

Ed Griffin talks about the politics of health - video transcription by Tracy Kolenchuk, Oct 8, 2011

I became involved in the health issues mainly because of a close friend of mine. Dr John Richardson was an MD, practicing general medicine up in the San Francisco area. And one day he told me that he was having trouble with the medical authorities because he was using a substance in the treatment of cancer, which was not approved by the AMA or the FDA in this case.

And even though he was having marvellous results with it, better results than anything he had ever tried in his practice, they had told him, in effect, to stop using it or he would lose his license. He had a terrible dilemma, because, his Hippocratic oath was to save lives. That was his first obligation. And to preserve his license seemed to be secondary to him. He was a very principled man.

So I said to John "Well look, my business is communication. So, let me dig into this. Give me your papers, give me your notes and educate me a little bit, and I'll produce a little documentary film. And we'll explain the truth and then the opposition will go away when they understand what the truth really is.

Well, that's how naive I really was, I had no idea how much voltage was in the wire I was about to grab.

In this field in particular, the science of cancer therapy, wasn't nearly as complicated as the politics of cancer. It wasn't an issue of whether something was effective. It didn't matter whether it worked. It didn't matter if you were saving lives. The important thing was 'was it approved'. Did it go through the political process? And then to find out that the political process is dependant largely on the economical process, who is involved, who is making a buck on this, who is in control of the industry.

And WOW, I had no idea what I was getting into.

I can speak of the American medical profession. It was captured. It was totally captured, in 1910, by the pharmaceutical industry. From that point forward, the doctors of America were trained, in how to prescribe drugs.

Who was paying the bill? Pharmaceutical companies. And so therefore the curricula of the great medical centres, where the doctors get their training, has always been skewed in the direction of drugs and drug therapy.

Prior to 1910, the condition of medical excellence, if you want to call it that, of medical professionalism, in the United States was at a very low level. In those days it would be possible to get a medical diploma

by mail. And just about anybody who really wanted to could hang out the shingle and say "I am a Doctor", and could treat people. There was a lot of quackery out there. I might say parenthetically however, there is a lot of quackery out there today, and some of them have the MD degrees. But nevertheless, let's just take it straight - you know. There was quackery. And this was certainly not anything to be defended. There was a low level of medical knowledge.

So, everyone knew this. Or a lot of people knew this in congress anyway, and there was a lot of pressure, political pressure, for medical reform in America. But nobody wanted to fund it; I mean medical reform, or whatever that means - you know that somehow it means money. If you are going to reform something, you've got to finance the reform.

Well it just so happened that the people who were the most heavily invested in the pharmaceutical industry, people like: the Carnegies and the Rockefellers, had tax exempt foundations that were practicing, what I call in my book, efficiency in philanthropy. It's not really what I called it, I borrowed that phrase from one of the original designers of philanthropy in those days. His name was Ivy Lee and his trade was picked up by a fellow by the name of Fred Gates. And these people were like public relations experts, and they were hired by the tycoons of the period, like Carnegie and George Pillsbury and John D. Rockefeller to improve their public images. And so people like Ivy Lee and Fred Gates came up with, what they called 'efficiency in philanthropy'. And their formula was, ok, here's what you do.

You give away large amounts of money. You've got plenty of that, so if you give away a million or two million, you hardly notice it. But to the average person, it's a huge donation. So you get a lot of publicity as a great philanthropist. But don't just give it away, give it away in a certain fashion - so that it brings money back to you. That's what the efficiency formula was all about. And what they would normally do, I'm digressing for a moment here, but it's interesting I think, it's part of the history. This was the origin of the matching funds formula. They used to just give away the money, but then Fred Gates said 'No, no, don't just give it away. Give away half of it. Get the community involved. Tell them that, you will match, dollar for dollar, every dollar that they can raise from the community - you will put a dollar in. Now that way, you still get your name on the top of the Library door, or the Hospital door - it's still your project. And you get all the publicity for it. Not only that, you get the community involved. And they are out there ringing door bells, and doing mailings, and everybody feels that they are part of your project. And they feel they are your partner. And they have a great feeling of camaraderie with you.'" and on and on and on...

And this is a business you see. Raising money is a business. And this all originated in those days. So, the formula for efficiency in philanthropy was applied to 'taking over the medical schools. All they had to do was to finance a great study, to show how bad medical education was in America, which was easy to do, because it was in bad shape. So they hired a fellow by the name of Abraham Flexner. And he was working at the time for the Carnegie foundation. He travelled around America and got the data together, and he published what was known as the Flexner Report. You'll find this in any of the textbooks of the period about the development of medical education. The Flexner Report said *surprise* medical education is a low state and needed to be reformed.

Well, having delivered the Flexner Report in the academic community and the halls of congress, now the great philanthropists came forward and offered money to reform medical education in America. Demonstrate the need, then offer the solution. So they did. They offered millions and millions of dollars to the medical schools in America. There were dozens of them. that would accept the money, with the strings attached, that they have some voice in how the universities and medical schools would then contour the curricula for medical education.

And of course, the universities and medical schools that accepted the money are the ones that we have today as the great leaders in medical education. They had the money. They were able to build buildings, and hire teachers with great credentials, and bring in equipment for the laboratories and all of that. The ones that rejected the money have disappeared. You don't hear about them any more - they're gone.

The pharmaceutical industries, indirectly, thru the tax exempt foundations, which were mutually controlled by the same financiers, were able to capture control of the medical schools. In every case, the schools that took the money, also took with the money, people - who were put on the boards of directors of the universities and the medical schools. These were Abraham Flexner and his brother Dr. Simon Flexner, and a certain group, there were about 5 of them altogether. Three of them always showed up in the same positions with all of the medical schools. And they saw to it that with the money, came the control. And with the control came a contouring of the curriculum, so that now, from that day forward, all of the doctors, would learn about drugs, drugs and more drugs. And that is how it came to pass.

One of the most perplexing questions that people have when they find out for the first time, that there are therapies that are indeed very effective. And they find out that they are not available, they are illegal as a matter of fact. The question is why? If these things really work, why doesn't my doctor know about them? Or if he does know about them, why cannot he get them, why cannot I get them? The answer to that question is very simple, and very logical when you think about it. We have accepted the idea that it is the function of government to protect us. This is kind of a mindset that has been gradually growing among western civilizations for perhaps the last century. That people are not really responsible for themselves. That it's the governments role to take care of them.

In that context, we have the thought that the government agencies in the United States it's the Food and Drug Administration, the FDA, it's their job to take care of us in this field of medicine. They're supposed to tell us whether this is good, or acceptable, or whether it's quackery, or whether we're allowed to have it. We're like little children, and we look to the government to tell us. And we allowed the governments to have the power, the legal authority, to control the field of medicine, and to determine, at that high level, whether or not a therapy can be allowed. And the assumption is that these are all good people, running these organizations, and they have no hidden agendas, they're not

subject to financial flattery or anything like that. They're all good people and great scientists. And so we can trust them.

This process of getting through all the way through these tests (*to approve a therapy*) in today's terms, never goes less than 20 million dollars. And in many cases it will cost you over 100 million and in some cases 200 million to go through that process. Now who can afford 200 million dollars? If you were to discover something that was growing in your back yard, and you said "This stuff really works, I don't know why it works, but look - its curing cancer." and you tried to give it to your neighbour - you would go to jail. Because, you see, you are prescribing or giving, administering, and unapproved substance. So you say 'well, I'll get it approved'. No, you're not going to get it approved, unless you have 20 million dollars that you are ready to just spend on the project.

That means that, automatically, the only companies, the only people, the only entities in the world that can ever get an approved substance, are those that have the 20 million dollars to spend. Or 200 million dollars, depending on where you are in the spectrum. That means the large pharmaceutical companies. So these laws have effectively blocked everybody out of the pattern, except the very large, well funded, pharmaceutical companies. They now have a monopoly on all of these drugs for this very reason. Supposedly because it's to protect us. But really it's to protect the large pharmaceutical companies. Beyond that, no large pharmaceutical company is going to take your weed - that you found in your back yard and have it tested because if they did so, they couldn't patent it. Anything that grows in nature, anything that is found naturally, cannot be patented. It has to be a man made concoction before it can be patented. So why would even a large pharmaceutical company spend the 200 million dollars, or whatever it takes, to prove that something growing in everyone's backyard is effective, when they couldn't patent it - and they would never get their money back?

That is the reason, that anything, found in nature, regardless of how effective it may be, will never be patented, and therefore it will never be approved. And therefore it will always be on that list. That horrible list they tell us 'this is an unapproved cancer therapy'.