A great many people have heard of Rescue Remedy®, which is used by all sorts of people to cope with crises and everyday emergencies: Princess Anne and Elizabeth Hurley are two of its better-known users. But how many know about the 38 individual flower remedies that are part of the same system of medicine, a system unusual in that it is aimed at treating the emotions rather than their physical manifestations?

Dr. Edward Bach, MB, BS, MRCS, LRCP, DPH, was a well-known bacteriologist, pathologist and homeopath whose career took him from University College Hospital to the London Homoeopathic Hospital and a successful Harley Street practice. His orthodox researches culminated in a series of oral vaccines that are still known as the seven Bach nosodes, but even though this work received great acclaim Bach himself was not satisfied. He wanted to replace the vaccines with plant material which he felt would be more effective. To this end he began experimenting in 1928 with medicines made from flowers.

Bach had always been more interested in the people suffering disease than in the diseases themselves - a fact that made him unusual at that time. But his work with the flower remedies convinced him that true health could only be maintained by treating the individual personality instead of concentrating exclusively on the diseases of the body. He found that by selecting flower remedies according to the personality and emotional states of individuals he was able to resolve these imbalances, and that well-balanced people got better physically because their bodies were quite literally free to heal themselves.

By the time he died in 1936 Dr. Bach had discovered the 38 remedies that were needed to treat every possible emotional state, with each individual remedy being aimed at a particular emotion or characteristic. Sometimes people find it strange that only 38 can deal with everything, but in fact used in combination over 292 million different mental states are covered by these 38 "primary" remedies, which are:

- Agrimony for people who put a brave face on their troubles
- Aspen for people who are anxious or afraid but don't know why
- Beech for people who are intolerant and critical of others.
- Centaury for people who allow others to impose on them
- Cerato for people who doubt their own judgment
- Cherry Plum for uncontrolled, irrational thoughts and the fear of doing something awful
- Chestnut Bud for people who repeat mistakes and don't learn from experience
- Chicory for over-possessive, selfish people who cling to their loved ones
- Clematis for day-dreamers
- Crab Apple for those who dislike something about the way they look and as a general cleanser
- Elm for responsible, capable people who in a crisis doubt their ability to cope
- Gentian for people disheartened when something goes wrong
- Gorse for people who have lost hope, often without cause
- Heather for talkative types who are obsessed with their own problems
- Holly for negative feelings of hatred, envy, jealousy and suspicion
- Honeysuckle for people who live in the past
- Impatiens for patients of irritation and irritation at other people's slownessness
- Larch for fear of failure and lack of confidence
- Mimulus for people who are afraid of something real that they can name
- Mustard for gloom and depression with no known cause
- Oak for strong, indefatigable people who can over-extend themselves by trying too hard
- Olive for people physically drained by exertion or illness
- Pine for those who blame themselves when things go wrong
- Red Chestnut for excessive worry about the welfare of loved ones
- Rock Rose for extreme fright and terror
- Rock Water for people whose self-discipline and high standards are carried to excess
- Scireranthus for people who find it hard to choose between possible courses of action
- Star of Bethlehem for sudden frights and shock
- Sweet Chestnut for utter despair and anguish
- Vervain for enthusiastic people who are always on the go
- Vine for domineering people
- Walnut to help protect against outside influences and the effects of change
- Water Violet for private, reserved people who can appear proud and arrogant
- White Chestnut for persistent worrying thoughts
- Wild Oat for people unable to find a direction for their lives
- Wild Rose for people who resign themselves without complaint or effort to everything life throws at them
- Willow for people who are full of self-pity, resentment and bitterness

When using the Bach Flower Remedies it is essential to ignore as far as possible any physical symptoms or disease. This can be a hard to do, but the physical side of disease can of course be treated using any other appropriate system of healing, whether orthodox or complementary. The Bach Flower Remedies themselves are selected according to the personality of the person being treated. For example, a kind gentle person who found it hard to say ‘no’ to other people would be given Centaury, while someone who always tries to laugh things off even when he is undergoing torture inside would need Agrimony. In addition, the current mental state is taken into account so that someone who was worrying all the time would need White Chestnut while someone who was feeling a bit despondent after a setback would be given Gentian.

The effect of the remedies is to transform negative thoughts and behavior into positive ones. They do not of course alter the personality or bring instant nirvana or bring back your past lives - instead they bring you gently back to yourself so that you can go on learning from the life that you are living now. So taking Centaury would not turn a kind person into a bossy tyrant; she would still be gentle and kind; but in addition she would be better able to draw the line and as a result wouldn’t suffer from exploitation by more ruthless characters. And the White Chestnut worrier would be able to think more constructively about problems instead of circling endlessly around them and never reaching a rational conclusion.
Dr Bach once gave nine remedies to one of his patients at a single time, but in practice it is possible in almost all cases to limit the number given to six or seven. There are two main ways to take them. One is to put two drops of each selected remedy into a glass of water and sip from this at least four times a day - more if necessary - or until the problem has passed. Alternatively the two drops can be put into a clean empty 30ml dropper bottle which is then topped up with mineral water. From this bottle - known as a treatment bottle - four drops are taken four times a day. Kept in the fridge and used regularly a treatment bottle will last up to three weeks.

The treatment bottle dose is the minimum needed for the remedies to work effectively. You can take them more frequently for moments of crisis, because they are completely safe: it is impossible to overdose on them or become addicted or build up tolerance. In addition the Bach Flower Remedies do not affect the actions of other medicines or therapies, nor are they affected by them. This and the fact that they are free of side effects free makes them an ideal complement to other courses of treatment. You should always keep in mind, however, that the remedies are preserved in neat brandy, and for this reason use caution when giving them to recovering alcoholics or people who are allergic to alcohol or object to its use on religious or moral grounds.

As for the Rescue Remedy®, it is a mix of five remedies - Rock Rose for terror, Clematis for light-headedness, Impatiens for agitation, Cherry Plum for loss of self-control and Star of Bethlehem for shock. Dr Bach selected these five remedies because he felt there would be at least something in the mix that would help anyone going through a crisis. To take it you simply put four drops in a glass of water and sip as required - and in an emergency, if there is no water available, you can put the drops straight on the tongue or rub them on the pulse points. Common uses for Rescue Remedy® include calming down the victims of accidents and combating pre-operation nerves. Many midwives use them to help mothers through labour.

Dr Bach’s remedies are still made today at the Bach Centre, Mount Vernon, the cottage in England where he spent the last years of his life. Since 1991 practitioner courses have been run at the Centre and are now run in the USA, Canada, Spain, Holland and Ireland as well. As a result more than 350 trained practitioners are now registered with the Centre.

This information was obtained at the Bach Centre website. Please visit them at http://www.bachcentre.com.

Bach Questionnaire

Instructions- Print this questionnaire out and mark if a statement applies to you, give it a rating, 1 being almost no reaction, to 10 being extreme reaction. Bring it into the office and we will work up a custom blend to help you “reset” your emotional state. You take it until you feel a shift; it might be 3 days or three weeks. Then, if you wish, reprint and redo the questionnaire to see what comes up next, and come in for your next custom blend to deal with the next facet that comes up.

Agrimony

3 I hide my feelings behind a façade of cheerfulness
__ I dislike arguments and often give in to avoid conflict
8 I turn to food, work, alcohol, drugs, etc. when down

Aspen
__ I feel anxious without knowing why
__ I have a secret fear that something bad will happen
__ I wake up feeling anxious

Beech
__ I get annoyed by the habits of others
__ I focus on others’ mistakes
__ I am critical and intolerant

Centaury
__ I often neglect my own needs to please
__ I find it difficult to say “no”
__ I tend to be easily influenced

Cerato
__ I constantly second-guess myself
__ I seek advice, mistrusting my own intuition
__ I often change my mind out of confusion

Cherry Plum
__ I’m afraid I might lose control of myself
__ I have sudden fits of rage
__ I feel like I’m going crazy

Chestnut Bud
__ I make the same mistakes over and over
__ I don’t learn from my experience
__ I keep repeating the same patterns

Chicory
__ I need to be needed and want my loved ones close
__ I feel unloved and unappreciated by my family
__ I easily feel slighted and hurt

Clematis
__ I often feel spacey and absent minded
__ I find myself unable to concentrate for long
__ I get drowsy and sleep more than necessary

Crab Apple
__ I am overly concerned with cleanliness
__ I feel unclean or physically unattractive
__ I tend to obsess over little things
Elm
___I feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities
___I don't cope well under pressure
___I have temporarily lost my self-confidence

Gentian
___I become discouraged with small setbacks
___I am easily disheartened when faced with difficulties
___I am often skeptical and pessimistic

Gorse
___I feel hopeless, and can't see a way out
___I lack faith that things could get better in my life
___I feel sullen and depressed

Heather
___I am obsessed with my own troubles
___I dislike being alone and I like to talk
___I usually bring conversations back to myself

Holly
___I am suspicious of others
___I feel discontented and unhappy
___I am full of jealousy, mistrust, or hate

Honeysuckle
___I'm often homesick for the "way it was"
___I think more about the past than the present
___I often think about what might have been

Hornbeam
___I often feel too tired to face the day ahead
___I feel mentally exhausted
___I tend to put things off

Impatients
___I find it hard to wait for things
___I am impatient and irritable
___I prefer to work alone

Larch
___I lack self-confidence
___I feel inferior and often become discouraged
___I never expect anything but failure

Mimus
___I am afraid of things such as spiders, illness, etc.
___I am shy, overly sensitive, and modest
___I get nervous and embarrassed

Mustard
___I get depressed without any reason
___I feel my moods swinging back and forth
___I get gloomy feelings that come and go

Oak
___I tend to overwork and keep on in spite of exhaustion
___I have a strong sense of duty and never give up
___I neglect my own needs in order to complete a task

Olive
___I feel completely exhausted, physically and/ or mentally
___I am totally drained of all energy with no reserves left
___I have just been through a long period of illness or stress

Pine
___I feel unworthy and inferior
___I often feel guilty
___I blame myself for everything that goes wrong

Red Chestnut
___I am overly concerned and worried about my loved ones
___I am distressed and disturbed by other people's problems
___I worry that harm may come to those I love

Rock Rose
___I sometimes feel terror and panic
___I become helpless and frozen when afraid
___I suffer from nightmares

Rock Water
___I set high standards for myself
___I am strict with my health, work &/or spiritual discipline
___I am very self-disciplined, always striving for perfection

Scleranthus
___I find it difficult to make decisions
___I often change my opinions
___I have intense mood swings

Star of Bethlehem
___I feel devastated due to a recent shock
___I am withdrawn due to traumatic events in my life
___I have never recovered from loss or fright

Sweet Chestnut
___I feel extreme mental or emotional heartache
___I have reached the limits of my endurance
___I am in complete despair, all hope gone

Vervain
___I get high-strung and very intense
___I try to convince others of my way of thinking
___I am sensitive to injustice, almost fanatical

Vine
___I tend to take charge of projects, situations, etc.
___I consider myself a natural leader
___I am strong-willed, ambitious and often bossy

Walnut
___I am experiencing change in my life--a move, new job, etc.
___I get drained by people or situations
___I want to be free to follow my own ambitions

Water Violet
___I give the impression that I'm aloof
___I prefer to be alone when overwhelmed
___I often don't connect with people

White Chestnut
___I am constantly thinking unwanted thoughts
___I relive unhappy events or arguments over and over again
___I am unable to sleep at times because I can't stop thinking

Wild Oat
___I can't find my path in life
___I am drifting in life and lack direction
___I am ambitious but don't know what to do

Wild Rose
___I am apathetic and resigned to whatever happens
___I have the attitude, "It doesn't matter anyhow"
___I feel no joy in life

Willow
___I feel resentful and bitter
___I have difficulty forgiving and forgetting
___I think life is unfair and have a "Poor me attitude"

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