

Energy R Us: Self Mastery...Giving Thanks!

For centuries the heart has been connected with the emotions of love, gratitude and compassion. It has also been associated with courage, wisdom and spirituality. Surprising new research in the field of neurocardiology has found that not only are these feeling states experienced by the heart, but *they also have a very stabilizing and beneficial effect on our total health.*

For many years mind-body research has focused on the effect of stress and negative emotional states upon hormonal fluctuations, immune response, heart and brain function. It has become clear that stress and negative emotion lead to disorder within the heart's rhythms, as well as within the autonomic nervous system, thereby affecting the rest of the body's function in a negative way. The good news is that the opposite is also true--- positive emotion leads to increased harmony, coherence and balance within these same systems.

Significant positive changes have been repeatedly documented in the body's systems when techniques are used that purposefully create feelings of appreciation, gratitude and unconditional love. The voluntary triggering of these emotional states was found to increase coherence both heart rhythms and the autonomic nervous system, thus positively affecting psychological and physical functioning. In addition it was found that people's perception of stress shifted in a positive direction, the ability to actively reduce stress was improved and performance was enhanced.

The 'heart-mind'

Researchers are reporting that it seems that the heart has a mind of its own and is a major factor in how we perceive and respond to the world. The heart has been found to be a very complex processing center that doesn't just receive information from the brain...*it is often the originator of information with the brain being the second responder!* In any case it is clear that these two are in a very intricate two way conversation and we can benefit from knowing how to participate!

Everyone knows that when they are in love their basic immunity is enhanced and they seem to be able to handle life with more grace and self-confidence. Research is documenting the *why and how* of this which is fascinating but there is even better news...we do not have to wait for these experiences to hit us out of the blue. We can let go of negativity and replace it with the positive as a matter of choice. We have within us the power to create profound change with some very simple techniques.

Emotional Self Mastery

Our emotions are very real energies that move through us. If we do not manage them, they will manage us. They do not disappear if we ignore them...they merely go underground to erode our systems and wreak havoc with our health at a later time. *Time only heals if we engage in a process that helps heal within that time.* We are human and so hardwired to feel. The point is to have methods that allow us to be in charge and able to transform our emotions so we do not become helpless victims of them.

A very helpful process is to notice when you are focused on a negative feeling. Stop the action in whatever way you can...imagine a huge red stop sign in your head, imagine hitting the pause button on your remote control, say 'stop' to yourself. Then use a memory or your imagination to get in touch with feelings of appreciation, gratitude or unconditional love. Feel as though you can breathe those feelings in and out through your heart. Keep doing this until you have shifted your emotional focus. Then see if you can adopt a feeling of ease in maintaining it. Remember this is a skill, so practice is the key.

Conscious 'control' of your breath can help no matter what tools you are using to transform emotional states. In our last article we spoke about conscious breathing to help us easily and effortlessly create new patterns and healthier ways of thinking and feeling. Breathing deeply and fully helps put you in touch with your core, your "self," your inner being. It strengthens your center of personal power. It helps to slow you down and make you aware of what is occurring around you. It tunes you in to your environment and puts you in a position to make choices ... choices that support your efforts in life.

Keep A Gratitude Journal

Expressing gratitude is another method to creating a healthier state of being and of feeling. Expressing gratitude for all of the blessings in your life ... big and small ... helps to attract more of them. Expressing gratitude puts your mind into a state of well being. When your mind is in a state of well being it is easier to put your body into a similar feeling state. When both your mind and your body are in thinking and feeling states of well being, you begin vibrating positive energy. When you vibrate positive energy, you attract more of the same. Good things happen. It's a wonderful cycle and a one that is worth learning how to master.

One way to express gratitude is to maintain a *Gratitude Journal*. Select a small notebook that you really like. It can plain or fancy. It doesn't matter. What matters is what you put inside. Open your journal and begin by writing at least five things for which you are truly grateful. You can write about anything you wish ... as long as it is from your heart and the words you use are positive. You can write about people, your family, friends and colleagues. You can write about situations, about things you have or things you've done. You can write about your feelings ... how you feel when you walk outside on a bright sunny day or how you feel when you are happy. You might write about your health, your pets, the food you eat. You might write about the joy of being alive and noticing the small things that make a difference every day.

You can write about anything and everything. You can even write about things you don't have but that you wish to have or you intend to have. You might give thanks for strong family ties and relationships. Or you may give thanks for having more than enough money to pay all of your bills. Excellent physical and mental health may be areas for expressing thanks. Simply give thanks for them in the present tense, *in advance*. Give thanks for them *just as if* you have them. Express thanks for the way you want things to be. It may sound silly, but it works. Thank God, the Universe or whatever belief system you have for things that are already on their way to you! They will show up, soon enough, as soon as you are ready to receive them.

As you get started, practice writing in your journal every day. It only takes a few minutes. Some days you might write a few thoughts. Other days you might write several pages or a long list. As you express your gratitude, your energy shifts into a very thankful and receptive mode. Your problems drift away from your consciousness and positive energy begins to flow. The more you do this, the faster your outer experiences will mirror your inner state. As you express your gratitude, people around you will notice a shift. They may not be able to pinpoint what is different, what they will feel it. They will feel it in the air. Each of us vibrates energy and feelings from the inside out. This energy is captured in a field around our physical body. On both a conscious and subconscious level we feel and respond to the energy of those around us. Sometimes we are drawn closer and sometimes the energy sets us apart. It all depends on how you are feeling. You can help yourself to FEEL GOOD by expressing good thoughts in your journal every day. When you FEEL GOOD you will draw others to you that also FEEL GOOD.

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