

Flying high

Jonathan Hardy discusses bird medicine in homeopathy



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Bird remedies are very new in homeopathy. They have only been proved in the last few years and for this reason it has been very exciting for me that in the last year I have seen a number of cases requiring them. Medicines are prepared from the feather, claw or blood of the bird since any part contains the essence of the whole.

When we think of birds we think of flight, soaring high in the air, bird song, the countryside, freedom, preening... It is fascinating then to find that patients needing bird remedies often demonstrate these themes in their lives. Each individual bird will have a particular theme or issue which characterises it.

Peregrine falcon

Peregrine falcons, cruelly persecuted for centuries in the British Isles, were driven nearly to extinction and are now making a modest comeback.

The central theme in this remedy is a deep sense of isolation. There is a very strong feeling of being excluded. The patient feels neglected and repudiated by friends, family and society as a whole. Patients may well have been actually deserted by their birth parents. They will usually have experienced severe abuse of a physical, emotional and/or sexual nature. As a result, there is a great deal of anger, which may either be suppressed or expressed. The anger is often directed at family members. There is often a feeling that siblings were more loved, more accepted, considered more important. There is also a very strong aversion to injustice.

The negative feelings are

internalised. There is a very negative self-image with feelings of disgust at oneself and at one's body, a feeling of ugliness. There is a very deep sense of shame, humiliation and resentment.

These feelings can lead to a deep sense of hopelessness and apathy. The patient may become discontented, discouraged, indifferent and lazy. There is indifference to household duties, to work, to family members, to everything.

I have used this remedy in about ten patients. Some of these are people who have suffered very severe abuse in childhood. Their feelings of anger, isolation and the negative feelings they have about themselves have been greatly relieved by the remedy, as have a range of other psychological and physical symptoms.

Raven

Ravens, the largest member of the crow family in the British Isles, are known to be extremely intelligent birds. They have been severely persecuted for centuries and this may be why there is such a strong sensitivity to danger, the wellbeing of the family and to the suffering of others in this remedy. The deepest inner feeling is the conflict between the desire to care for others and the desire for freedom.

Coming from the central dilemma, there is worry about work and activity, a tendency to be "hyperactive" and constantly hurried. There is a feeling of being intruded upon – of one's space being taken up, and a desire to escape from that pressure. There is a pre-occupation with caring for one's dependents and worrying about them. In the individual's dreams and imagination, she is flying

away from these obligations, up in the air, in nature, in the mountains where she is free, where her mind is released from constant worry.

One of my Raven patients cared for a family member for many years in her own home. She carried out her duties towards this person faithfully and without any resentment but suffered greatly because of the way it restricted her freedom. She said to me, "I wish I was a bird. I would like to open my wings and glide – I'd like to feel the air in my wings, to fly away for a day. It would be lovely to be soaring and admiring the view and then hopping back to security when I wanted to. To have freedom, which I feel robbed of in my home." What amazing imagery!

She went on: "Singing is a definite outlet for me, I love it. I have singing lessons. I've got to keep myself sparkly so that I can cope. I feel like a food machine." Aren't these feelings so like you would expect a bird to feel – the obligation to feed, feed, feed the young in the nest and the desire to fly away from it all and soar in the air! After the remedy she felt much more at peace with the situation.

Eagle

Eagle patients project an image of self-confidence and power. There is a feeling of contentedness with oneself and confidence to confront injustice, authority and people in positions of power, to express oneself freely and to get one's way. The individual is calm, self-assured and poised.

The essence of the Eagle state is extreme anger and/or fear, which is very deeply suppressed. This suppression can lead to insomnia and

other symptoms of stress. There is a very strong desire for self-control, due to fear of expressing anger and/or violence. The patient has extremely high standards, and expects a lot of himself and others. He can be critical. The ability to control himself also equips the individual for positions of power and influence in which it is necessary to maintain order and structure and to control and dominate a number of other individuals.

One of my Eagle patients was a young woman suffering with insomnia. She had been so keen to fly that she learned to fly at the age of 16. She was someone who appeared completely comfortable in herself – confident, poised, free of worries and in control. Just how you might expect an eagle to feel! Her job was one in which she had to control and organise a large number of people and she said she both enjoyed that and was also good at it. The remedy cured her insomnia.

Scarlet macaw

Macaws are very colourful birds, having bright blue and red feathers. They live together sometimes in groups of hundreds. They are parrots, birds famous for their ability to communicate.

A Macaw patient is someone who is very comfortable with being themselves. They like "to speak their truth", are confident and happy to be seen and to be heard. In fact it is very important for them to be heard, for what they believe in to be spoken out loud in a group – rather like the macaw, so colourful and noisy you cannot miss them!

They have good relationships

with their family and friends. There is a feeling of effortlessness – that everything is good and will continue to be good in their life.

I treated a woman suffering with acne and eczema. One of the most remarkable things in her description of herself was how completely happy, contented and free of resentment she was. She was very comfortable with herself and described a childhood that was absolutely wonderful. What specifically led me to Scarlet macaw as her remedy is that one of the things she concentrated most on in her description of herself



was how important it was for her to "speak her truth". She did wonderfully well on this medicine which cleared up her skin complaints.

There were two other interesting aspects to this case. She was unable to eat nuts (which she loved) when she first came to see me – they would aggravate her skin. She can now eat nuts without aggravation. Scarlet macaws, of course, love nuts. The second intriguing thing is that at a subsequent consultation she attended wearing a small red feather around her neck – just to give me an extra hint in case I hadn't found the remedy! ➤

The parrot (pictured above) is famous for its ability to communicate, a trait seen in people who need this remedy

The peregrine falcon (opposite page) encapsulates a patient's feelings of isolation

Bird remedies – general themes

Lightness

In the provings there are feelings of being light, immaterial, out of the body, dreams of flying and of being a bird. The patients can be light in the sense of being free of psychological “baggage”. They may be very content with their lives and contented with themselves. Not in an egotistical way but just having no hang-ups. They are people who let go of past problems and antagonisms. They do not want to be dragged down and dragged back by negative memories. They want to be able to fly in the psychological sense, get above mundane problems, which inhibit the expression of their higher natures. They are interested in spiritual matters, music and the arts.

They often have a very spiritual perspective, seeing events in their lives and hardships as being necessary for their soul growth. This contributes to their ability to lack rancour.

Freedom

There can be a strong sense of being free or on the other hand a deep feeling of being trapped by their circumstances and a very great desire for freedom, for their personal space, for psychological freedom or to get into the country, to be in the mountains, in nature. They can sometimes strongly resent circumstances or individuals that inhibit their freedom. There can be a great desire to escape from obligations.

Caring

A very strongly developed sense of duty and responsibility towards the

family means they take very seriously both the emotional and physical well-being of their loved ones. At the extreme there can be a feeling of being “a food machine” – just providing food and material comfort or, on the other hand, a strong desire to get away from this responsibility with indifference to the family and domestic duties. One thinks of the parent birds working every daylight hour to feed the young in the nest!

Danger

Feelings of persecution, danger and of being attacked may relate to the fact that a number of the bird remedies which have been proved have been persecuted, especially birds of prey.

Injustice

Perhaps as a result of the abuse and persecution of birds there is a strongly developed sense of injustice, an aversion to the mistreatment of others, to authority and mistreatment in general.

Sympathy

Patients requiring bird remedies have a very strongly developed sense of sympathy. With a deep intensity, they feel not only for the suffering of humans but also of animals and are greatly pained by the destruction of the natural environment.

Forsaken

This theme runs very strongly through the bird remedies. There is a strong feeling of being rejected, deserted and isolated. Again this feeling of isolation may relate to the persecution a number of bird species have experienced over

a long period of time.

Clairvoyance

Patients may be extremely intuitive; their physical senses may be heightened too, with very acute vision and hearing.

Music

There is a love for music and an aptitude in creating it. Patients have a tendency to sing and whistle.

Preening

There are often complaints concerning quite trivial symptoms, eg minor skin blemishes, slight problems with the hair or fingernails. The patient may even appear to preen during the consultation!

Physical activity

They love to be outdoors in the fresh air and are often very good sports people. There may be a strong desire to fly aeroplanes, climb mountains, or bungee jump.

Appetite

Appetite may be ravenous and constant.

Awkwardness

A patient can sometimes be clumsy with a tendency to drop things or bump into things. This may be analogous to the ungainliness of birds on solid ground in contrast to their poise and elegance in the air.

Travel

There is a desire to travel associated with an inquisitive nature, a desire for learning, knowledge and understanding.

Some or all of these themes can be found in every case requiring a bird remedy.



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