

# SECOND OPINION

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December 2009

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## Dr. Gabor Mate Speaks In Whitehorse

-Brian Eaton

Eminent author and outspoken psychiatrist Dr. Gabor Mate was the keynote speaker at a Whitehorse conference September 24-27 jointly sponsored by Learning Disabilities Association Yukon and Many Rivers.

Mate has written several successful bestsellers, among them *When The Body Says No*, *Scattered Minds*, *Hang On to Your Kids*, and his latest book *In The Realm Of The Hungry Ghosts*.

To watch the sixty-four-year-old Mate as he addresses an audience is like looking at a tightly-wound watch. With a wry sense of humour and boundless energy, he captures your attention immediately.

Hungarian-born Mate suffered early at the hands of the Nazi occupiers of his native country in World War 2. His maternal grandparents were killed in Auschwitz when he was five months old. While his father was serving in a forced labour battalion for the German and Hungarian armies, Mate and his mother feared for their lives, on the point of starvation in the Budapest ghetto. Meanwhile, his aunt had been deported, her whereabouts and circumstances unknown.

His formative years, perilous as they were, bestowed on him a resiliency and a compassion for the human condition that is reflected in both his writing and his daily activities. A family physician as well as a

psychotherapist, he gave up his practice a number of years ago, to work with HIV-positive heroin addicts on Vancouver's downtown east side. His experiences there formed much of the basis for his current book *In The Realm Of The Hungry Ghosts*.

On the role of psychiatrists in helping their patients get to the root of their difficulties, Mate has this to say:

"No! That's the last thing they know about. They never learned normal human development. They only learned about disease. If people go to psychiatrists expecting to be understood, that's a huge mistake. If they go and expect to be put on medication, that's great, that's what they do. But most of them don't understand. Some of them do, but if they do it's not because of their training, but because they've made themselves open to that themselves."

On the omniscient nature of his profession, Mate says "The problem with medical practice is not that we don't know a lot of things, the problem is that what we don't know is perceived as not worth knowing. So when a patient says: I heard such-and-such, the response is; Oh no, that's nonsense, rather than saying: I haven't looked at that. I don't know anything about that. It's as if what I don't know is not worth knowing."

Mate's pioneering book *When The Body Says No* makes a convincing case for the interlinking of the body and the mind into one complex and unified system that works together to maintain equilibrium and integrity.

He cites his early work in palliative care, when he observed some traits common to many of his dying patients. They would have low self-esteem and be unwilling to assert their own needs above those of others. They lacked strong personal boundaries, and seemed unable to say no to people when it came to stating what they really wanted. Eventually, says Mate, their bodies would do it for them, shutting down or manifesting illness and making the decisions that their minds had refused to allow them to make

Another of Mate's books *Hold on to Your Kids*, written with co-author Gordon Neufeld, addresses the increasingly common phenomenon of children replacing their parents with their peers as the central figures in their lives, and the damage that does to our social structure.

Says Mate: "Too often the only face-to-face contact children are getting is with their peers, and the book is about how stressful that is for kids. Because kids can't accept each other unconditionally.

By nature kids have to pretend to be something else to be accepted by other kids. It's only their parents that can give them that unconditional evaluation. When they lose that, it is a constant dance of pretend."

## Orthomolecular Medicine: Effective Treatment

-Brian Eaton

In mid-September, Whitehorse residents were fortunate to benefit from the expertise of Dr. Walter Lemmo and psychiatrist Dr. Tonya Wolfe, in a presentation at Alpine Bakery on the applications of orthomolecular medicine in the areas of cancer treatment and mental health.

The word orthomolecular literally means "right molecule", and it refers to the practice of prevention and treatment of disease, by providing the body with optimal amounts of natural substances.

Orthomolecular medicine was first pioneered in 1951 by Drs. Abraham Hoffer and Humphrey Osmond. The two Saskatchewan-based physicians were instrumental in discovering and promoting the use of Vitamin B3 or niacin in the treatment of schizophrenia. Concurrent with their work, Nobel laureate Dr. Linus Pauling was active in proving the effectiveness of large doses of Vitamin C in the promotion of general health.

Both Dr. Lemmo, a Vancouver-based naturopath and his colleague, psychiatrist Tonya Wolfe have followed in the footsteps of these pioneers, he in the area of cancer research, and she in the treatment of schizophrenia and allied syndromes identified as mental illnesses.

According to them, modern farming methods have resulted in such drastic

soil depletion that modern diets provide totally inadequate supplies of essential nutrients, so that supplementation with large doses of vitamins is not only desirable, but essential to the maintenance of both physical and mental health.

For example, they cited the fact that a modern potato, when compared with one grown 50 years ago, contains 100% less Vitamin A, and almost 60% less Vitamin C and iron. Similarly, a typical tomato grown in 1963 would have contained 30% more Vitamin A and 62% more calcium than its modern counterpart.

Lemmo's work in orthomolecular cancer treatment is particularly impressive. One of the most significant findings of his research has been the fact that the use of large doses of Vitamin C, when used in combination with traditional chemotherapy, has resulted in a significant extension of their survival rate for many cancer and leukemia patients, especially when orthomolecular treatment is combined with early diagnosis.

The American Schizophrenia Association Committee on Therapy claims that orthomolecular treatment is reported to be effective in 80% or more of cases of schizophrenia, based on a follow up of 1,500 patients. Treatment usually includes a special diet, vitamins and minerals in accordance with the individual needs of the patient. Many persons with schizophrenia have low blood sugar (hypoglycemia) and allergies which are treated.

Orthomolecular treatment has been found to be highly effective in treating many other disorders including

depression, behaviour and learning problems in children, alcoholism and problems associated with aging.

## **Judi's Corner**

### **Judi Johnny**

Happy Autumn to you all! Have been quite busy lately what with enjoying the short summer that we usually have.

In my neighbourhood some people have gone out hunting preparing for the long winter months. What is happening in your neighbourhood these past few months?

Did any of you have a summer vacation or are you going have a winter vacation? I never went anywhere for vacation. Enough of me.

We're in October now and in the first week we had snow. It didn't stay. My neighbour and I had an eventful trip downtown.

We both use wheelchairs. She had a manual and I had a power wheelchair. We weren't able to get either the Handi-Bus or the regular kneeling bus. Neither one was available. We couldn't afford the taxi either.

At any rate we wheeled downtown on the first snowy day of the month. I pulled her all the way to town while she held onto my power wheelchair. It took us forty-five minutes to get to town. She is still sore from holding. Now Transit makes sure we have the appropriate transportation.

We had a wonderful Thanksgiving Dinner hosted by Second Opinion Society. Both staff and Board Members cooked this fabulous meal. Thank you

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everyone for your help. Mike W and Brian Eaton provided us with fabulous music. Mike played the accordion and Brian played the harmonica. The rest of us sang.

There were many people, and one child showed up for dinner. Leslie is on vacation in Manitoba visiting family - she'll be back around the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. By the time you see this newsletter she'll be back to work at SOS.

I don't know if we have any October birthdays, if we do then Happy Birthday to you all!

Should you want to participate with writing or any kind of art for the newsletter please let us know.

## **A Craze**

**Charity Dawn Papineau.**

I looked down

Sparkled blackness

all around.

The time spent in the quarry,

Of my deep and dark places.

So many unknown faces?

Suddenly I have drifted away,

Amazingly all the secret passage ways

Have opened up.

I am running now in a maze,

A craze? What Craze !!!

Where am I anyway as night turns into day,

I realize I have gone away for days

A craze?!?

My thoughts on time, sleep, dreams, and imagination. For now.

## **The Beast**

**Charity Papineau**

Unleashed, snarling, sneering, screaming your name....

Looking for away. Yanking on the chain...

In the darkness, I am learning how to live,

The long dark hall, that never ends...

I see her there by the gate, crouched down lying in wait.

I see her back a gape, her eyes big and dark pleading to me.

She cried out do you not Know me....

Hold me. Show me....

Savior that I seek I am sowing what I reap. This cold this dank, this stink, that rank....

The bridge that I run is to You. Tis curse can I not undo....

My good friend, if only, if only you Knew.....

Although I love you, Truly I do.....

I reply meekly wanting to cry, feeling her

Pain this does cause pressure, a swelling to my brain.....Deranged

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