

Why symptoms come back

What may be keeping your symptoms going,
and where to start looking

INCLUDES YOUR TWO WEEK NOTICE LOG
AND EIGHT QUESTIONS TO SIT WITH

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Before you read

This book shares general information and what I've observed in clinic. It isn't a diagnosis or a treatment plan, and it's no substitute for care matched to you. I'm a holistic and natural health practitioner, and I don't diagnose.

If symptoms persist, talk to your health professional, or speak to me.

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A note from me

One question comes up in clinic more than any other: why has this come back?

Someone has had a good run. The headaches eased, or the sleep improved, or the skin settled. Then a few weeks later, there it is again.

Sometimes the remedy, or the approach, simply wasn't the right one. Often, though, something in the person's life is keeping the symptom going. Homeopaths have a name for that: an obstacle to cure.

I've worked as a private investigator for thirty years. The job is to listen closely, put events in order and keep what I see separate from what I assume. When homeopathy became part of my working life, I found myself asking the same kind of questions, only about different things.

I wrote this book so you can start looking for your own obstacles at home. You don't need to know anything about homeopathy to use it. You need some curiosity about your own patterns, a pen, and a little honesty with yourself. The last one is usually the hardest.

Van Seng

What an obstacle to cure is

Samuel Hahnemann, who founded homeopathy, wrote that a practitioner needs to know what stands in the way of recovery and how to remove it. More than two hundred years later, homeopaths still use his term for it: obstacles to cure.

An obstacle to cure is anything in your life that keeps a symptom going, or keeps bringing it back. It can be physical, like a food that doesn't agree with you or a bedroom that never gets properly dark. It can be emotional, like a conversation you're still replaying at bedtime. Very often it's something so ordinary that nobody thinks to mention it.

Ask what's in the way, not only what to take.

A remedy or a change in diet can ease a symptom for a while. If whatever was keeping it going is still in place, the symptom tends to return. That's often when people decide the remedy has stopped working, when the real question is what's still standing in the way.

Where I look

When a symptom keeps returning, I go through a person's history the way I go through a case file: in order, and without skipping the parts that seem unimportant. The obstacle is rarely where the person expected it to be. Here's where I look, so you can look too.

Your daily rhythm

Start with the plain things. What time do you eat, sleep and wake? How much coffee, and when? Has something dropped out of your week, such as an evening walk that stopped when your roster changed, or a swim you gave up over winter?

Changes like these happen gradually, which is why they're easy to miss. A three o'clock coffee looks harmless until you notice your sleep went downhill the same month it started.

Food, digestion and minerals

How you digest matters as much as what's on your plate. A food you eat every day can be the one that doesn't suit you, simply because you've never gone without it long enough to notice. Bloating, reflux, irregular bowels and cravings after meals are all worth writing down.

Minerals are another layer. Stress, diet and your surroundings can all affect your mineral balance. Hair tissue mineral analysis is one of the ways I look at this in clinic, as another view alongside what you eat.

Your mouth

The mouth is part of the body, though most of us treat it as a separate department. It's also where digestion begins, and your gums can reflect how well you're nourished as much as how well you brush.

Research has linked gum disease with other conditions, including diabetes and heart disease. That's an association, not proof that one causes the other, but it's one reason I ask.

Worth writing down: gums that bleed or recede, a bad taste that won't go, jaw pain or clicking, grinding at night, and teeth that have needed a lot of work. Ask your dentist for a list of the major work you've had and roughly when, then put those dates next to the dates your symptoms started or changed.

I'm not a dentist, and I won't tell you to change your dental work. I ask about the mouth because it's the part of the history people most often leave out.

Where you live and sleep

Your surroundings work on you day and night. Think about damp or mould, a bedroom that's too bright or too noisy, trucks going past the window before dawn, or a phone charging beside your pillow. Start with the place you spend the most hours, which for most of us is the bed.

Then think back to when the symptom started. Had anything changed where you live or work around that time, such as a move, a renovation, new carpet or a different office? People rarely connect the two unless they write the dates side by side.

Stress and your nervous system

Your nervous system influences digestion, sleep, hormones, pain and how quickly you recover. When it's stuck on alert, the body moves repair further down its list.

Stress isn't always obvious. Plenty of people under real strain describe themselves as fine, because they've been coping for so long that coping feels normal. A clenched jaw, shallow breathing and not being able to sit through a film without picking up your phone can all be worth noting.

What you're still carrying

Some obstacles aren't physical at all. It might be a conversation you keep replaying, resentment toward someone you haven't spoken to in years, grief that never had room, or a belief you picked up early, such as "I have to keep everyone happy" or "if I stop, it all falls apart".

These can sit in the background for a long time. Some patterns seem to run in families, where the same worry or the same way of coping turns up in a parent and a grandparent.

Timing is often the clue here. Did the symptom start, or get worse, around a loss, a falling out or a big change? Write the two dates down next to each other and see what you notice.

What a log can show

Here's an example I've made up to show how this works. It isn't a client's story.

Someone's headaches had settled for a while, then came back. Here are a few lines from their first week:

Day	Better, worse or the same?	What was different?
Mon	Worse	Office day. Long meeting with my manager. On my laptop until 11pm.
Tue	Same	Worked from home. Skipped lunch.
Wed	Better	Worked from home. Walked at lunch.
Thu	Worse	Office day. Same meeting again.
Sat	Better	Beach with friends. Didn't open the laptop.

No single line says much. Read together, the worse days fall on office days and that one meeting, and the better days on time outside. It doesn't prove what's behind the headaches, but it's a far more useful question to take to a practitioner than "why have they come back?"

Your two week notice log

For the next two weeks, write a few lines each day. Note whether your symptom was better, worse or the same, and what was different about that day, even if it seems too small to matter. If it changes more than once in a day, write each one down. Patterns often only show themselves on paper.

Days 1 to 5

Day	Better, worse or the same?	What was different? Food, sleep, people, places, weather, mood
Day 1 Date		
Day 2 Date		
Day 3 Date		
Day 4 Date		
Day 5 Date		

Days 6 to 10

Day	Better, worse or the same?	What was different? Food, sleep, people, places, weather, mood
Day 6 Date		
Day 7 Date		
Day 8 Date		
Day 9 Date		
Day 10 Date		

Days 11 to 14

Day	Better, worse or the same?	What was different? Food, sleep, people, places, weather, mood
Day 11 Date		
Day 12 Date		
Day 13 Date		
Day 14 Date		

Looking back

Read your two weeks from start to finish. What did the better days have in common? And the worse days?

Questions to sit with

Take these slowly. Some will mean nothing to you, and one might stop you for a while. That's the one to write about.

1. When did this first start? What else was happening in your life in the six months before?
2. When is it better, and when is it worse? Think about time of day, weather, food, people and places.
3. What were you doing the last time you felt really well?
4. What would change in your days if this went away for good?
5. What has this symptom made you stop doing, or start doing?
6. Is there someone or something you're still carrying? When did you last talk about it with anyone?
7. Where are you holding yourself to someone else's standard?
8. What do you fear would happen if you stopped holding it all together?

When you'd like another pair of eyes

Looking for obstacles at home is a good start, and some people find one or two on their own. Others find the list gets long, or that the obstacle is hard to see from the inside. That's normal. Spotting someone else's patterns is far easier than spotting your own.

If you'd like to go further, a Whole Health Review brings your symptoms, health history, treatments and significant life experiences into one chronological picture, so you can see the turning points and where to begin.

Not sure where to start? Book a free 15 minute suitability call. Tell me what's going on, and we'll see whether my way of working suits you.

I see clients in person in south east Melbourne, and online by Zoom anywhere in the world.

Book your free call at thenaturalhealthoption.com.au/book

Bring your notice log to the call. It helps more than you'd think.



Van Seng

Homeopath | Founder, The Natural Health Option

I've worked as a private investigator for thirty years, and I bring the same habits of listening and putting events in order to every client I see. Energy work has been part of my life for more than thirty two years, and homeopathy for ten.

Alongside homeopathy, I work with hair tissue mineral analysis, belief work, emotional release and values work. I look at four pillars together: physical, emotional, spiritual and environmental, because I rarely see them working separately.

You're perfectly imperfect.

I say this to every client because I believe it. Once you understand why things happened in your life, you start to see how all of it has shaped who you are today.

You're perfectly imperfect.

Ready to talk it through?
Book a free 15 minute suitability call

Scan or tap to book

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