

MIND-BODY AND SPIRITUAL HEALING

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Introduction

For thousands of years, mind-body and spiritual practices have been an integral part of worldwide healing traditions. A European worldview described by Sir Isaac Newton and René Descartes led to a medical system that looked at the physical body independent of consciousness. Descartes' philosophy formed a belief that mental and physical health are separate domains, and the physical laws described by Newton still guide the teaching and practice of modern medicine.

Our modern medical system focuses on understanding the chemistry and physical components of the body. Modern medicine as taught and practiced in the United States frequently regards physical health as a combination of parts. If we know enough about the individual parts, we can "fix" the whole. We have one set of healthcare providers to care for the mind and another to care for the body. So fixed is this division in our medical system that insurance will not reimburse providers if they provide treatment for or use diagnostic codes from the other's domain.

As limitations of this way of engaging in caring for people have become more evident, many providers and consumers are advocating for a more holistic medical system that integrates treating disease and maximizing wellness. As the field of *integrative medicine* evolves, it is clearer that the goals of "fighting disease" and promoting a great quality of life, regardless of specific disease diagnosis, are not at odds. Proof of this evolving view of healthcare is in the creation of this book that you are now reading.

In my *clinical* experience, the areas of mind-body medicine and spiritual healing are among the most powerful practices in improving life quality in patients who are living with the diagnosis of *chronic hepatitis C*. Research confirms that adults in the United States also frequently choose to use these modalities. In 2002, prayer was used by more than 50% of the U.S. population, and relaxation techniques, imagery, *biofeedback* and hypnosis were used by more than 30% of the population.¹ In 1992, the National Institutes of Health created an Office of Alternative Medicine. In 1998, this office increased in size and became the National Center for *Complementary and Alternative Medicine* (NCCAM). NCCAM organizes the study of integrative medicine into five fields as shown in Figure 1.

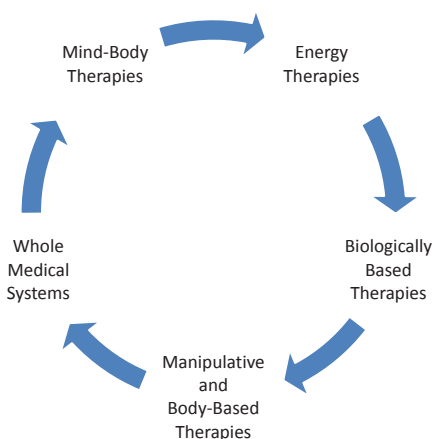


Figure 1. Major Types of Complementary and Alternative Medicine

This chapter will discuss some of the NCCAM descriptions of mind-body practices and then focus on some of the mind-body practices that I have found useful in my clinical practice. There will then be a discussion of NCCAM descriptions of energy therapies and conclude with some specific practices that I have found most useful in working with people who have chronic hepatitis C.

Mind-Body Fields of Practice

Mind-body practices can be an integral part of a treatment plan for any medical diagnosis. While the use of a mind-body practice may not make a medical condition disappear, it frequently improves the quality and/or quantity of life. As part of an effort to understand and research how altering mental health can affect physical health, NCCAM defines mind-body medicine to include the following practices.

Relaxation Techniques

The goal of relaxation techniques is to guide the body towards a state of balanced nervous system activity. This area includes a wide variety of techniques and is divided into deep and brief methods. Deep methods include *meditation*, progressive muscle relaxation, and autogenic training. There are many forms of meditation and this practice is discussed in much greater detail later in this chapter. Progressive muscle relaxation focuses on relaxing muscles from head to toe. Muscles are tensed and then relaxed in a sequence either from head to toe or from toe to head. Autogenic training helps a person produce comforting body sensations such as, warmth and consistently visualizing a peaceful environment. Brief methods are usually abbreviated forms derived from deep methods.

Hypnosis and Imagery

Hypnotic techniques promote a state of relaxation to achieve a desired clinical outcome. The hypnotic state may be self-induced or induced by another. Hypnosis practices include three phases: presuggestion to promote relaxation, suggestion to promote desired therapeutic goal, and postsuggestion to integrate the suggestion. The presuggestion component may include imagery, progressive muscle relaxation, or any other technique to promote muscle relaxation. During the hypnotic phase, a suggestion is offered such as decreased craving for nicotine or experience less pain postoperatively. The postsuggestion phase involves incorporating the suggestion into one's life.

Imagery is frequently thought of as closing one's eyes and seeing a desired image. Effective imagery actually uses a combination of senses. The image is more powerful and easy to create, if it is moving and involves other senses (e.g., the smell of pine trees, the feel of warm sun and a cool breeze on the skin, or the sound of a bubbling brook). Preferred imagery is a personal choice. Once while performing a small office procedure, I encouraged the patient to take a mini vacation in her mind and offered her the possibility of a trip to the ocean. Her response was, "I have left the state once in my life. That was enough. I prefer to stay home." Her preferred relaxation image was to be at home sewing while sitting on her living room sofa. One study showed the effects that hypnosis and imagery can have positive effects on immune function. Twenty-one patients who suffered from recurrent infection with genital herpes were taught self-hypnosis combined with imagery. After 6 weeks of using these practices, disease recurrence was reduced by almost 50%.²

Meditation

Meditation has three basic forms. One form is to focus the mind. The object of focus can be your breath, a candle flame, a word or a sound. The second type of meditative practice is to widen the view to observe the activity of the mind. Termed "mindfulness," the object of this practice is to observe as the mind leaps from past to future, stirring emotions as it travels back and forth. The third type of meditative practice is done to cultivate within oneself a desired quality. The quality can be compassion, harmlessness, or the ability to express unconditional love. This type of meditation may be used within religious tradition and beings who express this quality may be called upon for assistance (e.g. Quan Yin, Jesus or Krishna).

Biofeedback

This practice uses machines or other devices to provide audible, visual, or tactile information about body processes that frequently are under subconscious influence. This feedback can be as simple as holding a piece of tape that changes color when someone successfully practices a relaxation technique and warms their hands. In contrast, some very sophisticated computer programs allow a person to proceed in a computer game when their brain waves shift in a certain manner. Somewhere between these levels of technology are machines that provide light or sound feedback when a person successfully relaxes a muscle, lowers blood pressure, or lessens nervous system stress measured through changes in electrical conductance of the skin.

Yoga, Tai Chi, and Qi Gong

These forms of movement therapy are integral parts of the Ayurvedic (medicine from India) and Oriental medical systems. They involve slow movement combined with deep slow breathing. This combination of slow movement and breathing have been used for thousands of years to both prevent and treat disease. A recent article in Orthopedic Nursing compares it to western exercise programs and encourages nurses to promote its use.³ A systematic review looking at several studies showed *tai chi* to promote both physical and *psychosocial* benefits. Physical benefits include improved balance, flexibility, and *cardiovascular* fitness.⁴

Although much of the research of tai chi focuses on its health benefits for elders, there is also evidence to support its use in improving immune function. Studies looking at changes in immune function related to fighting viral infections may be more pertinent to people with *HCV*. Two studies have measured changes in blood cells associated with improved *immune system* health. One study looked at 21 practitioners of tai chi. Before and after class, participant stress was assessed and their blood was drawn. After class, a significant number of students showed increased number and activity of *natural killer cells* as well as a significant decrease in stress.⁵

Another study showed evidence of immune changes that would keep elders from developing a late complication of chicken pox known as shingles. Usually the chicken pox virus (acquired during childhood) remains dormant in the body because our immune system keeps it from replicating. With age or certain medications, a portion of our immune system becomes weak and the virus may begin to replicate. Growing in the nerves, frequently along the rib cage, the virus leads to pain and sores causing a condition called shingles. A group of elders was instructed to practice tai chi. Blood samples were drawn that showed that they had a significant improvement in the type of immune response that keeps the chicken pox virus from replicating and later causing shingles.⁶

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapies and Group Support

Once considered “alternative,” these methods are now part of mainstream medical treatments. In 1996, the National Institutes of Health organized a panel to examine the integration of behavioral and relaxation approaches into the treatment of chronic pain and insomnia. Cognitive-behavioral techniques we found to be moderately effective for relieving chronic pain.⁷

Art, Music, and Dance Therapy

In many traditional societies, art, music, and dance are integrated into everyday life. In this culture, many people only participate in these activities when they interact with children. Creative activities provide an outlet for expression of subconscious beliefs or feelings. Once these beliefs are mobilized or brought to a conscious level, they can be modified or used to promote a healing response. Art, music, and dance are considered essential activities for all humans by some cultures, regardless of medical condition. These therapies can be done individually or in group settings.

Spirituality

Spirituality is defined by NCCAM as a mind-body practice; this area has been granted significantly more attention by NCCAM within the last few years. The winter 2005 issue of the newsletter “CAM at the NIH” focused on prayer and spirituality in health. In response to criticism that it is inappropriate for NIH to fund studies of religion, the research focus is shifting from prayer and spirituality to positive meaning and personal growth. NCCAM’s Deputy Director and Director of the Division of Extramural Research and Training, Margaret A. Chesney, PhD stated in the newsletter, “The advantage of focusing our research on positive psychological states, such as positive meaning, is that people can be trained to increase these states, and the subsequent effects on well-being and health can be directly measured. By advancing the focus of research from prayer and spirituality to positive meaning and personal growth, NCCAM will be in a far better position to apply scientific rigor to this domain and to make discoveries that will be applicable to the widest range of people.”

Most NIH-funded research focuses on influencing the mind to improve physical health, decrease *symptoms*, or promote a sense of well-being. A more recent research development is to look at how practices focused on the physical body affect mental and emotional health. In one study, a group of nurses was offered a 15-minute massage weekly for five weeks. The self-reported stress levels showed a more significant decrease than the physical measure correlated with stress, urinary cortisol, and blood pressure.⁸

As the western mind better understands the nature of mind-body integration, more research will focus on how affecting the physical body – through a variety of practices that include massage, the Alexander technique, chiropractic, and others – leads to mental and emotional changes as well.

Specific Mind-Body Practices I Have Found Especially Useful In My Clinical Practice

Meditation

While many different meditative practices are used, three specific practices have been significantly researched in the United States. These practices include: transcendental meditation (TM), the relaxation response, and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR). TM and the relaxation response are examples of focused meditation.

TM was introduced in the United States in the 1970s. Derived from the Ayurvedic medical tradition, people are given a one-syllable sound, based on their year of birth. This sound, repeated silently, is particularly matched to the constitution of the practitioner. More information about this type of meditation is available from www.tm.org.

The relaxation response was popularized and researched by physician Herbert Benson. Contrasting health benefits he found in regular meditators with the adverse health effects described by Hans Selye's "stress response," Dr. Benson used the term relaxation response to emphasize that we have choices in how we respond to external stressors. In a practice similar to TM, people are encouraged to sit quietly each day and focus their thoughts on a word. For this form of meditation people are encouraged to choose a word that has particular meaning for them (for example, love, peace, joy, soft belly). More information about this form of meditation is available from www.mbmi.org.

MBSR is a form of meditation that combines components from different meditative traditions and relaxation techniques. Established by Jon Kabat-Zinn at the University of Massachusetts, the Center for Mindfulness Internet site provides a wealth of information about courses and research (see www.usmassmed.edu/cfm). Emphasizing a focus on the breath, MBSR also includes a tolerant observation that the mind has a tendency to "chatter" and jump from past to future. Emotions are frequently attached to thoughts. Thinking about the future may trigger feelings of anxiety or desire, while thinking about the past may trigger feelings of guilt or anger. MBSR practice emphasizes gentle acceptance of that experience and return to focus on the breath. In addition, MBSR emphasizes bringing this state of mindfulness into one's everyday affairs. A review of 20 studies of MBSR showed that it successfully improved physical and emotional well-being in people with a variety of clinical conditions.⁹

Energy Psychology or Emotional Body Clearing

Over the last 15 to 20 years, a field of mind-body medicine has emerged that emphasizes nonverbal ways of releasing toxic emotions or beliefs from the body. Developed by psychologist Francine Shapiro, one of the best researched of these practices is eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR). Dr. Shapiro observed that moving her eyes from side to side could decrease the anxiety associated with stress-filled memories. She observed similar results in working with her patients. EMDR has gained international recognition as an effective technique to assist people suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder. Further information about research and application of this practice can be found at www.emdr.com.

The American Psychiatric Association has recognized EMDR as effective as cognitive behavioral therapy for decreasing symptoms of acute and chronic post-traumatic stress disorder. An analysis comparing EMDR with other therapies for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder found that EMDR was more efficacious than medication and required a lesser number of treatments than cognitive-behavior therapy.^{9,10}

Another practice to assist in removal of negative emotions is the emotional freedom technique (EFT). EFT combines asking people to be aware of a belief and feeling, express unconditional positive regard for themselves (regardless of the negativity of the feeling), and tap on specific acupuncture points. Many energy psychology practices use acupuncture *meridians* or points. It is believed that these locations allow access to the emotional body and facilitate emotional healing.

An integration of the EMDR and EFT techniques is found in another practice known as the WHEE technique (Whole Health, Easily and Effectively) developed by psychiatrist Dr. Daniel Benor. The WHEE technique combines the rapid stimulation physical stimulation of both sides of the body of EMDR along with the EFT practices of quantifying distress and accepting self despite negative beliefs, and if necessary, using meridian points to facilitate release of negative emotions or beliefs. The advantage of the WHEE technique is that as the emotions are released, there is less anxiety than with EMDR and the practice takes less time to learn and do than EFT. How to practice the WHEE technique is discussed later in this chapter.

Acupuncture

In 1997, a National Institutes of Health consensus panel agreed that there is good research evidence to support the use of acupuncture for treatment of nausea and tooth pain.⁷ Most of the published research done in the western world focuses on the use of acupuncture for pain relief. Research also shows acupuncture to be particularly effective in relieving back and arthritis pain. Looking at acupuncture as practiced within the context of Oriental medicine, it also has applications for preventing disease and assisting with mental or emotional pain. Acupuncture relieves physical pain by changing the chemistry and electrical patterns in the nervous, hormonal, and immune system. It also affects emotional and mental health.

Very small needles, placed mostly in locations below knees and elbows, cause the deep part of the brain to produce chemicals that travel to the rest of the body. Some of these chemicals, known as *endorphins*, promote a deep sense of well-being. Other chemicals encourage the *adrenal* glands to release less stress *hormones*. Many people seek acupuncture care regularly as a preventive medicine practice during change of seasons or as a “tune-up.” A recent review article on acupuncture supports this use of acupuncture. Acupuncture “will not change the amount of stressors a person is subject to but will change the *physiological* response to them. When the nervous system is in homeostatic balance, individuals will report enhanced feelings of well-being, be more effective in coping with their conditions of living, and therefore, be less susceptible to illness.”¹¹

Spirituality as a Mind-Body Practice

When discussing spirituality, frequently the concepts of religion and prayer come to mind. For the purposes of this chapter, spirituality is defined as the unique connection between an individual and what they define as the source of healing.

Religion includes activities that people engage in as a group. Those activities may be organized to promote spiritual or social goals. The two most commonly described prayer forms include petitionary (to ask for oneself) and intercessory (to ask something for others). Many other types of prayer, such as confession or expressions of gratitude, exist and this complicates the process of studying the effects of prayer. In a large survey of U.S. adults that asked about their use of different complementary or alternative medicine practices (CAM), only petitionary or intercessory forms of prayer were asked about. Prayer was the most common practice used of all the CAM techniques that were asked about. Forty-three percent of the people interviewed had prayed for their own health, almost 25 % had asked others to pray for them, and nearly 10% had participated in a prayer group.¹²

In my job as a physician, I am careful to respect each person’s connection with the source of healing and work to honor their vocabulary and concept of what that is. In this country, there is sometimes a danger of equating mental/emotional or spiritual health with a disease-free physical body. There may be an unstated judgment, by self or others, that if

people would just fix something within themselves their disease would go away. My clinical observation does not support this belief. Many people of great mental, emotional, and spiritual health suffer from chronic disease or experience traumatic accidents. Also, I have known a fair share of people who abuse the body through consumption of nicotine, excess food or alcohol, and who live to be healthy elders.

After spending thousands of hours studying different medical systems in attempt to gain a complete understanding of all the factors that can lead to disease and can be mobilized to promote health, I have learned to be at peace with the unknown. (This isn't to say that my busy, inquisitive mind stops searching for answers and solutions. Now, a wiser voice allows me to be at peace, knowing that my knowing will always be incomplete.) With everyone, there is some mystery as to exactly why they have a combination of symptoms and what path will best lead to the removal of obstacles to best allow an individual's healing to occur.

It is through a regular spiritual practice that many people may return to a state of unknowing or connection with something grander than themselves. In finding or returning to that state, important healing perspectives are gained. A spiritual practice can be spending time in nature, being of service to others, reading poetry or inspirational literature, communing with ancestors, meditating, choosing to practice harmlessness. One purpose for engaging in a practice is to gain a different perspective about everyday life activities. In one study, 40 people diagnosed with HCV were asked to complete questionnaires that assessed their spirituality and personal experience in dealing with the infection. The respondents who were described as being spiritually oriented defined treatment success as having the "ability to manage HCV symptoms, the medical system, and the HCV-imposed life limitations and to approach life with an accepting, positive attitude."¹³

Energy Medicine

Also known as vibrational medicine, energy medicine can be described as either veritable or putative.

Veritable energy medicine can be measured and includes vibrations such as sound and electromagnetic waves such as light, magnetism, laser beams, and other frequencies from the electromagnetic spectrum. Frequently this type of energy medicine involves the use of specific, measurable wavelengths and frequencies in providing care.

Putative energy fields or biofields are not yet consistently measurable. These practices are based on a belief that there is a bioenergetic field of energy that animates the biochemical and biomechanical parts of our being. Imbalance in this bioenergetic field can be corrected through the use of intercessory prayer, homeopathy, or passing healing energy through the body of one human to another without providers necessarily touching the person receiving the healing. Examples of this type of energy medicine practice include Reiki, therapeutic touch, healing touch, and polarity therapy.

Light and Sound Therapy

One well-researched use of light therapy is exposing people who become lethargic or depressed in the fall and winter months to high-intensity light. This form of light therapy has been shown to balance serotonin levels. Other forms of light therapy, lacking strong scientific proof, include using low-level light on acupuncture points, wounds, or painful areas.

Sound therapy includes more than listening to or creating music. It may involve the use of drums, tuning forks, metal or crystal bowls, or the human voice to create sounds that set up healing, harmonic resonances in the body. Author Ted Gioia describes the area of sound healing as consisting of two extremes. The shamanic provider of healing sounds (with generations of tribal history contributing to the power of the healing sound) is contrasted with the music therapist (who gains their credentials through earning a degree and a requisite certification). Ted Gioia proposes that it is in our role as creators, not consumers, of sound therapy that we have become unbalanced. "Our instinctive need to move in rhythm, to dance, to drum, to sing: these find almost no outlet in modern society."¹⁴ Whether created by voice (our own or others), instruments, drums, bowls, or tuning forks, sound waves promote healing by creating order in their surrounding environment. In the late 18th century Ernst Chaldni created complex beautiful figures in sand by exposing the grains to

violin music. This work was further developed by family physician Hans Jenny who published two volumes describing the effects of vibration on different materials. His photographs demonstrate the effects of sound on liquid, quartz, glycerin and various powders.¹⁴ This work may help explain the current popularity of “singing bowls.” Originally brought to the United States by Tibetan monks, metallic bowls that are an amalgam of several metals create complex resonant sounds. The last decade has seen the creation of crystal bowls pitched to create specific notes that are purported to heal specific physical or emotional disharmonies.

Electromagnetic Pulse and Low-Voltage/Power Generators

A standard use for pulsating electromagnetic therapy has been to promote healing of nonunion fractures. This therapy has also been used to treat multiple sclerosis, osteoarthritis, migraine headaches, and sleep disorders. Although the mechanism of low power, millimeter wave therapy is not completely understood, this practice is commonly integrated in patient care in Eastern Europe and Russia. This type of therapy is used for a variety of diseases. Clinical conditions said to respond to this therapy include cancers, cardiac disease and skin diseases.

One proposed mechanism of action is that by offering the physical body the specific electromagnetic frequencies associated with healthy tissue, the body uses the information as a stimulus to heal. The idea is that everything in the universe has a unique resonance. From water molecules to bacteria to liver tissue, if offered the correct electromagnetic frequency, the cells can remember their “health” program.

Homeopathy

As described in *Chapter 12, Homeopathic Medicine*, homeopathy was established in the early 1800s by German physician Dr. Samuel Hahnemann. Homeopathy lost its place within western medicine when it came to the preparation of the remedies. To create each medicine, Dr. Hahnemann took a remedy, shook it up, diluted it again, and shook it up again. This process is repeated many times so that by the time a “high” potency remedy is created, it lacks any physical molecules of the original remedy.

To look at a mechanism of action we have to look to energy medicine. Maybe one day our physicist colleagues, with their ability to measure more precisely than most current biological/lab measures, will show us that each remedy has a different energetic signature.

Local and Distant Healing

The theory with these methods of healing is that humans, as bioenergetic beings, can create energy fields that heal others. This healing can happen while people are in the same place or across great distance. Therapeutic touch, healing touch and Reiki are examples of local energy healing. Frequently working in an area 2 to 12 inches away from the body, practitioners of these therapies will use their hands to scan the client’s energy field for areas of imbalance. Using intention to restore balance to a person’s bioenergetic field, a practitioner may continue to treat with hands off or they may gently touch the client. Therapeutic touch is frequently taught and researched within the nursing community. It has been used in treating anxiety, migraine headaches, osteoarthritis pain, and to promote wound healing. One study reviewed 11 therapeutic touch studies and found seven of the studies showed that patients receiving the therapeutic touch treatments responded more favorably than patients not receiving the treatments.¹⁹

Forms of therapy that are purported to promote healing across distance include qi gong and prayer. *Qi gong* is a form of movement therapy done to cultivate increased vitality within one’s body. In the Chinese literature there are several reports of qi gong masters using this energy to promote health in the body of someone located a long distance from the practitioner.

While the scientific data about the efficacy of intercessory prayer is mixed, it is still recommended by many healthcare providers as a practice for family of hospitalized patients, if such a recommendation is consistent with their belief system. A report that reviewed 23 studies of “distant healing,” which included therapeutic touch because it does not involve physically touching the patient found 13 of the studies showed significant positive treatment effects. Nine studies showed no effect over control interventions, and one study showed a negative effect from treatment.²⁰

Specific Practices to Improve Your Mind-Body Health

Change the inner dialogue about what your diagnosis means. Many people with the diagnosis of hepatitis C live long, productive lives. Infection does not equal disease. As the stress created by the diagnosis that you have hepatitis C fades, it becomes easier to gain perspective.

Your essential self is not the infection you have, it is not hepatitis C disease, but is rather something much more powerful that is able to choose a life-affirming response.

I have seen many people confronted with a diagnosis of hepatitis C who, after the emotional dust settles, use that diagnosis as an opportunity for personal growth and transformation.

Practice forgiveness each day.

Cited to be a significant force in promoting well-being, the practice of forgiving self and others has special importance to anyone diagnosed with actual or potential liver disease. Within the wisdom of the Oriental medical system, it is believed that anger is particularly harmful to the liver and that liver disease predisposes towards imbalance in the expression of anger. This imbalance can be either expressing too much anger or denying and suppressing all anger. To practice forgiveness is frequently very difficult, because it seems an irrational act. Of course, there is a reason to be angry. Deciding to release the reason and choose to forgive requires effort. Many people draw upon their religious faith to make this effort less of a struggle. Sometimes it is only after repeatedly practicing forgiveness that people are truly able to appreciate that forgiving really does improve the quality of their own life. Forgiveness of self and others is recommended as a daily practice to help keep the liver healthy.

Be clear about what you desire from your support team.

Many healthcare providers are trained to ask “What is wrong with you?” This question and focus creates a very different response than “What do you want?” Sometimes achieving clarity to that question takes time and the answer changes with time. Many years ago, I created a complex chart to guide patients in their choice of healthcare providers. With questions for patients to ask potential healthcare providers, the chart included characteristics such as whether a provider was directive or collaborative in style, regularly practiced self-care such as exercise or healthy nutrition, and whether the provider believed in something greater than information or technical skill to be as important to the healing process. As I became older, the chart became simplified to one question: “Do you leave the visit feeling good about yourself and the treatment plan?”

**As you think about your healthcare, it is helpful to ask yourself “What do I want?”
Having clarity about this central question will help you greatly in actually achieving
your health-related goals – whatever they may be.**

Sometimes it takes training to be clear about knowing what you want from your support team. This may be especially true for women who are sometimes more adept at being clearer about others’ feelings than their own. The body gives very clear messages. Once someone has mastered listening to the body’s language of “yes” and “no,” life becomes simpler. Yes, this feels good, this is an opening in life, this path is one of alignment. No, this feels tight or tense, less joyful, less light. I am going to choose the yes option.

Also, in relations from family and friends, have you clearly identified your needs and negotiated a way to have them met in a way that works for all? This sounds simple but can be complex. However, it is worth the effort for your health and well-being, and that of those around you.

Belly Breathing

Frequently taught as part of yoga practice, belly breathing changes the tone of the nervous system allowing someone to respond to stress in a more balanced way. While an infant naturally breaths this way, many adults have forgotten how. To remember you can practice the following:

- Start by thinking of the trunk of your body as a bottle, filling with your favorite drink – grape juice, sparkling mineral water, chocolate milk. (Calories are nonexistent in this image.) You fill the bottle from the bottom up and empty from the top down. Attach the same enthusiasm for filling your body with air as you would for drinking your favorite beverage if you were very thirsty. Many people’s bodies are starved for adequate oxygen. Know that each breath of light filled air is sustaining and improving your health. By increasing the amount of air in the lungs through deep belly breathing, you are better nourishing each of body cell with oxygen.
- Lie face up in bed.
- Place your hands or a small bag of rice on your belly.
- Inhale through your nose and push your belly out, away from your back.
- Exhale through your mouth, pulling belly towards back.

After you have mastered belly out with inhale and belly in with exhale (possibly overcoming years of encouragement to “suck in the gut”), you are ready to proceed to the next phase.

- Move one hand off the belly to the middle of your chest.
- Imagine that as the belly moves out, it is making room for the lungs to hold more life-sustaining air. You start filling the body with air from the belly up. First belly, then the middle of the chest, then the top of chest.
- As you exhale, empty your body of air in the reverse fashion. Air out from top, then the middle of chest, followed by the belly coming in to the back.

Once you have mastered belly breathing lying down, you can try it standing and sitting. While belly breathing is great to do early in the morning before arising and late at night before bed, it becomes even more effective in promoting well-being when practiced throughout the day. Link doing a belly breath with something you do at least 20 times throughout your waking hours – walk through a door, look at a watch, hit CTRL-ALT-DEL on the computer, answer the phone. Those of us reading this chapter are all breathing on a regular basis. The goal is to maximize the quality of the breathing we do.

WHEE Technique

WHOLISTIC HYBRID OF EYE MOVEMENT DESENSITIZATION AND REPROCESSING (EMDR) AND EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUE (EFT)

This is a practice that combines the emotional body healing practices of EMDR and EFT, allowing efficient release of feelings without having to relive the trauma of whatever originally created the feelings. One of the advantages of this specific practice is that it can be learned quickly and practiced almost anywhere by adults and children.

Following are instructions for how to practice the WHEE technique as presented by the developer of this method, Dr. Daniel J. Benor, in 2005.

- Describe how strong the negative feeling is that you want to address. Rate your feelings about something, someone, some event on a scale from 0 (not bothering you at all) to 10 (the worst it could possibly feel).
- Create an affirmation to transform the feeling. One generic affirmation adapted from the Emotional Freedom Technique is as follows:

“Even though I have this [name the feeling - anger, anxiety, panic, fear] when I think about [name something, someone, some event] I completely and totally love and accept myself and know that God loves and accepts me unconditionally.”

This is just an example. Use whatever strong positive statement suits you best at the time you need it.

- Tap alternately on right and left sides of your body. For example, your pat right then left thigh, back and forth. Alternate touching teeth on right and left with your tongue. Tap your right and left eyebrows with a finger.
- EMDR suggests the use of a “butterfly hug” as one of its self-treatment interventions, particularly for children. Cross your arms and rest your hands on your biceps muscles. Alternately tap each bicep with each hand. Many find this self-hug comforting, as well as highly effective when combined with the affirmation.
- Holding one hand over the heart/chest center while the other hand does the alternate side tapping can enhance the effects. A deep breath following the affirmation facilitates releases.
- After tapping for a few minutes, re-rate the feeling again. The rating usually decreases. Repeat the assessing and tapping until the rating of the negative feeling is zero. Then you can build up a positive affirmation to replace the negative, simply stating the positive as you tap, followed by the strong positive statement.
- If the numbers do not shift after you have tapped, you can give yourself a gentle massage on the releasing spot located just below the outside portion of the collar bone (the lung 2 acupuncture point). No affirmation is needed here. Then return to tapping.

For more information about Dr. Daniel J. Benor and the WHEE technique, go to www.WholisticHealingResearch.com.

Castor Oil Packs

Originally described and prescribed by healer Edgar Cayce, castor oil packs have been used for a variety of medical and pain conditions for at least 60 years.²¹ A castor oil pack uses a cloth soaked in castor oil which is placed on the skin. It is used to enhance circulation and promote healing of the tissues and organs underneath the skin. It is also used to improve liver function, relieve pain, reduce *inflammation*, and improve digestion.

There are two proposed mechanisms of action. One is that the castor oil contains a variety of anti-inflammatory compounds that are absorbed by the skin. The immune cells in the skin then use these anti-inflammatory compounds to promote the health of the body. Another proposal is that the combination of white (which contains all colors) flannel cloth combined with the healing properties of castor oil offer the body different frequencies of energy from which it is able to select what it needs to promote healing. Regardless of mechanism of action this is a practice I have found useful for a variety of conditions.

How to Make a Castor Oil Pack

Materials Needed: castor oil
 3 layers of un-dyed cotton flannel large enough to cover
 the affected area
 soaking container
 plastic wrap
 hot water bottle (optional)

Instructions

1. Place the flannel in the container and soak it in warm castor oil. You want the fabric to be saturated, but not dripping.
2. Place the pack over the area to be treated.
3. Cover the oil-soaked area with plastic wrap.
4. Place hot water bottle over the pack. (This is optional.)
5. Leave the pack in place for 30 minutes to 2 hours. Rest comfortably.

Oil that may get on clothing or bed linens can be cleaned by washing with baking soda. The pack can be stored in a covered container in the refrigerator and can be reused up to 30 times.

Summary

Mind-body practices are an integral part of regaining and maintaining health. The nervous system is woven throughout the body, and the human body is a greater creation than the sum of its individual physical systems.

Modern medicine is integrating new and traditional ways to look at health. Many of the world's traditional medical systems never lost the perspective that mind and body are one – different forms of energy. An exciting vision of 21st century medicine is to combine the technology and science of this culture with the wisdom of medical traditions that have thousands of years of experience in promoting health at all levels of being.

Modern physics has changed its Newtonian worldview with the incorporation of Einstein's theory of relativity and the demonstration that energy and matter are different forms of the same stuff. Although slower in adapting to this new view of the universe, modern medical science is also changing.

In the 1990's, Dr. Larry Dossey described three different eras in medicine. Era I medicine, most influential from the mid 1800's to the mid 1900's, was described as being the era of extremely materialistic medicine. Because the body is perceived as being an organized like a machine, effective therapies are based on this materialistic worldview. Many of the diagnostic practices and therapies that dominate modern medicine are based on this assumption (for example, drugs, surgery, and radiation). Era II medicine began in the 1950's with the initial studies and practices showing that emotions, beliefs, and thoughts can significantly affect physical health. The majority of this chapter has focused on looking at these practices. Over the last 20 years many of these practices that once were considered "alternative" have been incorporated into mainstream medicine.

Era I and era II medicine are frequently complementary in that they both emphasize the individual mind operating in an individual body. In this way, they are consistent with a Newtonian organizational view of universal order. In contrast, era III medicine takes into account the organizational view proposed by modern physics. "Mind" is viewed not just as residing within the bones of the skull, but is a consciousness that transcends time and space. Physicists know that just by turning their attention to studying a phenomenon, they have changed that phenomenon. With their greater comfort with uncertainty, physicists make great collaborators in the investigation of this frontier of modern medicine.²²

As we move forward in our search for understanding, and as you move forward in your journey with hepatitis C, we all seek the same thing: healing that leaves us with a sense of well-being regardless of circumstance.

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