

The Nature and Evolution of Healing, Caring, and Curing

A Theory of Cure Paper

Introduction

What are the differences between healing, curing, and caring? Are they the same, different? Sometimes? All the time? Historical and modern medical practices have many confusing, sometimes conflicting definitions of and distinctions between the three. Modern medicine has no theory of cure and does not study healing cures scientifically. Most of what modern medicine does is to “*care for the sick.*” Unfortunately, there is also no theory of “*caring for the sick.*”

In the mid-1900s, Lydia Hall created the Care, Core, Cure Theory (Chinn, 2018), often referenced as a theory of cure, perhaps because no theory of cure is currently recognised. However, Care, Core, Cure Theory is a theory of nursing, not of cure. It is not even a comprehensive theory of caring for the sick – simply because most people who are sick never see a nurse or doctor. If we go to a hospital, clinic, or a doctor with a minor cut, scrape, bruise, common cold, influenza, or even COVID, we will be sent home to care for ourselves. Hall’s theory of care is about medical systems where doctors cure, nurses care, and the patient is the core of the practice. It has no actual theory of cure or care and no discussion of the differences between cure and healing. Healing is barely acknowledged. The primary focus of Care, Cure, Core is “*diseased patients in need of nurturing*” – ignoring most cases of illness, which are never diagnosed as diseases, and most cases of disease, which a nurse never attends. Hall did not explore any theories, concepts, or evolution of healing, caring, or curing.

This paper uses the model of cure developed and explored in the book A New Theory of Cure (Kolenchuk T. , 2021). The theory begins with studies of cures of elementary illnesses, not complex diseases. Our current medical concept of disease is too poorly defined to facilitate a theory of cure. A case of illness might be any injury, medical condition, disease, or other circumstance for which we seek a cure. An illness element, an elementary illness, has a single present cause and many possible consequences, most of which are judged negative. An element of illness is cured when its cause has been successfully addressed such that the negative consequences stop occurring. In the theory of cure, the word *illness* describes what is to be cured. A case of curable illness is an illness which can be cured. An elementary illness, or an illness element, has a single cure cause, such that when that cause is successfully addressed – the illness is cured. We cure illnesses, not patients. On the other hand, a disease is medically defined, diagnosed, and treated – but rarely cured.

To continue the development of a scientific theory of cure, we need a clear, unified set of definitions to facilitate understanding and further analysis of healing, caring, and curing.

Most of the cases of illness discussed in this paper are trivial and easily cured. They are intentionally selected *elementary illnesses*. The theory of cure begins with studies of elementary illnesses and uses those elements to construct and deconstruct more compound and complex cases of illness. It's easy to mistakenly believe that most illnesses are not simple. But that's not true. Almost every complex or compound illness begins as an illness element – even if that element is never diagnosed. When an illness element is cured – we ignore the illness and the cure. We don't even notice most illnesses nor their cures – unless the illness was dangerous, unless the cure was difficult. They are not important, so they are unconsciously excluded from medical studies. We might compare current medical theories to alchemy studies before the discovery of the atom and the elements.

Healing

Healing is the first cure, the natural cure. All living things heal, from the smallest cell to the largest plants and animals. Cellular healing consists of many natural growth processes and repair of cell damage. Multi-cellular organisms develop more sophisticated healing mechanisms, which are driven by cell reproduction – replacing damaged cells and consuming damaged or diseased cells, tissues, and infectious agents. Organisms with more complex bodies, limbs, and organs have complex systems of exercise and rest, consumption, and fasting that heal and promote healing cures at many layers of healthiness.

Caring

Caring is the second cure. Caring comes from communities. There is a gradation between healing and caring based on intentional actions. Healing occurs without intention – caring requires good intentions. We care for ourselves: our bodies, minds, spirits, and communities. We develop communities that care for individuals – and even for communities. All animals live in communities and care for each other. Even trees – as has been demonstrated scientifically, care for their offspring, sacrificing their nutrients to ensure the healthy growth of progeny.

Curing

Curing consists of intentional actions directed at an illness's present cause. In this model, curing lies underneath the concept of healing cures, seeking to address underlying causes of illness. In most cases, the balance of the cure comes from healing. A dog bites or licks at a thorn and pulls it out. This is a minor surgery – when done by a veterinarian. Healing takes over naturally to repair the damage done by the thorn and, if necessary, by the surgery.

Cure Cause

In the theory of cure, an illness element has a single cause and is cured when its *cure cause* has been successfully addressed. The cure provides proof of the cause. The cure cause of an illness is the cause that is present with the illness element and causes the

signs and symptoms of the illness. In the theory of cure, the terms *cure cause* and *present cause* are used interchangeably to represent that cause, which when successfully addressed, results in a cure. Past causes of illness cannot be accessed to cure unless they are also present with the illness.

Many alternative medical practitioners – and some conventional practitioners, refer to *root causes* as if they are the cure causes. The concept of root cause has a fundamental flaw. Every root cause has a cause – there is no root. The cause that, when addressed, cures an element of illness is a present cause. For complex illnesses – where one illness causes another, we might view the cure cause of the first illness as the root cause, but that is not the concept articulated by those seeking root causes.

Most diseases are compound or complex illnesses, having multiple causes and requiring multiple cures. Simple illnesses, elementary illnesses, are often cured before we notice them or before they can be diagnosed as a disease. Most diseases cannot be diagnosed until they have advanced to a point where multiple causes are present – and multiple cures are required. It should not be surprising that most diseases are considered medically incurable. Our medical systems often seek single cures for illnesses with multiple present causes, a simple error in understanding and logic. In addition, most illnesses cannot be cured by medicines simply because most medicines have no ability and make no attempt to address present causes. Most medicines are designed to care for the patient, not to address the cause or cure any illness.

A cure is an action, not a drug, not a medicine, not a product. The cure action addresses the cause of the illness, the cause of the signs and symptoms of the illness, such that the negative consequences fade and disappear.

Negative Consequences: Signs and Symptoms

Modern medicine distinguishes two different types of negative consequences of disease – signs and symptoms.

“A patient goes to the doctor with an illness, and goes home with a disease” - unknown

Symptoms are what the patient feels, the reason the patient seeks medical attention: an illness, pain, discomfort, unease. The doctor or nurse cannot see pain or discomfort. They can only measure it by asking the patient’s opinion. Symptoms are what the patient reports about the illness. Symptoms often wax and wane, come and go, and sometimes disappear forever. Is the illness gone? Is it cured? Who knows?

Signs of disease are observable and measurable by others – sometimes by machines. Signs of labored breathing, rapid heartbeat, or bleeding can be seen and addressed. They are neither the disease nor the cure. However, they can be used to judge progress towards a cure.

What, then, is Illness?

An illness is the intersection or conjunction of a cause and its negative signs and symptoms. The proof is found in the cause. When the cause is addressed, the illness disappears.

Illness can cause illness, a secondary illness. Signs and symptoms of illness sometimes become independent illnesses or diseases. When a cut becomes infected – two illnesses are present, and two cures are needed.

When an action addresses the consequences of illness, it rarely cures unless the consequences are seen as a secondary illness to be cured.

Healing or Curing?

Natural healing processes often cure by addressing injuries, the causes of pain, distress, and danger.

“The art of medicine consists in amusing the patient while nature cures the disease.”
- attributed to Voltaire

The words healing and curing are poorly distinguished in current medical practice and theory. Healing is often defined as a type of curing, while curing is less often defined as healing. Some sources distinguish between healing and curing by describing healing as a movement towards health and wholeness and curing as attacking disease. However, disease is also poorly defined in general, and many diseases, like influenza and the common cold, are more likely cured by health and healing than by attacking *the disease*, whatever that means.

In many dictionary definitions, healing is curing, and to cure is to heal.

Webster uses each for the other.

- **“healing** *the act or process of curing or of restoring to health*” and,
- **“cure** *vb cured; curing vt : HEAL: a : to restore to health*” (Merriam-Webster, 1995).

Dorland’s, in contrast, avoids the words cure and heal in both definitions – which are almost identical,

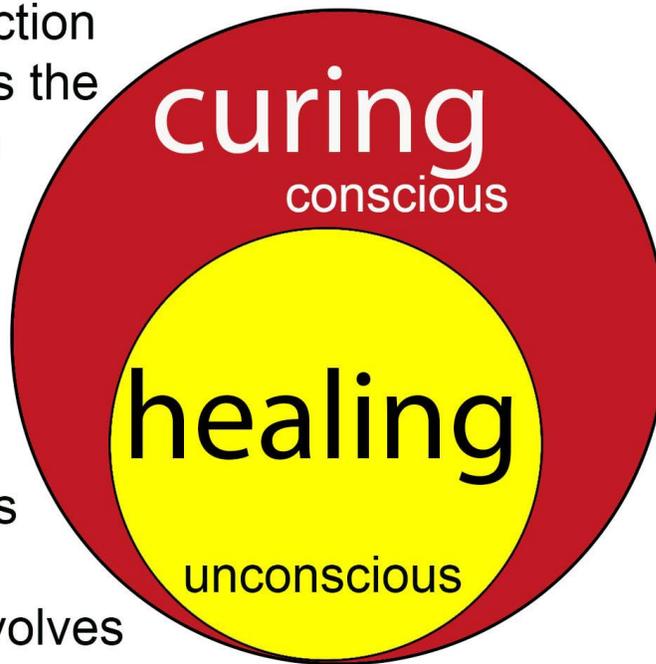
- **“healing** *the act or process in which the normal structural and functional characteristics of health are restored*” and
- **“cure:** *restoration to health of a person afflicted with a disease or other disorder.*” (Dorland, 2012)

[Some medical dictionaries do not even contain an entry to define cure \(Kolenchuk T. D., 2019\)](#). All such texts use the word cure regularly but not consistently. Do doctors cure? Many doctors intentionally avoid the word cure. Can doctors heal illnesses? Can psychologists heal our damaged minds and spirits? Does love heal? Does it cure? What's the difference between healing and curing?

A cure is an action that addresses the present cause of an illness.

Healing is curing.

Some curing is healing. Most curing also involves healing.



Theory of Cure © Healthicine

Healing is natural, always active, functioning without need for conscious intentions. We don't think about healing; it just works. Sometimes, it seems to stop when we think about it too much. Healing patches up the most minor injuries invisibly, curing small wounds efficiently, often curing even severe (curable) wounds slowly. We often think of healing as only healing injuries caused by bumps, scrapes, and accidents. However, healing also addresses injuries caused by infections from viruses, fungi, bacteria, parasites and social interactions. Healing also occurs in our minds and our spirits. We can't mend a broken heart, but it can often be healed. Healing sometimes makes mistakes – as might intentional cures. Life and health are complex; healing and curing sometimes cause illness. As we age, healing gradually slows and we might develop more illnesses that are *incurable within our lifetime*.

Curing is defined by Intention

Having accepted that healing is a type of curing, we need to define curing independent of the healing processes. In the theory of cure, healing and curing are distinguished by conscious intention.

Curing is intentional. Cures are intentional actions that address the present cause of an illness, breaking the link between cause and consequences. Cure causes might be attributes – like poisoning or dehydration or processes – like starvation or smoking. Curing is more varied than healing because causes of illness are not limited to body, mind, and spirit. Cure causes can be present in our diet, body, mind, spirits, communities, and environments. In addition, our body is a layer of environments – sometimes referred to as *terrain*. The body is the environment for

organ systems, organ systems are an environment for organs, organs are an environment for tissues, and tissues are an environment for our cells.

The distinction between healing and curing is a gradation based on intentions.



naturally addresses cure cause <----> intentionally addresses cure cause

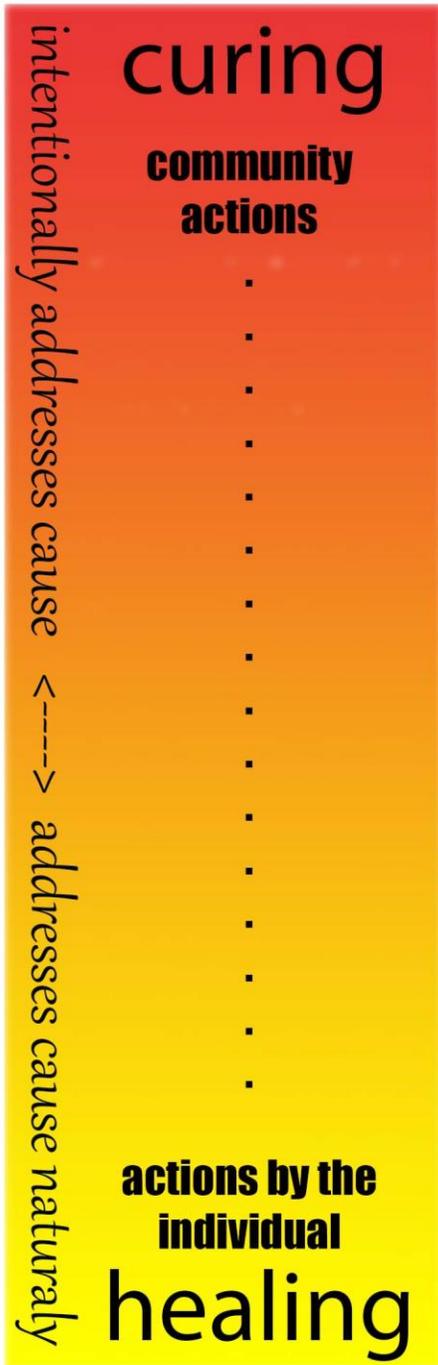
The gradation between healing and curing depends on the level of intentions to address present cause.

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Healing is the original cure. Healing forces are a natural part of life and health, always active, addressing present causes of illness, even when no illness is perceived. Curing occurs when we act intentionally to address the causes of illness. Medical cures occur when our medical systems intentionally address the present causes of disease.

Curing often comes from communities. A monkey pulls the lice off a neighbour or child, curing one tiny infection at a time. A grandchild, sister, or grandmother clips an ingrown toenail. A doctor stitches a wound or surgically cuts out a cancer.

The distinction between healing and curing applies to all types of disease. A respiratory infection might range from mild, easily healed, to a severe cold, requiring significant time to rest and recover, to severe pneumonia, requiring severe medical attention. A case of Vitamin C deficiency ranges from one easily cured by a natural, non-intentional consumption of foods containing Vitamin C to a severe case of scurvy, potentially causing physical damage. An ongoing Vitamin C deficiency, which can range from mild to moderate to severe, requires an ongoing change in the patient's diet.



A very deep cut might require intentional professional medical aid to ensure a cure proceeds well.

A less severe cut can be cured with intentional assistance from non-medical communities.

Many cuts, like a paper cut, are cured by intentional actions of self, to clean the wound and promote healing.

Minor cuts, ranging from some that might bleed or not to some minor scrapes that do not even break the skin, are normally healed without any intentional actions.

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Caring or Curing

“The relief of suffering and the cure of disease must be seen as twin obligations of a medical profession that is truly dedicated to the care of the sick.”
– Cassell (Ingmar Pörn (auth.), 1984)

Nurses and others care for us, not just for our illness, nor just its causes, when we are sick. A husband cares for his wife when she is ill, a mother for her child, and a child for her aging grandmother. When we are sick, we need rest and self-care. Are these actions cures?

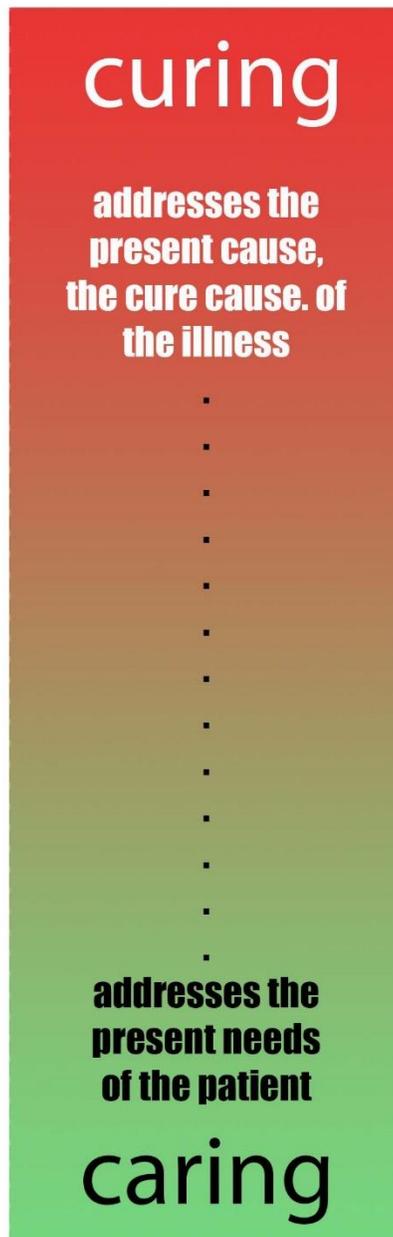


little or no intention to address cause <--> intends to addresses cure cause

The gradation between caring and curing depends on intentions to address the present cause of illness.

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Caring consists of intentional actions by our communities, including the communities of self, and is rarely curative. Most caring activities only address the negative consequences of illness on the patient. Most caring actions ignore cause, and sometimes caring requires intentional ignorance of cause. Some caring actions cure or aid curative or healing processes. Palliative care, on the other hand, is defined as care given without intentions to cure.



When an injury becomes infected a drug or a surgery may be needed to cure the illness

When a grandmother has an ingrown toenail she cannot reach, her daughter can cure it.

When the mother has an ingrown toenail, one she can reach herself, she cures her own illness by addressing the cause.

When no illness is present, the mother cares for her own toenails and those of her mother

Palliative care is caring for the individual with little, if any, attention to cause of their condition.

No illness is required for caring.

Theory of Cure © Healthicine

When we clip an elderly person's toenails because they can't reach them, we care for them. But when they have an ingrown toenail - our actions cure it. When a surgeon is involved, it's a medical cure.

Attribute or Process Causes

In the theory of cure, as previously mentioned, there are two types of illness causes: attributes and processes. These two types of causes necessitate two types of cures: transformation of the attribute – a one-time cure, or transformation of the process – an ongoing cure process.

An attribute cause is a thing, a noun. When the attribute is changed or removed such that it no longer causes illness, the illness is cured. Sometimes, the causal attribute is present by its absence, such that the cure is the addition of a missing attribute – like a dental implant. Attribute cures are on-time cures. If the causal attribute occurs again, a new illness might be caused. A thorn, an infection, and an adverse health status like dehydration are all attribute causes. We cure by removing the thorn, the infection, or addressing the health status. When a new thorn, a new infection, or a new case of dehydration occurs, it causes a new case of illness, not a remission.

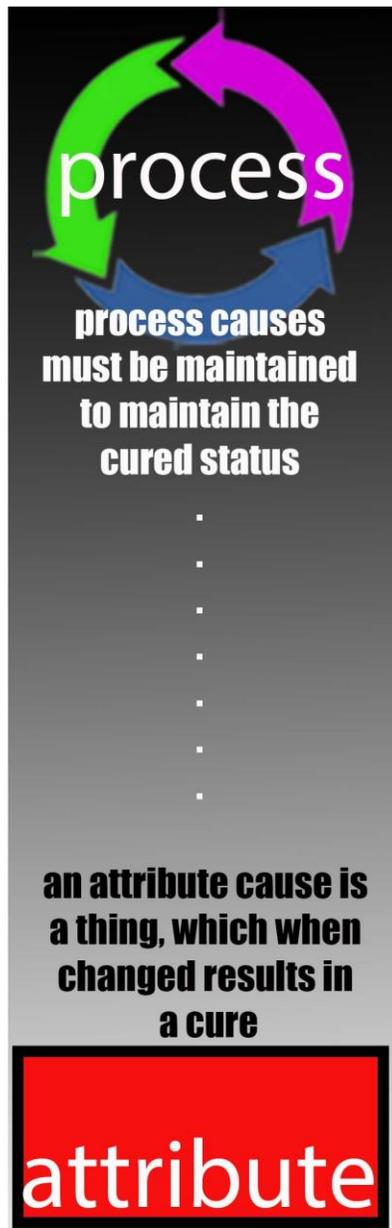
“I do not mean to say that lemon juice and wine are the only remedies for the scurvy; this disease, like many others, may be cured by medicines of very different and opposite qualities to each other.” (Lind, 1771)

Modern medicine often seeks “*the cure*,” a single cure one-time for a disease. Even though his understanding of scurvy was very weak, James Lind learned that there are many cures for scurvy. There are many cures for any illness element – because there are many ways to address any illness’s cause. To cure more effectively, we need to find better and seek the best cures for each case of illness. There are no perfect cures.

A process cure, a causal cure, is a cure that must be continually maintained. A causal cure is a preventative cure, a caring cure. Simple scurvy is a status, an attribute illness, cured with Vitamin C. However, an older adult who does not eat a healthy diet and develops scurvy cannot be cured with a supplementation of Vitamin C. Once the status cause is addressed, a process, a healthy diet of Vitamin C is required to maintain the cured state. Many causal cures are accomplished and maintained through caring, taking care of ourselves and others. Perhaps most causal cures are natural healthy processes, which only become cures when a process fails and illness is present. Sometimes, a causal cure necessitates stopping a process and maintaining the stopped process – like a smoker’s cough, cured by stopping the process of smoking. Many causal illnesses are indications that other illnesses are present below the level of awareness or diagnosis. A case of scurvy often indicates that a wider set of malnutrition illnesses is current, and the best cures address not just the scorbutic state – but other dietary statuses and processes as well.

For many cases of illness appearing to have similar causes, there is a gradient between an attribute cause and a related process cause. Proof of cause comes from the cure – which is also on a gradient between attribute, a one-time cure, and process, an ongoing cure.

The cause might be dietary, food or dehydration. It might be lack of exercise or rest of body, mind, spirits. It might be a poison in the environment or the diet. The cause might be some social circumstances leading to abuse, loneliness, or excessive stress. In each case, the cause might be one-time, cured by addressing the noun cause, or a process requiring ongoing actions or intentional non-actions.



Causal Illness:

A poor begger suffering from scurvy because he cannot buy healthy foods cannot be cured by a single donation of Vitamin C or a food containing it. The cure, an ongoing healthy diet, cures more than scurvy.

Repeating Illness:

A sailor who develops a Vitamin C deficiency while onboard ship, is cured repeatedly when he takes time ashore where his diet meets his health needs.

Attribute Illness:

Someone who, by some random conjunction of events, becomes deficient in Vitamin C, is easily cured with a feast on healthy foods or with supplements.

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Illness Causes Illness

An illness might be causing an illness in the present, or an illness in the past might have caused an illness in the present. An illness caused by an illness is a secondary illness that comprises a complex illness if the primary illness is still present.

When an illness is causing an illness, the cause is the illness process. The cure is an ongoing change or termination of the causal process, a cure of the primary illness, which might have an attribute or process cause.

When an illness in the past has caused a present illness, the present illness is elementary. Its cause is an attribute or process created by the previous illness. The cure is either a transformation of the causal attribute or to address the process cause. The illness in the past cannot be accessed to cure.

Caring or Healing

Healing and caring actions often address both the causes and consequences of illness. Sometimes, caring actions are also healing. Is self-care more about caring? Or healing? Is a healthy diet, with intentions to facilitate healing, a caring act or a curing action? The answer often depends on the situation, sometimes on our judgement of the case and the cure.

healing

caring

addresses cause without intention <----> intentionally cares for the person

Caring can also be healing, or curing, when caring actions also address an illness cause

Theory of Cure © Healthicine

The gradation between healing and caring depends on intentions and community involvement. Intentional actions are caring actions. A long hug or an expression of hopefulness might only provide support in one case. It might result in a transformation of resolve, promoting healing, or a transformation of cause, an actual cure, in another.



Community members care for each other in sickness and in health.

Community care addresses the person’s needs, not just consequences of illness. It rarely addresses cure causes, is rarely curative.

Community begins with caring about our selves. Self care comes from community. Self-care is essential to health and community, an aid to healing.

Healing often raises hope, promoting faith in care actions.

Healing addresses causes and consequences of illness.

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Healing, Caring, and Curing

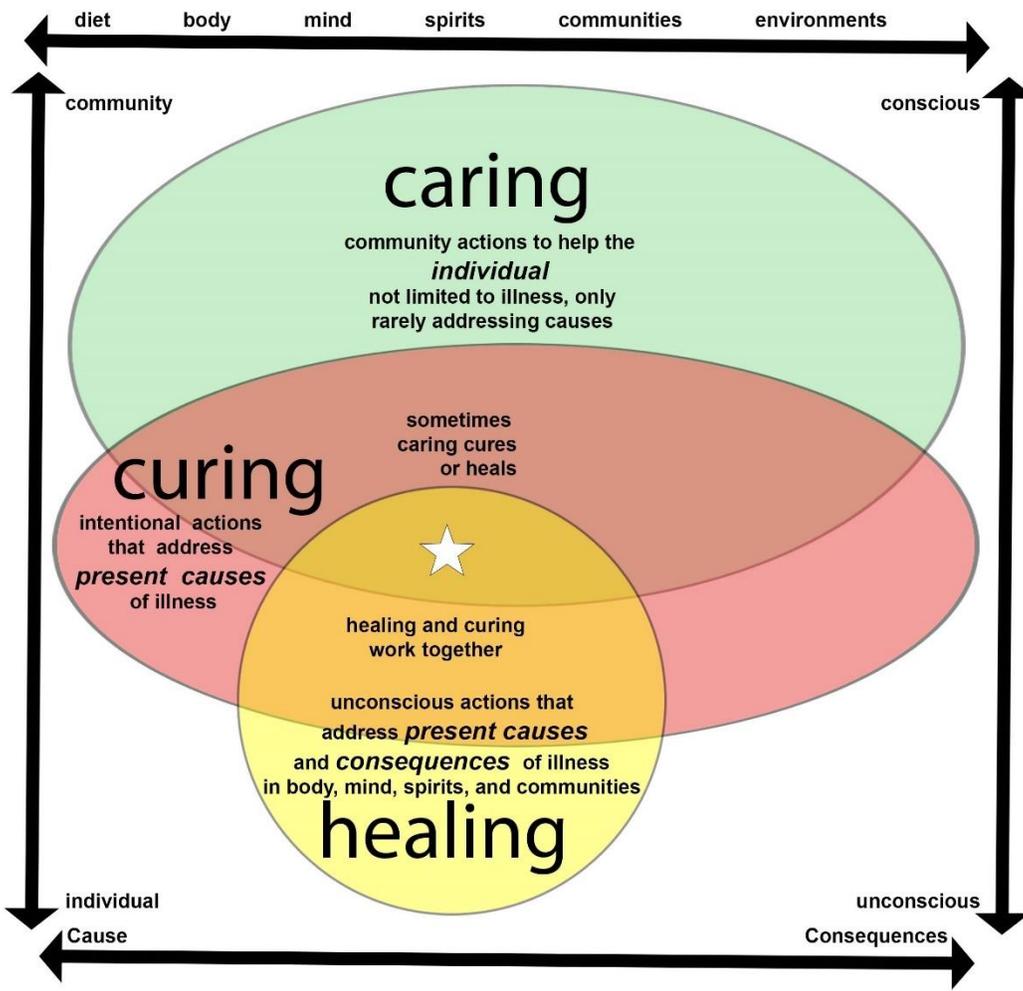
Healing came first. Healing is curative. All living things perform healing cures until they die. Healing is part of the natural processes of life addressing the causes and consequences of illness.

Caring comes from the community and raises the level of healing from the individual to the community. Caring begins with self-care, with “*me, myself, and I*” and grows to include family, friends, and others. Hope comes from caring. Caring is driven by faith and hope.

Curing, as distinguished from healing, occurs when our caring actions are intentionally directed at the present cause of an illness, not just the consequences. Can we cure a past illness? No. We can only address its consequences, which we might judge as another illness.

Plants, animals, and humans heal, live in communities, and care for and cure each other in many ways. Humans study healing and curing with conscious intention – to foster healing, to cure self and others. Medical doctors and medical systems study more complex cases of injuries, illnesses, and diseases, those more difficult or risky to address, with ongoing intentions to care for and cure. However, our medical systems easily lose sight of ordinary, simple cures. They are rarely medical.

These three concepts can be combined into a single image of healing, caring, and curing.



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The areas of overlapping circles represent combinations and gradations of healing, caring, and curing. Healing is unconscious. Caring consists of conscious actions for the patient's

benefit, including not just body, mind, spirits, and communities, but also addressing causes in diets and environments. Curing is conscious attention directed against the present cause of an illness, which might be in diet, body, mind, spirits, communities, or environments.

Healing, caring, and curing are not limited to the medical professions; they are natural actions of life and community. Healing, caring, and curing often occur in harmony and sometimes in conflict. We often bring multiple actions together when caring and curing are difficult.

Every conscious curative action is an alternative, a result of a decision, a choice of actions. Healing, caring, and curing are about success about helping ourselves and others. Healing actions heal, caring actions care, curing actions cure. Success succeeds.

What is healed, cared for, cured?

Curing illness has several components

- heal the damage
- care for the person
- address the cause
- cure the illness.

The past tense of healing, caring, and curing might indicate that the action has been partially or fully completed. Is it possible to be partially cured? Of course, just as it is possible to be partially healed or partly cared for, an illness is partially cured when its cause is partially addressed. How can we know if healing is completed? Healing for a specific condition is completed when the cause has been addressed, such that the healing stops and the need for healing stops. When is curing completed? We can easily define when an individual cure action is completed. A complete cure often involves all three: intentional curing, caring, and healing.

We might judge an elementary illness cured when:

- its present cause has been successfully addressed,
- and healing has been completed, such that
- negative signs and symptoms of the illness are no longer present,
- and no more medicines are required.

For a simple illness, an elementary illness, the judgement can be simple. Illnesses that are more complex and compound require more complex and compound cures and are more challenging to judge cured. Unfortunately, at present, our medical systems have very little experience judging cured for any illness. We have no statistics for any illness cured outside of clinical studies.

It's time to begin serious studies of healing, caring, and curing.

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