



Talking Health Spirituality and the Health Food Store

We are caregivers. No matter how important the prioritization of “business” in your business model, we all most certainly realize that we are caring for the health of our community every day that we open our doors. As our government rages on about their solutions for the health care issues of our times, we should take a moment to reflect on how we are providing health care to the people who turn to us for support.

OK, ok, so one would be outlandishly ill-advised to think we have the authority to “prescribe” a seasonal cleanse, or those organic vegetables, or spring leeks, dandelion or burdock or more daily carrots. And we have been trained to speak with trepidation about the facts of verifiable science, or the developing understandings of human physiology, when we lead a person to a nutraceutical or herbal food. But at the end of that day, we bring immeasurable goodness to the people we serve.

And how much do we reflect upon what the full effect of our involvement with our

customers actually is, and whether we are reaching them in every way possible to assist in their healing process? Let’s examine our approach and our intent and see if we need to reinvigorate our methods to do the best we can to serve each person who turns to us for help.

If we believe in the mind-body connection, or any of the now-basic tenants of wholistic medicine, then we must account for the role of spirituality in the actions that we perform every day. Do we take the time to remind ourselves daily that we are doing something powerful, and that our intent and our outreach has dramatic influence on each person we interact with? That we can provide deep influence by the words we use, and the time that we take—that these seemingly little things matter? If “we are spirits in a material world,” then how much energy and effort are we providing through the interactions we have with our customers? Are we taking the love we gather through our religion and using this compassion we profess to give an added extra

to everyone we encounter every day? Since I am a Christian, I will personalize it with this framework: am I seeing Christ in everyone I encounter?

I consider myself a deeply spiritual person, but I also have evolved to believe that my religion is my very personal relationship with God, and I am not one to be overt about my beliefs: I am carefully caring for this one soul and that is a heavy burden. I hope that my actions show people the love that I intend. At the same time, I advise that people do not bring their own religious beliefs too heavily into their store or their sales pitch, unless they want to turn a good amount of the community away and limit the openness with which people accept their advice and education.

But the distinctions between religion and spirituality aside, how much do we accept the human element of the person in front of us as we dialogue and answer questions in our stores each day? As we whisk around, keeping the

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Talking Health The Mythical Land of Oz

We have entered a new era of media. The Land of oz. Doctor Mehmet Oz has shocked the natural foods industry plenty times enough already in the past five months to make every smart retailer recruit someone to watch his show every day and see what he is recommending. In a world of media sensation, it is always prudent to be the first to order when the feeding frenzy of high-demand/limited-supply strikes an industry, and the phone rings incessantly for the product of the moment. Whether he knows it or not, Dr Oz is changing the buying habits of natural food buyers coast to coast.

Who is he?

Doctor Oz must be a brilliant man, and quite likeable too. How else can you become Oprah’s guest doctor, and then be the star of one of her television offshoots? The Dr. Oz Show first aired in September 1999 and has the best ratings for any new daytime talk show host since Dr Phil. Oz seems to have the credentials to go along with his pizzazz.

Dr Oz turns 50 this summer, and he has done a lot in that short lifespan. He is connected to over 400 published articles and papers, is a best-selling author of several books. He has registered patents, and the hottest TV show in the country: a doctor who

is fun and explains physiology and medicine in a style reminiscent of a high school musical.

Oz has flair, but he also has respect. He graduated from Harvard (‘82) and double-timed at the University of Pennsylvania with an MD and MBA (The Wharton School of Business) in ‘86. Topping off the bling, he is a Professor of Surgery at Columbia. You usually do not argue with a heart surgeon. I actually feel indebted to Dr. Oz as he successfully treated my best friend’s sister who had a rare genetic heart disorder. Apparently, he is as effervescent a doctor as he is a tv show host.

Dr. Oz is certainly an intriguing character. Born in Cleveland to Turkish parents—his father is a Professor—Dr. Mehmet Oz is a cross section of modern America. Raised in a Muslim household, he probably seems more like mainstream and modern America than his New Jersey neighbors. Oz is heavily involved in the pharmaceutical sectors of medicine, yet he certainly seems to be exhibiting a soft underbelly for the potentials of natural and integrative medicine. His wife is a Reiki practitioner, he regularly recommends acupuncture and he was a founding member of the Complementary Medicine Program at New York-Presbyterian Hospital. He seems to like what we do.

On his new syndicated daytime show (airing in different areas on all four of the prime-time channels), he displays a nice blend

IN THE NEWS

One Day of Awareness, a Lifetime of Better Health: International Omega-3 Awareness Day March 3

Ask Your BMC rep how you can capitalize on advertising, endcap promos and demos. This will now become a yearly event, so start to think, www.Omega3Day.com

“With over 12520 scientific articles on Omega-3 and their effects on health it is clear that Omega-3’s promote health in every body system.”

of professorial working knowledge of the broad range of medicine and a quirky if not sometimes too overt charm. He also been tagged “more sensationalistic than sensible.” Perfect for America’s tv audience!

Handling a Shopping Frenzy

America certainly has a sturdy daytime tv audience that has the perky tenacity to get up off the couch and buy that afternoon what they were shown that morning. Or, at least make the call to decide where to drive the car the next time the shopping list reaches its max.

In the last two months, we have seen a rush on three herbs that has left store buyers dropping their normal day’s assignments to search the rolodex to find a manufacturer

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Spirituality and the Health Food Store *continued from page 1*

shelves full and the cash register clinking, we are clear influencers in the holy ground of our stores. We are leaders and educators and role models. We are charged with the task of making our communities more healthy: that is why people seek out a health food store.

So think about it: did your store have 30 or 300 customers yesterday, and how many people did you speak with? How did you meet their needs? Today is the day to stop and think: how am I addressing the spiritual aspects of my customers needs, and am I able to see "need" when it is before me? Even though we are not primary care-givers by formal, sanctioned training, our presence and our promise do have a role in the health of the people who are shopping in our stores.

The Health of the Person Before Us

Think about the people we encounter in our stores every day. Regular friend or first-time customer, basic good salespersonship says that the regular smile and positive response are good for business. But, digging deeper, we also know that there is a precious inner dimension to every person around us. We are sometimes aware that our friends are often hiding major problems and concerns; the regular customer is often going through major calamities and pains as they walk through life and visit your store. And that new customer may be there to investigate a new way of health, or maybe as the final step—the last resort—before they give up hope.

I remember when I was in retail the day when a customer returned to my store on a trip home to visit her parents. She came to say hello with her new child. While I had always been friendly to her, I cannot say that I remembered much of our business interactions. When she slowed me down that day to tell me her very personal story, I was humbled and shocked, even as I gradually remembered our encounter the day she described to me. She told me that she came in looking for something for an emotional concern and that I stopped and dialogued

with her and gave her several options of things that she could explore. We literally went back to the Bach Flower Remedy display a few times. As she related to me years later, she actually was in a very bad state at that point in her life, and that suicide was in her mind. She said that my care and energy that day were more important to her than any product we discussed, and that she felt the human love from a "person in a store" and that helped her that day, and she was able to re-balance her life. She is now a caring, loving massage therapist and a loving mother—and goodness was achieved without direct intent in what most would have considered an every day task of the health food store employee.

Was this just luck that day? Certainly I did not realize what I was doing beyond answering customer questions, but possibly there was intrinsic love in what I was doing!?!? The larger message is that we do have a larger role in the health process than we sometimes think we have: we heal in many ways.

How do we know when the moment is there? Would it not be wonderful if we could "just turn it on" when we knew someone needed that extra effort, or when they were down and wanted more than just our knowledge? The fact is that we influence every day, and that people are looking to us for health guidance every moment our stores are open. We are role models by every action on the grand stage of the natural health food paradigm, and we may have dramatic and profound influence on a daily basis more powerful than we could ever imagine.

Honestly, we should be able to give people loving support every day—it is part of the health food store mantra. "We" may be the nicest and most honest interaction some people have in that given day. That is profound. But this action of care and support will not happen without practice—as with all good things.

One way to condition ourselves to be readily available to translate and respond to the needs of that single person who is reaching out is to train our minds to be aware of the moment when we are dialoguing with people. Learn to say to yourself: "I am before a person and what is their need?" as you start your "hello" in the course of daily business. We

EXPO WEST BOOTH NUMBERS:

Bluebonnet	1328
Nordic Naturals – retail	1620
Nordic Naturals – pet	4255
Aloe Life	1681
Herb Pharm	1453
Himalaya USA	1510
Newton Labs	1581
Essential Formulas	1658
Mineral Fusion Natural Brands	3213
Surya Brasil	3226
Bass Brushes	4132
Juvo	906
Mushroom Science	1764
Immune Health Basics	1577
Sovereign Silver	1118
EcoLips	4225
Oxylent/Vitalah	1584

cannot become more compassionate people unless we are constantly and consciously choosing to practice compassion.

That will also mean being open to the difficult customer, and to the person who seems to be a trigger to your less-attractive side. Everyone has needs, and maybe that person needs something from you. It may not always be tender love; maybe sometimes it is the need for a bold statement of reality that they are not willing to consider or accept themselves. What really matters with those difficult clients is that we think about their needs in between visits, and we earnestly consider what may be the need that they have and how and if we can help.

The statistics are clear that most of the people who walk through your doors—the doors of the health food store—are people that have a difficult health need, and they are usually not there by first choice. Many are literally desperate in their health needs, and have exhausted the other "alternatives" that have not helped them. They are not at your door because they want to be, but because they do not have any other place to go.

That makes the health food store a special and important place. Are we aware of our role and are we receptive to that stranger when they walk with trepidation into our stores? In a busy and stressful work-world, some of us may have lowered the importance of this consideration from our initial sales hello and in the manner that we dialogue with our customers (and then we wonder why people get the info in our stores and then run to the internet for lower costs: because they gained no value from the human contact that they may have been searching for).

But this is not just about caring customer service: this is about the intent to accept and receive the energy of the person before us, and the ability to translate our basic concern into a body language and vocal tone that allows them to be receptive to you and the goodness that you are offering. It is about acknowledging and being open and aware to everyone: open to anyone who may need us every day.

No wonder we are always exhausted on our days off.

IN THE NEWS

Tasty Daily Herbal Nutrition

Himalaya Herbal Healthcare announced the release of their new Certified USDA Organic Chyavanprash Spread

a delicious, traditional recipe for energy and rejuvenation

Containing nearly 40 herbs from India, including Amla, Cardamom, Malabar Nut, Bael Tree, Cinnamon + Tribulus, Chyavanprash has been eaten for energy, digestion & good metabolism throughout history.

Because of its enjoyable flavor, strong antioxidant content & health benefits, the ancient recipe is still considered a household name and cornerstone of good health in India today. Himalaya's new Chyavanprash Spread is now Certified USDA Organic and Gluten Free. It has a smoother texture, lighter color, and less peppery taste than its predecessor. "It's a healthy product the whole family will enjoy."

"Chyavanprash was essentially history's first multi-vitamin. 2,500 years ago, people may not have understood that modern concept, but they knew Chyavanprash rejuvenated them and gave them energy, so they ate it every day as a health-supportive tonic. Its great flavor just happened to be an incidental bonus to its great health support. It's still enormously popular in India and we've been very pleased this past decade to watch its following grow all over the world."

—Nabeel Manal, President & CEO
Himalaya Herbal Healthcare



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Expo West Show Special*

20% off
orders \$500 or more

15% off
orders \$100-\$499

* BUY-IN DATES MARCH 8-19

Ask for the **NEW Pharmer's Almanac**
with your next order.

Coming Soon: extracts of bacopa, guggul,
albizia, and dragon's blood

**America's Leading Liquid Herbal
Extract Company**

BOOTH #1453



Not represented by BMC in NJ



New Products

**High Gamma 100% Vegetarian + Kosher
Natural Vitamin E Complex Licaps**

Complete E Family including alpha-, beta-, delta- and gamma-tocopherols
and -tocotrienols from soy and palm

#600 \$7.98/15.95 30 Licaps • #601 \$14.98/29.95 60 Licaps

Owning another category for independent health food stores

Resveratrol *The French Paradox in a Vcap*

Bluebonnet Nutrition's Age-Less™ Trans-Resveratrol Vcaps provide the active
trans isomer of resveratrol in three potencies. A 4:1 red wine extract & Japanese
knotweed combo that has undergone an enzymatic purification process rendering it
virtually free of impure compounds commonly found in lower quality products.

- # 874 100 mg \$4.98/9.95 30 Vcaps
- # 875 100 mg \$8.98/17.95 60 Vcaps
- # 876 250 mg \$9.98/19.95 30 Vcaps
- # 877 250 mg \$19.48/38.95 60 Vcaps
- # 878 500 mg \$19.48/38.95 30 Vcaps
- # 879 500 mg \$34.98/69.95 60 Vcaps

Also, Bluebonnet's New & Improved **Eye Antioxidant Formula with
Zeaxanthin** is formulated with vitamins, minerals, whole food complexes, amino
acids and antioxidants – the most potent free-radical scavenging ingredients on
the market – designed to provide nutritional support for maintaining proper visual
health. Vegetarian and Gluten-free 60 & 120 sizes

**Expo West Deal: 1 identified "Trade Show Deal" as an
18% line-drive** order placed between March 8-19th. One order; identify as
show order when placing!!

Not represented by BMC in NJ, SC

Booth # 1328

**NORDIC[®]
NATURALS** 

Pure and Great Tasting Omega Oils

**Nordic Naturals Loves Trade Shows
Expo West**

- **Introducing 7 New Exciting Products**
more industry firsts and patented ingredients

• **Educational Seminar:**

*"The Norwegian Legacy of Omega-3s: From Pioneer to
Perfection"* Retailers who attend the lecture get an additional
discount off show orders

• **The Must-See Experience:**

"Drink the Fish & Eat the Worms"

• **More Good Press**

Media Breakfast with Shari Hindman

- **Cod-Tini Happy Hour 4-6 PM with samples
and souvenirs**

• **Rewards to the Expo West Attendees:**

Trade Show Discounts for Attendees Only

*Ask your BMC rep for info on the new goodies, as Nordic
continues to lead with good science, great taste and fresh
triglyceride-form fish oils*

If you cannot make the show, let us plan an event at your store:
Demos, in-store trainings, Coop advertising and great ways to
save with the Retail Partnership Agreement

Not represented by BMC in NJ, SC

NEWTON
homeopathics

Nurturing Naturally Since 1987

March Promotional Specials*

20% OFF

6+ of these products

Cold-Sinus (N003) • Cough-Asthma (N002)

Hay Fever (N007) • Pollen & Weeds (N055)

Sick Stopper (N216).

*Buy-in Period: March 1-31

Expo West Line Drive

March 12 – 22.

**10% DISCOUNT for non-attendees
15% DISCOUNT for attendees.**

Seminar: "Basic Principles in Homeopathy"

Conyers, GA, Thursday, April 8. Join us for a one day
seminar + learn the basics of homeopathy. Register two or
more for our one plus discount. Stay overnight & join us for
the optional tour at the Newton Facility on Friday.

Booth #1581

Not represented by BMC in NC, SC



JUVO™

March Promotion
"The One Deal You have to Consider this Month"

20% OFF Show Deal

All month long, must mention special
BMC Show Promo

Original Juvo
Juvo Slim
Juvo Raw Superfood
Juvo Yoga Food

People want to look their best and feel healthy: with JUVO's unique formulation—alive, natural, raw ingredients help them stay satisfied.

- Boosts Energy & Metabolism
- Strengthens Immune Health
- Cleanses the Body of Toxins & Waste Materials
- Help Reduce Tensions & Stress
- Easily Digestible & Improves Digestion
- Healthfully Appeases Hunger Pangs

For a tasty raw pick-me up at the show, visit Juvo at Booth #906

Not represented by BMC in Eastern PA, NJ

AloeLife.

INTERNATIONAL

Health Education • Health Products • Aloe Vera

Expo West Show Deals

for attendees:

2 cases, mix & match = 10% OFF

6 cases, mix & match = 20% OFF

Show deals 3/12 – 3/19

March Promotion
Detox Formula, Daily Greens & Fibermate
15% OFF

24 + items mix & match

Stop by the booth and taste the delicious antioxidant-rich newest juice—Aloe Super Fruit.

The Aloes also will have new labels that will be a must see!!

Booth #1681



Essential Formulas

Expo West Show Deal
Mix & Match

24 items = 10% OFF

48 items = 15% OFF

Dr Ohhira's Probiotics 12 PLUS
30 + 60 caps

Dr Ohhira's Essential Living Oils
60 caps

Dr Ohhira's Probiotic Kampuku
Beauty Bar

Dr Ohhira's Probiotic Magoroku
Skin Lotion

Dr Ohhira's Probiotic Hadayubi
Lavender moisturizer

Book-signing: Friday + Saturday,
March 12 & 13 at 1:00 pm.

Dr. Fred Pescatore & Karolyn
Gazella's new book "Boost Your
Health with Bacteria"

Booth #1658

OLBAS®

HERBAL REMEDIES

ENTIRE OLBAS LINE
10% OFF
(Open Stock)

Plus Olbas Floor Displays
15% OFF

- Winter Assortment
- Summer Assortment
- Full Line Assortment
- Ask About Our "Custom" Displays

Olbas Counter Displays
10% OFF

Buy in Dates: to March 19th. May not be combined with other specials

100 Olbas Consumer Samples in Handy Trial Display FREE With Each Floor or Counter Display Ordered!

wellinhand
ACTION REMEDIES™
Topically Applied Herbal Answers

March Specials 15% OFF
Direct Orders Only

Nit Kit™

New Mama® Tush Soothing Bath
New Mama® Tush Soothing Mist

Nit Kit™

- Easy to use!
- Happy Scent!
- Will not dry out hair!
- 100% Natural Aromatherapy!
- Metal LICE Comb and 5x magnifier!

New Mama®

- Aching back
- Swollen ankles
- Stretch marks
- Perineal massage
 - Labor aid
 - Cradle cap
- Soothe and renew delicate tissue.
- The perfect shower gift!

BASS®

Brushes

Finest Quality Hair, Body and Skincare Accessories

Expo West Promotion
for show attendees only

25% OFF
and free shipping

Too good an offer to pass up!!

The Best Bamboo Brushes on the market: check out these new, renewable hair care products

Check the quality of the brushes and body tools: there is not competition with quality and price for quality!

Booth #4132

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March Promotion

25% OFF line drive

Direct orders only

Orders placed at Expo West get FREE Shipping

- Semi-Permanent Henna Hair Cream
- Surya Tattoos
- Surya Henna
- Color Fixation Line
- Sapien for Men
- Amazonia Preciosa

Booth #3226

PERFECT[®] ORGANICS

Expo West Deals

15% OFF new store opening orders

10% OFF existing accounts

Buy-in dates: March 8-19

Lip Balms

Shea Butters

Body Washes

Lip & Cheek Shimmers

Body Scrubs

Bath Therapy

Perfect Cream
& Body Glow



Himalaya

HERBAL HEALTHCARE

March Promotions

Supplements

- GlucoCare[®] • 90 Vcaps[®]
- GlucoCare[®] Econo • 180 Vcaps[®]
- HeartCare[®] • 120 Vcaps[®]
- HeartCare[®] Econo • 240 Vcaps[®]
- VeinCare[®] • 60 Vcaps[®]

Companion Organic Single Herbs

- Gymnema • 60 Caplets
- Garcinia • 60 Caplets
- *Guggul • 60 Vcaps[®]
- Bitter Melon • 60 Caplets
- Arjuna • 60 Caplets

Mix & Match

12-17 units	18-23 units	24+ units
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Organic Single Herbs	10%	12%	15% off
Herbal Formulations	10%	15%	20% off

Organique by Himalaya[®] Full Line Drive 10% off Booth #1510

Not represented by BMC in Eastern PA, NJ

immune HEALTH BASICS

CLINICALLY PROVEN IMMUNE SUPPORT

Expo West Promotion 20% OFF line drive

March 11th to 31st.

Expo West Educational Seminar:

New Strategies for Immune Health

Friday, March 12 • 12-1 PM,
Room 205A Anaheim, CA

Presenters:

Dr. William Sears, MD, Associate
Clinical Professor/Pediatrics
University of California, Irvine, School
of Medicine.

Dr. Don Cox, Ph.D., Vice President of
R&D, Healthcare, Biothera.

Discover how **Wellmune WGP** works
with the body's first line of defense cells
to more quickly find and kill foreign
challenges. Learn why **Wellmune WGP**
may be considered one of most effective
natural ingredients to safely strengthen
your immune system.

Booth #1577

MushroomScience[®]

Expo West Promotions

20% OFF for show attendees only

15% OFF for non-attendees

buy-in dates March 12-19

Coriolus

Agaricus

Chaga

Cordyceps

Lion's Mane

Maitake

Reishi

Miracle Zzz

Maitake Gold-404[®]

5 Mushroom Formula more formulas soon!!!!

Booth #1764



#1 Selling Silver product 5 years running*

Most impressive are the sales of the
8 oz and 16 oz silver hydrosols

- Glass bottles
- smallest particle size,
constant dosage
- Safe & Effective
- Pure and Trusted

You need to only carry one silver product, Sovereign Silver

(July-July (2008-09) SPINs data:
nearly 50% market share)



Not represented by BMC in NC, SC, NJ, eastern PA



The Mythical Land of Oz

continued from page 1

with an in-stock of the latest Oz fad. At least Dr. Oz has good taste, as he seems to be reaching for **Herb Pharm** with great regularity. The moral of the story: give customers the label they seek—stock Herb Pharm!

The problem with the game that is that no one knows what Oz will be recommending next. Add to that the fact that he is tinkering on natural medicine's perimeters when he makes his recommendations. Beguilingly unpredictable. Finally, it seems that his audience is both new to natural foods (a good thing) and seemingly fickle (should one stock up on a product that is recommended by Oz, or is his prescription just a passing tsunami?). Time will tell, but so far most stores have said that they have had 2-3 surprising reorders from the Oz fan club: once he recommends it, they want to try it long enough to see if it works. Guess that means we will have to learn to ride the tide!

We do seem to have entered a new era of free advertising. Oprah's habitual recommendation of **Nordic Natural's** fish oil certainly seems to be good for the business of those stores wise enough to have this line as their premier fish oil manufacturer. No one should complain when men and women who have never looked at a health food store are entering our stores looking for our products by name. It works best when they ask for the best products: maybe that is the only way that it works!

Some stores have taken to using the guerrilla-marketing tactics of hand-made shelf talkers that proclaim "As seen on Oprah," which to some consumers is better than the FDA, CRN, or the Good Housekeeping Seal. While it is good to capitalize on media spotlight, it is better to be knowledgeable about the products and use the occasion to do proper, scientific education and wholistic encouragement.

Oprah's fanfare has at least been consistent, even predictable. Oz seems to be blazing a path all his own. I personally have not been able to figure out the method to his madness.

Preposterous about Passion Flower

Dr. Oz took a beautiful and valuable medicinal herb and made it a superstar overnight. When he showed Herb Pharm's Passion Flower liquid extract, and prescribed it as beneficial for stress-related weight gain, Dr. Oz wiped out Passion Flower inventories countrywide overnight. Many stores were thrilled to eradicate old inventory, as this

sleepy herb is known only to the herbal aficionado. A little secret is that the people who bring you **Olbas**, the **Penn Herb Company**, has the largest selection of herbs in capsule in America and they manufacture onsite, and they had 300 bottles of passion flower inventoried throughout the blizzard of talk, purchase and sale. Ask your BMC rep for a price list.

What worried me is that I could not find where Oz's research came from on the touted use of passion flower. Several hours of search could show me no research strong enough for a man of Oz's stature to make the bold claims that he made that episode of his show. We could say, "so what" but it is always best to understand methodology if one is moderating inventory on the recommendations of one man.

Next, Oz mentioned ginkgo, and then he recommended turmeric. Sales exploded in certain stores on each recommendation. In these cases, though, Oz was more in line with the accepted uses of the herbs recommended. One thing that is interesting is that most of his recommendations so far have leaned towards his largely female audience (though he has tackled prostate problems and other men's health issues). 110 shows in, Dr. Oz is proving himself a force, and that is something we as an industry should observe but not put too much credence in.

Oz giveth and he taketh away

Just when we were charmed into happiness by Dr. Oz's seemingly daily forays into natural medicine, he struck a cord that all should take note of. Dr. Oz casually struck down the benefits of kava saying that research showed that it could be dangerous. Obviously Oz's research teams did not venture too far down into their google searches.

This of course is a cautionary tale. There is no reason to believe that Dr. Oz is a deep researcher in natural medicine or that he even knows what he is talking about. He just has the large microphone. In the case of kava, he has sounded an echo that could damage the already beleaguered reputation of one of the best herbs available for America's massive anxiety. Dr. Oz obviously is trying to ride the tide of fame while pulling the ratings rabbit out of his hat every week. Not an easy task, even for a brilliant doctor. While he has extensive study in medical texts and physiology, he seems so far to be dabbling in the art of herbalism: and we all know where that can sometime lead!

Dr. Oz is certainly better than Dr. Sanjay Gupta of CNN. While Dr Gupta is also a very smart man, he seems to be steadfast in towing the company line: the modern medical establishment's very demarcated line. You will never see Dr. Gupta sending people into

REMEMBER
May 1 is Herb Day
Plan something herbal www.herbdays.com

a health food store. As a matter of fact, he regularly instilled doubt in the public's mind about most of what we do. Stern, absolute, irrefutable science. (Ha!)

Dr Oz's future path is somewhat predictable. While he did not take the path less journeyed, like Dr. Andrew Weil did, he will soon learn that an open mind about the non-orthodox will soon lose him the respect and favor of his peers. And just as Dr. Weil soon became cornered into great care about everything that he said by his own fame, so we can expect this honeymoon with Dr. Oz to end soon. I say, forget the three Doctors, stick with Oprah: she knows her strengths and plays deliberately to a very dedicated audience! She is all about the entertainment value of entertainment tv.

Credentials, intent, influence: the world is a funny place. Let's dream of a world where the network powers try an Ed Smith or a Stuart Tomc on for size. Oz should make Stuart a regular on his show: now there is brilliant fireworks. Joseph Maroon is an excellent story, a peer-reviewed expert, and a charming man. But a brain surgeon who follows the research on the Omegas religiously is not the media sensation of a Dr. Oz, even if Maroon is the doctor of the Pittsburgh Steelers. For the time being, we will have to skip to the music of this latest pied piper. He has been good to us so far, even if Walgreens is the main sponsor of his website, www.doctoroz.com

My advice is to never prop up the reputation of an MD who is dabbling in our industry. Spend your time recommending books by the true champions of our industry: their sage advice is more dependable for endcap strategies than any flash-in-the-pan talking head. When someone says that Dr. Oz recommended something, flash that quirky smile that conveys, "good for him, he is learning what I have been saying for years" and not "the great and powerful Oz." Especially if we do not know as of yet if it is a good witch or a bad witch behind those curtains.

Your comport will gain you these new shoppers trust, and we can hope that Oz stays the course. But we have to be prepared to prove him wrong too. If you are uncertain as to how to handle the fuss-up Oz may have caused about kava, ask you BMC rep to re-educate you on the facts and safety of Herb Pharm's **Pharma Kava**, because no natural foods neophyte should be able to override the truths and good science of modern herbal medicine.

I watched Oz at my Mom's house last month. He had people playing ping-pong on his set, telling them it was good for the brain to combat Alzheimer's. He is playing ping-pong with natural medicine, and we cannot predict which side the ball will end on. Like many in our world today, he is trying to do good. Cheer him on, but do not expect his loyalty for the good things that we do every day!

Me, I'm still searching for the Wizard ☺

ANOTHER REASON TO JOIN THE NATURAL PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

Lobby Day 13th Annual Natural Products Day in Washington D.C.

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Spirituality and the Health Food Store *continued from page 2*

Certainly this is why we need to constantly be replenishing our spiritual souls and conditioning our religious convictions to be prepared for that task: but more on this later.

Caring for the Souls of Our Friends

Working in a store is a special experience, with the work hours being similar to travelling in a boat with a crew over the sea of time each day. Indeed, relationships with our fellow employees are very intense, very unique to our industry and often long-lasting. We like to think that most of us are like-minded souls trying to do good. And every one of us who works together daily are also people with human needs and strengths and weaknesses, and we all need to appreciate our fellow-workers as part of our own healing processes.

Let's start with top-down management. Is it possible to carve out some time to analyze the health of our staff? Are there basic and simple things that can be done to improve the store soul? When there are special needs, when a person is hurting or struggling or self-destructive, are we willing to make the effort and get involved in a caring manner and commit to resolutions if the person is willing? And what role do we play in their lifespans if they are not interested or able to open up?

This is not about managerial activism or meddlesome intent to change behavior: it is about a managerial dialogue to know that the store and its resources will be there if an employee needs them. Mindfulness and compassion, not sit-down confrontations. Again, by taking the moment to try to understand the person, by taking the empathy

we hear about on Sunday and integrating it into our business process, we can have dramatic and lifelong influences on the people who work with us side by side for any period of time. When we hire, we should say, "I am accepting you into my life and I will try to honor you and look to your best welfare." This is a huge commitment, and one that may never enter the policy manual, but it is actually of core importance for our own spirit—and is the best way to gain employee satisfaction on the temporal level.

I made the decision to delve into this topic after I called to check in on a college friend of mine who now is an M.D. teaching at a Medical School. My call caught Jim on the occasion when he was working on a lecture on the elements of Spirituality in the Doctor-Patient Relationship. To be honest, I was flabbergasted that a Medical School would cover this topic at all, and we discussed his presentation briefly. I do not think that every medical student is presented with this consideration in their training, and Jim did say that his colleagues were a bit skeptical of his approach.

What could ever make more sense to the trained physician though? When discussing a life-threatening situation with a patient, how could one NOT consider their spiritual disposition or the depth of conviction of their family? Obviously, if the person has a strong belief system, or even if some rock can be found to hold on to, then the chances of the medical course of action and the healing process working are often going to be increased. When a physician must deliver bad news to a family, how could a person not invoke a care for the souls present and their heartache and trauma upon hearing the worst of announcements? I praise my friend for covering this subject and truly hope that the curriculum of every healing arts institution

covers this subject in detail. Spiritual compassion may be the missing link to modern medicine!

To take the subject one step further, we at BMC are beginning a series of staff dialogues this month. We are taking the time to see where all our wonderful BMC employees are in their lives and if their job is adding to their happiness. Trust me, our team works hard and does an amazing job at grasping and translating a bounty of information into caring relationships with a lot of health food stores over great distances. It is our intention—the BMC General Manager and myself—to listen to our work-friends and make sure that they are proceeding forward in their careers and lives in a manner where their work life is fulfilling and integrating into a constantly more healthful lifestyle. That is the hope.

As you begin to leave the winter of this stressful last year, maybe you can create the time to reach out to your team as well, with a willingness to let the waves of spiritual intertwining that occur while working in the close quarters of a store bring about a healthier moment for you and the people you work with. Care about your staff, and they will care about you

Honor Thyself Always

At the core, it is about our own spiritual development. This may be the most meaningful appraisal we can ever make in this life. How is your work making you better? Are you taking the time to grow spiritually,

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"WE ARE HEALTH FOOD PEOPLE"

Paul Kushner, Executive Director, Natural Products Association East



Born in Haddonfield, a small town in southern New Jersey, I grew up surrounded by immense stretches of working farms producing crops of all kinds. For many years, New Jersey farmers provided virtually all of the tomatoes used to make Campbell's tomato soup. Going over the Benjamin Franklin Bridge from New Jersey to Philadelphia, I could see dozens of tomato-laden trucks lined up in front of the Campbell Soup factory located in Camden, New Jersey. In fact, the Garden State, as it was then known, was the primary source of fruits and vegetables to a number of large manufacturers in and around the Delaware Valley. Over time, small tracts of farmland in communities surrounding my little town began to be bought up by developers who turned farmland into housing developments. It didn't happen quite overnight, but in the

course of less than 25 years, the farms were mostly gone, replaced by southern New Jersey's current cash crop: suburban sprawl. The changes occurred subtly and, like most of my contemporaries, I hardly noticed. Today, the independent farms are pretty much a memory, and at this late date, residents are demanding more open space and complaining about increasing traffic congestion. Now, of course, it's too late, or at the very least, any reversal of the process would be difficult if not impossible. During my three years as Executive Director of NPA East, I have seen many parallels between the indifference we residents showed to suburban sprawl until it was too late and the state of the natural products industry. Much of our time is spent advocating for the independent retailers within NPA's region, 12 states from Virginia up through Maine and the District of Columbia. One of our greatest challenges is convincing local retailers that they need to get involved now and join the fight against potential legislation that could cripple our industry and their businesses. Like complaining about the lack of green space in our town after the zoning laws have been changed and the developments are already built, complaining about legislation after it has been passed doesn't work. That's why I strongly encourage you to support NPA with your membership and time, now, while we can still make a difference. NPA East is the only regional association devoted exclusively to the survival and success of independent retailers. Please contact me at 856-985-5446 or e-mail me at pkushner@comcast.net. Or visit our web site at npaeast.org.

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We donate a portion of our profits to foundations which support indigenous tribes located in the Amazon region of South America.



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"If you don't read this newsletter every month, you are missing something."

Spirituality and the Health Food Store *continued from page 7*

and regenerate, and advance on your soul's journey?

For some, there is the pattern of working too much and not growing the self. For others, it is the fear of facing oneself and hiding in the details of the day. For others, it is being lost in self-destructive behaviors which may be ironically interspersed in a career of preaching good to the people we serve. For all of us it is about becoming better.

We are role models. Let people know that you too are changing and growing and struggling and trying, every day. Learn the humbleness of humanity, and be gentle with that knowledge. Share your weaknesses with loved ones and let them help you heal. Strive to be more loving in all you do everyday. Understand the blessing that is working in natural health and the role you play in the health of the people who make it to your front door.

This article was for me too. We all need to love and nurture our own souls. If we want to be part of the everyday miracle that just may save someone's life, then we need to practice humility and compassion and the silence of listening and constant courage in every action that we take. A simple hello carries ripple effects and healing vibrations. Work to dispel the coarse weakness of negativity: it is so easy to be cynical. Leave the burdens of the outside world at the curb, and make the energy and environment of your store unique—and a model for world change. In the 1980s when I started in this industry, I saw more of this. The world spirit was lighter then after the catharsis of everything that was the 60s and 70s. Today we are burdened with a weight that can suffocate: but we can transcend that. The spirit needs renewal and regeneration, and your store is the starting place: for you and your local community and every soul who comes before you to gain from the natural foods and health food experience.

With love, make every day All Souls' Day ☺



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