

Chapter Nine

Crisis



crisis in the ordinary sense of the word means change, either for better or for worse. In its relation to medicine, the term “crisis” has been defined as “a decisive change in the disease, resulting either in recovery or in death.”

We of the Nature Cure school distinguish between healing crises and disease crises, according to the character and the tendency of the acute reaction. If an acute disease is brought about through the accumulation of morbid matter or the invasion of disease germs to such an extent that the health or the life of the organism is endangered, in other words, if the disease conditions are forcing the crises, we speak of disease crises.

But if acute reactions take place in the system because conditions have become more normal, because the healing forces have gained the ascendancy and forced the acute inflammatory processes, we call them healing crises.

Healing crises are simply different forms of elimination by means of which Nature endeavors to remove the latent, chronic disease encumbrance from the system. The most common forms of these acute purifications are colds, catarrhal and hemorrhoidal discharges, boils, ulcers, abscesses, open sores, skin eruptions, diarrheas, etc.

Healing crises and disease crises may seem very much alike. Patients often tell me: “I have had this before. I call it an ordinary boil (or cold, or fever).”

That may be true. The former disease crisis and the present healing crisis may be similar in their outward manifestations. **But**

they are taking place under entirely different conditions.

When the organism is loaded to the danger point with morbid matter, it may arouse itself in self-defense to an acute eliminative effort in the shape of cold, catarrh, fever, inflammation, skin eruption, etc. In these instances, the disease conditions bring about the crisis and the organism is on the defensive. These are disease crises.

Such unequal struggles between the healing forces and disease conditions sometimes end favorably and sometimes unfavorably.

On the other hand, healing crises develop because the healing forces are in the ascendancy and take the offensive. They are brought about through the natural methods of living and of treatment and always result in improved conditions [unless the patient becomes fearful and seeks medical attention for the effects].

A simple allegory may assist me in explaining the difference between a healing crisis and a disease crisis:

For years a prizefighter holds the championship because he keeps himself in perfect physical condition and before every contest spends many weeks in careful training. When he faces his opponent in the ring, he has eliminated from his organism as much waste matter and superfluous flesh and fat as possible by a strictly regulated diet and a great deal of hard exercise. As a consequence, he comes off victorious in every contest and easily maintains his superiority.

These victories in his career, like healing crises in the organism, are the result of training and preparation.

The prizefighter in the one case and Vital Force in the other are on the offensive from the beginning of the struggle and have the best of the fight from start to finish.

Rendered overconfident by long-continued success, our champion gradually permits himself to drift into a weakened physical condition. He omits his regular training and indulges in all kinds of dissipation.

One day, full of self-conceit and underestimating the strength of his challenger, he enters the ring without preparation and is ingloriously defeated by a man who, under different circumstances, would not be a match for him.

So, in the case of a patient in a disease crisis, fatal termination may be due to the excessive accumulation of waste and morbid matter in the system, to lowered vitality and to lack of preparation.

Victory or defeat in acute reactions as well as in the ring depends on right living and preparatory training.

In the healing crisis, vitality is the stronger and gains the victory in the struggle; in the disease crisis, disease conditions have gained the ascendancy and may bring about the defeat of the healing forces.

Under conditions favorable to human life, a body of normal structure, healthy blood and tissues and good vitality cannot be affected by acute disease. Such an organism is practically immune to all forms of inflammatory febrile reactions. These always indicate that there is something wrong in the system which Nature is trying to correct or get rid of.

Healing Crises

In Chapter Two “Catechism of Nature Cure,” we defined healing crises”as follows: “A healing crisis is an acute reaction, resulting from the ascendancy of Nature’s healing forces over disease conditions. Its tendency is toward recovery, and it is, therefore, in conformity with Nature’s constructive principle.” The possibility of producing healing crises and thereby curing chronic ailments depends upon the following conditions:

- (1) The patient must possess sufficient vital energy and powers of reaction to respond to the natural treatment and to a change of habits.
- (2) The destruction and disorganization of vital fluids and organs must not have advanced too far.

Some patients become frightened at the idea of crises. They exclaim: “I came here to get well, not to grow worse.”

However, there is no occasion for alarm. Healing crises occur in mild form only because, under the influence of natural living and treatment, Nature has the best of the fight. The healing forces of the organism have gained the ascendancy over the disease conditions.

In fact, **Nature never undertakes a healing crisis until the system has been prepared for it**, until the organism is sufficiently purified and strengthened to conduct the acute reaction to a favorable termination.

Furthermore, it is well to remember that crises cannot be avoided, because it is through fevers and inflammatory processes that Nature effects the cure—that she tears down the old to build up the new.

On the other hand, if patients are possessed of exceptionally good vitality and if the organs of elimination are in good working order, the purification and adjustment of the organism may occasionally proceed gradually without the occurrence of marked acute reactions or crises.

Healing Crises, When Properly Conducted, Are Never Fatal to Life

When well assisted by the right, natural methods of living and of treatment, healing crises are never dangerous or fatal to life. The only danger lies in suppressing these acute reactions by drugs, knife, the ice bag or any means whatever.

If acute reactions are suppressed, the constructive healing crisis may be changed into a destructive disease crisis. Therefore we earnestly warn our patients never to interfere in any way with a healing crisis lest the chronic condition (which resulted from the suppression of the original disease) become worse than before.

When Nature, with all the force inherent in the human organism, has finally worked up to the point of a healing crisis, another defeat by a new suppression may be beyond her powers of endurance and recuperation. Fatal collapse may then be the result.

Therefore, take heed! If you are not willing to endure the healing crises, do not undertake the treatment. When you have conjured up the hidden demons of disease, you must have the courage to face and subdue them. Nothing good in life comes to us except as we pay the price. He who is too cowardly to conquer in a healing crisis may perish in a disease crisis.

Drugs Versus Healing Crises

Our explanations of the natural laws of cure and of natural therapeutics are often greeted by "Old School" physicians and students with remarks like the following:

"You speak as if you had the monopoly of eliminative treatment and of the production of crises. With our laxatives, cathartics, diuretics, diaphoretics and tonics, we are doing the same thing. What is more effectual for stimulating a sluggish liver and cleansing the intestinal tract than calomel followed by a dose of salts? What will produce more profuse perspiration than pilocarpin; or what is

a better stimulus to the kidneys than squills or buchu? Can we not by means of stimulants and depressants regulate heart action to a nicety?

“We accomplish all this in a clean, scientific manner, without resorting to unpleasant dieting and to barbarous applications of douches, packs and manual treatments. Isn’t it more dignified and professional to write a Latin prescription? How much better the impression on the laity than soaking and rubbing!”

Let us see if these statements are true, if laxation, urination or perspiration produced by poisonous drugs are identical in character and in effect with the elimination produced by natural living and natural methods of treatment through healing crises.

Mercury, in the form of calomel, is one of the best-known cholagogues [an agent designed to increase the flow of bile and, thereby, stimulate lower bowel action]. It is the favorite laxative and cathartic of allopathy. The prevailing idea is that calomel acts on the liver and the intestines; but in reality **these organs act on the drug.**

All laxatives and cathartics are poisons; if it were not so, they would not produce their peculiar, drastic effects. Because they are poisons, Nature tries to eliminate them from the system as quickly and as thoroughly as possible. In order to do this, the excretory glands and membranes of the liver and the digestive tract greatly increase the amount of their secretions and thereby produce a forced evacuation of the intestinal canal.

Thus the system, in the effort to eliminate the mercurial poison, expels also the other contents of the intestines. This may effect a temporary cleansing of the intestinal tract, but it does not and cannot cleanse the individual cells throughout the body of their impurities.

The Lasting Effects of Artificial Purging

In accordance with the Law of Action and Reaction, action and reaction are equal and opposite; the temporary irritation and overstimulation of the sensitive membranes of the digestive organs are followed by corresponding weakness and exhaustion, and if this procedure be repeated and become habitual, by gradual atrophy and paralysis. As atrophy progresses, the dose of the purgative must be increased in order to accomplish the desired result and this, in its

turn, hastens the degenerative changes in the system.

Such enforced, artificial purging may flush the drains and sewers, but does not cleanse the chambers of the house. The cells in the interior tissues remain encumbered with morbid matter. A genuine and truly effective housecleaning must start in the cells and must be brought about through the initiative of the vital energies in the organism, through healing crises, and not through stimulation by means of poisonous irritants.

When, under a natural regimen of living and of treatment, the system has been sufficiently purified, adjusted and vivified, the cells themselves begin the work of elimination.

This is what takes place: The morbid matter and poisons thrown off by the cells and tissues are carried by means of the venous circulation to the organs of elimination, the bowels, kidneys, lungs and skin, and to the mucous membranes lining the interior tracts, such as the nasal passages, the throat and bronchi, the digestive and genitourinary canals, etc.

These organs of elimination become overcrowded with the rush of morbid matter and the accompanying congestion and irritation cause the acute inflammatory processes and feverish symptoms characterizing the various forms of colds, catarrhs, skin eruptions, diarrheas, boils and other acute forms of elimination, which we call healing crises. In other words, **what the "Old School" of medicine calls the disease, we look upon as the Cure.**

Acute elimination brought about in this manner is Nature's method of housecleaning. It is a true healing crisis, **the result of purification and increased activity from within the cell, produced by natural means.**

Here interposes Friend Allopath: "You claim that you bring about your acute reactions by natural means only, and that these are never injurious to the organism. What difference does it make if the circulation is stimulated and elimination increased by a cold-water spray or by digitalis? The cold-water stimulation produces a reaction just as digitalis does, and the one must therefore be as injurious as the other."

To this we reply: "The stimulating effect on heart and circulation produced by digitalis is the first action of a highly poisonous drug; the second lasting effect is weakening and paralyzing. On the other hand, the first action of a cold-water spray is depressing; it

sends the blood into the interior of the body and benumbs the surface. The sensory nerves at once report this sensation of cold to headquarters in the brain, and immediately the command is telegraphed to the blood vessels in the interior of the body: 'Send blood to the surface!' As a result, the blood is carried to the surface, and the skin becomes warm and rosy with the glow of life. In this case the stimulation is the **second and lasting** effect of the water treatment, from which there is no further reaction."

Similarly, the stimulation produced by exercise, massage, manipulation or the exposure of the nude body to light and air is natural stimulation, produced by harmless, natural means. It is entirely due to the fact that conditions in the system have been made more normal, as explained in other chapters.

Drugs, stimulants and tonics, while they produce an artificial, temporary stimulation, do not change the underlying abnormal conditions in the organism. Likewise, the flushing of the colon with water, the use of laxative herb teas and decoctions or forced sweating by means of Turkish or Russian baths, though not as dangerous as inorganic minerals and poisonous drugs, cannot be classed among the natural means of cure. These agents, which by many persons are looked upon as natural treatment, irritate the organs of elimination to forced, abnormal activity without at the same time arousing the cells in the interior of the body to natural elimination.

Dr. H. Lahmann, one of the foremost scientists of the Nature Cure movement, made a series of interesting experiments. His chemists gathered the natural perspiration of certain patients, produced by ordinary exercise in the sunshine. These excretions of the skin were evaporated and analyzed, and were found to contain poisons powerful enough to kill rabbits.

If profuse sweating was produced in the same patients by the high temperature of the hot-air box or the electric-light cabinet, their perspiration, when evaporated and analyzed, was found to contain only small amounts of toxins. Thus Dr. Lahmann proved that:

- (1) Sweating and the elimination of disease matter are two different processes.
- (2) Artificially induced sweating does not eliminate disease matter.
- (3) The organism cannot be forced by irritants and stimulants

and artificial means, but eliminates morbid matter only in its own natural manner and when it is in proper condition to do so.

In a lesser degree, this applies also to fasting. Under certain conditions it becomes a necessity; but it may easily be abused and overdone.

Do We Never Fail?

Certainly we fail, but our failures are usually due to the fact that sick people, as a rule, do not consider Nature Cure except as a last resort. The methods and requirements of Nature Cure appear at first so unusual and exacting that people seek to evade them so long as they have the least faith in the miracle-working power of the poison bottle, a metaphysical healer or the surgeon's knife. When health, wealth and hope are entirely exhausted, then the chronic sufferer grasps at Nature Cure as a drowning man clutches at a straw. But even though ninety percent of these cases which come to us are of the apparently incurable type, our total failures are few and far between.

If there is sufficient vitality in the body to react to natural treatment and if the destruction of vital parts and organs has not too far advanced, a cure is possible. Often the seemingly hopeless cases yield the most readily.

Our success is due to the fact that we do not rely on any one method of treatment, but combine in our work everything that is good in the different systems of natural healing.

The Law of Crises

Everywhere in nature and in the world of men we find the Law of Crises in evidence. This proves it to be a universal law, ruling all cosmic relations and activities.

Wars and revolutions are the healing crises in the life of nations. Heresies and reformations are the crises of religion. In strikes, riots and panics, we recognize the crises of commercial life.

Staid old Mother Earth herself has in the hoary past repeatedly changed the configurations of her continents and oceans by great cataclysms or geological crises.

When the sultry summer air has become pregnant with poisonous vapors and miasmas, atmospheric crises, such as rainstorms,

thunder, lightning and electric storms, cool and purify the air and charge it anew with life-giving ozone. In like manner will healing crises purify the disease-laden bodies of men.

Emanuel Swedenborg gives us a wonderful description of the Law of Crises in its relationship to the regeneration of the soul. We quote from the chapter in which he describes the working of this law, entitled, **“Regeneration Is Effected by Combats in Temptation.”**

“They who have not been instructed concerning the regeneration of man think that man can be regenerated without temptation. But it is to be known that no one is regenerated without temptation; and that many temptations succeed, one after another. The reason is that regeneration is effected for an end, in order that the life of the old man may die, and the new life which is heavenly be insinuated. It is evident, therefore, that there must be a conflict [healing crisis—author’s note]; for the life of the old man resists and determines not to be extinguished; and the life of the new man can only enter where the life of the old is extinct.

“Whoever thinks from an enlightened rationale, may see and perceive from this that a man cannot be regenerated without combat, that is, without spiritual temptations; and further, that he is not regenerated by one temptation, but by many. For there are very many kinds of evil which formed the delight of his former life, that is, of the old life. These evils cannot all be subdued at once and together; for they cleave tenaciously, since they have been inrooted in the parents for many ages back [the scrofula of the soul—author’s note] and are therefore innate in man, and are confirmed by actual evils from himself from infancy. All these evils are diametrically opposite to the celestial good [perfect health—author’s note] that is to be insinuated and which is to constitute the New Life.”

Thus the inspired Seer of the North draws a vivid picture of what we call healing crises in their relation to moral regeneration.

We cannot help recognizing the close agreement of physical and spiritual crises; this, again, demonstrates the continuity and exact correspondence of Natural Law on the different planes of being. [The Law of Hermes: *As above, so below; as in the inner, so in the outer; as in the lesser, so in the greater.*]

We of the Nature Cure school know that this great Law of Crises dominates the cure of chronic disease. Every case is another verifi-

cation of it; in fact, every decided advance on the road to perfect health is marked by acute reactions.

The cure invariably proceeds through the darkness and chaos of the crises to the light and beauty of perfect health, periods of marked improvement alternating with acute eliminating activity (the “spiritual temptations” and “combats” of Swedenborg), until perfect regeneration has taken place.

