

# Three Powerhouse Alternative Healing Practices

By Marcia Detwiler Scupin

Healthy choices in alternative healthcare abound in Tucson. We visited three practices – a naturopathic clinic/detox spa; a holistic dentistry practice; and an integrative sleep and dream specialist. Though they appear quite different on the surface, we found they share a strong common purpose: each practitioner and team is passionate about discovering and sharing healing wisdom.

Best-selling author Dr. Andrew Weil's recent book, *Why Our Health Matters: A Vision of Medicine That Can Transform Our Future*, tells us that more than half of all out-of-pocket health expenses go toward alternative medicine. (See our review of this book on page 19) Weil maintains that Americans turn to alternative care because medical schools fail to give future doctors the best education to care for patients; insurance companies have destroyed our opportunity to get excellent care; and pharmaceutical companies have come to rule our lives, with 81 percent of us on prescription medicines.

Read on and discover the exciting frontier of holistic health as we give you an inside look at what's happening right here in your own back yard.

## Judy Hiell, N.M.D.

We begin with NatureMedica, where naturopathic physician Judy A. Hiell, N.M.D., leads a clinical team in the practice of natural integrative medicine. Dr. Michael Uzick, N.M.D., specializing in cancer treatments, oncology and vascular rejuvenation, is part of NatureMedica's staff.



Judy Hiell, NMD

Dr. Hiell carved a niche in her busy day to give *Natural Awakenings* an overview of her practice and philosophy of health and healing. Perhaps the most telling of her comments about her practice was this: "Why do you have pain, fatigue, stomach

troubles, etc? Let's dig, dig, dig! I am a medical detective." Of her team, she says, "We have to be good natural cardiologists, endocrinologists, gastroenterologists and dermatologists."

Dr. Hiell described several case histories that illustrate her integrative approach. She spoke of being a health-care manager who works "outside the box." Some of her favorite approaches to wellness are adrenal restoration and support; food-allergy detection; gluten-intolerance detection and treatment; neuro-transmitter balancing; healing all gastro-intestinal issues; surgery prevention; balancing hormones; and weaning away from prescription medicines. "It all comes down to quality of life," she says, "We are committed to having people leave here healthier than when they came in. My patients would not trade it for the world. I am not just managing their symptoms – they feel fantastic!"

Dr. Hiell's bright, energized demeanor exudes an intense passion to help her patients feel better. To that end, she employs a toolbox of physical examinations and testing of blood, urine and stool samples; in-depth patient interviewing (her intake paperwork is eight pages long!); plus, she will custom-design an individualized health program for each of her patients, which may include dietary changes, nutritional and herbal supplementation, cleansing and detoxification, nutritional IVs, and organic skincare products.

NatureMedica's integrative medicine practice is complemented by a comprehensive Detox Spa to enhance wellness and alleviate stress. Its prescriptive-care services include clay and herbal detox wraps; a 12-week customized lifestyle education and weight-loss nutritional program (First Line Therapy); acupuncture combined with contrast hydrotherapy and LED lights for pain and inflammation; lymphatic drainage therapy; colon hydrotherapy; reflexology; and a Far Infrared Sauna.

Naturopathic physicians must graduate from one of only four post-graduate naturopathic medical schools in the United States, pass a state board, and practice under a governing and licensing board. They are licensed as doctors in Arizona to diagnose and prescribe most medications. (For more information, see [naturopathic.org](http://naturopathic.org).) Dr. Hiell is a board-certified naturopathic physician and has been in practice in Tucson for 14 years. She enthusiastically puts her credo in a nutshell: "Everyone can benefit from naturopathy; everyone can heal."

*NatureMedica is located at 1 West Wetmore, Suite 101. Call 520-887-4287 for an appointment; to learn more, visit [naturemedica.net](http://naturemedica.net).*

## Steven Swidler, D.D.S.

The Medicine Wheel Dental Holistic Integrative Team holds the firm conviction that holistic dental care is a major key to establishing and stabilizing optimal health. The team's approach to complete wellness combines traditional dentistry with naturopathic, homeopathic and alternative modalities. Steven A. Swidler, D.D.S., founded his practice 34 years ago with a three-pronged care approach: eliminating disease and infection, balancing alignment, and implementing biocompatible materials to restore an optimal bite. All aspects of general and cosmetic dentistry



*Steven Swidler, D.D.S*

are expertly engaged against a backdrop of holistic techniques for whole-body health.

Dr. Swidler and his team use integrative and holistic approaches to address their clients' dental concerns. He describes this as "taking patients through the layers of the onion to high-level wellness." The "onion" represents the body's connective tissue system, likened to a "body glove" of layers

and patterns that support your organs, blood vessels and glands. Strain patterns from physical, mental and emotional traumas in ever-deeper layers distort this glove. Postural realignment increases overall function and creates better health, he says.

Medicine Wheel Dental offers a head-to-toe examination. Bite and jaw problems are approached from a balanced alignment perspective, using equal and opposing body/cranial motion. With 40 percent of your body's nerves located between your eyes and your chin, the jaw acts as a radio tuner, affecting the alignment of your neck and even your hips, Dr. Swidler says. Jaw misalignments can lead to back and head pain, even low energy and emotional "short fuses."

Dr. Swidler delves into your dental history, examining years of prior care. Past bodily ills offer clues to current problems. One example is the much-reported adversities resulting from toxic mercury in older silver fillings. His state-of-the-art protocols for identifying and removing these fillings ensure minimal toxic exposure. Another difficulty called "galvanism" could be the culprit, which is the

result of having dissimilar and conflicting metals in your mouth. Another preventive approach used at Medicine Wheel Dental is a digital x-ray machine that limits patients' exposure to one-ninth of regular x-rays.

Dr. Swidler likes to educate the public about what he calls the "dark side" of root canals. "Using alternative materials and treating nerve (pulp) exposure with natural antioxidants, we have been able to save teeth for patients who were told they needed root canals by keeping the tooth alive," he says. "Each tooth is a living system with its own circulation; its health or disease can affect other organs, systems and meridians."

As part of Dr. Swidler's regular care, he offers a Cranial Sacral Osteopathic approach by experienced practitioners. Cranial Sacral work is a gentle, hands-on method of evaluating and enhancing the body's whole system of membranes and cerebrospinal fluids that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord.

Other Medicine Wheel Dental practitioners offer massage and Dr. Swidler has invented a "percussion table" that can be tuned in frequency and amplitude to the body's tissue tension. Using the table's feedback, the doctor can eliminate stress patterns and traumas. These traumas build up in "onion" layers over time and affect the entire alignment of the body. "It is vital before changing a jaw alignment to identify and eliminate the old patterns first, so as to not build on an unaligned body structure," he explains.

"People come to me from all over the country," Dr. Swidler, whose face lights up with intense excitement about the ever-expanding nature of his discoveries. He developed his whole-body dentistry and treatment modalities through 30 years of clinical research into temporal mandibular joint (TMJ) and bite dysfunction. He also studied chiropractic and osteopathic wisdom, which maintain there is a "twin" relationship between the skull base and the sacrum of the lower spine and, indeed, the entire spine. Dr. Swidler takes the concept a step further into what he calls a "triplet" relationship. For example, if the jaw is misaligned, then the cranial base and hips are too. Hips out of position can create tissue restrictions that, in turn, impair blood and lymphatic flow, nerve and muscular function. The result can be sciatic, hip, sacral, back, neck and knee pain.

There's a whole, holistic world of health to discover at Medicine Wheel Dental. Perhaps one professional's endorsement of this practitioner says it best. Dr. Weil, featured elsewhere in this issue, declares, "He's my dentist ... need I say more?"

*Medicine Wheel Dental is located at 4650 W. Jojoba Drive. Call 520-743-7101 for an appointment and visit [medicinewheeldental.com](http://medicinewheeldental.com).*

## Rubin Naiman, Ph.D.

Our final spotlight shines on Rubin A. Naiman, Ph.D., a local psychologist and holistic expert who also enjoys the endorsement of the world-famous Andrew Weil. Just as the relationship between dental health and whole-body health is not generally understood, the importance of sleep is often minimized or hidden under the covers. According to Dr. Weil, “Dr. Rubin Naiman is truly a pioneer in integrative sleep and dream medicine.”

What can a sleep and dream pioneer teach us about ourselves and our mind-body-spirit health? Insight into the mysteries and spiritual nature of night consciousness can lead to healing practices for disturbed sleep, according to Dr. Naiman. We can choose to use our “healing night” as a springboard to a better life.

*Natural Awakenings* recently caught up with Dr. Naiman on a sunny fall morning as he enjoyed a healthful breakfast at a local restaurant. He looked, as expected, extremely well-rested and chipper, eager to share his sleep and dream insights. “We unthinkingly carry our waking-world consciousness into night. It’s like trying to understand darkness by using a flashlight,” says Dr. Naiman. It is a profoundly mistaken notion to view sleep as merely the absence of waking. “Deep sleep is a kind of serenity,” he says, noting it also forms the basis for our waking consciousness.

Sleep research is not new, Dr. Naiman explains. It has, however, nearly always served the waking world – a view that makes sleep a slave to waking life. Dr. Naiman’s new approach is to view sleeping and dreaming as a direct experience and perception of our deeper self, and so they deserve more attention and care if we want to be “practically conscious.”

Dr. Naiman is the author of *Healing Night: The Science and Spirit of Sleeping, Dreaming, and Awakening*, which discusses “restoring a sense of sacredness to our nights and night consciousness.” As our nights have become eroded, sleep disorders have risen up to haunt us. Sleep disorders are a global health problem in industrialized nations, affecting everyone’s health, welfare and safety, even consciousness itself, Dr. Naiman explains. In America, 70 million adults are insomniacs; another 18 million suffer from apnea, meaning at least 88 million Americans are not getting restful, healing sleep.

The modern, inadequate answer, Dr. Naiman says, is to treat the body as a machine to be switched on and off, leading to a massive prescription medicine industry of pharmaceuticals that conk us out and then artificially blast us back into so-called consciousness, which is often no



Rubin Naiman, Ph.D.

more than being on “auto-pilot.” According to Dr. Naiman, we then seek to get back our pep through counterfeit energies like caffeine and sugar, prescription drugs, or illegal fixes like uppers and cocaine.

Dr. Naiman suggests that contemporary sleep science can take us only so far and, as a pioneer in his field, he recommends an integrative approach that

recognizes the connection among sleeping, dreaming and awakening. To that end, he invites us to heal our relationship with sleep and discover that night offers healing on more than just a physical level.

Dr. Naiman’s consulting practice occupies about one-quarter of his time. He aids clients, half of whom come from out of town, who suffer from narcolepsy, intractable insomnia, sleep apnea, and those who seek his expertise in dream work and consciousness-shifting. He provides national and international consultation, training and lectures. Dr. Naiman is a clinical assistant professor of medicine at the UA’s Center for Integrative Medicine, where he works with Dr. Weil and leads sleep-medicine “intensives” for doctors from around the world doing fellowships in Integrative Medicine. He is co-authoring a second book, *The Healing Sleep Handbook*, a guide for psychotherapists with a sleep-medicine specialist from Johns Hopkins University. Several audio books are in progress with Sounds True. Another new project can be found at [sleepadvisor.com](http://sleepadvisor.com), which offers a free analysis of major sleep disorders.

Visit at [drnaiman.com](http://drnaiman.com).

We hope this inside look at a naturopath, a holistic dentist and a sleep doctor has given you a wealth of information to get wrapped up in, chew on, or even dream about. If your health needs are not being met through allopathic medicine channels, *Natural Awakenings* hopes you will seek out the care you deserve from the many alternative-health practitioners our city offers.

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