

HYPNO DOC

LESS IS MORE
for Dr. Kathy Doner,
who traded traditional
medicine for the often
misunderstood world of
alternative healing.



DR. KATHY DONER, a graduate of George Washington University medical school, sold her medical practice in 2010 and is now fully committed to a holistic approach.

Board certified in internal medicine, Kathy Doner practiced Western medicine for more than two decades from her Sebastian office and served on the staff and board of trustees of Sebastian River Medical Center.

Throughout those years, she stressed preventive medicine's role in healing the mind, body and soul. "I practiced the way I wanted," she said.

"I preached a healthy lifestyle. I was in both camps. I did not regard myself as an alternative. I regarded myself as holistic. Then I got frustrated. Teaching and motivating people takes time. Even though I took more time with patients than many doctors do, I still couldn't take the time they needed. I wasn't living my truth. I felt I was practicing medicine with one hand tied behind my back."

Eventually, the holistic approach

won out, and in 2002 Doner sold her old practice to focus on hypnosis as a cure for issues that range from weight loss to insomnia. The Grant physician now practices from offices in downtown Melbourne as well as Sebastian.

Doner admits leaving her practice was one of the most difficult decisions she ever made. "It was my identity," she said.

"A Buddhist nun once told me that I was a healer, but that if the tools I was using were hurting me, they were no longer the right tools. I realized I could still help people, but in a different way."

Reflecting on her unusual journey from a medical degree from George Washington University to her certification in hypnosis from the National Guild of Hypnotists, Doner believes her nonconformist approach to healthcare was nurtured during a year-long trip

around the world before entering medical school.

"I lived with families around the world as I did research on the medical system of different countries," said Doner.

"It exposed me to a world view of medicine and different healing modalities. Then I came back home to medical school. I kept my mouth shut and learned the tools of Western medicine."

She contends with misconceptions about hypnosis, a healing technique that still remains in question by some, even though the American Medical Association endorsed hypnotherapy in 1958 as a valid medical therapy. The Hollywood-created image of zombie-like subjects under the spell of calculating hypnotists, it seems, refuses to die.

Doner gently but firmly tries to bury that incorrect image, pointing to clinical data.

"Despite substantial variation in techniques among the numerous reports, patients treated with hypnosis experienced substantial benefits for many different medical conditions," wrote Dr. James Stewart in the "Mayo Clinic Proceedings."

"As alternative treatments for

medical conditions become popular, contemporary medicine is being challenged to take a more integrative approach. The National Institute of Health supports clinical trials of complementary and alternative medicine, which includes hypnosis."

Of course, you don't have to sell Doner on hypnosis' value. She has chosen to solely practice hypnotherapy because of its effectiveness in changing negative habits and improving well-being. If you improve the mind, you improve the body, she says.

"The mind and the body are one," she said.

"When people are happy, their pain symptoms are better. Patients gain a sense of control."



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THROUGHOUT HER YEARS OF PRACTICE Dr. Doner always addressed the whole person— body, mind, emotions and spirit. She also stressed preventive medicine such as good nutrition, exercise, social support, the search for meaning in life, and stress reduction.

ALTERED STATE

Hypnosis, says Doner, is as natural as breathing. Hypnotherapists are just the guides. "Hypnosis is simply an altered state of consciousness that is perfectly natural," explained Doner.

"All hypnosis is self-hypnosis. You go in and out of it all day long, reading, watching TV and falling asleep. When the famous bank robber Willie Sutton was put in jail, someone asked him, 'Willie, why do you rob banks?' He replied, 'Because that's where the gold is.' And that's why I use hypnosis, because the subconscious mind is where the 'gold' is. It's where your vast potential for positive change and creative possibilities resides."

A member of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, Doner is a trainer in neuro-linguistic program and has specialized training in both medical and pediatric hypnosis. She was also trained in EFT and Time Line Therapy. EFT, or Emotional Freedom Technique, uses tapping on acupuncture points to draw strength from the body's own energy field. Time Line Therapy attempts to help individuals let go from past negative experiences.

She has been around the world on meditation

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ALTERNATIVE CARE

retreats, including a three-week session with Buddhist monk, teacher and author Thich Nhat Hanh, nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967 by Martin Luther King.

Doner frequently conducts self-hypnosis workshops, from standing-room only programs for Harris Corporation employees to weight-loss classes at Pro-Health and Fitness Center. She has produced several CDs on the subject. Other physicians have become strong referral sources for Doner.

“Professional hypnosis is a wonderful way to restore balance to the mind-body disequilibrium that manifests itself as so many difficult-to-treat disease states,” wrote Vero Beach physician Dr. Guy Ulrich.

“It is a great tool for life management as well as disease management.”

Research shows that stress, depression or anxiety impacts negatively on

physical problems. To a degree, you are what you think, so if you can react positively to a negative situation, you stand a better chance of overcoming it. Suggestions given under hypnosis can directly change bodily functions such as blood flow, allergic



Thich Nhat Hanh



NOTED ARTIST SIGI OBERLAENDER of Indialantic said that he reduced the intake of his pain medication 75 percent after four hypnotherapy sessions with Dr. Doner. Oberlaender has had solo exhibitions at the Henegar Center for the Arts in Melbourne, Florida and in his native Germany.

responses and stress hormones.

“The goal of physicians is to help their patients, so they’re very happy to refer to me their difficult patients, the smokers, the chronic insomniacs, people with irritable bowel syndrome. It’s a partnership.” ■

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