

Book Reviews

The Longevity Factor. The New Reality of Long Careers and How It Can Lead to Richer Lives. L. Bronte HarperCollins, New York, N.Y. Hardcover 409 pages, 1993, US \$20.00.

L. Bronte, PhD, tackles a problem which has enormous significance for modern society. The mean age of our population is gradually increasing, and more and more people are living to ages that would have been deemed impossible a century ago. The common idea is that as we reach the age of retirement, usually around 65, we are already on a slippery slope downward into an age of quiet, useless, and desperate senescence. Dr. Bronte examined this stereotypic view of aging humanity over a five year study during which she interviewed 150 men and women who had continued to work past the age of 65. At the end of her study her views on aging and senescence are entirely different the common idea.

Using the histories and anecdotes of these 150 people she was able to describe five main career models. These are homesteaders who stayed in the same field all their lives, transformers who found their dream job after a major career shift, explorers who made periodic changes in career, long growth curves and late bloomers who reached their peaks late in life, and retirers and returners who had decided to leave their work permanently but went back.

I found this book fascinating, even more so when I saw it included Allan Cott, Norman Cousins, Linus Pauling, and Albert Szent-Gyorgyi, all friends and supporters of the orthomolecular movement. Major contributors to the *Journal of Orthomolecular Medicine* have been Carl Pfeiffer who became more productive with age, and Emanuel Cheraskin who continually surprises me by his high level of productivity.

Linus Pauling was not content to rest after winning his two Nobel Prizes. At age 65, the usual retirement age, he made a

major shift in his field of interest, while at the same time not giving up his earlier interest in chemistry and in helping humanity. He read our book, *How To Live With Schizophrenia*, written by Humphry Osmond and myself, now two near octogenarians. After reading all night he arose the next morning, having decided that he would not retire and that he would go into the field of nutrition. This was one of the most fortunate decisions for nutritional medicine. He remained highly productive until the end of his life at age 93. He and I had almost completed writing a book on Cancer and Vitamin C.

Dr. Bronte's book must be read by everyone to remove the pervasive negative image of the aging process. I think that becoming senile is a disease and ought not to be tolerated. She writes, "We have magnified our negative image of aging until it is far out of proportion with reality—until it fills the entire screen, as it were, leaving no room for any positive view. Becoming aware of the positive aspects and opportunities of aging gives us a more complex and even-handed view of this part of the life course."

The Mercury in Your Mouth. The Truth About "Silver" Dental Fillings. Quicksilver Press, 217 E 85 Street, Suite 117, New York, N.Y. Paperback, 134 pages, 1994, US \$20.00.

If you are interested in the mercury controversy, read this book. It provides, in a concise way, all the evidence you need to argue with your dentist, and with the dental and medical profession, about the hazards of the mercury in your silver amalgams in your teeth. I am not going to summarize what these authors have written so well, since the readers of this journal have already read a large number of articles in which this is described, from Hal Huggins' first report in 1982 to the one which appears in this issue.

It is especially timely as the Health Protection Branch (HPB), Ottawa, has just

released its report. Dr. P. Neufeld, director of research with the health protection branch, stated that "a total ban on amalgam is not considered justified. Neither is the removal of sound amalgam fillings from patients who have no indication of adverse health effects attributable to mercury exposure". He added there have been no conclusive studies proving amalgam is safe, but there is also no evidence it poses a significant risk for most people. However, to be safe the HPB recommends that the following groups of individuals should not have fillings installed or removed: during pregnancy; in the primary teeth of young children; in the teeth of people with impaired kidney function; in teeth which will come into contact with metal braces, and in people who are hypersensitive.

Yet, even with all these restrictions, the HPB still maintains that "current evidence does not indicate that dental amalgam is causing illness in the general population." What proportion of the population must be affected before it does become a general problem? Would we be happy with the statement that tuberculosis does not impose a general problem for society if it only affected pregnant women, children, teenagers and so on?

The message is clear. Do not put any more mercury into your teeth. Some will have to have them removed. I do not think that we who are older should to be less concerned than pregnant women, or children and teenagers, or people with weak kidneys, or who are allergic to mercury. No one really knows how many are allergic since there have been no general surveys, but there is evidence in this book that the proportion of allergic individuals is much greater than the one to three percent recognized by the HPB. I suggest you write to the HPB and ask them to explain these discrepancies. But first, read this excellent book.

Depression Survivor Kit. R. Sealey, BSc, CA, 291 Princess Avenue, North York, ON M2N 3S3. Paperback, 90 pages, 1996 \$19.99.

The Depression Survivor Kit is not the usual type of book written about depression and for people who are depressed. Many books describe in agonizing detail what it is like to be depressed. A variety of psychosocial interpretations are given, depending on which of them the authors accepted the usual psychodynamic interpretations. Many people recovered, giving credit to the treatment they received, although it is equally likely they would have recovered without treatment. Of the huge number of studies on the effect of psychotherapy on anxiety and depression, there are very few which have demonstrated that the particular form of therapy was effective.

Other modern books content themselves with describing the disease, giving information about the current hypotheses of the causes of depression, and on the limited treatments, again depending upon the orientation of the writer. Some are interested only in drugs, others (not as many) in the use of nutrition, and supplements or orthomolecular treatment.

This book is different, for it provides the information that any person who is depressed will want to learn and to use in overcoming the depression. This book's main purpose is to restore normal mood.

Sealey describes five tools (from the Kit). But as in any kit, one does not need to use them all for any particular job or in any precise order. Ideally, one would start with one and if it did not work could then go on to use the next tool. And also, as with any kit, the work will have to be done by the person who is using the kit. No one else can do it for them.

The first tool describes the phenomenon of depression, the type of professions that can be consulted for help, and a variety of treatments ranging from drugs to herbs and nutrients which might be used.

Tool 2 goes into greater detail with the phenomenon of depression, the effect on the sufferer, both personally and on interpersonal relationships. Tool 3 outlines what can be done. Tool 4 gives more information about additional tools that can be used, and Tool 5 provides an excellent literature list including a large number of books to which the person can refer and in which he or she will surely find themselves. These books include the orthodox approach (drugs only) and the more modern orthomolecular approach, a combination of diet, supplements, herbs and drugs. The author of this book was helped by the herb *Gingko Biloba* and provides much useful information about this herb and how it should be used.

The author is not an expert on depression by having gotten an MD or PhD. He is an expert from the inside, having been depressed for many years, and from the outside by reading and studying ravenously all the approaches which have been used. These are all distilled into this valuable depression kit with its five major tools. I do recommend this kit for people who are or have been depressed and would like to avoid any further depression, and for professional people to use as a reference work to improve their skills in treating depression.

The Yeast Connection Handbook, by William G. Crook. Professional Books Inc, Box 3246, Jackson, TN 38303. Paperback, 259 pages, 1996, US \$14.95.

Bill Crook is one of the most widely read authors in the world on the problems generated by chronic yeast infection or candidiasis. He has been most helpful in making widely known the immense distress caused by this simple infection, and what one can do to diagnose and to treat it. In this, his latest book, he has provided a simple, accurate guide with illustrative case histories and illustrations.

The list of conditions related to yeast infection is long and is described. It ranges from the purely physical to the psychiat-

ric, and includes some of the modern plagues such as chronic fatigue syndrome on the physical side, to infantile autism on the psychiatric side. He describes the latest in treatment including the use of thyroid, DHEA, nutrition, allergies, the proper anti-candida antibiotics, and more.

His first book was published in 1983, with a second edition in 1984, followed in 1995 by "The Yeast Connection and the Woman". This latest book is a simplified version of Crook's previous work with simple and easy to follow instructions.

Reviews by A. Hoffer, MD, PhD