

# Healing Arts Report

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Examining Alternatives in Health and Healing

Volume 1, No. 7

Dear Reader:

Think of all the words and phrases relating to the heart -- heartthrob, heart-to-heart, take heart, speak from the heart, follow our hearts, heartsick, heartbroken, heartache, heart-rending, heartfelt, pulling at our heartstrings, getting to the heart of it, heartless! Do you think it's all just a metaphor? No, I heartily agree. Even our ancestors believed it to be the focus, not only of compassion and love, but of thought and imagination. Today, the physical effects of the emotions of the heart are a medically-proven reality.

For many years researchers have had the ability to continuously monitor the body for blood pressure, heart rate, and even more subtle hormonal changes, all relating to the health of the heart. In addition, they have developed methods which prove what we've intuited and expressed in our language all along. By looking into your heart you can find compassionate solutions to the conflicts in life.

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## HEALING ARTS

### Healing the Heart

As early as 1977, James J. Lynch, Ph.D., wrote *The Broken Heart* and demonstrated that the simple process of holding a conversation with another person dramatically affects the

body's cardiovascular system. As professor of psychology and co-director of the Psychophysiological Clinic and Laboratories at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, many of the people Lynch first began working with were referred to him by doctors because of high blood pressure which was unyielding to medication. These patients were unaware of any connection between their hypertension and their feelings. Often they did not believe their feelings were an issue in any way and they challenged his explanations. Through the use of monitoring devices, however, they could learn to sense involuntary changes within their autonomic nervous system that were related to the emotional content of what they were discussing.

#### Seeing His Internal Process

Lynch tells the story of a physician he calls Michael, who appears to be doing all the right things for his health, yet his blood pressure is alarmingly high. Michael wants to get off his medication because of its side effects.

During his first appointment, Michael is connected to a blood pressure cuff that automatically measures his blood pressure at regular intervals and displays the results on a computer screen they both can see. The physician's demeanor appears so perfectly controlled and relaxed that Lynch can barely believe what he is seeing. Every time Michael speaks, the numbers go higher and higher. Lynch stops him from speaking and they watch his pressure go down. Michael speaks and it goes up. Lynch reminds him to breathe deeply and stop talking and it goes down again. After three times, Michael wonders aloud how many of his patients' blood pressure is as erratic when they come to him. The very process of taking blood pressure without the patient speaking may disguise the true variation in readings.

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Michael eventually realizes that when he talks about his past, his body reacts strongly. He thought he had long ago gotten over a bad divorce. Now he sees that he apparently has also divorced himself from his own feelings and this is where they are hiding -- in his heart. It takes almost eight months of therapy for Michael to learn to regulate his blood pressure without drugs. He learns to recognize the feelings that everyday conversation arouse and how those feelings are sensed by and reflected in his body. This is how biofeedback can be used temporarily to help a patient become aware of usually unconscious autonomic processes.

### **Feelings and Dialogue**

More than any other factor, Lynch realizes that the patients he is working with do not know how to recognize that they are having feelings. This lack of awareness does not allow patients to use feelings beneficially for their relationships. Instead, suppressed feelings find other avenues of expression. They often affect the person's cardiovascular system with high blood pressure and increased heart rates, which put them at risk for heart attacks or stroke. Variations in blood pressure during dialogue occur in most people. Patients with hypertension, however, tend to show much greater deviations. According to Lynch, recent research from Johns Hopkins University has shown that people who respond in this way may be up to twenty times more likely to have silent heart disease.

Lynch points to the growing body of research on emotional and psychosocial factors impacting cardiovascular health. Among the findings he cites are:

1. The act of speaking elicits major changes in blood pressure, heart rate, and heart rhythm.
2. Among coronary artery disease patients, those who react to communicative stressors are three times as likely to suffer serious cardiac problems than those who do not show such reactions.
3. Patients lacking social support are at two to four times the risk of hypertension and coronary heart disease than those with support.
4. In a recent review of twenty-three major studies of 2,024 heart patients in *The Annals of Internal Medicine*, psychosocial interventions

added to standard cardiac rehabilitation programs significantly improved survival and symptom recurrence rates of the patients for at least two years after being discharged from the program.

### **Teaching Patients**

Every day Lynch and his staff teach what they call Transactional Psychophysiology to heart patients as a routine part of their rehabilitation. The program includes learning about communication and its relationship to the cardiovascular system. The patient's mate is often part of the process, so they both can learn improved ways to communicate. People with other illnesses can benefit from the program, too. For them, the effects of inadequate dialogue may show up in migraine headaches or digestive problems. Transactional Psychophysiology is a powerful non-drug treatment for stress-linked diseases.

Lynch teaches that the following aspects of communication can positively influence blood pressure and overall health:

1. Talk slowly.
2. Breathe deeply and relax while talking.
3. Meditate.
4. Learn to feel cardiovascular reactions when relating to others and recognize them as signals to be listened to.
5. Learn the difference between recognizing an emotional issue and altering one's physiological response to it.
6. See personal struggles in a spiritual context, for example, ask oneself, 'What lesson do I need to learn? How will this situation make me a better person?'

### **The Body Speaks**

Lynch explains, "Dialogue is corporal, not mental. It is as if "the body is a language itself. Dialogue occurs between bodies." At the time Lynch wrote *The Broken Heart* in 1977, "it was the high water mark for viewing the heart and body as machines. Loneliness was not even a part of the picture. After all, machines don't get lonely. But, in fact, communicative life is an integral part of health."

Lynch expresses concern about the rise of loneliness and the absence of touch in our society. According to him, these omissions have devastating effects on health. Lynch quips, "I

hope they never put my books in the self-help section of the bookstore. It isn't the right place. You can't work on the communal aspect of life by yourself or through meditation." Lynch does not see the goal of treatment as bringing blood pressure down. The object is to attend to it. Patients are not learning to control the body but to live in it. He reminds us that we are not apart from nature. We are a part of nature.

### **The Big Picture**

Lynch explains his understanding of the difference between emotions and feelings. While we share the experience of emotions with animals, feelings are rooted in body sensations and language. Awareness of them is impressed or repressed through dialogue, by our learning the language for recognizing and understanding them. He describes how ". . . recognition of bodily changes, both as emotions and as feeling, is intimately connected with learning to speak."<sup>1</sup>

It is through dialogue that we come to understand the world, our place in it, and our relationship with other people. Lynch compares the person out of touch with his feelings as suffering terrible isolation from others and unable to live in his own body. This is like having no place to live. That person is like a Jew wandering in the desert. Lynch explains, "To find one's home and to rediscover one's own body is to discover a life with others in the Jerusalem of the human heart."

By carrying these thoughts one step further, Lynch concludes that the most far-reaching aspect of understanding dialogue, is that, as nations, we can "no longer believe that political, economic, and philosophical differences have any bearing on the overall health of our citizens." As we come to understand the links between physical health and communal dialogue, we will have to take responsibility for participating in a process that contributes to the high incidence of specific illnesses and increased mortality rates in certain social groups. When we deny a group the opportunity to participate in dialogue, we eliminate them from the communal process, make them outcasts, and contribute directly to their illnesses.

### **Techniques for Reducing Stress**

Continuing the work of James J. Lynch,

the Institute of HeartMath (IHM) is a scientific research and education organization founded by Doc Lew Childre. They have developed proven techniques for providing stress relief in a very practical way. Numerous corporations, the U.S. military, and health and education organizations are using these techniques to improve health and productivity among their staff. Case studies show that an individual can retrain emotional and mental habits that cause worry, anxiety, burnout, and fatigue by learning some of the Institute's techniques. Instead of venting, analyzing, or repressing disturbed feelings and thoughts, they can learn how to release them and increase intuition, care, energy, and contentment.

Unlike Lynch's early clients who needed proof of a link between their emotions and their cardiovascular health, most people who come to a HeartMath seminar are already aware of the link. They are looking for methods to reduce burn-out and no matter what their level of awareness is, they can begin work.

Childre explains that stress is a response and not the event that triggers it. The situations we experience as stressful are often the ones about which we care the most -- doing a good job at work, having our children do well in school, or sharing family time in spite of a busy schedule, for example. When we become impatient, frustrated, or anxious about these things and our inability to influence these events, our care begins to drain our emotional energy. This is what Childre calls 'overcare.' Childre points out that the first dictionary definition of 'care' is "a troubled or burdened state of mind" which shows how far we have moved from 'care' as heartwarming feelings.

### **Heart Waves Radiate to All Cells**

The amplitude of heart waves or the heart's electrical energy is forty to sixty times as strong as brain waves. This means that the heart's electromagnetic field radiates to all the cells in the body and into the space several feet away. Our thoughts and feelings cause immediately measurable changes in the electrical system of the heart.<sup>2</sup>

Childre developed the Cut-Thru technique to help people shift from the emotional drain of overcare back to their original heart-felt

care. By monitoring people experiencing different emotions, IHM researchers have recorded the changing heart rhythms experienced during times of anxiety and those experienced while using the Cut-Thru technique.

The heart frequency pattern of frustration is one of disorder and chaos in the heart's electrical system. The pattern while using the technique is coherent. It "is an aligning of the frequencies of the heart which generates an increase in power. When we are sincerely feeling love for someone, we feel it in the area of the heart, then the heart communicates the signal of love to the brain. The brain then responds by creating balanced hormonal patterns that regenerate the well-being of the entire system."

Entrainment or a matching of the rhythms of the heart and brain waves causes a change of perception and increases intuition.<sup>3</sup> With a different perception of a situation, a person can develop a stress-free response, which is reflected in the autonomic system.

### **Changing the Autonomic Response**

The Cut-Thru technique may seem familiar to those who practice meditation or have experiences of self-observation, but for those with a business orientation, the book describes it in a more familiar language. It is not possible to do justice by condensing all five

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steps here. The first two steps paraphrased below, however, can be used successfully on their own for easier-to-perceive stress-provoking interactions.

1. The first challenge is to recognize the feelings and thoughts of over-caring. They often feel bad or, if subtle, vaguely disturbing -- for example, angry thoughts, the temptation to say something without thinking first, tension in the neck or abdomen, shallow breathing, or tightening of the throat.

2. Bring these thoughts or feelings into the heart and hold them there. You may find this is enough to transform them. If not, homogenize or blend them in the heart. This disperses the energy enough to allow for a new perspective of the situation.

For all five steps and a more complete understanding of the technique, see *Cut-Thru* by Doc Lew Childre.<sup>3</sup> The Institute of HeartMath also has developed an "Autonomic Assessment Report," a new noninvasive tool to help physicians assess a patient's risk for sudden cardiac death and other conditions.

*James J. Lynch's groundbreaking books, The Broken Heart and The Language of the Heart, will soon be re-released by Bancroft Press, Baltimore, in updated versions. For information about future seminars, phone Life Care Health Associates in Baltimore at 410-321-5781.*

*For more information about HeartMath books, tapes, and seminars, phone 800-450-9111, fax 408-338-9861, or visit their web site at <http://www.heartmath.org>.*

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## **SELF-CARE**

### **Developing Intuition**

The very concept of intuition is surprisingly scant in the literature of alternative medicine. Biologist Rupert Sheldrake explains why when he explores the topic of the contracted and expanded mind. In *Seven Experiments That Could Change the World*, Sheldrake describes arguments about the nature of the mind.

Traditionally, all over the world, the mind is seen as part of a "far larger animate reality." It is equated with soul, linked to our ances-

tors, other life on the planet, life after death, and life shared with spiritual beings, such as elves, angels, and saints. Sheldrake says, "By contrast, for more than three hundred years the dominant theory in the West has been that minds are located inside heads." He refers to this as a model of the "contracted mind," confined to the brain and usually described in terms of mechanistic functioning.

In the area of personal beliefs, however, the sense of our psyches as existing beyond our bodies is quite prevalent. Surveys show that more than fifty percent of the population have experienced telepathy and other psychic phenomena, while a much greater majority believe in their existence.<sup>4</sup>

### **Using Intuition for Health**

Christiane Northrup, M.D., in *Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom* (Bantam Books, New York, 1994) suggests that most of us have our intuitive abilities trained out of us by the time we are seven years old. The bias in our culture is for left-brain rational thinking. "Our bodies are designed to function best when we're doing work that feels exactly right to us. If we want to know God's will for us, all we have to do is look to our gifts and talents -- that's where we will find it. Health is enhanced in women (and men) who engage in work that satisfies them." The possibility of life-threatening illness sometimes reawakens these skills. She describes a number of cases where information about their own physical and emotional health is perceived intuitively by women. Their perception about their physical bodies is sometimes confirmed later in surgery.

According to Belleruth Naparstek, a licensed psychotherapist in Cleveland, Ohio, intuition is a natural ability. In the same way sports or musicianship may be an inborn gift, they can also be improved upon through learning and practice. Naparstek's preferred vehicle for psychic development is guided imagery.

She says that, "it alters consciousness, drops us down into the clear, receptive state necessary for picking up subtle, intuitive signals, changes the biochemical mix in the bloodstream, shifts brain waves, and amplifies the human energy field." Naparstek has produced a series of guided imagery audiotapes which are designed to replicate these mind states.

In a presentation and workshop at a Common Boundary conference, Naparstek described some of the insights she has observed about intuitive ability. From the many intuitives she has interviewed, she has found that certain life circumstances shared by many of them include:

- being gifted from birth
- experiences of trauma, abuse, and terror states
- near death experiences
- yoga, meditation, or other right brain practices
- proximity to a powerful psychic
- falling in love and heartbreak
- cultivating compassion and working with an open heart

### **Recognizing Intuition**

Naparstek describes the difference between logic, experience, and intuition, giving examples from her own role as a therapist. Some things are obvious and can be rationally thought out. After years of experience, some things which may not be obviously logical make sense because she has observed patterns of behavior that are very common. On the other hand, intuition is knowing or having an immediate insight without making use of rational processes or conscious reasoning.

Sometimes intuition may be needed to solve a dilemma. For example, Naparstek describes therapy with a young woman who was in a distressed state, unable to sleep or cry, ever since an auto accident in which a younger woman she was supervising had been killed. One session is usually enough to bring in some kind of healing insight or feeling. In this case, one session produced no relief. A week later, during the second session, suddenly, without thinking, Naparstek asked, "Is there an image that comes to you from the accident?"

There was an image, which had been recurring repeatedly. Immediately after the accident, she turned to the younger woman who had been in the back seat. Frozen on her face was a horrible toothless grin. Her teeth had been knocked out by the impact and she was dead. Naparstek's client was haunted by this image and yet had been unable to speak of it until the moment she was asked the question

directly. It released a flood of tears and finally provided a doorway through which the woman could process and digest the tragedy. This is intuition at work.

In Naparstek's recently released book, *Your Sixth Sense*, she lists twenty-three things to do to accelerate the development of intuition. Here is a sampling:

- be playful
- pray
- seek solitude
- practice structured meditation
- practice gratitude, kindness, forgiveness
- slow down your pace of living
- get physical exercise
- observe the machinations of your ego

*Belleruth Naparstek, a practitioner for almost 30 years, makes presentations and gives workshops across the country. She is author of Staying Well with Guided Imagery. Your Sixth Sense audio - tapes includes four guided meditations for accessing your own intuitive ability on two tapes. To make comments, ask questions, or receive a list of her tapes, call 800-800-8661.*

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## SCIENCE REPORT

### Gut Feelings and the Chemistry of Emotions

In contrast to the motto from the popular television show "The X-Files" -- "the truth is out there" -- Candace Pert, Ph.D., research professor of physiology and biophysics, announces that, "Truth is in the gut feelings." According to Pert, the brain is, in fact, usually the last to know what's going on. In addition, the body, once thought of as purely physiological, is the subconscious mind.

#### Major Conceptual Shift

In an interview with Bill Moyers for his public television series, *Healing and the Mind*, Dr. Pert describes the major conceptual shift that occurred in the neurosciences and immunology in the last twenty years. Researchers have confirmed the interconnectedness and shared structures of the brain, the immune system, the endocrine system, and all the functions of the body. Perturbations in any one system affect the

other systems. These discoveries have created the new field of psychoneuroimmunology. The connectedness of what were once viewed as separate systems suggests the viability of using non-conventional forms of healing. In a recent phone interview, Pert's examples of therapies that could affect the chemistry of the body included visualization, change of attitude, light, feelings, exercise, and sound.

#### Physiology Modulated by Chemicals

Dr. Pert, an internationally recognized pharmacologist, has made research observations which suggest theories supporting what some health care practitioners have claimed for years -- that emotional states and physical therapies can alter the course of illnesses once considered to be entirely biological. According to Pert, the brain and somatic functions, which used to be called physiology, are modulated by numerous chemicals. About sixty of them have been identified to date. Most of them, and possibly all of them, affect behavior and mood. Many had been studied within other contexts as hormones, growth factors, or as components of the immune system.

Pert's original interest in consciousness focused only on the brain. Her study broadened to the connection between mind and body when she began working on finding receptors for opiates in the brain. Receptors had been hypothetical at that time, but she discovered ways to measure them. This led to the discovery that the brain makes its own morphine, and that emotional states can be created by chemicals called endorphins, which is short for 'endogenous morphines.' Endorphins, peptides, and other chemicals similar to them are found throughout the body and are created by it. Furthermore, the chemicals are picked up by receptors which float around on the surface of every cell in the body and are indistinguishable from those identified in the brain. Pert calls this flow of information a psychosomatic communication network.

According to Pert, the cells are being told what to do by the chemical messenger molecules. The cells are given diverse information, such as whether to divide, activate a gene, or make a particular protein. All these molecules appear to mediate the intercellular communication throughout the brain and body. Theoret-

ically, they are the biochemical correlates of emotions. When asked whether feeling anger is mental or physical, Pert answers, "It's both. . . . [emotions] are the bridge between the mental and the physical, or the physical and the mental. It's either way." Pert says that because the chemistry of the messages happen almost spontaneously, it isn't clear where the messages originate. We may not be talking about something that occurs only in the physical realm.

### **Another Energy May Be Involved**

It seems there is another form of energy involved that has not yet been understood, something beyond chemical and electrical responses. One example that seems to indicate qualities outside of the realm of ordinary material chemical reaction is the phenomenon of multiple personalities. Sometimes the different personalities clearly have physical symptoms that are linked with only one of the personalities, such as allergies or diabetes. These reactions can be measured in the body -- one personality making the right amount of insulin and the other, unable to do so.

As a scientist in the Western tradition, Pert doesn't use words such as 'spirit' or 'soul.' Some might call it Mind with a capital M. She refers to it as 'the information realm,' a subtle energy that has not yet been identified even though its effects have been observed. In Pert's new book *Molecules of Emotion*, she presents her latest research suggesting the unity of mind and matter and what it means in terms of our views on health and medicine. In addition, she tells the gripping story of her odyssey as a female scientist making revolutionary discoveries, both professionally and personally.

*Dr. Pert is active on the editorial boards of many peer-reviewed journals, including Cellular and Molecular Neurobiology, Peptides, Reviews in the Neurosciences, and the Journal of Alternative Medicine. Pert is Research Professor of the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at Georgetown University Medical School and has held a number of research positions with the National Institute of Mental Health. Her new book, Molecules of Emotion, will be released in September by Scribner. She may be reached through Georgetown University, 37th and O Streets N.W., Washington, D.C. 20007.*

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## *HEALTH RESOURCES*

### **When Bad News Hits**

What can a patient do after being told that they have a serious medical condition they don't know anything about? The doctor sorrowfully gives some basic information and sends the patient out of his office. It may feel to the patient like being dropped in the middle of the desert. Patients have described it as frightening, overwhelming, or just plain confusing. Often, there is no time to digest what the doctor said and no time to formulate questions. They may have been given names of national organizations that deal with the condition or not. They may be given new medication with little information about what it does and the long-term consequences of taking it. They may be told about the need for immediate surgery. Often, they can't absorb the information anyway -- they are still trying to take in the diagnosis.

### **Learn As Much As Possible**

How can a patient find out more? Why should they? Where can busy health professionals and their patients find reliable information that a layperson can understand? Even if a practitioner has the time and ability to convey what is needed for understanding and comfort, a patient will benefit from learning as much as possible. Why?

- to know all the options available, not just what is commonly done by one doctor or in one part of the country
- to discover which options suit oneself in terms of preferences, willingness to follow through on treatment, costs, and availability
- to participate in the process, sharing in the decisions made

### **Help For Life-Threatening Illness**

Janice R. Guthrie, founder and director of The Health Resource, Inc., a company located in Conway, Arkansas, established the company as a result of her own rare type of ovarian cancer. She did not feel comfortable with the only treatment option she was offered. Through research, she was able to find a physician who

had a special interest in her condition and who welcomed her participation in the process of decision-making. She gained a sense of control over her personal health.

This experience inspired her "to do similar research as a service for others with medical problems." Within a week, the client will receive over 150 pages of material listing support groups, physicians' names and locations, professional and grass roots organizations that could make licensed medical practitioner referrals, articles from magazines and newsletters, and published peer-reviewed research from computerized medical data bases. If clients are not satisfied with the material, they may return it within thirty days for a full refund. Anyone reluctant to spend \$250 to \$350 for a report should find that reassuring. In addition, Guthrie states that customers receive, at no charge, news bulletins about new treatments for their condition and they are offered a yearly update service.

One client who received research from The Health Resource, Inc. said, "I learned enough to talk with doctors about their philosophy of treatment and the costs, availability, and usefulness of various tests for celiac sprue. Since I am responsive to a gluten-free diet, I feel I now have time to make further decisions. I believe an intestinal biopsy is invasive, besides being costly. However, blood tests that would help me improve my immune system after years of possible malnutrition are worth my investing in."

Other resources that provide education

and medical searches include Planetree Health Resource Center at 415-923-3681 in San Francisco and the World Research Foundation in Sedona, Arizona at 520-284-3300. Each organization has a different price range and size of report available. Most use approximately the same computer databases. Planetree will connect clients to others with the same concerns. World Research Foundation offers a catalog of books, tapes, and videos on health topics and an in-house library open to the public.

Contact The Health Resource, Inc. at 564 Locust Street, Conway, AR 72032. Phone 800-949-0090, 501-329-5272, or fax 501-329-9489.

Best wishes,

Barbara June Appelgren

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#### END NOTES

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2. W. Tiller, R. McCraty, and M. Atkinson, "Cardiac Coherence: A New Non-invasive Measure of Autonomic System Order," *Alternative Therapies* 2:1 (1996).
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4. R. Sheldrake, *Seven Experiments That Could Change the World*, (New York: Riverhead Books, 1995):102.



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