This form of exercise was started by Joseph Pilates in the early 20th century. Today, there are variations of Pilates, often with an admixture of yoga.

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(Source: CANA - Christian Answers for the New Age)