

MIND,

BODY

CONNECT.

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Elmer Green, the Mayo Clinic physician who was a pioneer in biofeedback as a treatment of disease, was quoted in saying "Every change in the physiological state is accompanied by an appropriate change in the mental emotional state, conscious or unconscious, and conversely, every change in the mental emotional state, conscious or unconscious, is accompanied by an appropriate change in the physiological state".

Candace B. Pert, PH.D. Internationally recognized pharmacologist and neuroscientist who discovered the opiate receptor, the cell-binding site for endorphins in the brain in 1972, which opened the door to so much of what we understand about the brain today. Author of the book 'Molecules of Emotion' which explores how the mind, spirit, and emotions are unified with the physical body in one intelligent system, one that involves a massive and rapid simultaneous exchange of information between mind and body, your cells are literally talking to each other and the brain is in on the conversation.

"My research has shown me that the body can and must be healed through the mind and the mind can and must be healed through the body."

About 99% per cent of the brain remains a mystery to scientists. Scientist Professor R Komisaruk was quoted to saying in a 2007 "There are an estimated 100 billion

neurons in the human brain. It's been estimated that each neuron receives about 1,000 inputs from other neurons," he says. "As neuroscientists, we understand much less of the 'terrain' of the brain than astronomers know about the moon." The way in which neurons of the brain create conscious awareness is the "Holy Grail" of neuroscience.

C. Pert theorises towards the end of her book 'Molecules of Emotion' "What is this 'energy' that is referred to by so many alternative healers, who associate it with the release of emotion and the restoration of health? According to western medical terms, energy is produced strictly by various cellular metabolic processes, the idea that energy could be connected to emotional release is totally foreign to the scientific mind.

Many ancient and alternative healing methods refer to a mysterious force we cannot measure with Western instruments, that which animates entire organism and is known as "subtle" energy by metaphysicians, prana by Hindus, Chi by Chinese. Freud called it libido, Reich called it orgone energy, Henri Bergson called it *élan vitale*.

It's my belief that this mysterious energy is actually the free flow of information carried by the biochemicals of emotion, the neuropeptides and their receptors. When stored or blocked emotions are released through touch or other physical methods, there is a clearing of our internal pathways, which we experience as energy."

Whether you believe in 'life force' or not, C.Pert work and theories 20 years later are now beginning to have more scientific fact behind them. The heart for instance, a pump!

Yet so much emotion, poetry and feeling have been attached to this organ.

Oxytocin - the love hormone has a whole range of positive effects on the brain, heart and arteries, oxytocin is released when we feel love, share warm emotional contact of any type, feel compassion, kindness, share, give, stroke animals, or receive or give touch, like a massage or a hug. It was always believed that oxytocin was produced by the brain and then secreted into the blood stream. While this is true a recent research suggests that it is also produced in the heart.

Oxytocin is cardioprotective, which also makes any feeling or action that produces it cardioprotective. How does it work? Oxytocin causes cells along the walls of our arteries to relax. Then the arteries widen, or dilate, more blood flows through them, which in turn means more blood can be delivered to the heart and other organs and blood pressure is reduced. Reduced blood pressure means protection against heart attack and stroke.

“ The brain decides whether something hurts or not- 100% of the time with no exceptions.”
Butler and Moseley 2003. The biggest news flash in pain biology research over the past decade is this: the amount of pain you experience does not necessary relate to the

amount of damage sustained. There can be tissue damage without pain and pain without tissue damage. You can be riddled with bulging discs, rotator cuff tears and crumbly joints but be in no pain whatsoever. Conversely, you can have real, excruciating and debilitating pain without a single iota of damage to any of your muscles, ligaments or joints.

So if the pain condition is not always coming from damage to the tissues, what exactly is going on? Research over the past decades has confirmed that pain is a perception of the brain rather than always being an accurate representation of what is happening at the tissue level. Thus, the sensation of pain can be mediated by a variety of factors including emotional state, previous experience, expectations, sense of control over the pain condition and other social and contextual factors.

Placebo – the power of faith, we have long understood the power of placebo, through its use as a control in drug trials, where a group of people suffering from a disease will be given a placebo, a substance that has no therapeutic effect, the other people in the trial are given the drug being tested. Strangely there is a high percentage of reduced symptoms or in some cases a cure of the symptoms with the placebo group.

Most scientists agree it works by three main factors;

1. A person's desire to be healed.

2. Their expectancy that they are going to be healed, or that something positive is going to happen.

3. Their belief that they will be healed, either because they believe in medicine or because they believe in the competency of the medical staff looking after them.

Many complementary therapists squirm at the suggestion that their modality simply works for some patients because they believe in you and the treatment you are administering and nothing else! However belittling and devaluating this claim can be, I don't view this as a negative, I embrace it! I think this is the most powerful natural tool the mind/body has to offer, if you believe like me, that in each of us is our own natural pharmacopoeia - the very finest drugstore that can produce all the natural drugs we will ever need to run our bodies and mind this is no small feat.

The concept of health today has come to mean a lot more than just a lack of disease or infection at purely a physical level. Rather it is based on the notion of physical, emotional

and psychological wellbeing and an ability to cope positively with a variety of pressures and stresses placed on us by our modern lifestyle and expectation.

I am not suggesting that massage alone can cure all our major ills, prescription drugs have a important purpose and save lives. If I have a bad infection I am going to take antibiotics. If I have clinical depression I am going to take anti-depressants.

However there is enough research out there to show that the power of touch and our minds positive interpretation of this experience can stimulate our natural chemicals to maximize our feelings of health and well-being, which support our bodies back to a healthy equilibrium.

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