

An Interview with Dr. Gwen Choi: Part One

Written by Suttty Suddeth
Wednesday, 24 July 2019 06:21 -



In the spirit of Spirituality, I am pleased, honored, and grateful to welcome special Suddeth family friend and neighbor, Dr. Gwen Choi, M.D. Our goal at Wholly Holistics is, and always has been, to welcome various modalities of healing and points of view rather than to woo you with our woo woo. I can think of no better person and healer than Dr. Gwen to bridge the gap that sometimes exists between medicine and the holistic world. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed...

1. Q. Dr. Gwen, you are unique in that before you were a people surgeon, you were a veterinarian. You once told me that a prosthetic testicle for a dog was \$7. The same product is also used in humans, but costs \$7,000. Any other revelations the average person, or even surgeon, may find interesting?

2.

A. Medical insurance in the human world has led to grossly inflated charges and costs as well as inequities in charges for those with insurance and those without. Pet insurance is available and pet owners who have had emergencies or prolonged treatments seem to be very happy with it.

3.

Q. You and your sisters are talented artists in addition to your other accomplishments. Can you speak to the artistic side of being a healer?

4.

A. Having an appreciation for art helps connect with patients on other levels when getting to know them. For instance, I recently saw a patient everyone referred to as a "crabby old lady." In talking to her I found out she was an accomplished painter and we shared a great conversation about her work and talents. I think we need to see our patients as people, not just a problem in a bed or in the office. Being artistic also means I am meticulous with my skin closures so any scarring my patients may have is minimized.

5.

Q. What are your views on things unseen, on faith, religion, and/or spirituality in medicine? What lines, if any, do you draw from dogma directly to sexual dysfunction?

6.

A. Faith, religion and spirituality all have very important places in medicine. Doctors are

technicians and usually have a lot of insight and knowledge about disease but there is so much that cannot be explained by science alone. The importance of faith, hope and trust in a higher power or being can dramatically alter patient outcomes. I always offer my patients support for these things (but not weird herbal remedies or things I know to be unsound or dangerous). I do try to be open and honest with my patients and share what I know medically with them, including things like poor prognosis or an inability to cure something. One of the things I tell my patients who are faced with difficult situations or choices is, "We never give up hope. We may change what we hope for, but we never give up hope." It usually helps when patients feel we are a team and are working together to help them with their problem.

As far as dogma to sexual dysfunction that is an entire discussion of its own. When I have a patient who wants to discuss their sexual dysfunction I try to get as much history about their beliefs and upbringing as possible. If I determine that the cause of their dysfunction may not be organic after doing my work up, I have referred patients to psychotherapists or sex therapists. I think those professionals are much better equipped to handle that aspect of sexual dysfunction.

1. Q. That said, you've experienced psychic surgery and emotional alchemy in a couple of my sessions. Any suggestions or insights, besides not burping so much (seriously, I know it's gross, but I almost always burp when a client is getting to a release or insight), into how energy work can complement your side of the healing coin?

2.

A. In select patients, energy work can be an extremely powerful tool for managing pain and accepting the healing process. Loss of health or function is a devastating thing, especially for men, and being sick or needing medical help can result in feelings of anger and helplessness from the perceived loss of control they experience. I ask my patients what things have helped them in the past and if they seem open or have had a good experience with energy work I like to suggest it as an adjunct to their medical treatment.

3.

Q. 'Botched' is a popular TV show. Have you ever had a patient botched by a fellow doctor that you had to put back together again?

A. Yes, but often the problem isn't so much a botched operation or diagnosis but a failure of adequate explanation on the part of the doctor or inadequate understanding on the part of the patient. Communication is the key to patient satisfaction, and careful explanations with patient feedback demonstrating understanding is essential. If we make a mistake or fail, we as physicians must always be open and forthright with the patient and do everything we can to help solve the problem. You would be surprised how many patients I have heard say, "I wouldn't have sued him if he had said, 'I'm sorry.'" People aren't always looking for a big check if something goes wrong. They all want to be heard, they want empathy and they want to know you are going to help them and not abandon them if the outcome isn't what anyone expected.

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Read Part Two of this interview in my next column.