

# The Good News About AIDS and HIV Patients Speak Out

by Gary Null, PhD

Recently, the AIDS research establishment has taken us on a roller coaster ride of expectations. First, there was elation with reports that the new mixed anti-HIV "cocktails" acted to substantially reduce viral load; and in some cases completely eliminate the presence of active viruses from the body. However, within months, the optimism faded considerably, when articles began coming out showing that the anti-retroviral cocktails were not the magic panacea that everyone had hoped they would be. Reports were that as many as 50% of the people who had initially shown major improvement, in terms of dropping viral activity and infectivity, had relapsed, with the relapse frequently killing them.

How reminiscent this is of the pattern we see in orthodox medicine's "war" on cancer: Chemotherapy and radiation shows an initial shrinking or removal of the tumor mass, but several months later, the tumor reappears, remetastasizes, and kills the patient. Once again, the short-term view has obscured the reality of the long term.

It can't be denied that today, we do understand a great deal about the immune system because of all the valuable work that has been done on AIDS. The problem is that mainstream medicine still takes a single-minded approach to AIDS – kill the virus before you kill the body. What about seeking a way to allow people to be completely well – without relapse?

The good news is that a minority of people have sought this alternative path, and there is a model to follow along these lines. Thousands of individuals who have had full-blown AIDS – many from the very beginning of this struggle – have taken what I call a second-opinion approach to the condition. Many have lived healthful, active lives for years by forgoing the orthodox drug protocols and turning instead to body detoxification and lifestyle changes.

They've done so because they have reasoned as follows: If you take a healthy person and expose him to the destructive co-risk factors so often associated with AIDS – i.e., intravenous drug use; cocaine; alcohol; multiple sex

partners; multiple infections, such as hepatitis B and C, herpes 6, cytomegalovirus, Epstein Barr virus, coxsackievirus, and mycoplasma; parasites; inadequate nutrition; and sleep deprivation – that person is going to be seriously immunosuppressed and in free-fall, ending up eventually in a hospital or perhaps dead. And if these cofactors are dangerous to the otherwise healthy, for those who are HIV-positive, they are even less well tolerated. The way to get rid of them is through dietary and behavioral changes, and as will be seen from the individual stories that follow, making these kinds of changes can produce significant health benefits.

The fact is that many of the people who have taken this second-opinion approach to HIV have outlived everyone in their AIDS support groups who was put on the orthodox protocols. They, the ones who stepped away from the tunnel vision of the mainstream approach and concentrated on optimizing their immune systems, were the only survivors, frequently going from group to group to group over 5, or 10, or 15 years. Unfortunately, the governmental and medical establishment has not made an effort to study this phenomenon. It has been politically and economically more expedient to blame AIDS on a single weak retrovirus – HIV – ignoring the role of cofactors and the benefits of the immune augmentative approach that these long-term survivors have used.

I have interviewed hundreds of individuals whose stories are in essence, the same as the ones recounted below. Space does not permit me to include more than a handful, but it should be kept in mind that these are not unique nor isolated cases; rather, these represent the rule with the alternative approach to AIDS.

The bottom line is that the more things a person does to change the negatives in his or her life to positives – that is, the more aspects of immune enhancement they entertain – the healthier they will get, without the high relapse and death rate that results from the orthodox therapy. Hopefully, it is only a matter of a short time before the

American media begin to pay attention to this second-opinion approach to AIDS, and to stories such as the ones that follow.

## Dave

Fourteen years ago, I was diagnosed with AIDS, and today I'm alive and well without a trace of HIV or any AIDS-related symptoms. Hopefully people will listen to my story and start to reject the dominant paradigm, which says that the only way to deal with HIV infection is with tons of toxic drugs for the rest of your life.

In 1988, I was tested for HIV after being sick for about four months with what I thought was mononucleosis. I went to St. Vincent's Hospital, in downtown Manhattan, and was put on the HIV ward. Over the next six months, I was in and out of the hospital. I took many tests including two HIV tests: the ELISA and the western Blot. They were just starting to experiment with the PCR then, and I took four PCR tests.

I was told I had, [among other things], histoplasmosis, idiopathic CD-4 lymphocytopenia, anemia, cytomegalovirus (CMV), herpes, Epstein Barr, toxoplasmosis, pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP), Kaposi's sarcoma (KS), and malabsorption syndrome. They told me I was progressively worsening because of the strain of HIV that I had. Overall I had 21 diagnoses. At least seven of these were potentially fatal. KS or CMV could have killed me. Toxoplasmosis kills 70% of the people who get it. I had PCP three times within the course of a year and a half, and this was the #1 killer of persons with AIDS for over 10 years. Had I not done something about my situation I would have been dead very quickly.

At first I was a front-line activist for organizations like Act Up. I would fight for more money for research and medicine. What caused me to change my direction to a more holistic one was simply that everybody I knew died. Nobody from my support group at the Gay Men's Health Center is alive today. Nobody I knew from Act Up is alive today.

## AIDS & HIV

Everybody who went on the drugs died. They didn't die from HIV; they didn't die from AIDS; they died from AZT toxicity. Just take a look at the symptoms listed in the *Physician's Desk Reference (PDR)* for HIV-related wasting syndrome. Then take a look at the symptoms associated with AZT. They're identical. Hospital studies are still using AZT monotherapy when they know that it's poisonous. They want to keep on testing because pharmaceutical companies really control what's going on with this epidemic. And a lot of the gay community has gone along with it. It's a horrible thing.

I realized that lifestyle factors led to my illness. When I was 20 years old, I was an alcoholic. I also smoked two to three packs of cigarettes a day. I'm straight, but I grew up in the gay community where I hung out in the gay bars. I adopted a lot from their lifestyle. I would go to Fire Island where I was a substance abuser. Everybody used poppers, amyl nitrates. (An interesting note is that these drugs are made by Glaxyl Welcome, the same people who make AZT.) I went from poppers to coke,

from coke to sniffing heroin and using pills. I was malnourished.

About six months later, I went in for a test knowing that I was probably positive. My suspicions were confirmed. After being told that I was positive, I started declining in health. I went on a drug run, like many people do, because I thought I was going to die anyway. This was 1988; there was no hope.

My mom listened to your show (Gary Null's) all the time and went to a lot of your lectures. She knew that taking AZT would be wrong. She contacted you, and you told her what to do. So you pretty directly saved my life.

I survived because of the holistic protocol I've been on. If you religiously follow this type of a protocol you can survive. I went to the Healing Center and started getting IV vitamin C drips. I called Dr. Revici (now deceased), and he prescribed a whole host of other therapies for me. I received ozone therapy for awhile. And I started urine therapy. I began taking a million vitamins, and would drink 18 to 25 juices a day. I worked on changing my mental attitude. I became a vegetarian.

And I stopped the smoking and drinking. I started going to the running and walking club. At first, I hated it, but now I love it. In fact, I recently ran in the New York City Marathon. I got acupuncture and Chinese medicine.

I started recovering. My attitude changed from seeing this as a battle between myself and the virus to being a conscious choice between health and sickness. After an enormous three-year struggle, I realized that I had gotten better. I went in for another test, which is an extremely stressful thing to do.

My latest tests are all negative. I've repeatedly taken every single AIDS test there is, and no one can find anything wrong. I have no HIV antibodies, no HIV virus, no viral load, no PCR. What they're saying is that I've stopped producing antibodies for the virus due to a hematological condition which I can't pronounce. I'm going down again to get more lab results, but I believe it will be the same. ➤

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## AIDS & HIV

▶ A lot of people dispute whether or not I was positive because the predominant idea is that you can't rid yourself of an HIV infection without using combinations of drugs, such as the protease inhibitors and the nucleotide analogs, like AZT and DDI. We're really quick to accept that this is possible. But it's only possible in that paradigm [that involves] spending thousands and thousands of dollars for these drugs, which very few people can or ever will be able to afford.

Recently, there was a study in the nationally distributed journal *AIDS Treatment News*. The study, which came out of Stanford University, showed that n-acetyl cysteine (NAC) raises glutathione levels, and that that helps predict survival. Yet no one is paying attention to the fact that people with HIV aren't being prescribed glutathione or NAC by their doctors. They are selectively prescribing what treatments people should take. And that's why this epidemic has turned into the ravenous monster that it is.

I would urge people with AIDS or a diagnosis of HIV to come to HEAL on Wednesday nights at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center at 208 W. 13th Street, in New York. You don't have to be gay to attend. I'm straight; I'm just not narrow. You can get an enormous amount of help there, an enormous amount of information about where to get vitamins and herbs.

### John

I had some very high titers to some very serious and challenging bacteria and viruses. By listening to your show, I learned about holistic approaches for enhancing my immune system. I stopped doing bad things to my health, and I started to nourish it. Now, six years later, in 1997, I've eliminated the HIV virus. My blood workup shows that I am completely negative for the HIV virus. I'm extremely healthy, and I feel very good.

First, I stopped smoking, drinking, and using drugs. Then I began taking vitamin C drips, starting with 25,000 mg and working up to 200,000 mg three times a week. I also took ozone treatments three times a week. I took multiple vitamins, including vitamins E and A. I gave up meat eating and am now a vegetarian.

Today, I look better than I've ever looked. I feel vital and healthy. No one would ever know that I was sick.

### Troy

About 12 years ago, I tested positive for HIV, although I very well may have been exposed to it before that. At the time, I didn't really do a lot about it. My T-cells were very high, and I never did get sick for many years. I just continued with my life as normal. I have been a quasi-vegetarian for about 20 years, and I have always been conscientious about a healthy lifestyle. I took vitamins, and I watched my diet. I think that was a big factor in my not getting sick early on.

Then about two years ago, I lost my lover to AIDS. He got so sick so fast that we had no choice other than to rely upon what the doctors wanted to give him. Obviously, they did not have much success. This was in 1995 before some of the new drug therapies had come out. Going through that experience with him was very hard on me, both emotionally and physically. I was so focused on his care that I stopped taking good care of myself.

By the time he passed away, my T-cells had dropped down to just below 200. That made me realize that I had better start taking better care of myself. My mainstream doctor's answer was to start me on AZT. I resisted for many months, and then, finally, he convinced me to give it a try to see what kind of results I would have. I tried it for about two weeks. I have never been so sick as when I started to take AZT. To me that was my body telling me this stuff is not for you.

Being concerned about my health, and realizing that I did not want to take the drug therapy, I began to educate myself and to find other people who were pursuing alternative therapies. I got involved with a very small support group of people pursuing natural and alternative therapies. It was a real help to me to have the support of other guys who were having success keeping HIV in check without any kind of drug therapy. As it turned out I ended up facilitating that group for almost a year.

Sometimes it was frustrating to me that there were not more people pursuing alternatives. A lot of the stuff that I do, as far as lifestyle, diet, and natural supplements, has been around much, much longer than any of what we call medicine today. A lot of these very

simple approaches to healing are now being rediscovered. It's no big mystery.

Recently, I started working with some people from Japan who do what is called *kai igatu*. The literal translation is "comfortable healing." It's a system of movement to warm the different organs of the body. You actually use an iron to warm the organs to stimulate the brain, and to bring blood to the different areas of the body. It's very, simple, yet the results I've had have been profound.

What I really want to say is that for over a year now I have been going to a licensed homeopath who works with energetic medicine. He and I and a lot of other people believe that our whole organism is a complete system working on certain frequencies, certain energies, that can be read through some form of testing. What he does is called bioresonance testing, which is a sophisticated form of what a lot of people know as kinesiology and muscle testing. For example, let's say you have heard about garlic or olive leaf extract and you're thinking about taking it. Someone who knows how to do bioresonance testing can tell what kind of effect that particular supplement will have on your body. Of course, you can test medications also.

For over a year now, I have felt empowered by working with this gentleman. The reason it's so empowering is that now when I go to the doctor I feel like it is my body telling him what I need rather than the other way around. With the conventional doctor you're the guinea pig, where they're telling you what to take, or saying let's try this or that. Not only has it been psychologically empowering for me, but we've had wonderful results.

The other thing I want to say is that you can't live your life based on a test result. You hear that the man who created the PCR questions whether or not it should even be used for the kind of testing that they're doing. I did the PCR test and the blood tests. But I finally realized that I could not live my life based on some tests that someone created. At the worst, my viral load was at about 95,000. And my T-cells kind of hovered around 200 to 300, pretty much for the last two or three years. By working with this homeopath, I feel like I really turned that around. We cut my viral load in half. It's now down to about 30,000 instead of 95,000. There's not too much change in my T-cells, but I've kind of let all of that go, as far as exactly what

the numbers are, exactly what the counts are. If you stop focusing on the illness and start focusing on the part of you that is well, it's just amazing the kind of stuff that starts to turn around and happen.

Another point I'd like to make is that in working with the homeopath, all the different stuff we do, all of the remedies that I take, none of it is directed toward killing HIV. All of it is directed toward detoxifying the total organism, toward supporting the system as a whole, improving general function, supporting the immune system, and letting the body do its thing. I've come to believe the body is a remarkable device that can handle anything, including exposure to HIV.

### Ron

Unofficially, I was diagnosed with AIDS about 13 years ago; officially, it was eight years ago. I ended up joining a support group. Most people were taking the AZT therapy. All of them are gone.

I chose not to take drugs because I've been around quite awhile, and I remember hearing two things about AIDS medicines on the news. These were called miracle drugs. But at the same time you'd also hear about the problems that people were having with them. I've always been trying to stay away from medicines and trying to stay healthy. So I investigated other ideas and different dietary things to do. I started experimenting with raw foods and fruitarianism. When I was on the fruitarian diet my movements were excellent, so I know I was not harboring anything in my intestines. I enjoyed eating like that. But it's a little bit difficult to do that in modern life. Traveling for a living makes it even more difficult.

I did have some lingual thrush. I went on a therapeutic water fast...I fasted for six days with just a little bit of water when I was thirsty. I became very weak because I'm very thin. There were larger people there who were fasting too. They fasted for days and days and never lost any energy until about the time I left, 10 days after arriving. Anyway, it did clear up all thrush.

I consulted a naturopathic doctor. He got me on lots of carrot juice, three times a day. Sometimes I get wheat grass juice at the health food store. I also do an imagery exercise where I picture light

going into my third eye, the healing eye, and traveling throughout my entire body, part by part. That's very relaxing and powerful as well.

### Michael

My first intuitive awareness of having HIV was in 1982. I was listening to the radio when a newscast came on that over a million people had been infected. At that point, I instantly knew that I was going to be one of the million people. I just intuitively knew. I looked back into my history because they had given an indication of the type of people that would be infected. I didn't fall into that category, but I still felt that I was one of the people infected.

From 1982 to 1986, I was uncertain. The test actually came out in '85 or '86. I was a mess, and I had to know. I was getting more and more upset inside and more crazy not knowing whether or not I was infected. In '86 I took the test. At the time I had a lover. We both were monogamous, and we both got tested. I came out positive, and he came out negative. Based on the fact that I was with him from '83 to '86 and that I was monogamous, that put me back into thinking that I was infected in '82, '81, or '80. I was in Australia then, living a frivolous lifestyle. So I think that's how I got infected.

The person that I was living with was encouraging me to go on drugs because he felt that they would come out with new drugs for HIV. But again I listened to my heart, and intuitively decided against AZT, which was the drug being

used at the time. From what I knew, based on what I read, it was a poison. I just couldn't conceive of the idea of taking a poison for something that was wrong in my system. To me it didn't logically make sense. I didn't understand how someone could take poison to cure an ailment in the body...it didn't compute. I thought there had to be a better way.

I also knew that the body's function is to heal itself. That's how the body is designed. It has everything it needs to physically heal itself. If you take care of your body it will respond. At that time, I would go to meetings just to find out more about HIV. I found out about a doctor who was looking for people to do alternative natural therapies. It struck me as a good way to go.

So I called him up, but he had already closed the study group. He said he'd put me on a waiting list. It would be a year before I could get into the study. That was in '88. From '86 to '88 I was doing my own sort of treatment. I was exercising and meditating. My friend told me about an herbal tea called astragalus that I had to buy in Chinatown. I had to brew the tea myself. I did that for two years. I also changed my diet a little bit. Then I met Dr. John Kaiser. His protocol was practically the same as the one I had been on myself, except for the herbs. His herbs were in pill form, which made it easier for me to take them. ➤

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## AIDS & HIV

I eat just about anything, although I don't eat a lot of dairy or fat. I don't drink coffee, and I don't smoke or drink alcohol. I have a high metabolism so I need lots of protein. I do a lot of running and just light weights on my chest and arms.

I think a lot of my health comes from my attitude, the way I view the world and the way I see myself. It's that, in combination with diet, exercise, and meditation. You can't take one component and say this is it. It's a combination of everything that I do in my world and universe.... Everything that affects me affects my body. I look at every aspect of my life in terms of my health. There's no one thing that I can put my finger on to say this is the way I am. It's everything that I do.

### Albert

I have been HIV positive for 11 years. I found out back in 1986. I had run into an old friend, and we wanted to become intimate again. He wanted me to get the test before we had sex again. I thought, why not? I expected it to come back negative. When I got the results I was shocked. I felt like the floor had fallen out from under my feet.

Over the next two years I went through a strange adjustment period. I went through a depression. That very same year, I moved out to California. I started a new job and a new relationship and basically a new life. I wasn't very focused on my job because I was depressed. Eventually, I was asked to leave the job. I went to another job a couple of months later.

They were just starting to use AZT, and I didn't want to go on any medication. So I basically tried to keep myself healthy by watching my diet. I tried to get my rest and keep my mental

and physical stretches at a minimum. The person I moved out there with also was having problems, and he eventually died a year later. I was on my own again.

I discovered acupuncture through another friend. I did acupuncture for a couple of years. Then I stopped. I also took Chinese herbs. That helped. My T-cells, during that time, were in the 500 range. One time, after my lover had died, my T-cells dropped to 108, but I attributed it to stress. Then they went back up again. So I learned an important lesson about T-cells and mental health. A lot of times our minds do a lot of things to our health that we don't realize when we're under stress. So I learned from that that I had to be concerned about my mental state. I continued to do the Chinese herbs, and I went to the gym to get physically fit.

The work I started doing was with the postal service doing manual labor, which was very good, because I had nothing to worry about. I did my job and went home. Over the next few years I just basically took care of myself that way.

I got involved again with another person. I was still doing herbs and vitamins and keeping my mental health together. And after the first two years I realized that I was still alive. I realized that I was going to be there for awhile and that I had to start thinking that way and stop thinking that I was going to die. I kept trying to keep myself healthy. All around me people were getting sick and dying. I think my background helped me. Also, I'm one of those people who doesn't give up. The whole thing is to persevere and have the strength to endure suffering and hard times.

My next relationship ended kind of tragically because my partner committed suicide. After he passed on, I went back to acupuncture and herbs. And I've been doing them ever since. I've been doing them for six years now. What my acupuncturist's done for me has been very important because she talks to me, and she finds out what I'm doing. She takes the time with me every time I go see her to find out where I am.

During the first two years that I started going back to her I went on the antiviral AZT. Although I went into it with a positive head space I also realized that I was taking a medication that was very toxic. My doctor prescribed that I take five a day. But I realized that that would be just too much. I ended up taking three some days, one on others.

Some days I'd take none. I really didn't take a dosage as it was prescribed. After two years I was doing so little of it that I just stopped. And I haven't been on anything in the past four years.

Five years ago, I discovered qi gong through my acupuncturist. This is a Chinese-style exercise and breathing routine, which is over a thousand years old. It's helping me to release stress from my internal organs and relax my mind. They're gentle movements that help me to relax and stay calm. When your body's calm, your mind's relaxed. You can then heal yourself. A qi gong state of mind is that thin line between sleeping and being awake. The body feels the energy flow. And you're at a place where you feel wonderful. I'm now an instructor of qi gong. It has helped me to remain healthy. My T-cells are still in that range of 300 to 500. Right now my T-cells are in the 300 range. I'm not worried about that because I know my T-cells go up and down. And I'm not going to be stressed out by numbers. Now they have a viral load testing, which also puts another little strain on you. Your doctors will tell you, oh, your viral has gone up. And the cocktail is something I don't want to go on right now. I understand the point of viral testing; it tells you what the virus is doing in your body.

But I'm still healthy. I haven't had any opportunistic infections. I'm very healthy. I'm doing well mentally although I do have my days where I get depressed a little bit. When you're dealing with a virus for over a decade you do have your worries. But I'm still here. And regardless of what happens I'm going to maintain the routine I'm doing as far as my qi gong, Chinese herbs, and acupuncture.

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