



The Illness is the Cure - 2nd extended edition: an introduction to Life Medicine and Life Doctoring - a new existential approach to illness

Peter Wilberg

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... Peter Wilberg's application of timeless wisdom to ... different aspects and areas of living shines new light, and brings important new information and perspective, to the topic areas themselves, and this new book is no exception. This approach often supplants misunderstanding, and/or fills in gaps and blind spots which currently exist in these topic areas, per the incomplete approaches of so-called conventional wisdom." By Living Unbound about the 1st edition. What if 'the illness is the cure' - and not something to be cured? In a way that is clear and practically helpful to both lay readers, patients and health professionals alike, this book challenges the most basic assumptions of almost all forms of medicine – 'modern' or 'traditional', 'scientific' or 'spiritual' – namely that illness is something to be cured rather than being the cure. To do so it draws on the work of Illich, Heidegger and many others to introduces a fundamentally new approach to health and illness – 'Life Medicine' and 'Life Doctoring'. Life Doctoring is a new form of non-biomedical therapy for serious and chronic illness. Instead of employing standard forms of medical testing and treatment the Life Doctor is there to help the individual come to an understanding of the ways their own particular illness 'is the cure' – how it is a potential source of new healing understandings of themselves and of a healing transformation of their lives. Life Medicine is a new understanding of health and illness that does not separate science and life, biology and biography, the life of the human body and the life of the human being. Instead its focus is on the larger life context and specific life meanings that particular symptoms and illnesses hold for the individual patient. For as Marx wrote: "The idea of one basis for science and another for life is from the very outset a lie." This 'lie' unfortunately has dire consequences. For as research by the medical establishment itself has confirmed, conventional biomedical diagnosis and treatment through drugs and surgery is itself the leading cause of premature death – ahead of both cancer and heart disease. By offering an entirely new framework for understanding the essential nature of 'health' and 'illness', Life Doctoring can help patients understand the underlying sense of 'dis-ease' in their lives that lies behind their clinically diagnosed illness or 'disease'. In this way it can also serve to (a) prevent an individual's 'dis-ease' manifesting as clinical 'disease', and (b) educate patients about the possible dangers and potentially sickness-causing or 'iatrogenic' effects of many standard forms of biomedical testing and treatment. The continuing monopoly over knowledge of the human body that biomedicine claims has one basic reason – namely that it is not actually 'science-driven' but 'money driven' – turning illness into a source of vast profits for Big Pharma and the corporate health industry as a whole. Many people are angered by the global trend toward the privatisation of medical care or else concerned about the rising costs. Yet the roots of this trend lie in the fact that illness itself has long been 'privatised' – seen as bearing no relation at all to the social and economic ills affecting the patient and to the sicknesses of society itself. To argue that 'the illness is the cure' is also to recognise that illness is also an expression of a fundamentally sick world. Through Life Medicine and Life Doctoring, illness can also help us to recognise and respond in new ways to this world and its politics - and in this way help to heal it. "The first task of the doctor is ... political..." Michel Foucault

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