

Self-healing and Self-creating Forces

The brain is one of the most amazing parts of the human body. A common myth is that human beings only use about 10% of their brain. But recent studies show that this is not true. Scientists have been able to show that most of our brain is in use for most of the time. With that in mind, it is clear that brain health and function becomes important and can be done with the following:

- 1.) Eat a balanced diet. This will help reduce the risk of acquiring dementia, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and midlife obesity, to name a few.
- 2.) Exercise regularly
- 3.) Keep the brain active (i.e. using brain training exercises)



Our cognitive health can help us engage in healing the rest of our body. And when one wishes to endeavor, self-healing and self-created forces are available to those that are willing to go that path and not just rely on pharmaceuticals.

A good way to start is by looking inward. Body awareness and working with your breath are two good methods that support you in this pursuit.



Below is a description of a body awareness exercise you can start with:

Body awareness can be started by making an inventory of your body. Find a quiet place and sit or lay down, whichever is most comfortable for you. Close your eyes so you are less distracted by what is around you. Start with the feet and work your way up the body slowly. Note as you slowly dwell on the feet as to how they feel. How does your contact with the ground feel? Are there any points of tension or pain in the feet and/or toes? Then feel your ankles – is there any tension there? And just note each time you feel tension, pain, or discomfort in any part of your body. From the ankles you move up to your lower thighs, then the knee, and then the upper thigh. Try tightening and releasing the muscles in each location mentioned. Each time note what the status of these parts of your body is. You will notice that you might begin to feel tired and relaxed as you take this inventory. If you are lying down, you might even find yourself drifting off and falling asleep. This is perfectly alright. When you awake, continue where you left off or try going farther the next time. It is important to not judge yourself while doing this. As you reach your hips and groin region, do the same. When addressing the pelvic region, tighten and release your buttocks. As you travel up to your stomach muscles, feel how that region feels. You might turn or move slightly to see how that whole region feels. Then as you travel up to your chest and lungs, become aware of your breathing. Is there any tension there? Where do you notice you are breathing from on the in-breath? Is it from the lungs or the lower belly? And just notice it. Do not try to change it or alter the rhythm. But be aware of it. This step will start integrating your breath into this awareness. Then, flip your attention to the backside of your body and travel all the way from the tailbone up your spine and feel along the spine. Note what tension, if any, exists along the spine and in the connecting muscle tissue in your back. You might want to move slightly to feel more. Once you reach your upper back, go down to your hands, and feel your fingertips and hands. Doing the same as before go all the way up the arm, occasionally tightening your hands and arm muscles and

noting any pain and/ or tension on these areas- and just be aware of it. Address the shoulders and move them about feeling whatever it is to feel there.

Continue doing this from the neck on up. Note your complete facial muscle structure, your jaw, and your teeth. Were they clenched or relaxed? Do you feel tension in the jaw? Try moving your jaw slightly and note what you feel. See if you can feel your eyes and nose and ears. Note how the whole head feels as you turn it slightly on its axis and from side to side. See if you can even feel your hair. How is it as you put your fingers through your hair?

It is quite possible as you note tension and pain in various places, you might also start becoming aware of emotions rising up as you focus on any certain part of your body. Again, just be aware of it. The more you practice this, the easier this will be to discern. Keep in mind, do not "search" for tension, pain, or even emotions. This is more of a practice of "being" and allowing that what is to be noticed. Also be aware of your breathing with more practice. Notice if you stop breathing at some point. Does it happen every time at the same place? Or do you notice your breath getting shallower? Or as you continue, does your breathe become freer and do you feel more volume?

These are all rhetorical questions mentioned to help guide you into yourself and create an awareness of your body and the space that exists around it and within it.



Breathing can not only be an accompaniment to the body awareness exercise mentioned above but it can be done as a separate exercise. The breath is the most important thing we do on a continual basis- and most of us do it unconsciously. However, when we become conscious of our breathing, we can truly focus on ourselves and transform the areas where we feel blocked and gain new energy and perspectives in our lives and heal physical and emotional issues.

There are two methods of breath work that I recommend to initiate self-healing and gather self-creating forces. One is the Middendorf technique, created by Ilse Middendorf, and the other is Holotropic Breathwork, which was developed by Stanislov Grof.

The Middendorf technique is a very gentle approach and allows one to truly experience your natural breathing pattern. It is an interactive and integrative experience of allowing the breath to come and go without interference enabling the person to unwind and attain a fulfillment of true balance. Feeling, experiencing, and connecting to the breath's natural, harmonic rhythms can help you connect to vitality, resolve stress, flow with instead of reacting to life's challenges, thereby maintaining clarity and effectiveness in communication.

The Holotropic Breathwork is a technique that involves a more intense use of your breathing. Ideally, the subject is lying down on a mat and will start to first breathe in deeply and then exhale a few times and then return to a normal rhythm of breathing. Then the subject will be instructed by a guide to start breathing rapidly in and out- kind of like the breathing that expectant mothers practice before giving birth and engage in during the birth process. It is almost to the point of hyperventilating but if done correctly, you won't hyperventilate. That is why it is best to do this method with a well- trained facilitator. The breathing will be done to music which is turned up to a loud volume and compiled especially to address the chakras (energy centers, of which there are 7) in your body. The music combined with your breathing can move you into an altered state of mind and can be very life changing.

I feel that one of the most important aspect of this work though, is the integrative process that should follow the breathwork session. And this could also be said for the simple body awareness exercise mentioned above. If you experience anything – for example, you get an image in your mind or deep emotions start to well up inside you- it is important to integrate that experience by doing something creative that can symbolize what you experienced. It is encouraged to paint, draw, or write something after such an exercise. It gives voice to that which is within you. Sometimes, we can't really understand fully what we felt or saw until we try to

express it through some creative medium. Furthermore, by giving whatever we experienced a voice, we honor that part of us and that becomes integrated into our body, further enabling true emotional and physical healing.

Being a body-oriented mental health practitioner, I was trained in the approach that all emotions and all experiences that one has in life are stored in the body. The body never forgets. Gabor Mate, a well-known Hungarian born doctor whom now lives in Canada, and has documented through his own case studies the deep connection between the psyche and the body and medical illnesses that can ensue due to trauma and unreleased emotions. His book, "When the Body says No" draws a correlation between trauma experienced and the outbreak of such illnesses as any autoimmune disease (Rheumatoid arthritis, Lupus, Scleroderma...), chronic pain, chronic fatigue syndrome, Fibromyalgia, Multiple Sclerosis, or even cancer. Thru his various case studies he reports from over the many years of practice, he presents astounding proof with deeply descriptive profiles that help support his thesis.

What does this suggest? It suggests that an honest look at your own childhood and background can be very helpful in maintaining your health. It is something many people choose to avoid, not wanting to venture into painful past memories. Psychologically, denial is one of the most common and well-used self defense mechanisms the mind/ brain has to offer. And it does help us at the moment. When we are faced with trauma at the moment, it is often too much for the psyche and mind to handle. We might wipe the incident from our mind totally or play it down- making it out to not be as bad as it was. But in reality, all these events and all your emotions get stored in your body- somewhere! Hence, my aforementioned advice to start with simple body awareness.

If one decides to venture out and do this inner work, it is not only recommended to do what is called in psychological circles as "Inner child" work- but also undergo some type of body-oriented Psychotherapy or Trauma therapy. I find not only Gabor Mate to be a leader in this field, but also Peter Levine and Roger Woolger.

Peter Levine, a well-renowned body-oriented Psychologist and Trauma Therapist, has developed a body release technique called Somatic Experiencing®. Here the body is at the forefront and Levine has developed various ingenious subtle body techniques that enable a person to release the trauma that has been held by the body. The method starts with the client's body awareness and works with their body memory to release shock trauma.

Roger Woolger, a renowned Jungian analyst, also developed a body- release technique called Deep Memory Process® that addresses trauma stored in the body and releasing it. This process uses a blend of active imagination, Reichian body work, and Moreno's Psychodrama to achieve the release needed. It is a process that is deeply reliant on body awareness and active imagination to produce any clear results. The most sobering result of this process is that a client can be presented with deep hidden complexes that one has subconsciously harbored over the years and very possibly since birth or even whilst as a fetus in the mother's womb. Being aware of the complexes is an integral step in healing.

It is with Roger Woolger's work where I realized how important the Imagination could play in helping clients engage the healing process. Bringing a person into a light trance state and allowing them to create a space in their mind where they feel safe and in control can be enormously beneficial for the client. First, it empowers the person to create something that is also a connection to their inner self. Secondly, they can use this space to even look at their physical illness. I have used this technique to help people look at cancer for example. In their imagination, they can bring this invader into their minds eye and engage with it. I had one client that suffered from prostate cancer. He was in remission but lived with the constant dread of it returning. The fear hung over him like a Guillotine. However, in the mind's realm and the space he created, he brought the cancer before him and he claimed it was a huge poisonous viper. As guide, I instructed him that he had absolute control in this space. Nothing could harm him here. In borrowing from Shamanic traditions, I suggested he call on any Spirit guide or animal that he needed to help him here. The client insisted that he do this alone. But he called up a huge sword that looked like Excalibur. He wielded it back and forth. Since I believe in creating the movement, I handed him a stick to hold that made it feel like he had a sword in his hand. I had him move the hand as he did in his mind's eye- giving it a more realistic feel. I find this very important in getting a true body release. Allow the body to move as it needs with the sword, I suggested to the client. He moved and writhed and then thrust the sword with a huge yell from his gut into the huge viper, gutting and killing it. He hacked away at it

until he felt that it was absolutely dead. The client heaved in great gasps and was sweat drenched. Then the client lit the viper's corpse afire and let it burn- also a very symbolic event of transmutation. The client recently called me and was delighted that he was now 10 years free of cancer and living well. He thanked me for killing his snake- at which I retorted, You killed the snake- I only guided you. Never give your power away. He heartily agreed and acknowledged the well-meant lesson.



Another example of using the imagination as a healing tool was used by a client of mine that was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. She had previously been almost fully incapacitated and was unable to move, walk, or stand. With great effort, she would try to force herself up and move. It seemed to be pointless and impossible. However, she had went into that space in her mind's eye and envisioned herself to be in a pyramid. She sat in the middle of this pyramid, in which white light flooded into it. As the white light covered her body, she saw a black like fluid flowing out of her body. At the first time she saw this, she was so shocked, she came out of the trance. After convincing her that nothing could happen, it was her space and she had total control of it, she went back in and repeated the process. Again, a black fluid was leaving her body out of various orifices in her mind's eye. She repeated this trance type meditation several times. After a month, she was able to stand, walk, and move. What is important here is that it is the client that picked the pyramid out and envisioned what she saw. I only played the guide and would ask appropriate targeted questions so that she would be in contact with her body and where she felt changes and how the light affected her. It is truly an amazing process to witness and an affirmation that the mind itself can play a powerful role in healing. This is not to say that she completely healed herself on MS. However, the remission remained long and her mobility to this date has not been impaired. Subsequent reports though, from the client, report a noticeable decrease in comfort and health when exposed to heavily stressful situations. This suggests that continuous meditative practice would be beneficial to the client to continue good health and decrease stress.



Noting what Imagination techniques can do, it is also worthwhile stating that meditation can also be a very helpful tool to achieve self-healing. Stillness can be so beneficial for the mind, body, and spirit and can support regeneration of one's energy reserves.

What other methods are available to you to induce self-healing and self-creating forces? If you have an open mind and have no bias against alternative methods, I would suggest also Jikiden Reiki. Jikiden Reiki is an ancient Japanese method of “Hands-on” healing. The belief is that Universal energy is channeled through the individual giving it. My own experiences have been indescribable as client and also as practitioner. When I first experienced Reiki over 15 years ago, I didn’t think much of it. I was not open to it at the time and therefore, I experienced nothing. Almost 7 years later, I happened upon Reiki again and was much more open to the practice and also felt the energy being given. Shortly thereafter, I also came upon Jikiden Reiki, which is the purest form of Reiki and closest to that that the founder Mikao Usui developed in the early part of the 1900’s. It can be used as an accompaniment to modern medicinal techniques. I find the strength in Jikiden Reiki lies in the intuitive process and the ability for the client to truly focus on themselves. It is a superb relaxation technique as well. And if you learn Jikiden Reiki or any other form of Reiki, you can give yourself the treatment, thereby giving rise to self-healing.

In closing, there are many options that are available to you to induce self-healing and gather self-creating forces within yourself. The above are just a few. There is also Yoga, and Ayurveda Medicine, just to name a couple more. What is important is that you make a start somewhere and build a rapport with your body. The journey inwards will be the most valuable journey you ever can make. And as the old Zen saying goes, “The path is your destination”. Happy travels!

