# Holistic Turnaround

Fred Bingham dares convention and wins

April 1, 1994 By Karen Ocamb

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Fred Bingham looks at himself holistically, “like a garden.” Not surprising for a professional horticulturist who’s had AIDS since 1981. But what has grabbed the attention of AIDS specialists at New York City’s St. Vincent’s Hospital is how Bingham’s understanding of herbs, experimenting with organic materials and creating strange new gardens helped reverse his AIDS diagnosis. “Technically, I’m in remission,” he now says.

Bingham says that for about a year-and-a-half he’s been “comfortable and stable” with a T-cell count of around 900. But, like the delicate intricacies of a Japanese garden, he believes the health of his body is inexorably intertwined and balanced with his mental, emotional and spiritual health as well -- a philosophy increasingly backed up by scientific evidence.

In 1988, Bingham says that he had “dried out enough to think a little clearly.” He curbed his alcohol intake and recreational drug use and started “nutritional intervention.” And he studied everything he could find on AIDS. He discovered that all PWAs have multiple deficiencies of critical nutrients and many have high levels of “inflammatory producing free radicals,” unstable molecules that cause oxidation and harm intact cells.

Under the care of a sympathetic physician, Bingham started experimenting with herbs, an alcohol repulser called antibuse and taking massive amounts of anti-oxidants to restore the sulfur-containing amino acids (especially glutathione which regulates the cell’s life cycle).

Then, in late 1989, Bingham resumed taking all alcohol and drugs and went off his protocol. For nearly a month he experienced enormous stress and the virtual collapse of his immune system. He had severe thrush, severe neuropathy, lost 35 pounds in three weeks and was diagnosed with dementia. He wound up in the hospital with a T-cell count of 39.

“I had really bad peripheral neuropathy,” Bingham recalls. “It was spreading into my hands and face. And like a good queen I said, ’No, not my face! Give me AZT.’” He took AZT for about three months until forced off by its toxicity. He started developing his own long-term intervention to manage his chronic illness.

“The one-drug, one-bug, one-million-dollar mentality is really not serving people with HIV and AIDS

very well," says Bingham. "It's really very complicated."

In the summer of 1992, Bingham founded the non-profit Direct AIDS Alternative Information Resources (DAAIR) "to promote self-empowered healing from AIDS" through a multifactoral approach and the use of natural therapies and minimally toxic drugs. Completely member-run and all-volunteer, DAAIR strives to help PWAs manage their own disease through a wholesale nutrient buyers' club, a 100-page packet of information, a hot-line, public forums and lobbying before governmental bodies about the need to keep nutrients and dietary supplements safe, available and inexpensive.

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