

Questions for Mary Tillinghast of Castle Remedies

When you were a girl, what did you think you wanted to be when you grew up?

I recall daydreaming about being a doctor. There was a time when bored in school, I hid a short stack of loose-leaf paper underneath the book I was supposed to be studying. On these pages I wrote down everything I knew about the human body, stream of consciousness style. I'd share a song or two, now, in order to read that collection.

Where were you raised, and do you still have family there?

I grew up in a mill town in upstate New York. During World War II, Glens Falls was designated "Home Town USA", and featured on the cover of Look Magazine. Craving adventure, I left that town behind, but all my siblings and their families still live there. I truly love going back to visit them in the beautiful setting of the Adirondack foothills.

How did you come to be involved with homeopathic medicine?

When I first moved to Ann Arbor with my husband and four young children, we were invited to a block party in our neighborhood. I introduced myself to a lovely girl, a potential babysitter (I thought), who turned out to be the mother of four and married to Dr. Ed Linkner, a holistic MD who uses homeopathy in his family medical practice. We became friends, and shortly after that I began helping Dr. Linkner dispense homeopathic remedies out of his office. How fortunate I was to find a job and a mentor at the same time.

I never knew that story, Mary. That's wonderful! And how long have you been running Castle Remedies?

I have been running Castle Remedies from its inception in 1983; that would be 25 years.

Would you say that interest in homeopathy is growing in our community, holding steady, or declining? Is homeopathy attracting younger people to Castle Remedies and to your classes?

Over the past twenty-five years, I have watched the interest in homeopathy here in our community, as well as across the country, steadily grow. When Castle first came into being, there were, at the most, maybe a half dozen books for lay people on the subject of homeopathy. Now there are hundreds. Probably the main portal for people coming to be interested in using homeopathy is having a young family that they want to keep safe and healthy. Young people continue to be more proactive about their family's healthcare. This can only be a good thing.

In a nutshell, what do you love about homeopathy?

I love that homeopathy provides us with a process for becoming more in tune with our own health, and that of our loved ones. I love that it helps people suffer less. And what has been most meaningful to you about being a teacher of homeopathic principles?

I have so much enjoyed people learning that it is not difficult, and it is important for each of us to be aware of how our individual bodies and minds respond to our environment. If we are able to notice and describe our individual symptoms, we can keep ourselves healthy. If we are working with a practitioner of any type, it is only to each other's benefit that we participate in our own wellness.

What's the biggest misconception people have about homeopathy?

People do not understand that in the practice of homeopathy, the symptoms are not the disease. Symptoms are the clues that each of our bodies give to let us know that it is in a state of imbalance. I find that when people get this concept, they become much more able to choose remedies for themselves and their loved ones, or when needed, provide a practitioner with pertinent descriptions of symptoms, enabling her to prescribe the most appropriate homeopathic remedies.

Is Castle Remedies the only store of its kind in southeastern Michigan, or in the state?

I am not aware of any other homeopathic pharmacies in the state of Michigan. There are many professional practitioners of homeopathy, however. Some of these dispense homeopathic preparations, as well as send their clients to us. We have found that when people become educated about how to use homeopathic remedies, they are much enabled to work with their practitioners.

What do you most enjoy about Ann Arbor in the wintertime?

I love that shared feeling of having to hunker down. It seems to me that the community gets a little closer in the winter. We help keep each other warm, nurse each other through colds, and most importantly keep each other laughing. Downtown Ann Arbor is so pretty at night. This year I've made a pack with a colleague to get out and walk in the snow several times a week.

Where would you like to travel to that you've never been to?

I've been to Ireland and so love it. I've traveled to Vietnam with Thich Nhat Hanh, which was an incredible experience. Been to France, Turkey, and many places in our own spectacular country. I want to go to Nova Scotia, not sure why, and to South America, and to Africa, and, oh yes, one of those islands somewhere, where you just lie on the beach.



Mary Tillinghast has been the manager of Castle Remedies in the Parkway Center for 25 years, and she also teaches homeopathy classes.

