

MIND-BODY MEDICINE

-Using the Mind to Heal the Body

-A series of excerpts from Newsweek, September 27, 2004

Hypnosis is actually a way of enhancing people's control, of teaching them how to control aspects of their body's function and sensation that they thought they couldn't.

- Dr. David Spiegel, professor and associate chair of psychiatry, Stanford University School of Medicine

Note: Hypnosis is also known as visualization, creative visualization, deep relaxation, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and deep breathing. Meditation is self-hypnosis. Chinese Qigong is also a form of hypnosis

Brain Check

Scientists are mapping the pathways that link emotion to health

By Herbert Benson, M.D., Julie Corliss and Geoffrey Cowley

- That thoughts and feelings can affect our health is hardly news. Viewed through the lens of 21st-century science, anxiety, alienation and hopelessness are not just feelings. Neither are love, serenity and optimism. All are physiological states that affect our health just as clearly as obesity or physical fitness.
- The federal government's five-year-old Integrated Neural Immune Program will spend \$16 million on mind-body research next year
- Medicare now reimburses for certain relaxation techniques administered by psychologists. Hospitals, for their part, are opening mind-body clinics.
- ...nearly half of all Americans used mind-body interventions in 2002. The respondents embraced practices ranging from deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation to meditation, hypnosis and guided imagery.
- Experts now believe that 60 to 90 percent of all doctor visits involve stress-related complaints.
- Mounting evidence suggests that any number of soothing emotional experiences can improve our physical health... In studies of HIV-positive men, researchers at UCLA have found that optimism is associated with stronger immune-cell function. And research at Harvard suggests that the "relaxation response"—the deep sense of calm we can achieve through yoga, prayer or simple deep-breathing exercises—can help counter the effects of chronic stress. We now believe that the body produces more nitric oxide when deeply relaxed, and that this molecule acts as an antidote to cortisol and other potentially toxic stress hormones.
- Yet mind-body techniques can improve almost anyone's quality of life. Stress-related illness often defies conventional remedies, and when we persist with high-tech pills and procedures, the costs of treatment can easily outweigh the benefits. Mind-body medicine offers a saner starting place. If it fulfills half its promise, it could reduce medical costs while improving our health and our lives. And whatever its limitations, it has the advantage of doing no harm.

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Altered States –rethinking hypnosis

Hypnosis can help with problems from anxiety to pain. How it works, and what it does in the brain

By David Noonan

- At 27, Beth, an Indiana housewife, came down with chronic diarrhea that plagued her for the next three years...Doctor after doctor told her it was stress-related. She tried diet changes and medicines, but nothing helped. Then she went to see Dr. Marc Oster, a Chicago-area psychologist. After 12 sessions of hypnosis with Oster, during which Beth explored the traumatic events that preceded her illness (including her husband's agonizing two-week stay in a burn unit), the problem disappeared.
- Despite widely held misconceptions about hypnosis (in part because of its long history as a type of entertainment), a growing body of research supports the ancient practice as an effective tool in the treatment of a variety of problems, from anxiety to chronic pain.
- "One of the interesting ironies about hypnosis is that old fantasy that it takes away control," says Dr. David Spiegel, professor and associate chair of psychiatry at Stanford University School of Medicine and a leading expert on the practice. **"It's actually a way of enhancing people's control, of teaching them how to control aspects of their body's function and sensation that they thought they couldn't."**
- Hypnosis is "a form of highly focused attention," says Spiegel—an induced state of mind that enables people to alter the way they perceive and process reality.
- Besides pain management and stress reduction, habit control is another popular clinical application of hypnosis; it's routinely used by people who want to quit smoking. It has also been used successfully as an alternative to sedation during invasive medical procedures like angiography. And at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Dr. Peter Bloom, clinical professor of psychiatry and past president of the International Society of Hypnosis, sometimes uses it to enhance therapy sessions. "Hypnosis allows us to interact with the people who seek our care in more than one dimension," says Bloom. "It involves the totality of the person. Clinically, when I get stuck, I use hypnosis and see if that gives me a different way of linking up with them." As it is practiced by medical professionals like Bloom and Spiegel, hypnosis is generally safe.
- Practitioners often use vivid imagery when making hypnotic suggestions. Dr. Olafur Palsson, a psychologist at the University of North Carolina, developed a detailed, seven-session hypnosis protocol for the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome, a disorder often accompanied by abdominal pain.
- Several studies using positron emission tomography (PET) have looked at what goes on in the brain during hypnosis..."It's not just a fantasy," says Spiegel. "It's not just telling people things because that's what you think they want to hear. If you think you are seeing color, you actually see it, and your brain acts as though it's seeing it."

Forgive and Let live

Revenge is sweet, but letting go of anger at those who wronged you is a smart route to good health

By Jordana Lewis and Jerry Adler

- The subject is one of the hottest fields of research in clinical psychology today, with more than 1,200 published studies, up from just 58 as recently as 1997.
- Research suggests that forgiveness works in at least two ways. One is by reducing the stress of the state of unforgiveness, a potent mixture of bitterness, anger, hostility, hatred, resentment and fear (of being hurt or humiliated again). These have specific physiologic consequences—such as increased blood pressure and hormonal changes—linked to cardiovascular disease, immune suppression and, possibly, impaired neurological function and memory. One study examined 20 individuals in happy relationships, matched with 20 in troubled relationships. The latter had higher baseline levels of cortisol, a hormone associated with impaired immune function—which shot up even further when they were asked to think about their relationships. "It happens down the line, but every time you feel unforgiveness, you are more likely to develop a health problem," says Everett Worthington, executive director of A Campaign for Forgiveness Research.
- "It's a process, not a moment," says Dr. Edward M. Hallowell, a Harvard psychiatrist and the author of "Dare to Forgive." Forgiveness, he emphasizes, has to be cultivated; it goes against a natural human tendency to seek revenge and the redress of injustice. For that reason, he recommends doing it with help—of friends, a therapist or through prayer.

Note: One of the key platforms of Patrick Wanis' behavioral approach is forgiveness: letting go of your own anger and suffering, and releasing the need for revenge. Forgiveness does not imply reconciliation or the condoning of behavior. This Newsweek article supports the health and physiological benefits of forgiveness.

Combination Therapy

Mind-body techniques may not cure cancer, but they make living with it a whole lot easier

By Peg Tyre

- These days tens of thousands of cancer patients are using mind-body practices like conscious relaxation, talk therapy, music therapy, visualization, tai chi, qigong and prayer to help them deal with their disease. Eighty percent of cancer patients report using some kind of complementary medicine, a category that includes mind-body techniques as well as nutritional supplements and other holistic approaches. And no wonder. Scientists have found that mind-body practices help patients sleep better and cope with the pain, anxiety and depression often associated with traditional cancer treatments. Recent research has shown that mind-body practices can subtly enhance a cancer patient's immune system, too.

- Dr. Barrie Cassileth, chief of integrative medicine at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York. Of the nation's 26 major cancer centers, 14 now offer complementary-medicine programs, mostly in the form of nutritional counseling, support groups and instruction in guided imagery...**Lorenzo Cohen, head of integrative medicine at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, predicts that mind-body techniques will soon become as much a part of standard cancer care as chemotherapy or radiation.**
- Repeated studies have shown that conscious relaxation and meditation can counteract stress by lowering heart rate and blood pressure, and reducing levels of the stress hormones cortisol, epinephrine and norepinephrine in the bloodstream. They also enhance immune function. In a study published this month, researchers at the Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center observed 227 breast-cancer patients for 10 years. Scientists found that the patients who received regular relaxation training and attended therapy and a support group had higher T-cell function than those who didn't participate in mind-body training.
- **For cancer patients, mind-body practices can be a blessing. Here's how they help:**
Reduce stress: A Harvard study showed that meditation lowered heart rate and blood pressure and reduced stress hormones.
Improve mood: In Canada, cancer patients reported less anxiety and depression.
Enhance overall health: Cancer patients in Ohio who learned conscious relaxation ate better, stopped smoking and showed marked improvement in immune function.

For a Happy Heart

Depression, loneliness and anger all take a toll on your cardiac health. New research shows what can help

By Anne Underwood

- It should come as no surprise that emotions affect the heart—and not only in metaphorical terms. Suffer a fright, and your heart begins to pound. Get angry, and your blood pressure rises...Upon further investigation, anger and hostility were a problem, but not simple ambition or competitive drive. Today, scientists are using high-tech instruments to elucidate the mind-body connections that damage the heart. ... And they are applying an understanding of all these mechanisms to help point the way to nonsurgical treatments that may help trim our soaring medical bills.
- If belligerence puts people at risk, science increasingly shows that a life of quiet desperation does, too. Study after study has now confirmed that factors like social isolation, depression and poor marital relations can contribute to heart disease. Patients who are depressed at the time of bypass surgery are more than twice as likely to die in the next five years as patients without clinical depression, although their disease is of comparable severity.
- In a major study in the Lancet this month, researchers surveyed more than 11,000 heart-attack sufferers from 52 countries and found that in the year before their heart attacks, the patients had been under significantly more stress—from work, family, financial troubles, depression and other causes—than some 13,000 healthy control subjects. "Severe stress didn't pose as great a risk as smoking," admits Dr. Salim Yusuf of McMaster University, senior investigator on the study. "But it was

comparable to risk factors like hypertension and abdominal obesity. That's much greater than we thought before."

- **At every stage of heart disease, state of mind appears to play a role.** "During the 1991 gulf war, fewer fatalities in Israel were due to Scud missiles than to [heart attacks] among frightened elderly people," says Stanford University stress expert Robert Sapolsky...But thanks to high-tech scanning devices, scientists are now able to show that **psychosocial factors play a role in the initial phases of the disease process** as well. Psychologist Timothy Smith of the University of Utah...reported that couples with no history of heart trouble who were hostile or domineering in their interactions over money, kids, in-laws and household chores were more likely to have this type of damage. "The more strained their relationships, the more severe this silent atherosclerosis tended to be," he adds.
- Dr. Dean Ornish, president of the nonprofit Preventive Medicine Research Institute in Sausalito, Calif., has the most published work in this area. Not surprisingly (coming from the nation's leading proponent of an ultra-low-fat diet), a stringent diet and regular exercise are two pillars of his approach. But stress management is equally important, he insists. Stress reducers like yoga, meditation and group sharing have direct effects on cardiac risk, lowering levels of stress hormones and helping to relax arteries. They also have indirect effects. Participants gain a sense of well-being that helps them stick to a diet and exercise plan...If stress reduction makes you more likely to exercise, a half hour on the treadmill, in turn, lowers stress and depression. "Diet and exercise alone are like a two-legged stool," says Dr. Redford Williams, director of the Behavioral Medicine Research Center at Duke University. "It's more stable with the third leg, stress management."
- But does it really work? In one trial, patients who adopted Ornish's radical lifestyle changes reduced their atherosclerosis in one year and showed even greater improvements at five years, while those on standard care grew steadily worse. "Patients in our studies showed a 91 percent reduction in angina in a few weeks to a few months without the trauma or expense of angioplasty or bypass," says Ornish.

ADDENDUM: Hypnosis for pain and anxiety

The April 29, 2000, Lancet Medical Journal reported on a study to evaluate the effectiveness of hypnosis in easing pain and anxiety associated with undergoing minimally invasive surgical procedures such as angiograms and angioplasties, nephrostomies (kidney drainage), and liver biopsies. The researchers at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital, Boston, found that hypnosis was more effective and safer than either of the controls: Hypnosis had a long-lasting effect on pain and anxiety; even four hours after the start of the procedure, hypnotized patients were doing much better. And the longer the procedure lasted, the greater the difference was between the standard care and hypnosis groups.

In the United States, the National Institutes of Health have issued consensus statements supporting the use of hypnosis for pain related to cancer...hypnosis, and relaxation techniques are included in guidelines on the management of pain associated with cancer that have been published by the US National Comprehensive Cancer Network. -British Medical Journal –September, 2000