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The Power of the Mind

By Patricia A. Muehsam, M.D.

Jul 17, 2006

 Special to The [Epoch Times](#)

This four-part series describes how the mind can keep us well or make us sick, and offers tools for harnessing this power.

Part I: What We Can Learn From the Scientists and Mystics

What distinguishes Western allopathic medicine, based on the pharmacological treatment of diagnoses, from all other healing traditions are two key concepts: the separation of mind and body and the notion that nature can be explained materialistically. On the other hand, every non-allopathic healing tradition recognizes the inextricable link between psyche and soma. "Dis-ease" is not limited to the physical body; thoughts and emotions are causative factors. Healing necessitates addressing these elements. Getting well is not just about fixing the physical body.

Thoughts are powerful vibrations that can keep us well or make us sick. Negative thoughts can make us sick and keep us sick. Positive thoughts can heal us and transform our lives. These concepts do not come from the realms of pseudoscience. In fact, there is a tremendous body of scientific research that can support these principles.

Researchers in physics and engineering have been conducting experiments that suggest the profound effects of consciousness on the material world—how our thoughts can affect us [1].

For over 25 years, scientists at Princeton University's Princeton Engineering Anomalies Research (PEAR) Laboratory have demonstrated powerful correlations between human intention and machine behavior. They have shown that untrained individuals can influence the output of random mechanical and electronic number generators, just by thinking in which direction the numbers should go. These effects were found to be independent of space and time. Effects also occurred when the individual was thousands of miles away [2].

These ideas are millennia old and have roots in many of the world's ancient traditions. However, Western allopathic medicine usually ignores these concepts. Most doctors did not study advanced physics in undergraduate or medical school.

These models dramatically influenced our understanding of nature, and physicists became more like philosophers. These new views of nature were parallel to the ancient traditions of other cultures, to the healing traditions of other cultures and to mystical, non-Cartesian views of life.

Homeopathic medicine, a Western traditional medicine with ancient roots, based on the law of similars, treats patients according to their mental, emotional and physical symptoms.

Ancient Chinese medicine and Ayurveda (traditional Indian medicine) draw links between bodily symptoms and emotions. In Chinese medicine, the lung is the repository for grief, the liver for rage, and the kidney for fear. In Ayurveda, the vata dosha (thin body type, light and airy), may yield many types of arthritis and worry, while the pitta dosha (medium build, fire and water elements), ulcers and rage. To even consider a separation between these elements is contrived.

In Part II, the dichotomy between Western allopathic medicine and the concept of the inherent connectedness of mind and body will be elaborated.

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PRAYER has been demonstrated to have a beneficial effect on patients in coronary care units in hospitals. (Chris Hondros/Getty Images)

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The Power of the Mind, Part 2

By Patricia A. Muehsam, M.D.

Jul 24, 2006

 Special to The [Epoch Times](#)

Before the advent of the pharmaceutical empire, with its vast offerings of new fixes for our physical failings, physicians were consummate healers. Voltaire described our role as that of the amuser, to keep the patient amused long enough so that nature could do her healing work. Sir William Osler, considered one of Western allopathic medicine's founding fathers, maintained that it was more important to know the patient that had the disease, than to know what kind of disease the patient had.

However, Western allopathic medicine is not in the business of healing. Rather, it is a disease care system. By its very nature, our Western allopathic medical model makes people sick and keeps them sick. Indeed, its approach to chronic illness cures no one of anything. Pharmaceuticals merely suppress symptoms, interfering with the true and natural healing mechanism of the human organism. Skeptics and those who espouse our dominant biomedical paradigm, relegate inexplicable cures to the realms of placebo or perhaps an initial incorrect diagnosis. In fact, they are ignoring that most powerful mediator of healing: the mind, intention, consciousness.

All these ancient concepts, once lost, are now seeking resurgence with the advent of unhappy patients and truth-seeking scientists. These scientists are the pharmacologists, experimental toxicologists and immunologists doing low-dose research to support the veracity of the homeopathic phenomenon. They are the physicists and engineers mentioned earlier. They are the parapsychologists and psychoneuroimmunologists, lending credence to the concept of mind affecting matter and mind affecting body. They are the open-minded physicians and other researchers conducting research on the power of prayer and on the healer phenomenon.

Some examples of how our minds can affect our health include the following: positive thinking lowered blood sugar levels in diabetics, lessened asthma attacks, reduced colitis symptoms and improved immune function in HIV-infected individuals [1,2]. Not only can our thoughts affect our bodies, but also our thoughts can affect others. Numerous studies have demonstrated the clinical efficacy of prayer, most notably the positive effect of prayer on patients in a coronary care unit [3].

In addition to this concept of the inherent connectedness of mind and body, as suggested by both ancient wisdom and modern science, is the existence of some ineffable source-entity, energy, connectedness which embraces all and affects us all. Healing traditions around the globe draw on this source as a conduit to healing.

While we may delight in acknowledging this ancient wisdom, and be encouraged that the ever-growing field of complementary and alternative medicine has lent support to the idea of mind-body medicine, we are still missing the link. Until we can realize that the mind is more powerful than molecules, than pharmaceuticals, and that we can apply this concept to actually heal our own bodies, we are not realizing the full potential that lies within each of us.

In Parts 3 and 4, techniques for harnessing the powers of our minds, for healing ourselves and even impacting situations and circumstances in our lives will be discussed.

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THE POWER OF PRAYER has been documented in scientific studies. (David McNew/Getty Images)

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The Power of the Mind, Part 3

By Patricia A. Muehsam, M.D.

Jul 31, 2006

 Special to The [Epoch Times](#)

Our thoughts and emotions can get us well and keep us well, or get us sick and keep us sick. Practical tools for harnessing the power of intention.

In Parts 1 and 2, which can be seen here: [The Power of the Mind](#) and [The Power of the Mind, Part 2](#), I discussed how ancient wisdom and modern science describe the inherent link between mind and body, and described scientific research that demonstrates the effect of thoughts and feelings on our physical health. Here, in Part 3, I give practical tools for harnessing the power of intention.

Our thoughts and feelings affect us. They can affect all aspects of our lives: our health, relationships, even finances. What I come across most often in my work is the impact that thoughts and feelings have on health. Negative thoughts and unexpressed feelings can create energy blockages, which become foci for disease.

Our culture doesn't readily support being in touch with our emotions, especially ones that are judged to be negative. Many of us spend our lives not even knowing how we feel, let alone being able to express feelings. Instead, we may medicate ourselves with activity to avoid feeling uncomfortable feelings. Workaholism, food, alcohol, addiction to exercise, dependence on pharmaceuticals and relationships are some of the ways we can avoid knowing our feelings and ourselves.

Feelings are normal and natural. Anger, sadness, fear, whatever you are feeling, is completely normal and natural. It's what we do in response to our natural feeling state that can become harmful to us. Keeping uncomfortable feelings inside can make us sick.

When we learn to feel our feelings, and "just be" with them, rather than keeping them stuck inside our bodies, we can harness the amazing inherent power that each one of us holds.

The following simple writing techniques will help you to get in touch with feelings and transform negative thoughts and uncomfortable feelings.

Get a notebook that can serve as a journal. It helps if you can commit to this daily practice and start your day with it. If your schedule doesn't permit, any time will do. Soon you will miss it when you don't do it! If you can take your journal around with you, you'll find it can be a source of comfort when situations arise that bring up uncomfortable feelings.

1) Stream-of-Consciousness Technique: Write down all your thoughts and feelings, including fears, resentments and anxieties. If you are not certain, then just write that. Even if you are feeling that you don't want to write, write that down! Be "in the moment" with whatever is going on. Do not censor or judge what you are writing. Take your feelings to the limit. For example, if you are worried about money,



GETTING IN TOUCH WITH FEELINGS: Journaling is one way of contacting one's feelings and resolving problems. (Photos.com)

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write why, what might happen♦your innermost and deepest fears. If you are having a hard time with a spouse, significant other, or co-worker, write about this. As you are engaged in this process, your mind will naturally have reflective thoughts in response: Difficult feelings will transit to positive responses. Write these too. If more feelings come up, continue with these until you can write no more.

2) **Non-Dominant-Hand Response Writing:** After you have written your feelings down, write with your non-dominant hand: If you are right-handed, use the left and vice versa. Do not censor, and don't worry what your penmanship looks like. Just let your hand do the writing. Just write whatever comes to mind. See what happens♦you will probably be surprised!

Next week: Part 4 details more practical tools to harness the power of intention.

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The Power of the Mind, Part 4

By Patricia A. Muehsam, M.D.

Aug 07, 2006

 Special to the [Epoch Times](#)

Our thoughts and emotions can get us well and keep us well, or get us sick and keep us sick. Here are additional practical tools for harnessing the power of intention in our lives.

In Parts 1 and 2, I discussed how ancient wisdom and modern science describe the inherent link between mind and body. Part 4 is a continuation of Part 3, in which I gave practical tools for harnessing the power of intention in our lives, for healing and transformation.

In an earlier Series of articles in The Epoch Times, "Food as Medicine," I discussed the importance of wholesome food choices. However, even the purest of foods will not nourish us if negative thoughts and feelings plague us as we eat.

What follows are two additional simple writing techniques to help transform negative thoughts and feelings. The first involves releasing resentments; the second involves the power of affirmations.

Resentments

Resentment keeps us stuck or blocked more than any other emotion. In Chinese medicine, anger is a source of many physical diseases. A specific writing exercise to release resentment is as follows: Make 3 columns on a page. In column 1, write down the names of all the people you have ever felt angry or resentful toward, as far back in your life as you can remember. In addition to people include institutions, organizations and even social injustices that you may feel angry about. In column 2, write down what circumstances made you feel that way. In column 3, write down how this situation made you feel. Be specific: not just angry or resentful, but, for example, not honored, not respected, not taken seriously and so on. In the process of writing, you will discover that these feelings will transit.

Affirmations

In list form, write down all that you dream of and desire. Limit yourself in no way whatsoever. Your present personal, financial, employment, or geographical circumstances are irrelevant. Do not allow any of these situations to limit your creative imagining. Write about your ideal partner, job, home, vacation activity, financial needs. For example, if you dream of a new job, describe your ideal job: what you do, location, co-workers, how much money you make. And, most importantly, write in the present tense, as if you have all these desires now. Imagine how you feel in these circumstances. Write these feelings down.

And finally, if you are without pen and paper, and are feeling stuck in a negative mode of thinking, or feeling uncomfortable feelings (like fear, anxiety, frustration or anger), you can shift these thought/feeling patterns just with your intention to do so, and a simple technique. Imagine the scenarios you wrote about above: your specific dreams and desires. With your eyes closed, slow your breathing down, breathe fully and deeply into your abdomen, and imagine these ideal circumstances. Visualize them if you can, note the feelings you have about them, feel any sensations you may have. Note how the negative feelings have shifted. The point is to turn on positive thoughts, and turn off the negative ones. And remember, you can do this anytime, anywhere.

Dr. Muehsam is a holistic physician practicing in New York City.



SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA: A meditation session in Sydney's Hyde park, 08 February 2005. (Olivier Chouchana/AFP/Getty Images)

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