

Holistic Health: Prevention and a Healthy Lifestyle

By Ryan N. Harrison, MA

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Introduction

“Prevention” is a buzz word lately, and has been for the past decade or so. With the rising cost of medical care and medical insurance, people are becoming increasingly more interested in staying well and avoiding the complications involved in relying on allopathic medicine. Unfortunately, the vast majority of people do not know what it takes to become (let alone remain) healthy, and how the odds are stacked against them. As bleak as it sounds, we live in a toxic world that does not engender radiant health and sustainable well-being. Quite the opposite, a person living the typical “American lifestyle” is likely to succumb to cancer, heart disease, and/or diabetes, and be taking any number of poisonous prescription drugs to “help” treat the issues. Each year, it seems, younger and younger people are dealing with diseases and health problems that used to confront only the well-aged. The good news is that there is a way to stop the downward spiral. The bad news is, it won’t be easy.

Holistic Health Practitioners (HHPs) know that each aspect of a person’s life plays an important and incontrovertible role in his or her well-being. The very term “holistic” is built on the Greek word *holon*, which means “whole entity,” and refers to the ubiquitous triumvirate of body, mind, and spirit. Any weakness in one affects the others. Likewise, when each aspect is healthy, a sense of wholeness and optimal health is experienced.

The “average American,” however, may not understand all of this. Holistic health has become a fad, a selling tool that companies use now to convince unwitting buyers to purchase products that really have little or nothing to do with wholeness, and which may very well lead to sickness and ill health! Indeed, the terms “all natural,” “holistic,” and “organic,” can be found on any number of foods and personal care items that are made with toxic chemicals and/or are exposed to harmful chemical substances during processing or packaging. This means that the person who wants to live a healthy lifestyle may not even be aware that their expensive, “holistic” products are indeed keeping them from experiencing *real* holistic well-being.

There are any number of aspects to consider when speaking of how to achieve natural, holistic health. Most people, when they hear the term “holistic health” think of herbal remedies, using nutrition as medicine, various forms of bodywork or energy healing, etc. All these things are part of a good holistic lifestyle, of course, but trying to write conclusively about everything that falls under the term “holistic” would require volumes of text. Accordingly, I am going to write about the three specific areas of holistic health (i.e., body, mind, and spirit), and only a few specific ways that people can make preventative changes and enjoy a healthy lifestyle in these areas.

Holistic Health: Body

“Detoxification” sounds good. It rolls off the tongue easily. And, depending on where you live and your lifestyle, if you happen to mention it to your friends or coworkers, it’s likely to make

you seem “in the know” about natural healing and health. But many people actually do not know what detoxification really is and why is it so important.

The human body is an amazing thing. In its healthiest state it has the ability to keep itself clean and relatively poison-free. In this sense, detoxification is the body’s natural process of eliminating or neutralizing toxins. This happens via the liver, kidneys, and lungs, as well as in urine, feces, and through sweat. Yet, your body can become so overloaded that its natural detoxification system can’t keep up, and when this happens the toxins build up and can affect virtually all of the systems of the body, head to toe.

Unfortunately, people today carry within their bodies a veritable chemical cocktail of modern-day industrial chemicals, pesticides, food additives, heavy metals, and anesthetics, not to mention the residues of pharmaceuticals, legal drugs (like alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine), and illegal drugs (like heroin, cocaine, and marijuana). The sad but undeniable truth is that we have created a living environment that is toxic to our bodies. Look at these facts, taken from respected sources:^{1, 2}

- Over 69 million Americans live in areas that exceed smog standards.
- Most drinking water contains over 700 chemicals, including excessive amounts of the heavy metal lead.
- Some 3,000 chemicals are added to the food supply.
- As many as 10,000 chemicals in the form of solvents, emulsifiers, and preservatives are used in food processing and storage.
- U.S. chemical companies hold licenses to make 75,000 chemicals for commercial use; the federal government registers an average of 2,000 newly synthesized chemicals each year.
- The government has tallied 5,000 chemical ingredients in cosmetics; more than 3,200 chemicals added to food; 1,010 chemicals used in 11,700 consumer products; and 500 chemicals used as active ingredients in pesticides.
- In 1998 U.S. industries reported manufacturing 6.5 trillion pounds of 9,000 different chemicals, and in 2000 major U.S. industries reported dumping 7.1 billion pounds of 650 industrial chemicals into our air and water.
- Chemical companies are not required to tell the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) how their compounds are used or monitor where their products end up in the environment. Neither does U.S. law require chemical companies to conduct basic health and safety testing of their products either before or after they are commercialized.
- Eighty percent of all applications to produce a new chemical are approved by the U.S. EPA with no health and safety data; eighty percent of these are approved in three weeks.

If these numbers are startling, that’s a good thing. No one knows how long some of these chemicals remain inside us once they are ingested or otherwise introduced to the body. And even the toxins that our bodies *do* know how to break down require extra metabolic energy expenditure to complete the detoxification process. That means less energy for other important things, like keeping the immune system up to speed.

A recent groundbreaking study was conducted by the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, in collaboration with the Environmental Working Group and Commonweal. Researchers at two major laboratories found an average of 91 industrial compounds, pollutants, and other chemicals in the blood and urine of only nine volunteers, with a total of 167 chemicals found in the group. Like most of us, the nine people tested do not work with chemicals on the job and do not live near an industrial facility. Of the 167 chemicals found in those nine tested individuals, 76 are known to cause cancer in humans or animals, 94 are toxic to the brain and nervous system, and 79 cause birth defects or abnormal development.³ What's more, *the danger of exposure to these chemicals in combination has never been studied.*

In general, it's a frightening – and frighteningly true – scenario, and one that we simply cannot afford to let be swept under the carpet or forgotten. Dr. Marshall Mandell, one of the world's leading allergists and father of bio-ecologic medicine stated:

*The current level of chemicals in the food and water supply, and the indoor and outdoor environment, has lowered our threshold of resistance to disease and has altered our body's metabolism, causing enzyme dysfunction, nutritional deficiencies, and hormonal imbalances.*⁴

Is it any surprise then, that although America is considered one of the wealthiest countries in the world, it doesn't even rank in the United Nations top 20 list of the *healthiest*?⁵

Beyond chemicals, at some time in their lives, three out of every five Americans will have had a parasite living inside of them. Easier to contract than some less deadly diseases, parasites are among the most highly numbered living organisms in the world – and they live right inside of you. But what does that mean?

The August 2000 issue of *Discover* magazine made this incredible statement:

*Every living thing has at least one parasite that lives inside or on it, and many, including humans, have far more. Scientists...are only just beginning to discover exactly how powerful these hidden inhabitants can be, but their research is pointing to a remarkable possibility: Parasites may rule the world. The notion that tiny creatures we've largely taken for granted are such a dominant force is immensely disturbing. We are collections of cells that work together, kept harmonized by chemical signals. If an organism can control those signals — an organism like a parasite — then it can control us. And therein lies the peculiar and precise horror of parasites.*⁶

The problem is simple: The average American diet produces a sick colon, complete with deadly fecal build up that becomes the perfect breeding ground for parasites. Humans can actually play host to over 100 different kinds of parasites, ranging from those that are microscopic to tapeworms that can grow to be several feet in length. And they don't just sit in your intestines. They can migrate to other parts of the body, including the liver, lungs, muscles, joints, skin, blood, and even to the brain.⁷

While they are not terribly difficult to clean from the body, parasites are often unsuspected and therefore completely unnoticed by their hosts. This allows the parasites to thrive, taking the most valuable nutrients away from the host, who then has to deal not only with poor nutrition and all of its attendant complications, but parasitic waste products as well.

Scientists refer to the level of a person's chemical and toxin exposure as an individual's *body burden* – the consequence of lifelong exposure to industrial chemicals that are used in thousands of consumer products and which linger as contaminants in air, water, food, and in the soil. There are literally hundreds of chemicals in drinking water, household air, dust, treated tap water and food. And they come from household products like detergent, insulation, fabric treatments, cosmetics, paints, upholstery, computers and TVs. What's more, they accumulate in fat, blood and organs, or are passed through the body in breast milk, urine, feces, sweat, semen, hair and nails.⁸

Carrying a high body burden translates into all sorts of maladies: Headaches, insomnia, constipation, fatigue, weakness, blurred vision, greater susceptibility to infection, allergic reactions, joint pain, recurrent respiratory problems, back pain, mood changes, stomach pain, digestive problems...the list goes on and on. It's shocking to realize that many of the problems just mentioned have become so commonplace in our culture that we don't stop to wonder why we experience them with such regularity. There are entire over-the-counter product lines that depend on us to be and feel ill. Indeed, some companies *need* us to carry a high body burden!

Fortunately, the human body is quite resilient. One of America's leaders in complementary medicine today, Dr. Andrew Weil is a firm believer that our bodies want to be healthy: "Health is the condition of perfect balance, when all systems run smoothly and energy circulates freely. This is the natural condition, the one in which least effort is expended; therefore, when the body is out of balance, it wants to get back to it."⁹ When we take the steps necessary to alleviate our body burden, we assist it with its natural process of detoxification. We literally give our body the extra nutrients, natural substances and energy it needs in order to set the balance straight and get the process of detoxification back in high gear.

Now – more than ever before – it is imperative that we assist our body's detoxification processes. Detoxification is a natural, health-preserving therapy, which helps remove harmful toxins from the cells and tissues, restoring their immune-protecting functions. Dr. Elson Haas, Director of the Preventive Medical Center of Marin, in San Rafael, CA, and author of *The Detox Diet* says, "The process of detoxification...is the missing link to rejuvenating the body and preventing such chronic diseases as cancer, cardiovascular problems, arthritis, diabetes, and obesity. The modern diet, with excess animal proteins, fats, caffeine, alcohol, and chemicals, inhibits the optimum function of our cells and tissues. The cleansing of toxins and waste products will restore function and vitality."¹⁰

All detoxification programs are not equal. Some, due to the relatively recent discovery of the need of detoxification, are nothing more than low-quality attempts to cash in on a potential market. So, you need to know what makes a good detoxification program. Here are the components that I suggest:

- **An “All Systems” Detoxification Program.** While it is great to target one particular system of the body from time to time and as necessary, such a regimen is no substitute for a complete, full-body cleanse. Completing a detoxification program that cleans all systems of the body is an essential step to achieving maximum health and wellness.
- **A Convenient and User-Friendly Program.** Let’s face it, the more difficult the detoxification procedure, the less likely most people are to start it, let alone see it through. Luckily, detoxifying is not as difficult as you may think. You shouldn’t have to make trips to and from a detoxification facility or specialist, and in general, the program needn’t be uncomfortable or something so complicated that you don’t want to try it again. I recommend finding a detoxification program that comes pre-assembled and ready-to-use so that you do not have to spend hours and hours searching for all the right components. But be aware and do your research: never sacrifice quality for convenience. The right detoxification program will offer both.
- **Natural, “Human-Friendly” Ingredients.** You should only use a detoxification program if it contains 100% natural, non-genetically modified, life-promoting ingredients. After all, you can’t expect to help detoxify your body by pouring more potentially-harmful synthetic chemicals into it! Look for a program that uses primarily herbs, vitamins and minerals, and if there are ingredients that you can’t pronounce, be sure you know what they are and what they do.
- **Anti-Parasite Support.** Recent medical studies suggest that 85–95% of the North American adult population is infected with at least one form of parasite. Easily spread from person to person and through contaminated water, food and soil, parasites cause our bodies to lose their biological balance by secreting toxins and damaging vital organs.¹¹ A good detoxification program will have an anti-parasite component to help expel parasites as well as to clear their eggs and hatching larvae from the body.
- **Intestinal/Colon Cleansing Support.** Making sure that the bowels are consistently active is vital to healthy detoxification. Toxins and “dead” foods lead to poor digestion, constipation, toxic colon build-up, weight gain and low energy. These common symptoms are more than just an inconvenience – they can lead to long-term health problems and serious disease. Irritable bowel syndrome, constipation, gas, diverticulitis and colon cancer are simply not things we like to discuss. And yet, as the old expression goes, “death begins in the colon.” Don’t believe it? Ask any coroner. Autopsies often reveal colons that are plugged up to 80% with waste material.¹²
- **Probiotic Support.** You may not be aware of this, but inside each of us live vast numbers – as in, several thousand billion – of bacteria without which we could not remain in good health. We call these “friendly” bacteria to distinguish them from the “harmful” bacteria that also inhabit our bodies. When the “harmful” bacteria proliferate and outnumber the “friendly” bacteria, we experience all manner of ailments, including excessive gas, bloating, diarrhea, intestinal toxicity, constipation and poor absorption of nutrients. If this imbalance is left untreated the symptoms can become chronic and can compromise the immune system, leading to other serious illnesses. A good detoxification program will provide you with a potent probiotic to help tip the scale back in favor of the “friendly” bacteria. Look for a probiotic that contains at least eight different strains of “friendly” bacteria and which is “enteric coated.” This ensures the bacteria are released in the intestines where they are needed and not in the stomach, where they can be destroyed by digestive juices.

- **Multivitamin/Mineral Support.** Few Americans actually obtain the minimum recommended amounts of vitamins and minerals from their diet, and yet our bodies cannot function optimally without them. When you add to that the fact that an unhealthy and toxin-burdened body cannot make complete use of vitamins and minerals as they are made available, you have a recipe for very poor health. As your body becomes progressively cleaner and toxin-free, its ability to uptake and utilize much-needed vitamins and minerals increases dramatically. This, in turn, super-charges your body, optimizing it to perform all of its functions flawlessly.
- **Oral Chelation.** Probably one of the most beneficial and yet unknown treatments available today, oral chelation is highly effective at assisting the body in the removal of dangerous heavy metals and toxins. A well-documented, firmly established medical practice, it draws toxins and metabolic wastes from the bloodstream, thereby promoting improved circulation, reduction of internal inflammation caused by free radicals, and anti-aging effects that remarkably increase a person's energy. Most oral chelation supplements will contain a handful of vitamins that are natural antioxidants, but the best oral chelation products will also contain an ingredient called EDTA (ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid). EDTA is a naturally safe chemical that passes through the body, taking toxins and heavy metals out with it. It is so safe, in fact, that according to current drug safety standards, it is nearly three-and-a-half times *less* toxic to the human system than aspirin.¹³

While it sounds like a large bill to fill, a good detoxification program will meet and/or exceed all these suggestions. Because detoxification is such an item of interest lately – and with good reason – your options are fairly open. By staying within the guidelines prescribed above, you can take a lot of the hassle out of figuring out if a program will meet your detoxification needs.

Holistic Health: Mind

“Over the last 30 years, rates of depression have been steadily increasing in Western societies. In the last 10 years, consumption of antidepressants has doubled in the most advanced Western countries. Today, more than 11 million Americans are taking antidepressants.”¹⁴

“Clinical studies suggest that 50 to 75 percent of all visits to the doctor are primarily related to stress, and that, in terms of mortality, stress poses a more serious risk factor than tobacco. In fact, eight out of ten of the most commonly used medications in the United States are intended to treat problems directly related to stress...”¹⁵

Statements like these are not hard to find in a book by Dr. David Servan-Schreiber, titled *The Instinct to Heal: Curing Stress, Anxiety, and Depression Without Drugs and Without Talk Therapy*. Fortunately, for every ounce of despair, he offers a pound of hope. Dr. Servan-Schreiber's book is just one in a dizzying array of informative and self-help books, audio recordings, and video presentations designed to help people move from stress, anxiety and depression (as well as all their attendant complications), to peace, calm, and mental/emotional well-being.

In his book, Dr. Servan-Schreiber moves among topics as diverse as physiology and nutrition to EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) and the healing power of animals. He

explores several natural, drug- and talk therapy-free treatments that capitalize on the mind's and heart's healing mechanisms for recovering from stress, anxiety and depression. In an age of mass drugging and endless psychological spinning, there has never been a more important message to the world than the one clearly stated in his book: Vibrant emotional and mental health is possible without the use of drugs or talk therapy.

Most people, when they think of reducing mental stressors in their lives, consider changes of scenery, attitude, jobs, etc. Though they may not directly think of it as running away from an issue, that is precisely what they are imagining. Others go to seminars to learn about time-management, stress-reduction techniques, stretching and exercising for release, and other well-known means of dealing with the effects of stress upon the mind and body.

What most people are not aware of, however, is that we are beset by stressors that we cannot even see. It's easy to become aware that we live in a polluted, toxic world. If we are honest enough to admit it, we can see how we have inadvertently dirtied the air, tainted the water and loaded the earth with contaminants. Try as we might, it is physically impossible at this time to distance ourselves from our species' collective waste products. Many of us have awakened into action, striving to live organically and urging our governments to help us guard and clean up our ailing Mother Earth. But an unseen, unnoticed, and unforgiving adversary is dogging our steps. Electromagnetic Fields (EMFs) are only recently becoming recognized for what they are: A ubiquitous form of pollution to which we unthinkingly continue to contribute on a daily basis, and which may very well have dire consequences.

In technical terms, an EMF is "the field of force associated with electric charge in motion, having both electric and magnetic components and containing a definite amount of electromagnetic energy."¹⁶ Translation: Any time you use electricity (e.g., plug in an appliance and/or turn it on, start an engine, flip a light switch, use a telephone or cell phone), you are creating a field of combined electricity and magnetism. Naturally, these fields occur in a wide range of frequencies and strengths. At the high there is cosmic radiation (the energy that the stars and celestial bodies exude) and at the low end is household electricity. Throw into the equation the microwaves with which we cook, the satellite transmissions we use to watch TV, and the radio waves our cell phones use, and we have a wide array of EMFs buzzing all around us, all the time.

The truth is, however, that human-made EMFs are on the rise and have been over the last 50 years to the point that health professionals all over the globe are beginning to consider them a serious threat. What's all the fuss? First, some numbers: "The United States is wired with 500,000 miles of high-voltage power lines. Industry, government and the military depend on 250,000 microwave relay links. Airliners see and are seen via radar. 9,000,000 broadcasting transmitters and microwave relay stations, and 30,000,000 CB radios flood our airways. Industry employs 35,000,000 electromagnetic devices."¹⁷ Second, recognize that as a result, "a typical American now gets a daily dosage of electromagnetic radiation up to 200 million times more intense than what his ancestors took in from the sun, stars, and other natural sources."¹⁸

One of the greatest concerns at present is simply that EMFs put added stress on our already overly-burdened bodies and minds. Conventional and complementary medical practitioners alike

agree that stress is destructive and a major contributor to disease today. Hans Selye, MD, PhD, DSc, the father of stress-health research at the American Stress Institute, states that 80% of illness in high-tech societies is stress related, 43% of adults suffer from adverse health related to stress, and 75 – 90% of doctor visits are stress related.¹⁹ In fact, Dr. Selye links stress to all manner of diseases and ailments from heart disease to mental, emotional and immune problems.

Where electropollution is concerned, the most aggravating forms of stressors are the kinds that reach us in pulses, such as from the use of cellular phones and other appliances that are routinely turned off and on. Prolonged bombardment by these “pulsing” stressors upsets normal functioning and disturbs mental and physical performance. A currently held “rainbarrel” concept of stress proposes that the effects of low-level EMFs “accumulate like drops of water in a barrel, leading to exhaustion, premature aging, poor performance, minor illness, and eventually chronic disease.”²⁰

One way to mitigate the harmful effects of mental and emotional stressors is to strengthen your personal biofield (the field of electrical energy that surrounds each person’s body). Scientists at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have researched and verified the human biofield. They have connected it with all the electrical activity that occurs inside the body: Nerve impulses deliver electrical impulses throughout the nervous system, the brain has a constantly active and complex electrical component and even the heart has its own electrical activity.

Scientists have proven repeatedly that when EMFs interact with the body and its bio-energies, there are physical, quantifiable *bio-effects* that can ultimately manifest as a variety of conditions including: fatigue, anxiety, emotional highs and lows, depression, headaches, migraines, allergies, hormonal imbalances, arthritis, hyperactivity, short attention span, frequent colds, and increased susceptibility to recurring illness and infection.²¹

There are several reasons why this knowledge is only recently coming to light. As with all other kinds of pollution, those in positions of high power and financial gain have much to lose if people start suspecting EMFs as possible causes of illness, disease, and ultimately, death. Power companies, the entertainment industry, communication networks, the military, and even the medical industry all rely very heavily on electricity, radio waves, radiation and other forms of EMFs. The truth is, our civilization is irreversibly dependent on electronics – that’s just a fact – and abolition of electromagnetic radiation is simply impossible, let alone impractical.

It is entirely appropriate to make an effort to protect ourselves from the mental, emotional, and physical damage that EMFs and other stressors can have on the body. In his book *Spontaneous Healing*, Dr. Weil gives several helpful ideas for avoiding EMFs. His suggestions include protecting yourself from higher frequency radiation by not working in an environment which exposes you to it (uranium mining, radiology, power plant maintenance); by not living near sources of it natural or otherwise (such as a nuclear waste disposal site); and by not letting doctors or dentists X-ray you without good reason.²² In the home, you would do best to avoid electric blankets and heating pads, since they generate large electrical fields and are right next to the body. Electric clock radios are considered dangerous for the same reason. Try putting them as far across the room as possible from your bed.

Dr. Joseph Mercola, another widely known and respected osteopathic doctor and holistic health practitioner recommends: “Don’t sit close to your TV set. Distance yourself at least 6 feet away.”²³ Additionally, he recommends that all appliances (e.g., computers, TVs, refrigerators) be placed against an outside wall, to keep from creating an EMF in an adjoining room.²⁴

I believe that, in addition to the suggestions made above, there is a product that is not only worth looking into, but experiencing firsthand. It’s called the “Q-Link” and it consists of a pendant and cord or chain that you wear around your neck up to 24 hours a day. In a nutshell, wearing the Q-Link pendant will “tune up your biofield through a resonant effect that harmonizes your [personal] energy.”²⁵ You can think of the Q-Link like a tuning fork, which helps remind your biofield of its optimal functioning state. “Worldly stress causes the biofield to become more chaotic and incoherent. The Q-Link reverses this process, ensuring efficiency, harmony, and balance.”²⁶

The science behind the Q-Link is impressive: many researchers and doctors from several universities and institutions from three different countries have verified its effectiveness with numerous statistical and double-blind studies using FDA licensed equipment. Over 250,000 people wear the Q-Link, including a sizeable number of world-class athletes and a host of medical professionals, including Deepak Chopra, MD.²⁷ Even the U.S. Academy at West Point uses it, and reports an increase in physical performance of up to 74%.²⁸ Among the many proven results that can be expected when using a Q-Link are lower stress, lower blood pressure, better oxygenation of blood cells, increased vitality, better sleep, increased focus and mental clarity, reduction or cessation of “jet lag,” mood stabilization, higher productivity, quicker post-exercise recovery, and improved performance for athletes.²⁹

According to the research I have done (including a lengthy review of several scientific studies surrounding Q-Link technology from the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*), the power of the Q-Link resides in its innovative and proprietary technology. Q-Link pendants house something called Sympathetic Resonance Technology™, or SRT. The theory behind SRT is that it interacts at the level of the human biofield by reinforcing particular frequencies that help moderate the body’s response to stress. Its inventors suggest that when you wear a Q-Link pendant (with its built-in SRT component) over the sternum, it exhibits maximum protective effects. This is due to the fact that “the heart is the single most important contributor to the biofield in terms of steady-state rhythms, and it exhibits the largest field strength of all the emitters of the body.”³⁰ In fact, the biofield emissions from the heart can be registered throughout and around the entire body.

In short, when you put on a Q-Link pendant, the SRT technology boosts the strength of your body’s unique biofield, thereby enhancing your body’s ability to resist the kind of stress that EMFs produce. The results, as illustrated in numerous professional and clinical studies can manifest as: better sleep, cessation of headaches, better bowel elimination, fewer sugar cravings, a more centered feeling, less mood swings, decrease in anxiety and restlessness, more emotional stability and feelings of centeredness, less digestive sensitivity, increased energy, reduction in light-headedness, cleared congestion of throat and lungs, lowered inflammation, improved muscle strength, improved athletic performance and endurance, and an overall feeling of good health.³¹

Beyond the application of a physical device to help mitigate the effects of stress on the mind and body, practitioners of holistic health and healing have long understood power of the mind to heal and calm itself. Indeed, some believe that a person's *imagination* is the least utilized health resource. Dr. Martin L. Rossman, Cofounder of the Academy for Guided Imagery states that the imagination "can be used to remember and recreate the past, develop insight into the present, influence physical health, enhance creativity and inspiration, and anticipate possible futures."³²

Actively using your imagination is a technique called *imagery*. There are three proven characteristics of imagery that make it such a valuable technique to use and to master:

1. It directly affects physiology (i.e., how your body functions).
2. It can provide insight and perspective into your health.
3. It has an intimate relationship with the emotions, which often underlie or are the roots of many common health conditions.

Imagery of various types has been used and shown to positively affect heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory patterns, brain-wave rhythms, gastrointestinal issues, sexual arousal, levels of hormones and neurotransmitters in the blood, immune system functioning, physical discomfort (e.g., neck, back, and joint pain), allergies, anxiety, urinary complaints, sprains, strains, infections, flu symptoms, broken bones, depression, and more! Research continues to confirm the many benefits of imagery. It is very well known to help with mood swings, anxiety and mental disorders, but it's benefits extend beyond the mind and into the realm of the body, as it is also used to explore diseases and symptoms, and is also proving useful for enhancing tolerance to medical procedures like MRIs and surgery. Best of all, using imagery is extremely easy to learn and to do. It can quickly become a wonderful and effective part of anyone's self-care regimen.

Holistic Health: Spirit

Though many health care practitioners – HHPs included – fear the daunting task of speaking of the subject with their clients, the truth is that there is really no substitute for a strong sense of personal spirituality. Far from the confines of "religiosity," spirituality refers to the search to know our true selves, to discover our connection to something beyond ourselves, and to grow in personal and collective consciousness. Even more ephemeral in nature than the mental or emotional components of holistic health, personal spirituality is nonetheless vastly important for the role it plays in health and healing.

Stories abound of the healing power of faith, prayer, and spiritual guides, teachings, and miraculous experiences. That the human species has expressed interest in the realm of spirituality since its infancy only confirms that it is inextricably tied to something "greater" that exists simultaneously within and outside of itself. Almost magically, when people embark on a quest to strengthen their personal spirituality, they discover new ways of relating to, understanding, and dealing with all manner of physical and emotional ailments. This shift in consciousness, in personal awareness, allows many people to heal themselves, to let themselves be healed, or to let their illnesses teach them lessons otherwise unlearned in life.

Throughout all of recorded history, movements have been afoot which have implored people to look beyond the skin and into the soul. Teachers of many faith traditions have extolled the value of what those of the Christian faith call the fruits of the spirit: “Love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, humility, and temperance.”³³ Buddhism teaches that a human’s purest essence is compassion, and all of its teachings and practices are intended to help a person’s innate compassion unfold organically. Such teachings encourage people to recognize that those who place their happiness in material, physical things – when such things fade or are lost – will be confused and empty.

People, vast numbers of them, are looking for something to make them feel at peace. Unfortunately, this has produced a big business. Demand creates product, whether marketed in trendy bottles or by religious organizations. In whole foods and alternative health stores all over the United States, entire aisles have been devoted to items that tout the ability to impart spiritual riches to those who purchase and use them. With a new label and a dash of patchouli scented oil, the same companies that produce lipstick and blush can offer the masses a lotion or after-bath body spray that can “provide focus and clarity of spirit...enhance positivity...[and even] enlightenment”.³⁴ The age-old danger of confusing physical with spiritual value has plumbed new depths.

Those misguided by such advertising may still find hope, however. Today, as throughout all the ages of humankind, people have been warned about obsessing on only the physical world. By believing in – and loving – only that which we can see, touch, hear, taste, and smell, we dull our spiritual receptors. That is, our focus becomes so trained on the physical world that the subtleties of energy, intuition, and intention are lost to us. Nevertheless, mystics all over the world have taught that all of us have the potential to exhibit spiritual energy and wisdom, and to thus gain those valuable unseen treasures. What is required is a spiritual practice, some regimen that calls forth the very gifts that are being sought. Practice patience to learn patience. Practice compassion to learn compassion. Practice love to learn love. Practice healing to be healed. The message is simple and true: Outer things do not by themselves a whole person make! Holistically well people do healthful things precisely because they are holistically healthy from the inside out!

In response to the commercialization of spirituality, spiritually-centered groups have arisen extolling the life-enhancing properties of a spiritually activated life. Feminism has fought back against a culture that pushes image above spirit. New Age groups have taught visualization, chanting, prayer, and contemplation – all activities that inspire the growth of an inner landscape. Wiccan and Pagan groups have reclaimed the beauty and power of the natural world. Buddhists train to appreciate the divine in everything, believing even that in the middle of our biggest issues and problems lie jewels that can transform us if we are willing to patiently sift through our problems to find them. All of these things help people develop spiritually by emphasizing patience, acceptance, introspection, gentleness, kindness, and service to others.

Recognizing the physical realm is a simple thing. We are accustomed to seeing with our earthly eyes, and have been trained by our cultures to appreciate certain physical things. Perceiving spiritual beauty, however, can be elusive. Sri Chinmoy suggested that when we see spiritual beauty:

*There can be quite a variety of feelings, but the main feeling will be that you want to embrace the whole world as your very own. You will feel that you are not only embracing the world, but also becoming the world itself. And then you will feel that there is nothing dark either within you or around you. Right now you see darkness all around you and if you are sincere with yourself, you will see darkness inside you as well. But when you have seen real spiritual beauty, you will immediately see that inside you is a flood of beauty and outside it is only a reflection of what is within.*³⁵

In essence, the ability to recognize a personal spirituality opens one up to experience connection with the divine that permeates everything. A common discovery made by those who have mystical experiences is an overwhelming feeling of peace and unity with all that exists, often accompanied by miraculous and spontaneous healing of the physical body. Spiritual traditions from all over the globe mark this as the highest mystical experience one can achieve.

While healing the body and mind is certainly possible without a strong sense of personal spirituality, those who maintain and exercise their spirituality often exhibit a sense of peace, serenity, and centeredness, even in the face of trauma, disease, and death. Certainly, as with the mind, a positive sense of connection to the “spirit” part of the body-mind-spirit triumvirate can only enhance a person’s health and well-being.

Conclusion

Holistic Health – that which arises from the perfect balance and health of the body, mind, and spirit – *is* attainable. It requires that we live a healthy lifestyle, pursuing those things that strengthen all three areas of our lives. In this way, we actually practice prevention; by keeping our bodies, minds, and spirit healthy, we perpetuate a state of being that is less prone to illness and disease. Yet it does not guarantee a life free from pain, illness, or sadness. What it *does* suggest is a swift recovery from these things. All people are healers with the ability to heal themselves. Taking care so that body, mind, and spirit are all healthy ensures that when illness or disease does overcome us, we will have the necessary strength on each level to regain wholeness in good time. Some ways to do this include decreasing our “body burden” through detoxification, reducing mental and emotional stressors through imagery and EMF protection, and seeking to expand and strengthen our personal spirituality. When taken all together, these measures go a long way in helping us to stay healthy, prevent disease, and to enjoy a life of true holistic well-being.

¹ Goldberg, Burton. *Alternative Medicine: The Definitive Guide*, 2nd ed. © 2002

² <http://www.bodyburden.com>

³ <http://www.ewg.org/reports/bodyburden/es.php>

⁴ Goldberg, Burton. *Alternative Medicine: The Definitive Guide*, 2nd ed. © 2002, pg. 168.

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- ⁵ http://depts.washington.edu/eqhlth/pages/more_questions.pdf
- ⁶ <http://www.DrNatura.com>
- ⁷ Global Institute for Alternative Medicine, *Toxicity and Detoxification*, © 2002, pg. 7.
- ⁸ <http://www.ewg.org/reports/bodyburden/findings.php>
- ⁹ Weil, Andrew, M.D., *Spontaneous Healing*, © 1995, pg. 36.
- ¹⁰ Goldberg, Burton. *Alternative Medicine: The Definitive Guide*, 2nd ed. © 2002, pg. 169.
- ¹¹ Goldberg, Burton. *Alternative Medicine: The Definitive Guide*, 2nd ed. © 2002, pg. 847.
- ¹² *Vegetarian Times*, March 1998.
- ¹³ Goldberg, Burton. *Alternative Medicine: The Definitive Guide*, 2nd ed. © 2002, pg. 146.
- ¹⁴ Servan-Schreiber, Dr. David, *The Instinct to Heal: Curing Stress, Anxiety, and Depression Without Drugs and Without Talk Therapy*, ©2003, pg. 162.
- ¹⁵ Servan-Schreiber, Dr. David, *The Instinct to Heal: Curing Stress, Anxiety, and Depression Without Drugs and Without Talk Therapy*, ©2003, pg. 7.
- ¹⁶ <http://www.answers.com/electromagnetic%20field>
- ¹⁷ <http://www.bewisepolarize.com/radiation%20harmful.htm>
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ *21st Century Health Breakthroughs: New Discoveries from the Next Generation of Health Science*, Spring 2003, Vol. 2, No. 1, pg. 1.
- ²⁰ Rubik, Dr. Beverly, *Sympathetic Resonance Technology™: Scientific Foundation and Summary of Biologic and Clinical Studies*, The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, Vol. 8, No. 6, 2002, pg. 824.
- ²¹ Goldberg, Burton. *Alternative Medicine: The Definitive Guide*, ©2002, pp. 211-212.
- ²² Weil, Dr. Andrew. *Spontaneous Healing*, ©1995, pg. 168.
- ²³ http://www.mercola.com/cgi/pf/article/emf/emf_dangers.htm
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ http://clarus.com/p_how_works.shtml
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ *21st Century Health Breakthroughs: New Discoveries from the Next Generation of Health Science*, Spring 2003, Vol. 2, No. 1, pg. 16.
- ²⁸ *21st Century Health Breakthroughs: New Discoveries from the Next Generation of Health Science*, Spring 2003, Vol. 2, No. 1, pg. 14.
- ²⁹ *21st Century Health Breakthroughs: New Discoveries from the Next Generation of Health Science*, Spring 2003, Vol. 2, No. 1.
- ³⁰ Rubik, Dr. Beverly, *Sympathetic Resonance Technology™: Scientific Foundation and Summary of Biologic and Clinical Studies*, The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, Vol. 8, No. 6, 2002, pg. 828.
- ³¹ Rubik, Dr. Beverly, *Sympathetic Resonance Technology™: Scientific Foundation and Summary of Biologic and Clinical Studies*, The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, Vol. 8, No. 6, 2002.
- ³² Goldberg, Burton, *Alternative Medicine: The Definitive Guide*, 2nd ed., ©2002, pg. 245
- ³³ *King James Bible*, Galatians 5:22-23
- ³⁴ <http://ship-of-fools.com>, “Spiritual Beauty for Sale”
- ³⁵ www.srichinmoylibrary.com