



KARYN SHANKS MD  
*Heart, Hope, Healing*

# Beware of the Big Lie

BY KARYN SHANKS MD | FEBRUARY 16, 2019



I like simple. And focused. It's easy on my brain. And helps me grasp pieces of more complicated conceptual problems and ideas—like me and what I need to do to heal.

Give me three simple steps and I'm all over it.

But do I fool myself into thinking anything is that simple? Ever?

Those three simple steps get me started. It's what I can focus on today. But we all know, with our mature minds, that it isn't that simple. *We aren't that simple.*

When they tell us we're simple, just three steps away from solving our big problem? It's a big lie.

Let's talk about the big fat lie of reductionism.

**We're seeing a new wave of reductionism.**

Have you noticed the revolution of “experts” in health, business, and everywhere, who promise simple? Who reduce us down to a simple problem with a three-simple-steps solution?

They’ve gotten good at engaging with our simple-seeking brains. And when we’re suffering and searching, our survival focus locks on to their simple ideas and promises. And we buy their stuff.

Like (we’ve heard these all by now, haven’t we?):

- The food plan that will cure us.
- The single miracle nutrient that will save us.
- The super foods that will stop us from aging.
- The five-minute exercise that will give us six-pack abs.
- The four-point plan that will make us rich.
- Or any of the multitude of singular ideas that size us up, reduce us down, and offer three-step strategies to fix us.

This is reductionism. It’s silly. It’s immature. In medicine and business, it’s the attribute of old paradigms we’ve left behind, that failed to connect to the truth of us.

We know we need to be understood as whole, complex, unique, constantly evolving human beings who thrive on more meaningful and sustainable solutions to our problems.

I see well intending, highly trained experts in functional and integrative medicine tout their area of expertise as *the answer* to everyone’s problems: mold toxicity, Lyme disease, mercury toxicity, hypothyroidism, hormone imbalance. With simple solutions: the paleo diet, hormone replacement, nutritional supplements.

These are important concepts which belong in a thorough and thoughtful consideration of our complex problems, but the approach is all wrong. Seeing us as simple. Offering simple solutions. The same old thing.

See, we’re all adults in the room, yes?

We know it’s never that simple. It’s never one thing. Not in our lives. Not in my consultation room.

While we love great ideas and having it broken down into digestible pieces so we can learn it and apply it to our lives, we know we’re complicated, right? The larger trajectory of our healing lives is complicated.

**We want what’s real. We want the truth.**

Those super-niched, savvy experts? They've lost sight of the bigger deeper picture of us. The real us. The messy, not so simple us. Who know the truth when we see it us.

### **Here's what I say to those super-niched experts who think they know us:**

Thank you for understanding that we need fresh, new, simple ideas to consider. That we need a few basic steps to get us started. And a plan for thinking through the next steps, and the next. So we can breathe while expanding our minds and considering the possibilities.

But spare us the promises, the quick fixes, and the dogmatic three step solutions to our problems. Stop looking at us through the highly biased lens of your area of expertise. We know better.

We know your super niched authority is just another form of reductionism, the very thing we've run from in search of a more enlightened healing paradigm.

Unless you can tie your expertise back to the bigger picture of our inherently complex lives, it's just another lie.

### **Simple is a *strategy*.**

That's all. Breaking down ideas and solutions into bite-sized pieces and baby steps helps us engage and utilize our brains to maximum effectiveness.

But we're not simple. We can't lose sight of that.

Let's listen to what speaks to us and add the expert focused ideas and solutions that fit us to our repertoire. But know in our mature minds that we're weaving together *pieces* of truth and knowledge—not the *whole or singular* truth—to become the beautiful, complex, nuanced, ever-evolving people that we are.

Have a Beautiful day, Truth Warriors!

Karyn

p.s. All sustainable healing starts with us and a single foundational ingredient put into action: self-love. Let's take a deeper dive together in my new e-book, [\*\*\*Love—The Nine Domains of Healing: Part Two.\*\*\*](#)

## **KARYN SHANKS MD**

Karyn Shanks, MD, is a physician who lives and practices in Iowa City. Her work is

inspired by the science of Functional Medicine, body-mind principles, and wisdom gleaned from the transformational journeys of thousands of clients over her twenty-five-year career. Her work honors each individual and the power of their stories, their inner wisdom, and innate healing potential. She believes that the bones of healing are in what we do for ourselves. She is the author of *Liftoff*, a manual of energy recovery and healing through essential self-care practices.

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