

# Self-curing

## A practice that's growing by leaps and bounds



**Sherry Kahan**

their own medical problems. I think one reason for this is that medicine, at one time considered so reliable, so certain and uncontestable, is now regarded as less reliable and somewhat uncertain. People are challenging its assertions all the time. They also are challenging their doctors.

I am the type who has always taken family members and myself to the doctor the minute anything looked serious, and I am beholden to a series of physicians. I also regard them as the segment of society best trained to make a diagnosis or perform an operation.

Yet what I have been hearing is that patients want to be told more than "take this." Many want to know why, and what it will do to them or for them?

They want to know about prevention. Will exercise or vitamins help?

They would like to sit down and have a real chat about the illness that is worrying them. They would like the doctor to consider both the mind and the body, and not think of them as merely as Mrs. Bladder Infection or Mr. Gout.

WHEN A FRIEND broke her leg, she read up on

her problem and learned that it was important to exercise leg muscles to protect weak ligaments.

"After doing all this reading, I was upset that my doctor hadn't said anything about exercise," she said.

"I told him off. The main thing for a doctor to do is to help you understand what is going on. It's helpful to understand why."

An acquaintance went through a rough patch of bad health 20 years ago. She was uncomfortable enough to go to several large hospitals for checkups. But no answer was found for her, and the suggestion was made that it was all in her mind.

She decided to research her own problems. Later, she told her doctor she thought she had hypoglycemia, not as easily detected 20 years ago as today.

He gave her some test and agreed. Treatment began, and a great weight was lifted from her mind.

Another friend with a bladder infection was repeatedly given medicine by her physician and sent home. Looking for some prevention hints for this recurring problem, she went to the library, and found a slew of preventive suggestions from which she profited.

"Why didn't my doctor give me advice on how to prevent it?" she asked.

THESE ARE NOT earthshaking complaints, I know, but they are causing people to rethink their attitudes toward medicine.

Similarly, we are having to face our expectations too many miracles of our medical establishment. It shakes our confidence a little when there are changes or internal differences.

For example, a few years ago the American Cancer Society, presumably on the advice of physicians, urged women to have a Pap test every year to see if they had cancer of the cervix.

Groups all over the country went to great trouble to set up local Pap testing so women could easily get their yearly test. Then suddenly something changed.

The society is now saying that a test every two or three years is satisfactory for women not in the high-risk category if two previous Pap tests have been negative. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology questions this.

X-rays, that much-used diagnostic tool, are now being seen in a new light. Into this office come U.S. government bulletins warnings people not to have too many X-rays because of the danger of radiation.

Good hospital food gets stories in the newspaper, forcing one to feel there must be plenty that is not so good. Some, like Norman Cousins, even say it is not very healthy.

A new word, nosocomial infection, was coined to cover hospital-acquired infections. Senior citizens are being cured of ailments by giving them a drug holiday. They were overdosed, which is some cases was their own fault, in others not.

One has only to look at the burgeoning of health foods, health food stores and vitamins to know that some kind of revolution is taking place in health care.

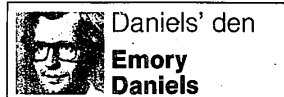
EXPERIMENTATION is the key word in this trend. People are guessing at vitamin dosage. And they sometimes make mistake and overdose.

I don't think this happens as often as those opposed to vitamins would have us believe. However, a Lansing 3-year-old overdosed recently on vitamin A because her overzealous parents simply gave her too much.

In Prevention Magazine (circulation two million), people write about their successes with this vitamin or that. Vitamin E healed burns, one claimed. Vitamin C, bone meal and other supplements stopped bleeding gums, another wrote.

Zinc cleared up athlete's foot. Witchhazel in water cured hemorrhoids. Garlic tablets brought sinus relief. Lecithin ended psoriasis.

Even if you assume that most of Prevention's income comes from advertisements for vitamin supplements, the message comes through that some people are having success with them.



**Daniels' den**  
**Emory Daniels**

# Born a man, not a legend

Shortly after I arrived to work that morning, my wife called with the news that Dean Spencer had been killed the night before when the plane he was piloting crashed at Oakland Airport.

The rest of the day was spent handling that news — struggling with the stark reality that the words were really true, that I'd never see Dean again.

Although the news took a while to really sink in, I was not shocked. Somehow I always felt Dean would not live to be an old man.

Only a year older than I, his life was at least 30 years fuller than mine. He had packed into 38 years more than most of us think about doing.

I had met Dean for the first time about 10 years ago, and he became a fixture in my life — someone you expected to be there. He was someone I listened to very carefully because Dean wasted few words and because he had a much firmer grasp on the great issues of life than I do.

DEAN HAD ALL the makings of a myth — a modern Horatio Alger story.

A farmboy born and raised in Yale, a town of less than 2,000 north of Port Huron, he often kidded about being a "Yale graduate." Dean learned to fly an airplane at age 18. His father owned a plane and taught Dean how to fly out in the fields.

He graduated from Wayne State University and, in a relatively short time, he became vice-president of marketing for Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Company in Farmington Hills.

And, then, within the past few months, he became chief operating officer of the Trinity Co. of Southfield.

As a young man he had escaped death in a boating accident in Alaska. And about three years ago, Dean escaped death again in a motel fire in Louisville, Ky.

Those are the kinds of things of which myths are made. But Dean Spencer was a man, not a myth.

He became what he was by individual effort, by building self-confidence, by searching for knowledge, by insisting on finding answers about things he didn't know about, and by chasing what looked like windmills to others.

Born the son of a farmer, he became by his own initiative, drive and skill a marketing genius.

And that's true of us all. We are not born what we become, but we become what we live.

Dean was not born a great man but became great because he placed few limits on his personal potential. He set high goals and immediately sought others to help him reach them.

HOW WELL I remember three years ago when Dean was almost killed — trapped in a motel engulfed with smoke, heat, and fire.

He suffered first-degree burns all over his body, had a broken neck, and had his lungs filled with black ashes. For weeks he lay in intensive care with the chances of his dying increasing daily.

But God and Dean Spencer decided otherwise.

After the recovery, Dean returned home and agreed to serve as chairman of the building committee for the church he belonged to — the Detroit First Church of the Nazarene. During those same months he wrote a book telling of his experience in facing death in the burning motel.

The book came out in August, the church was completed and dedicated the first week in February, and the accident was but a couple weeks afterwards. It was as if he chose when to die.

I REMEMBER many of stories Dean used to tell — about life on the farm in Yale, about his college days, about the family reunion picnics, and about his many experiences flying.

Many times before Dean had made instrument landings in heavy fog. I remember him telling about how you must have complete and absolute trust in the instruments because a pilot doesn't dare "second-guess" the readings.

Although you cannot see a thing, you learn to accept by faith that the runway is just a few hundred feet away and in another second you'll see the runway lights because that is what the instruments say.

And Dean lived the same way he flew — by placing the same kind of absolute faith in his maker as he did in his plane's instruments. Absolute trust is something few of us ever achieve, but Dean did — maybe because he had twice faced death and lived.

After that, who else can you trust?

Some of us struggle with who God is, why he made us, what he wants to do with us, what he expects of us. But Dean knew all those answers. Dean knew because he asked God a lot of questions and insisted upon answers.

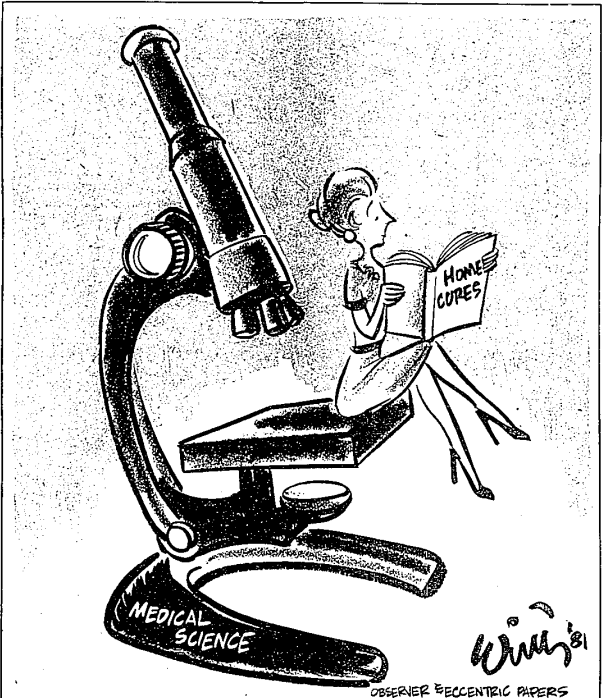
That's why I always listened closely to Dean because he knew a whole lot more about God and life than I.

And now what once was a fixture in my life is a collection of memories, and thoughts and truths. It's almost as if an era has passed, or as if I have just moved from one generation to another.

Last Wednesday night I sat in a memorial service and listened to his closest friends pay tribute to a great man. The word used most often was "extraordinary," and that's an accurate description because Dean Spencer had an affect on everyone who knew him.

Extraordinary, yes, but he was not a myth. He was a man who displayed excellence as a husband, a father, a brother's keeper, and as a teacher.

A private man, Dean kept to himself if the deeds he did for others. But still we knew him as a Good Samaritan — as someone who loved and served God and man equally well.



## Headline sparked memories

# This pool game was elevating

While reading the paper at the breakfast table the other morning, The Stroller's eye caught a headline hidden on one of the inside pages that caused a flood of memories to come splashing through the years.

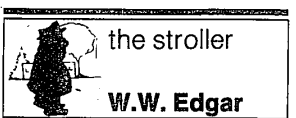
The headline proclaimed to the world that the ancient game of pool was being reincarnated and that there was a series of pool rooms being planned that would lead to a pool league.

What caused the memories to come rushing back was the fact that The Stroller cut his eye teeth on a pool table back home, and the first honor he ever won was to be crowned the pool champion of the volunteer fire companies in the Lehigh Valley and later the champion of the entire county.

His connection with pool came in a most unusual way back in our little town in the foothills of the Lehigh Mountains in Pennsylvania.

FOR YEARS The Stroller's father had been employed in the only factory in our town and then sickness overtook him and he had to quit. As a means of supporting our family he decided to open a lunch counter. In the rear of dining section, he had installed the only "public" pool table in town. It soon became quite a popular place for the young men seeking entertainment in the evenings.

The Stroller was so young at the time that he was sent home each evening at 7 o'clock.



the stroller  
**W.W. Edgar**

But there came a day when his father took him aside and told him that he would have to learn the game in order to cater to the customers' desires for a partner on occasions. This was a big event in The Stroller's life. So he ardently went about the task of learning to "shoot" pool. For a year his father had refused to let him use a cue. Instead he had to roll the balls and watch how they moved.

Then came the big day — A Thanksgiving Day — when he was allowed to use a cue in an official game. Well, he remembers the thrill. And it wasn't long before he became known as the "house" man. And he was only eight years old.

ONE OF THE BIG thrills — and disappointments — came one night when he was paired with Ralph Greenleaf, a child prodigy from Illinois, and he lost

by a single ball, 100 to 99. He never got over the "beating."

Years later when he was toiling in the sports department of the Detroit Free Press, this same Greenleaf, now the world champion, came to Detroit to defend his title at the long-gone Recreation Building.

After we renewed our acquaintance, The Stroller and Greenleaf practiced pool each afternoon. Then, one day, Greenleaf asked him to join an unusual exhibition. It was to play pool in one of Henry Ford's airplanes, still known affectionately as the "Tin Goose."

For more than hour we played an exhibition over the down-town area at midway just to prove that the plane was stable.

It was a thrill long to be remembered as our game in the air proved that the plane could carry weight and it was the early success of the airplane industry.

All these things came rolling back through the years when The Stroller noticed that small bit in the back pages of his morning paper.

And would you believe it — he still has the cue Greenleaf, the world champion, gave him as a gift that noon day away back little more than a half century ago.