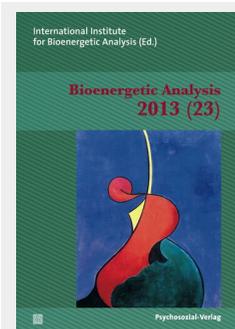


*Virginia Wink Hilton*

# Book Review of: Self Cure: You Can Do More For Yourself Than Your Doctor Can



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# Book Review

## Self Cure: You Can Do More For Yourself Than Your Doctor Can

*Virginia Wink Hilton*

There is something compelling about a book entitled, “Self Cure: You Can Do More For Yourself Than Your Doctor Can.” Perhaps it is because many of us have had experiences with our health care practitioners that have been less than satisfactory. Mark J. Sicherman, who has been a physician for 50 years, agrees with that. He observes that, while he has considered medical practice to be a noble profession, in recent decades the quality of medicine in our country has declined “to the point where the whole system is in crisis” (xii). Clearly this sense was a strong motivator in the writing of this book.

Sicherman – “Jim”, as he is called by those who know him – began training with the New York Society for Bioenergetic Analysis in 1982 and was certified in 1987. “This was a life-altering experience, for me personally and for my practice”, he writes in “Self Cure” (p. 3). The influence of Bioenergetics is apparent throughout his book.

“Self Cure” is about the mind/body approach to health and wholeness. But it is also about the refutation of what characterizes most of current medical practice: “one size fits all”.

“Every patient who has a particular disease will be treated the same way. In contrast, my expertise has been in helping people to get to know themselves on a body/mind level. When a person achieves this self-awareness, they will know what they need in order to restore and maintain health (xii).”

Sicherman’s approach to finding and embodying self-awareness is based on what he calls the “Three Pillars of Good Health: Intake, Exercise, and Going to the Source.” In Part I of the book he describes and explains the importance of each area.

In addition to food, Intake includes water, air, medication, and supplements. He offers “The 7 Guidelines for Eating Well,” and ultimately urges the person to, “listen to your body.”

The second Pillar, exercise, extends well beyond aerobics and gym workouts. He includes flexibility and expressive exercises – even sexual exercises – for enhancing

energetic flow, techniques that are quite familiar to the Bioenergetic community. He emphasizes that, “The free flow of energy and feeling through the body is the most effective deterrent to the development of chronic disease states” (p. 37).

The third Pillar he calls, “Going to the Source.” By this he means “going to that place of stillness that is present deep within each of us” (p. 48). The third pillar is “a safe haven from the stresses of daily life and in fact an antidote to the negative physiologic effects of those stresses” (p. 49). Sichernman, noting validation of meditation by numerous scientific studies, offers different techniques and discusses the problems and resistance arising around meditation practice. And, I would venture to suggest that his particular emphasis on meditation might be referred to as “body mindfulness.”

In Part II of the book, a number of conditions are presented in alphabetical order, from Allergies to Urinary Tract Infections, which Sichernman believes, “are possible to prevent, ameliorate, or cure through your own initiative” (p. 65). With each condition he makes observations, based on his many years of practice as a physician and his body/mind perspective, and he gives recommendations within the Three Pillars: Intake, Exercise, and Going to the Source. He refers the reader to additional resources of exercises, meditations, and diet, which are found in Part III.

Chuck Storman, co-author of the book, is a computer engineer whose wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. He utilized his advanced computer skills to research methods believed to be helpful in stopping the illness. Diet became a central focus and greatly aided his wife’s recovery. His findings are central to the Intake Pillar of “Self Cure”.

In “Self Cure” Sichernman has created an accessible and valuable resource – much of it based on principles of Bioenergetic Analysis – for enhancing health and well being. I find the book to be simple, direct and profound. Frequently it provides information and wisdom that we know very well, and at the same time, it is a clear reminder of what we so often fail to put into practice. It is useful for us personally and for our clients. And I believe that Sichernman’s book will have a broad appeal to persons interested in and open to the mind/body approach to wellness.

## **About the Author**

Virginia Wink Hilton, LCSW, PhD., is a Bioenergetic therapist since 1975 (New York City) and a IIBA faculty member since 1977. She moved to Southern California in 1985, and has continued in private practice with her husband, Robert Hilton. She has published articles on gender and sexuality and is co-author of the book, *Therapists at Risk*.