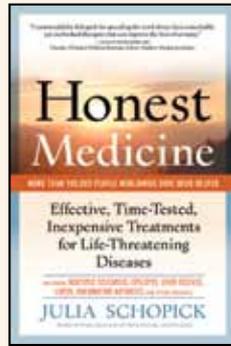




Honest Medicine: Effective, Time-Tested, Inexpensive Treatments for Life-Threatening Diseases by Julia Schopick. (2011). Oak Park, Illinois: Innovative Health Publishing, 308 pp. List Price: \$14.95 paperback.



In this book, Julia Schopick provides information about four effective, time-tested, inexpensive treatments for life-threatening illnesses that currently are frequently dismissed by mainstream medicine in favor of newer, toxic and inordinately expensive treatments promoted by pharmaceutical companies. These long-standing and safe treatments that have been known for 25 to 90 years are already approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA). The therapies are: Silverlon for non-healing wounds; Low Dose Naltrexone (LDN) for autoimmune diseases, such as multiple sclerosis and rheumatoid arthritis; the Ketogenic Diet for epilepsy; and alpha lipoic acid (ALA) for terminal liver disease.

Mainstream medicine argues that these older, safer treatments do not meet the gold standard; that is, they have not been studied using double blind research methods, and all reports of effectiveness are simply anecdotal. Schopick maintains that the older therapies have not been studied using the gold standard because to do so is not profitable for the pharmaceutical companies. I would add that at the very least, by insisting on this single standard, all attention is directed to the mythical average and no consideration is granted to outliers. Since the long-standing treatments are safe and have been demonstrated to be helpful in numerous cases, why not try them first? Even though the newer pharmaceuticals are less effective and more dangerous, patients too often do not receive the older therapies until they have suffered irreversible damage from the new drugs and/or disease. Several personal accounts of the struggles of patients and their families in their search for successful treatments are chronicled.

The author urges all patients to become active participants in their own health care. Numerous references to studies and websites are generously scattered throughout the text. This book and the author's own award-winning website amply attest to her mission to use her writing and public relations skills to assist all people in their healthcare choices. I strongly recommend this book for holistic nurses.

Izzy, will-nilly by Cynthia Voigt. (1986). New York: Simon Pulse, 327 pp. List Price: \$6.99 paperback.

Literature offers us a clinical objectivity through a different way of knowing. Creative writers are often excellent observers of the full range of human behavior, and provide insights into the complexity of the psychological and physical forces in health and illness. Literature gives us an opportunity to step back, take a second, closer look at what we may have missed in the intensity of the moment. And for this reason, I would recommend one of Cynthia Voigt's best young adult novels for nurses, especially those nurses who care for adolescents.

One of the main and most memorable characters is Rosamund—an intelligent, but socially awkward, girl who is ostracized by her high school peers. Yet, when Izzy, an attractive, privileged, popular, and therefore inaccessible classmate is injured in a car accident, Rosamund is the only one who reaches out to her with understanding, patience, creativity and unapologetic curiosity. Friends who were once part of Izzy's inner circle simply do not seem to know how to act around her and withdraw. After all, Izzy can no longer be a cheerleader; she must be replaced. Her family is supportive, but they are unwilling to deal with how much she's hurting; all their efforts are directed to modifying her environment and encouraging her to adjust to her new life. Even the professional caretakers in the hospital, all of whom Izzy labels as nurses, seem to focus on completing tasks and maintaining a certain clinical distance. Rosamund alone knows how to be a companion in suffering. She is not intimidated by Izzy's bitterness and tears, but remains open to Izzy's process. Rosamund knows how to be silent and is able to withstand rebuffs. Even though Rosamund clearly would not have been the kind of girl Izzy would have befriended in her old life, she may be the only person who helps her face her new life.

All nurses need to know the many ways our patients and their families and friends deal with suffering. Our willingness to be there, even when we're uncertain about how to behave, may help us enter these places of suffering with confidence and trust, not needing to know or predict the outcomes, but rather being fully present to whatever the moment calls forth.

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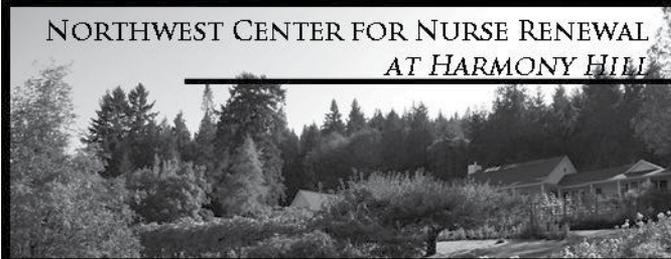


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