

ISSUE NO. 2

ASIA-PACIFIC EDITION

JUN - AUG 2019

# esteem

FOR YOUR PSYCHOLOGICAL  
WELLNESS

**Ask the psychologist**  
Alone in marriage?

**Plastic surgery**  
Nip and tuck or  
leave it be?

**How parents' mood**  
affect children

**Managing emotions for**  
business value creation



**EMOTION  
&  
TRAUMA**

# 4 WAYS YOUR EMOTIONS MAY BE SABOTAGING YOUR HEALTH

BY DR. WENDY NICKERSON AND JEANNETTE FOLAN

**N**o doubt you've heard that stress can contribute to many health issues. The idea that stress is related to physical health was first conceived in the late 1960s, when psychiatrists Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe created a stress scale that included 43 common life experiences. Over 5,000 medical patients participated in their survey, and the results showed a clear correlation between dealing with difficult circumstances and the ability to maintain one's mental and physical wellbeing.

The higher the stress score and the more challenging the stressors, the greater the chance the patient's health would decline in one form or another.

Fast forward 50 years and umpteen research studies later, we are now learning that EVERY emotion, pleasant or unpleas-

ant, has an impact on the physical body. Scientists refer to this in medical terms as Psychoneuroimmunology.

This is the study of how our thoughts, beliefs and attitudes dictate the quality of our health. Holding in anger about your ex? You might end up with high blood pressure, headaches or even hemorrhoids. Having a hard time letting go of grief? You may experience digestive problems, fatigue, headaches, chest pains or sore muscles. Happiness and peace, on the other hand, boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, decrease aches and pains and increase life expectancy.

## MIND

Some experts say that our emotions come from our thoughts. Research has shown that our thoughts are running on autopilot roughly 46% of the time. The autopilot



'Default Network' kicks in whenever we're planning, daydreaming or mulling things over. It's located in the part of the brain that scans our history and calculates our future based on the stream of present incoming information.

The Default Network's counterpart is the Direct Experience Network, which is highly engaged when we are experiencing something new—like your first walk on the beach—but stops being engaged when that repeated experience gets filed away in the Default Network's memory bank. This is why your walks on the beach probably now entail a lot of daydreaming or unconscious ruminating over the past or future.

That same research shows that being in a mindless state does NOT make us feel happy. If our emotions come from our thoughts, and we're spending nearly half our time in a numbed-out state, how does this affect our health? How do we disengage from operating on autopilot?

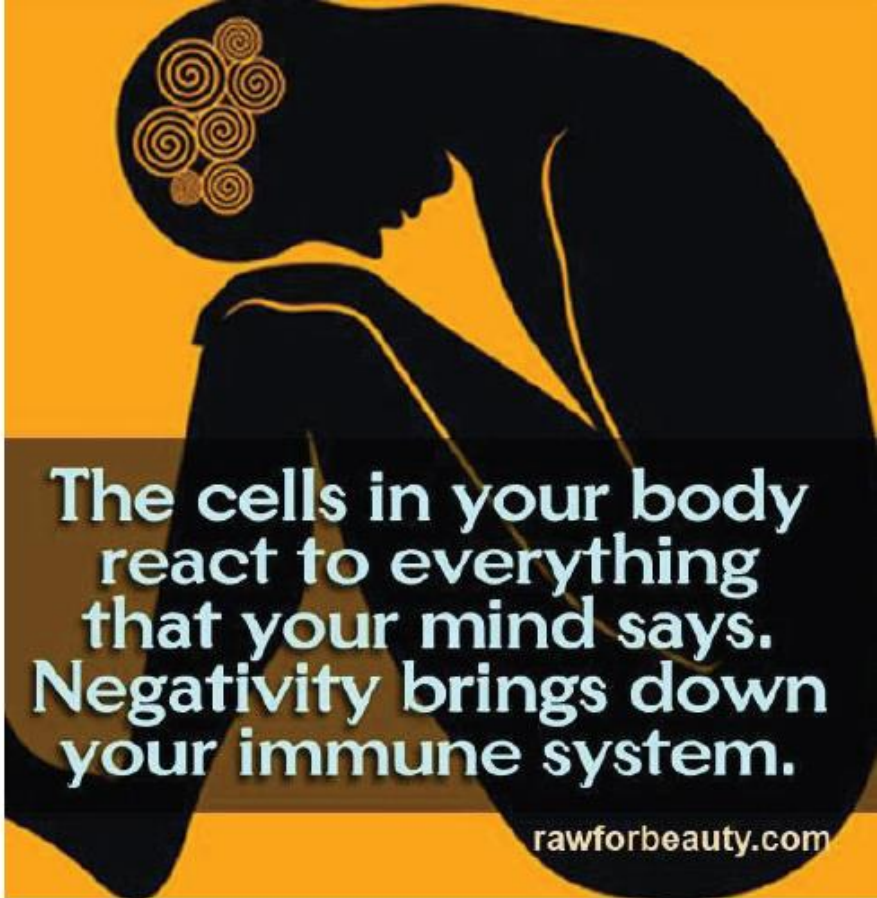
The answer, as you may have guessed, is **MINDFULNESS**. Mindfulness trains the brain to focus on what we are experiencing in this particular moment. It commands our physical body to be fully present, helping us to NOT react to our emotions. Because mindfulness techniques strengthen the mind-body connection, they enhance our nervous system, greatly improving the quality of our relationships and fostering more empathy and less reactivity.

Bruce Lipton, Ph.D. has carried out countless studies demonstrating that our attitude, level of optimism and mental state are key factors which determine whether or not we 'inherit' diseases. However, most people have difficulty mastering the ongoing chatter in their minds without first receiving assistance to improve their mental health. Holistic mental health coaches have been trained expansively in this area.

### **BODY**

Did you know that we can boost our emotional health with the aid of our physical bodies? Besides the recommended 30 minutes of exercise daily, there are many ways to rev up your 'happy hormones' such as dancing to upbeat music, taking a cold shower or hot bath, walking barefoot on grass, laughing, doing yoga or tai chi, getting a massage...the list is endless!

Our bodies and minds need adequate



**The cells in your body react to everything that your mind says. Negativity brings down your immune system.**

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nutrition to function at their best. For example, many people take medications for depression and anxiety despite all of the research indicating equal results by merely adding Vitamin D3, B12, the Omegas and supplements to our diet. This simple yet often overlooked fix is worth further consideration.

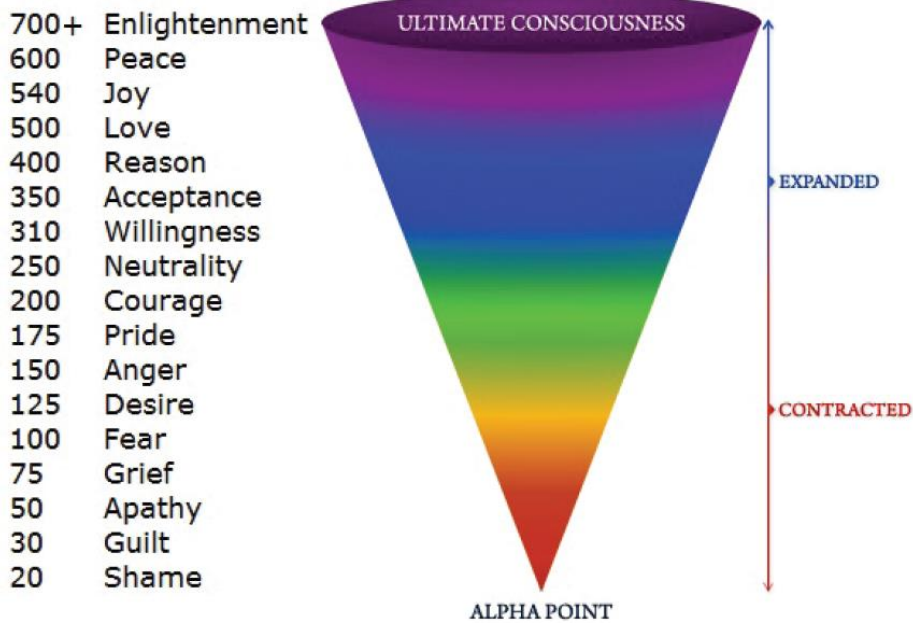
Dr. Stephen Porge's research on the polyvagal theory further elaborates on the importance of having a healthy gut in order for the brain to function properly and develop a positive mindset. This finding is cutting edge, explaining in detail the detrimental effects of consuming foods containing GMO, gluten, preservatives and pesticides. The polyvagal nerve is connected to the nervous system, directly affecting how secure we feel in our world.

### **SPIRIT**

The Oxford English dictionary defines spirit as "the non-physical part of a person which is the seat of emotions and character; the soul". Though intangible, it appears everywhere in our lives and affects our well-being.

Research studies indicate that those who have a spiritual practice and feel connected to the Divine have fewer hospital visits and heal much faster after surgery. The mere knowledge of having a special pur-

# OMEGA



pose here on Earth provides a buffer that transcends all understanding.

According to the research conducted by Bartolo (2018), hope can be connected to spirituality as it often allows for an individual to trust in something greater than themselves and in the possibility of positive future outcomes. The idea of hope has definitive roots in positive psychology and is comprised of optimistic thought patterns which promote character strengths and resiliency in health and healing. These findings suggest that hope not only speaks to one's character but is a concept we can learn and practise.

## ENERGY

Our emotions are actually energy in motion throughout our bodies. According to Dr. David Hawkins, every emotion has a vibrational frequency that either helps or hinders physical health. For example, when we find ourselves in lower vibrational emotions such as guilt, fear, shame or sadness, our muscles tighten, constrict or atrophy. In his book, *Power vs. Force*, he discusses the levels of consciousness contingent upon the vibrational level of our emotions. Joy, positive expectation, gratitude, trust and curiosity increase levels of consciousness and overall health. Studies show how anger can lead to heart disease, shame can lend itself to cancer, and that resentment and feeling stuck often manifest as chronic arthritis. Research repeatedly indicates that the emotional frequency we function at in our day-to-day lives has a profound effect on our immune, nervous and endo-

crine systems.

Highly sensitive people (HSP) and empaths are even more susceptible to the energy of emotions; but rather than being exclusive to the individual, they often pick up on what those around them are feeling. Feeling someone else's pain can have a significant effect on HSPs. Dr. Elaine Aron's research has ignited interest in HSPs and now there are practices to clear and balance energy, making a significant difference in the emotional and physical well-being of HSPs/empaths.

Jeannette Folan, author of the *Diary of a Teenage Empath* novel and interactive workbooks for highly sensitive teens, introduces teenagers to effective coping skills and practices to regulate their emotions and energy.

<https://www.empathdiary.com/>. A Certified Highly Sensitive Persons (HSP) online program is being offered for therapists with highly sensitive clients through the Nickerson Institute of Integrative Health Training.

*Dr. Nickerson's Certified Integrative Health Coach Training Program is a one-of-a-kind accredited holistic mental health care training program that can be used as a stand-alone mental health certification or as an expansion of present practitioner or healthcare knowledge and expertise. The next 15-week live/virtual training program begins in June 2019. Get your seat early.*

*For more information, testimonials and registration, visit <http://nickersoninstitute.com/individual-health-coach-training/> or contact Dr. Nickerson at [drwendynickerson@gmail.com](mailto:drwendynickerson@gmail.com) or call 888-339-8443.*