

Wholeness, Health and Healing Part 2

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Let me now turn to Deepak Chopra, the author of *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind: The Quantum Alternative to Growing Old* (23). A medical doctor, formerly chief of staff at New England Memorial Hospital, he is the director of the Institute for Mind/Body Medicine and Human Potential at Sharp HealthCare in San Diego. Coming out of an ayurvedic Hindu tradition, he has succeeded remarkably in translating certain ancient truths about the body and healing into understandable, twenty-first century language. In the process of doing so, moreover, he has found a very responsive audience and has become one of the "gurus" of the new "alternative" health movement.

Chopra examines the phenomenon of aging and confidently challenges many of the current beliefs people hold about growing old (again, we come across the idea of "belief"). He says, "Your body is aging beyond your control because it has been programmed to live out the rules of that collective conditioning." (24) He lists ten assumptions which must be discarded, and these have to do with the view of the body as a material machine, and with the mind and body as separate and independent

from each other. (25) He emphasizes, instead (as did Borysenko), the inseparableness of the mind and body.

When discussing the aging process he emphasizes that the way in which we think, even about our own life and inevitable death, has a great influence on our aging, and on the health of our body. As is well-known we are not consciously aware of everything that is going on inside of our body. If we were we would suffer from information overload. Most of the body's biological phenomena (physiology) is carried on sub-consciously, and we only become aware of it should there arise some problem, at which time we feel "pain," which is the body's signal to us that we need to do something to "fix" the situation. But this does not seem to be true in the reverse. Whereas we are usually not aware of the physiological situation in a particular cell, for example, the cell itself is aware. According to Chopra, our cells are aware of our thoughts. Not only that, but "Every cell is a miniature terminal connected to the cosmic computer." (26) He says that "Our cells are constantly eavesdropping on our thoughts and being changed by them. A bout of depression can wreak havoc with the immune system; falling in love can boost it...the line between biology and psychology can't really be drawn with any certainty." (27) This means that the way in which we think, what we are feeling, and even what we believe, even at this very moment, have an impact on the very cells of our physical body. "Because the mind influences every cell in the body, human aging is fluid and changeable; it can speed up, slow down, stop for a time, and even reverse itself." (28)

Chopra claims that in the new world view that transcends the old collective conditioning, "nothing holds

more power over the body than beliefs of the mind."(29) He points out that each assumption of the old world view can be replaced by "a more complete and expanded version of the truth."(30) In this expanded understanding, "You can change your world—including your body—simply by changing your perception."(31) Thus, as we change our perceptions of the world, of ourselves, and of our life, we can take a large degree of control over our life and wellbeing. In fact, as has been documented by those adept at meditation, "Every so-called involuntary function, from heartbeat and breathing to digestion and hormone regulation, can be consciously controlled."(32) Furthermore, underlying this new perception and world view is the belief that "at bottom there is one single intelligence shared by the whole body."(33)

Thus, rather than the body being just "dead matter," as was held in the traditional world view (and by most of those doctors in the Western medical community), Chopra emphasizes not only that the mind and body are intimately connected, but that the body itself is "conscious," and that because the body is endowed with an innate consciousness it possesses a significant healing potential. This is a healing power that we can tap into and use.

But Chopra goes even further than this. In stating that the mind and body are inseparably one, he also holds that "The revolution we call mind-body medicine was based on this simple discovery: Wherever thought goes, a chemical goes with it."(34) Because of this, and knowing that chemicals (i.e. hormones, etc.) affect the human body, he asserts that "Healing cannot be understood unless the person's beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and self-image are also understood."(35). He states that "Our bodies are the physical results of all the interpretations we have been learning to make since we were born."(36) That is to say, throughout our life, "Our cells have been instilled with our memories."(37) This means that "there is no biochemistry outside awareness: every cell in your body is totally aware of how you think and feel about yourself."(38) Moreover, "Outside the biologist's test tubes and flasks, DNA gets influenced by your every thought, feeling, and action."(39) The cell becomes a more and more sophisticated entity. "Every cell is nothing but intelligence organized into various layers of visible and invisible patterns."(40) Chopra can say that "All that has ever happened to you is recorded in your body."(41) It has been said that we are what we eat, but truly, it is becoming apparent that even more to the point, we are what we think.

From these ideas, we can begin to understand the value and significance of prayer, meditation, belief, hope, positive thinking, etc. on our health. Chopra says that "According to the new paradigm, your entire body is one field of awareness, and the activity inside your cells is directly influenced by how you think and act."(42, emphasis added) In this same connection, True Mother speaks about the "ideal of love," and the fact that "the material world is an extension of us." She says that "the universe is created so that matter can settle only in the ideal of love. It is only in the ideal of love that all cells can live in tranquility. But this is all ruined whenever a person becomes angry."(43) We know from scientific research the effect of strong human emotion on the cells of plants, and on their growth. We can only imagine what traumatic effect such emotions as anger and resentment have on the cells of our own body. Such emotional experiences are directly connected to our health.

It is easy to see how very important it is that we are mentally healthy. The mind has an enormous influence over the body. Whatever we think, whatever we believe, whatever our faith is, whatever hope we have or don't have, has a major influence on our body, the way in which it functions, and how healthy it is. Although it may not be quite this simple, one might almost say that, if we are not careful, we can think ourselves sick; yet, we also have the ability to think ourselves well.

We have seen above (Borysenko and Chopra) that there is a profound degree of mind and body interaction, and that the mind significantly influences the body.