

David Zigmond: Biography for Centre for Welfare Reform

David Zigmond is a veteran NHS medical practitioner who has, increasingly, devoted himself to repersonalising the NHS. This has been fuelled by his perception of the last three decades of serial reforms and systematisations: each seems to squeeze yet more intelligence, life and humanity from our healthcare interactions – both with colleagues and patients.

David's initial medical training was in the 1960s. His subsequent experiences over the next two decades of working in the NHS were, mostly, benign – akin to being part of a well-functioning *family*: flawed and uneven, but well-motivated, convivial and intelligently flexible.

In the later three decades he has witnessed, and been subject to, a very different regime: one of draconian management systems and policies that extinguish our better relationships, sense and sensibility. Yet all of this must be done – we are told – in the interests of greater efficiency, safety and performance standards. David has, instead, seen the results departing, increasingly, from the mission statements. Many healthcare workers can no longer tolerate their working conditions. So what we have done is replace a well-functioning, good-enough *family* with a fractious, mistrustful fragmented – and so poorly performing – *factory*.

It is such experiences that motivate David to work with others at the *Centre for Welfare Reform*.

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Since initial graduation David has worked mostly in General Practice and Mental Health. From the beginning of his work he has believed that, in our endeavours, human and personal understanding ('art') is quite as important as generic understanding and schematic management ('science') – often more so. Because of this he pursued training and experience not just in physical medicine and psychiatry, but also in psychoanalytic and humanistic psychotherapies. Such eclectic synthesis used to be much more possible and thus commoner. Our systemisation has now extinguished such possibilities. One of his questions is: what kind of 'progress' is this?

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David has worked as a frontline NHS doctor for the better (and worst) part of fifty years. His two main jobs have been as a traditional small practice family doctor and a large hospital psychiatrist and psychotherapist: in all of these he came to see (the now-imperilled) personal continuity of care as vital to much of our best care. Throughout this time he has spent the smaller fraction of his time working as a private psychotherapist.

For many years he has written about his wide-ranging experiences and his ideas of how to make sense of them. This has been contiguous to his teaching of healthcarers and psychotherapists.

Many of his writings can be found via his Home Page and also in his Anthology: *If You Want Good Personal Healthcare – See a Vet. Industrialised humanity: why and how should we care for one another?* New Gnosis Publications, 2015.

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His professional affiliations, of course, reflect his concerns and aspirations. Mostly his active memberships are synergistic with CWR: he is a founder member of the *British Holistic Medical Association* and the *Small Practices Association* (now *Family Doctors Association*). His mounting anxieties about our gathering human dislocations throughout Welfare have led him recently to join *Doctors for the NHS* and now CWR.

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