

**Dr. Edward Taub**, a pioneer of integrative medicine, is a man ahead of his time. When he first introduced the idea of meditation, exercise and good nutrition to his patients in the late 70s, the term “wellness” had not been invented yet. He later founded the first Integrative Medicine Department in American hospitals and created the only smoking cessation program ever endorsed by the American Medical Association. He also inaugurated the first “Voyages to Wellness” at sea for WindStar, Holland America and Cunard Cruise lines as well as served as QVC’s on-air Wellness Medical Doctor for 15 years.

Here, he shares with *Pulse* his journey in helping push integrative medicine into the limelight and his views on the challenges that are keeping mainstream medical professionals from embracing wellness.

**PULSE:** You helped pioneer integrative medicine in the U.S. What first sparked your interest in blending mainstream medicine with alternative medicine in your own practice?

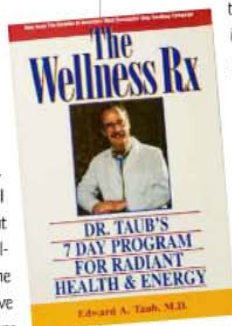
**Dr. Edward Taub:** In 1975, I built one of the largest pediatrics practices in Southern California, which consisted of 20,000 patients. I did a survey to determine the patterns of illness that my four medical partners and I were treating. I discovered that 80 percent of our office visits were directed to 20 percent of our patients. I initially assumed these were children with severe chronic diseases or genetic conditions. However, by digging deeper into our survey results, I discovered these were children with mostly minor but recurring problems like ear and eye infections, tonsillitis, colds, asthma, rashes and tummy aches. The shocking results led to the beginning of integrative medicine and determined the course of my career ever since.

**P:** Can you share some findings from that survey?

**T:** I realized that the children who were ill 80 percent of the time could be part of the legions of the “worried well and walking wounded.” I began to wonder whether the fact that they actually expected illness—and if the anticipation—helped create illness

and problems for them. To find more answers, I initiated a clinical study participated in by 2,000 children and parents in my medical practice.

For two years (1976 – 1978), I personally taught the children, some as young as four or five years old, a therapeutic meditation technique when they came to our office with an illness. In addition to healthy nutrition, exercise, prayer and meditation, me and four of my medical partners recommended yoga and periodic massages—which were concepts very, very “way out” in medical practice at the time. The results were dramatic. Most of our “worried well and walking wounded” patients stopped coming in with recurring illnesses.



**P:** What was the most surprising part of your findings?

**T:** The most amazing phenomenon we noticed was that both the kids and their parents who initially came to us with poor health mindsets were empowered with a new belief system. We helped shift their attitudes from illness to wellness, where the body responds to the mind.

Despite these findings, however, we were still confused about the changes because the “wellness” paradigm as we know it today was still virtually unknown then. Dr. John Travis had only

brought the concept of wellness to national attention in 1979. I decided to consult with Dr. Jonas Salk, the famous polio vaccine pioneer. After reviewing my patients’ charts at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, he looked up at me and said, “You are developing an entirely new type of vaccination! It will be a stress inoculation—a painless immunization you should administer as early as possible to patients because the younger they are, the more effective it will be.”

**P:** You once said integrative medicine should be as spiritual as it is scientific. What do you mean by this?

**T:** My co-author, the Nobel Laureate, Dr. Ferid Murad, and I introduced “Wellness Theology” in *The Wellness Solution* (World Almanac Publishing, 2007). He was awarded the 1998 Nobel Prize in Medicine for discovering nitric oxide molecule as the body’s signaling molecule—it helps keep our cells, tissues and organs healthy and balanced.

Essentially, everything we do that’s good for us—healthy nutrition, exercise, altruism, yoga, massage, spa treatments, being loving and forgiving—increases the amount of nitric oxide in our bodies. Dr. Murad and I wrote: “If you believe God first breathed life into your atoms, we suspect the divine breath, in molecular form, would be nitric oxide.” We further introduced the idea of Wellness Theology by writing: “Faith, hope, and prayer are also essential cornerstones for building health and overall well-being.”

**P:** What are some of the hurdles that could make it challenging for physicians and other mainstream medical professionals to embrace integrative medicine?

**T:** According to official government resources, the nation’s health-care tab in 2016 is expected to surpass US\$10,000 per person for the first time! Can you imagine the economic chaos that would ensue if we were to all of a sudden adapt wellness lifestyles? Unfortunately, the economics of modern medicine also encourages physicians to be very poor listeners. Younger physicians and “super-specialists” seem to be the worst listeners among doctors.

This troubling phenomenon can be explained in pure economic terms: Insurance companies pay doctors for procedures and tests, not for conversation. Unfortunately, this means the qualities that make us quintessentially human—thoughts, feelings, emotions, the expressions of our souls—tend to have

## 2 Core Principles of Dr. Taub’s Integrative Medicine Practice

1. Health is primarily determined by personal responsibility, self-value and reverence for life.
2. Health is too important to leave up to only science, but also too important to take an unscientific point of view and reject the real benefits of science.

very little place in the patient-physician interaction. Insurance companies and increasing medical sub-specialization have created a conceptual blind spot, namely, an inability to appreciate the virtues of self-care and self-healing. We are standing on the cusp of a golden age in integrative medicine as it evolves into the field of Molecular Wellness (the unfolding dance of life in which the energies of our body, mind and spirit are in balance with each other), but the medical system, as it is currently structured, is poorly qualified to carry this exciting field into the 21st century.

**P:** Which trends or innovations in the medical and wellness space should spa leaders keep an eye on?

**T:** Spa leaders need to beware of the powerful trend to “medicalize” our ills and worries—which is in no small way driven by the economic incentives inherent in the medical model. As influential medical institutions begin taking part in the spa and wellness space, the tendency may start to lean toward generating income over excellence. On the other hand, it’s heartening to learn that the venerable Mayo Clinic has aligned with spa culture since the ethics, integrity and motivation of this institution are beyond question.

Thus, while creating a brand or reputation in the medical or wellness space can have exciting PR and economic value, the offering itself can and should be the real deal—helping guests determine their own health destiny via spa culture, first and foremost, rather than building or reinforcing reliance on the medical model. ■



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