

THE POWER OF THE MIND

By

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These extracts are taken from his text entitled: 'How to best work in partnership with your Healer'.

Other extracts in the series are:

'How to get the most benefit from a Healing session'

'The importance of correct breathing'

'Visualisations'

Although avoiding the use of esoteric language, the content is only suitable for the recipient of Spiritual Healing who is prepared to play a full role in the healing process and who recognises that ultimately, each of us must accept responsibility for our own physical or mental wellbeing.

Certain references contained in this text apply to other extracts.

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Unfortunately, mainstream medicine has in the past been very reluctant to recognise the vital role that our mind plays in controlling our state of health, and to recognise that Mind Power can effect a chemical reaction. It may seem incredible that medical science has been so slow in accepting that our brain does in fact control our immune system and that it co-ordinates our body's ability to heal itself and to destroy harmful micro organisms.

It is indeed, only in the last thirty years or so, that medical science has begun to carry out serious research to establish how our brain can effect our general wellbeing. Much of the early research came about as a result of Astronauts returning from Space who were discovered as having low blood cell counts. These pioneers of space exploration, who had been trained to the peak of physical fitness in order to meet the strenuous demands of weightlessness in Space, were suffering from stress through working in these abnormal conditions and this was affecting the cells of their immune system. Further tests were carried out on groups of people who were subjected to other stressful situations such as students before and after taking exams and with couples who had marriage difficulties. This involved monitoring the levels of white blood cells - which are the key cells of the bodies defence system against disease. The resulting statistical evidence was overwhelming, that stress does have a dampening effect on the cells of the immune system.

Using electron microscopes and modern sophisticated scanning techniques, Neurologists - that group of medical scientists who study the function, structure and causes of disease of the nervous system, discovered that the nerve cells which are hard wired to the Brain were interacting with the 'Lymphocytes', which are the variety of white blood cell involved with the immune system. This proved that there was a physical link between the brain and the bodies immune system.

When we are subjected to a stressful situation our body is alerted by our brain releasing the hormone 'ACTH' which slows down our immune response. But does the fact that our thoughts can produce tiny changes in the cells of the immune system, prove that they are big enough to affect our health overall? Are these changes biologically significant? Further comprehensive studies carried out in the U.S.A. of people caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's Disease (in other words having to cope daily with a very stressful situation), showed that wounds took 24% longer to heal. Thus, there is strong evidence to suggest that our state of mind can affect our body's efficiency to heal itself.

Modern research shows that the brain has two major pathways by which it communicates and controls the functions of our body. The first are the nerves which are hard wired but the second which has the greater effect on the immune system is by 'messenger' hormones travelling through the Brain and the blood. When activated by stress the Brain intervenes via hormonal pathways. First the 'Hypothalamus', which is a region of the forebrain, transmits electrical and chemical messages to the Pituitary Gland which in turn sends the hormone 'ACTH' to the Adrenal Glands where it stimulates each gland to release over thirty chemical messages.

One of the messages is 'Cortisol'. The increase of Cortisol in the blood does all sorts of incredibly complicated things within the immune system. It results in white cells changing numbers and their formation. It is known through studies done on animals that changing the amount of Cortisol can change an animal that is totally resistant to getting arthritis to one that gets arthritis. Cortisol can have a profound effect on your susceptibility to getting major disease.

Scientists have now shown conclusively that the Mind can turn down the immune system - but can we harness this power? Can we indeed, use our minds to stimulate the body's defences? A German study of Sky Divers showed that Adrenaline - a hormone secreted by the Adrenal gland, increases the activity of natural killer cells - a key part of our natural defence system. But can the mind be stimulated by conditioning to produce a similar immune response? The German study took 48 volunteers who were each given over a four day period, injections of Adrenaline. At the same time they were each given tablets of the sharp fizzy taste of sherbet. Unknown to any of the volunteers, on the fifth day the injection of Adrenaline was replaced with a neutral solution. They were still given the sherbet tablet which had the effect of increasing the activity of the natural white killer cells by almost **double**. Thus, the only conclusion that could be made was that it was possible to increase killer cells by planting a conditioned reflex on the mind.

It is believed that these same killer cells are able to destroy certain types of cancer. It therefore, baits the question - can the mind be programmed or conditioned to help fight cancer? One major NHS hospital in the UK had been using relaxation and imagery techniques to help ease the side effects of chemotherapy in treating cancer (i.e., to ease nausea and vomiting). They discovered that their records collated over several years showed that patients participating in these visualisation exercises had survived longer, although not necessarily causing the cancer to go into remission. Other trials using visualisation techniques have subsequently been carried out aimed specifically at attacking or suppressing the cancer. The results have shown more active killer cells in those patients participating in these imagery techniques which may mean that there is a anti cancer effect.

At last mainstream medicine is beginning to take seriously the effect our minds can have on our immune system and such studies now have the official scientific name of: 'Psychoneuroimmunology'. The consensus of medical opinion still remains that there *is* no evidence that the mind can cure disease but there is at least now general acceptance that the mind may well be able to alter the progression of the disease or your susceptibility to the disease and that in itself may well be extremely important and is well worth further investigation.

I have now given you several examples of medical research that has been carried out by respected medical institutions which have established beyond any reasonable doubt how our thoughts can effect our state of health by causing chemical reactions in our bodies. We now have to address the vital question if these effects can be enhanced by the intervention of Healing using 'Spiritual' energies. Although there is an increasing number of medical doctors

who are recognising the important role that such Healing can play in at least improving the quality of life of their patients, there are still many more who are sceptical as to the merits of Spiritual Healing and dismiss it as being 'all in the mind'. This unfortunately, is usually meant as a disparaging remark. Such medical opinion seems unable to consider any treatment as valid unless it involves actual clinical intervention in the form of drugs or surgery. What I wish to establish very clearly, is that Spiritual Healing is very much about affecting a positive reaction by stimulating our brain to deal with an adverse medical condition.

Most of what we consume through our mouths is processed by our bodies to generate and maintain cells, and to provide the energy we need to carry out our normal bodily functions. The mechanical components which make up our body, be they bone or tissue, are no more than structures of different cells working in harmony with one another through electrical and chemical messages sent out and controlled by the brain. When we are unwell through whatever cause, it is our brain that will be co-ordinating our body's efforts to rectify the adverse situation. It is our brain that determines how to best utilise any remedies we take to augment the healing process, or to ease the symptoms. This includes any medicines prescribed by our doctor. So in reality, describing any treatment as being "all in the mind" is meaningless since ultimately all methods of intervention which are intended to bring about a positive effect to our wellbeing are regulated by our brain. What is contentious, is if methods of bringing about an improvement to our state of health which do not involve the ingestion or absorption of chemical substances, any less valid.

Medical science goes to great lengths when testing the effectiveness of any new drug to eliminate what is termed the 'placebo effect'. In medical terms, a placebo is medicine which is known to be ineffective but which may help to relieve a condition because the patient has 'faith' in its powers. New drugs are tested against placebos in clinical trials. One dictionary describes a placebo as " a medicine to humour the patient". The word 'placebo' comes from the Latin which literally translated means 'I shall please'. Unfortunately, there are those medical scientists and doctors who are inclined to categorise many of the complimentary or alternative health treatments, including 'Spiritual Healing' as being no more than a placebo effect.

When patients report an improvement in their condition, through having tried one of the so called forms of 'non conventional medicine', some doctors are still inclined to want to view the results as unreal, in other words no different than if a patient had been administered a placebo substance. But if the effect is sustained, is it not fair to acknowledge that a physiological change must have taken place, the only difference being that it has been created by a stimuli not requiring the intervention of drugs or surgery?

Because we do not fully understand the mechanism by which an improvement to our health is brought about, does not mean that it is not real and should not be treated with respect. It is too easy to dismiss what we don't comprehend by such expressions as being "all in the mind" or a "placebo effect" instead of acknowledging we have still very little understanding of the cosmic forces around us and how we can effectively use them for our own wellbeing.

Through modern scanning techniques, medical science now asserts that it has located and named most of the component parts of the brain. Neurologists now understand a great deal about what the brain does but still have little knowledge of how it works and how it controls our conscious and unconscious thoughts. Even less is understood of how the brain controls our body's defence against disease or infection or issues the necessary instructions to repair the skeletal or tissue structures of the body. It is for this reason that medical reference sources give so little, if indeed any, explanation of how our brain looks after our physical wellbeing. Drug Companies spend huge sums of money in researching the effects of various combinations of chemical substances by methods which amount to no more than 'trial and error'. This is because they do not possess even a rudimentary understanding of how the brain creates and utilises the immensely complicated chemical substances which maintain our physical existence.

Most of our very limited understanding of how our brain operates comes from observing the effects of when it sustains damage through some accident or through strokes or tumours and through observing the effects of electrical stimulation during surgery - but even with the very latest designs of microscopic probes, only the simplest explorations of the brain's tissue can be carried out. A piece of our brain the size of a pinhead may contain up to five million cells and each cell or 'neurone' which resembles a tree like structure, *is* capable of firing an electrical impulse which is bursting along to its neighbour at approximately two-hundred and fifty miles an hour. In a tiny fraction of a second it *is* ready to fire again and an average brain has a staggering one hundred billion such neurones which together can produce enough electricity to illuminate a light bulb. The human brain uses up more energy to run than any other organ in the body. This represents one fifth of the food we consume and makes the head hotter than any other part of our body.

When a particular part of the brain is working harder, extra blood flows there to provide energy for the active nerve cells. Brain power is a result of the collective effort of neurones working together. Teams of neurones take on different responsibilities i.e., different functions of the body. The thousands of branches between each neurone are not actually physically joined together. Between each neurone is a tiny gap and minute quantities of chemicals are released each time they fire an electrical impulse and it is this cocktail of chemicals which influence our thoughts and general wellbeing.

Whatever we consume into our bodies , from whatever source, can easily effect the very intricate balance of these chemicals. The medicines prescribed by your doctor, or any other health care practitioner, ultimately are given to bring about an effect on these chemical messages transmitted between different groups of neurones. These transmissions may in turn result in adjustments to the instructions being sent out to other organs of the body such as the Endocrine Glands which manufacture and regulate the secretion of hormones directly into the bloodstream. It is these hormones which are carried to other organs or tissue of the body to act to modify their structure or function.

One of the main criticisms of conventional medicine is that too many of the drugs prescribed are only masking or counteracting the effects of some chemical imbalance or deficiency within our body, rather than trying to identify the root cause. This approach contrasts, for example, with Nutritionists or Herbalists where the emphasis is on trying to identify any minerals or chemicals which may be lacking in our diet, or the elimination of foods which can, particularly if consumed to excess, have a detrimental effect on our wellbeing.

Within our brain is genetically planted a time clock whereby our bodies are slowly degrading. It is an inevitable part of the cycle of life that we must eventually grow old and die. Often we are inclined to associate our state of health with the ageing process, but how quickly this comes about is greatly affected by how we look after our bodies in terms of the quality and variety of food we eat, the air we breath, and how regularly we exercise. To this must be added the importance of cultivating and maintaining an active mind which does try to think positive.

It is believed that it is the frontal cortex of our brain which houses our long term memory. Our thoughts are stored across many individual neurones and over a period of time the branching connections of these neurones are strengthened. This is how we remember the main events in our lives, but it is also how we become conditioned in our mental outlook, and this can greatly affect our state of health.

I have devoted some time in this text to explain only a small part of the intricacies of how our brain controls our whole physical and mental wellbeing. I hope you will take on board how important it is to cultivate positive thoughts in order to encourage the optimum conditions for your brain to tackle your medical condition. The more time you devote to encouraging your mind to tackle whatever ails or troubles you, the greater your chances of a successful outcome. The visualisation exercises which are described in a supplementary text, will definitely help in this respect. These should be taken seriously and used frequently as part of your treatment.

To conclude this section on how our brain can affect our wellbeing and how visualisations can help with the healing process, I will return to the role of Spiritual Healing. Any stimuli, from whatever source, which brings about an improvement in our health, should be respected even if we do not fully understand the mechanism by which it works. Most Spiritual Healers are dedicated, caring people who very often give their services without expecting any financial reward. It is only a very small minority who are not genuine and whose motives may be questionable.

Unfortunately, there is also a small minority of Healers who sometimes feel the need to adopt what appears to the uninitiated as being rather strange, even bizarre, procedures or rituals. They may also feel the need to wear or surround themselves with occult objects or symbols in order, for example, to draw in or focus the right type of healing energies. I am not questioning the validity of these techniques and no doubt the vast majority of such Healers are quite sincere in their beliefs and their reasons for carrying out such methods. However, these techniques make it more difficult for medical doctors, or other persons with a scientific background, to give Spiritual Healing the credence it deserves.

What should be realised is that these beliefs are merely a means to focus or concentrate our thoughts to produce a specific reaction. It is not the object or method in itself which causes the effect but it is how they help us to concentrate our minds to produce a positive outcome. If it was paramount to carry out certain rituals or to hold specific beliefs as to how we may receive healing energies, then any variance in approach would be ineffective. This is clearly not the case and the vast majority of Spiritual Healers go about their vocation in a very straightforward and unassuming manner.

There is no doubt that many Healers radiate a loving and caring disposition which can only help the recipient of healing feel better in themselves; but Spiritual Healing has at its core the belief that all around us are subtle energies which are constantly interacting with our physical bodies. It is when this process is impeded and an imbalance occurs that we become ill, and the Healer acts as a conduit or channel by which healing energies may flow to restore the bodies symmetry. However, the person receiving healing must do their part to help create the right conditions so that the same problem does not reoccur.

This is why the effects of healing can wear off because the underlying problem has not been addressed. For healing to stand the best chance of being effective requires the full co-operation of all parties involved. When all those involved in conventional medicine can accept the essential role that Spiritual Healing can play, then the greatest strides in medical science will be achieved. Perhaps a good starting point would be for medical institutions to explore more seriously better ways of encouraging the mind to trigger a healing response, such as through more effective visualisation techniques, or by finding better ways of harnessing and utilising Spiritual energies.

It is not by coincidence that most illustrations depicting the act of Healing show the hands of the healer a short distance from the recipients head. This is almost universal as forming part of the healing act. Healers will offer various explanations as to why they do this and increasingly these interpretations are found to be based on the Hindu and Buddhist Yogic concept of there being Chakras or vortices which penetrate the body and its aura through which various energies including the universal Life Force are received, transformed, and distributed. The Universal Life Force is said to enter the aura through the Chakra at the top of the head and permeates down through the other Chakras to be transformed into usable energy for the function it governs. Some Healers therefore believe that they are regulating or balancing this energy or clearing blockages using their hands, starting with the vortice located on the crown of the head.

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I am only giving a very simplified explanation of this process in order to observe the undertaking previously given, that I would not become involved in abstruse explanations of the healing process.

However, whatever the belief or understanding may be, in scientific terms the Healer is recognising that the brain controls our physical wellbeing and therefore, first and foremost the healing energies must be directed to alter any faulty or inappropriate programming contained in our mind.

In a separate text I describe some mental techniques which you can employ to augment this process, but you should first read one other important topic which can have a vitally important effect on our physical wellbeing: **'The Importance of Correct Breathing'**.