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INSIDE-OUT EDUCATION

The qualities you experience and the traits you develop in your inner practice will manifest in your outer life. This process is called 'transfer of learning', and it's one of the fringe benefits of meditative practice.

Let's begin with your stature in your seated meditative posture. When you become aware of your stature in an inner session, you see that it relates to how you are feeling at the moment. For example, if you are feeling a bit fatigued, you might begin in a slouched position. As you observe your slouched position, you feel any weakness, and you accept it for the moment. As you accept and observe your position, your posture gradually straightens. You just let it happen, and experience yourself going through different degrees of strength in your posture. When your back becomes straight and you assume a fully stable and settled position, you feel the complete inner strength of the position. You can clearly see how the stature of the basic meditative position is itself an expression of this inner strength.

As you master the posture and assume its full stature, you naturally begin to bring your stable posture and inner strength into purposeful activities that involve physical position and movement, self-presentation, and interacting with others. You experience a wonderful sense of calm inner strength and power that is immovable and invulnerable to external forces. You can bring this feeling into your life when you want to be solid in a purpose, a cause or a mission.

Another trait that transfers from inner to outer practice is patience. Patience or 'the spirit of waiting' is considered in many age-old traditions to be one of the most essential qualities for the spiritually minded person to cultivate. Your inner practice is a perfect place and time to cultivate this quality, since the entire practice involves

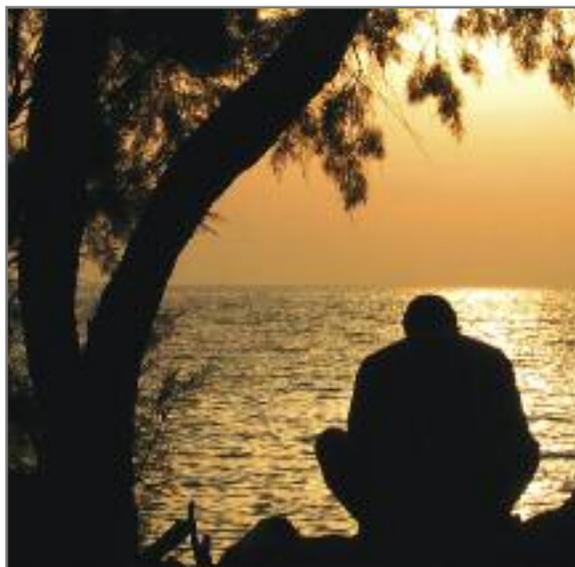
staying in position and waiting for changes to occur in your body that bring your posture to a state of alignment and stability. You simply let go of those symptoms of impatience, (like anxiousness, the urge to move about, impulses, distractive or excitable thoughts) and let your body take over the process. Also, once you are seated, it requires extraneous effort to move out of your position, so you simply let go of any feelings of restlessness, and let your body do what it is inclined to do naturally. When you take the quality of patience into your outer world, you can solve many of the personal problems of life, and quell many of life's stresses.

In your inner practice, you enter a state that insulates you from the problems of the world and creates the feeling of being in a safe haven through the duration of your session. As an eternal soul that survives death, this quality of being safe is inherent in your essential nature. Your inner practice is your sanctuary where you remember this spiritual fact of life. When you take this feeling of being safe into your outer everyday world, it translates to a feeling of personal inner security. Naturally, you are a material being living in a material world, subject to physical laws, so you continue to exercise your normal precautions. However the manner in which you do so, and the feelings you experience change when you maintain a spiritual mindset and live a soul-centered life. In your everyday life you feel an inner security based on the realization, knowledge and acceptance of the fact that you are an eternal spiritual being, and that all of the changes and challenges of your life are part of your spiritual path.

Satisfaction is not found in outer searching.

Needs are never satisfied, they just grow and expand. When one need is met, another takes its place. The feeling of need can be felt as a weakness, as though you are continually lacking something and feeling off balance all the time. Most of us have learned to hold on to this feeling of need and defend it.

In inner practice, you learn to surrender desires and therefore let go of the feeling of need. In meditation, you need nothing more than the moment and the full experience of sitting in the powerful position that you are initiating and maintaining through the time frame of the session. When you take this feeling into the world, you experience a new kind of approach. Instead of experiencing satisfaction by reaching a goal, you first experience a sense of satisfaction and take it into your goal-reaching activities. This is an ultimate test of bringing the calm, centered inner state into your outer practice. Feel this satisfaction and experience it not only at the end, but also at the beginning and middle of the important strivings of your life. ▲



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Yoga Goes to School

Stressed out Kids? Come on, really? Though it's hard to believe, it's true – many school age children are under extreme pressure to excel. There are so many scheduled activities that some kids practically need a secretary (a.k.a. Mom) to keep track of all their weekly commitments. Demands on their time range from school assignments to language lessons, sports and other extra-curricular activities. Bullying at school is on the rise. External stimulation and marketing messages come at them from all angles – TV, radio, video games, computer, cell phones etc. Parents are overloaded and stressed out, with less time and energy to contribute to being patient and/or listening. All of these things make it harder for kids to relax, play and even learn as they are supposed to.



A well-known 2003 California State University study showed a link between yoga and better learning, improved behaviors, and higher self-esteem. Since then, dozens of additional studies have been completed, supporting those results. The very same benefits subjectively seen by people who work with children, have now been measured and reported.

Overwhelmingly, research shows that children who practice yoga and mindfulness are better able to regulate their emotions, manage stress and calm themselves. They may also choose better foods to eat and engage in more physical activity than children who do not. The studies also illustrate that centered, calm and focused children learn more easily, have better social skills and, in general, are much happier kids.

The following are some of the benefits of yoga to maximize the learning process:

- Provides students healthy ways to express and balance their emotions.
- Promotes a more relaxed, comfortable state of being - the perfect state for teaching and learning.
- Brings students into the present moment – the most basic requirement for learning.
- Encourages community and connectedness within the classroom.
- Helps to create an atmosphere of confidence, enthusiasm and non-competitiveness where everyone can succeed.
- Provides opportunities for beneficial motor breaks throughout the day.
- Eases anxiety and tension (such as pre-test or performance jitters).
- Enhances focus, concentration, comprehension and memory.

- Provides opportunities for reflection, patience and insight, reducing impulsivity and reactivity.
- Supports social and emotional learning.
- Improves listening skills.
- Wakes up sluggish minds and creativity as needed.
- Enhances organizational and communication skills.
- Improves posture, assisting students to sit comfortably for long periods.
- Enhances motor skills and balance.
- Improves mind/body awareness and connection.
- Improves confidence and self-esteem.
- Encourages respect for oneself and others.
- Creates a calm, harmonious classroom.

Science has shown, and educators have experienced first-hand, that when children are anxious, frustrated or stressed, it is nearly impossible for them to learn. It is only from a relaxed, calm and present state of mind and body that our children can be psychologically and physiologically learning-ready. Encouraged perhaps by the overwhelming pressures of the “No Child Left Behind Act,” teachers and school administrators around the U.S. are searching for a means to this end.

In France, South America, India, Italy and other countries where social/emotional learning is deemed as crucial as academia, yoga has been part of the school curriculum for over 25 years.

After years of an increasing focus on results over process, the pendulum of American education is finally swinging towards a focus on the whole child, physical, social and emotional.

More and more schools are recognizing the effectiveness of taking a few minutes here and there throughout the day for yoga breaks– right in the classroom. A few deep breaths, physical movement or stretching to reconnect the body/mind, and moments for quiet introspection, are often a quick and easy way to ‘reset’ the nervous system to calm and focus. Children are brought into the present moment, a place where they can pause, truly hear and feel, reflect and learn.

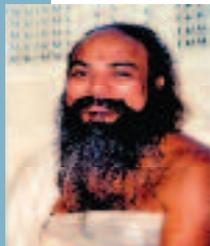
Though many teachers recognize yoga’s potential benefits in the classroom, many are not practicing yogis and therefore may initially feel uncomfortable leading yoga breaks. That is where a trained yoga instructor with a child focused skill-set can become quite valuable.

A child who learns yoga, mindfulness and relaxation will not only be more learning-ready, but will also be developing essential skills he can use for lifetime of health and wellness in mind, body and spirit. The pendulum of American education is definitely swinging in the right direction. ▲

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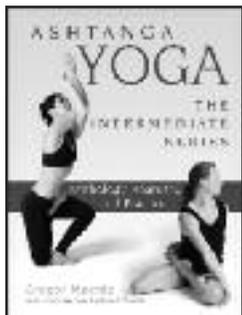
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ASHTANGA YOGA - THE INTERMEDIATE SERIES: MYTHOLOGY, ANATOMY & PRACTICE by Gregor Maehle



This book, penned by expert yoga teacher and practitioner Gregor Maehle, offers an in-depth guide to Ashtanga yoga's Intermediate series. The 27 postures that comprise the series are clearly explained, and photos are offered along side of informative line drawings of anatomical illustrations and practical tips. In addition to the thorough treatment of the postures' physical aspects, the book goes into the mythology behind each posture's name. Additional chapters offer more in-depth information about the philosophical and spiritual background of yoga, presenting some detail about the way the eight limbs of the practice work together toward the ultimate goal of spiritual realization. The author also contextualizes Ashtanga yoga within the millennia of Indian cultural history, showing how the practice of yoga relates to other schools of Indian spiritual practice, dispelling Western myths and offering insights gleaned from studying with Indian masters. With passionate erudition, this book will help practitioners reap the physical, spiritual, and mental fulfillments of an evolving yoga practice.

Editors Note: A thorough exploration of the more advanced practices of Ashtanga Yoga – highly recommend for those wanting to study the system in more depth.

PATIENCE: A LITTLE BOOK OF INNER STRENGTH by Eknath Easwaran

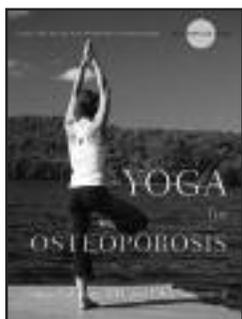
This new book from world-renown author and spiritual teacher Eknath Easwaran offers short, inspiring readings under the theme of patience, with specific attention to how it comes with practice and creates a calmer, kinder life. He offers us the heartfelt wisdom of his grandmother, "Patience is the ornament of the brave," and in all relationships, Easwaran says, patience is the mark of love.

He is a gifted author with powerful insights and advice for developing patience at home and at work, and his unique blend of humor and practicality really shine through in this little volume of stories meant to create space for quiet personal interludes throughout the book. Varied anecdotes about animals, sports stars, and happy family outings make the readings as entertaining as they are instructive. Gentle reminiscences of India, tales from the author's Hindu heritage, and cross-cultural inspiration from the world's saints lift the reader's spirits and give courage. Just keep trying, Easwaran says, and you'll find there's no end to your patience — no end to the wisdom, love, and compassion in your heart.

Editors Note: With its heartfelt commentary and thought provoking passages, this book would make a great gift for anyone interested in the spiritual life.



YOGA FOR OSTEOPOROSIS: THE COMPLETE GUIDE by Loren Fishman and Ellen Saltonstall



This book is a comprehensive, user-friendly medical yoga program designed for the management and prevention of osteoporosis, with more than four hundred detailed illustrations and easy to comprehend instructions. Osteoporosis leads to painful fractures due to loss of bone mass; yoga strengthens bones without endangering joints: it stands to reason that yoga is the perfect therapy for osteoporosis. Forty-four million Americans suffer from low bone mass, and osteoporosis is responsible for more than 1.5 million fractures annually. Drugs and surgeries can alleviate pain, but study after study has shown that exercise is the best treatment, specifically low-impact, bone-strengthening exercises—hence, yoga.

In this comprehensive and thoroughly illustrated guide, Loren Fishman and Ellen Saltonstall, who between them have seven decades of clinical experience, help readers understand osteoporosis and give a spectrum of exercises for beginners and experts. Classical yoga poses, as well as physiologically sound adapted poses, are presented with easy-to-follow instructions and photographs.

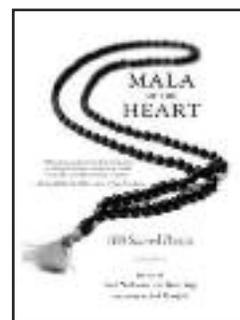
Editors Note: A welcome addition to the library of any person working or living with Osteoporosis, including health professionals, yoga teachers and physical therapists.

MALA OF THE HEART: 108 SACRED POEMS by Ravi Nathwani and Kate Vogt

This collection of timeless poetry celebrates the eternal spiritual truth within each heart. Since ancient times, this hidden essence has been symbolized by the number 108. There are 108 earthly desires, 108 human feelings, 108 delusions, 108 beads in the traditional meditation mala, and 108 sacred poems in this anthology. Filled with crystalline wisdom from the great poets, sages, saints, and mystics, this selection of poems is a collective expression of universal heart-filled wisdom. The poems span a wide range of cultures and civilizations — from India to Europe, Japan, and the Middle East — and each one offers a unique perspective about the path to awakening.

Some of the poems express belief in a higher being. Some convey instantaneous awakening. Others lead the reader down a disciplined path of contemplation. Ordered according to a broad interpretation of the heart-centered chakra model, these remarkable poems guide the reader toward realization and offer timeless jewels of insight to spark awakening and enrich spiritual practice.

Editors Note: This sweet little book takes the reader on a timeless journey through the divine metaphysical musings of some the great spiritual minds of both the old and new ages.



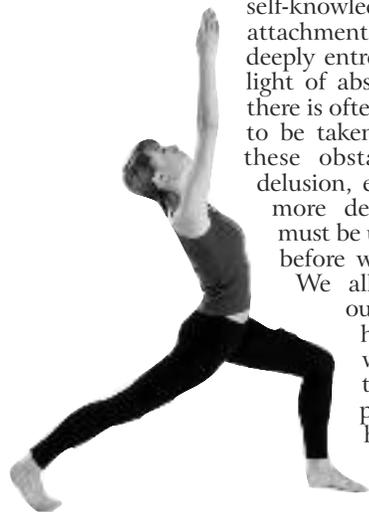
The Yoga of Purification

YOGA PURIFIES THE MIND AND BODY BY ASKING YOU TO DEVELOP DEEP SELF-KNOWLEDGE. When you unify with the deepest part of yourself an incontrovertible understanding of not only your own life, but also all life takes root. The highlights along the path of yoga are epiphany moments where your higher self is revealed to you in between your breath, your posture and point of attention. This three-pronged approach is the pinnacle of the Ashtanga Yoga method that I learned from my teacher Sri. K. Pattahbi Jois, whom I called Guruji.

Guruji taught that regular yoga practice cleanses the area around the spiritual heart and removes the six poisons of kama (desire), krodha (anger), moha (delusion), lobha (greed), matsarya (envy) and mada (sloth). He was a firm believer in the benefits of daily practice as the main method for practitioners to experience the benefits of yoga. In order to remove these poisons you have to practice with strong determination in order to change layers of accumulated patterns. This is done through daily practice of all the eight limbs of the Ashtanga yoga path. When this integrated approach to spiritual development is in place the inner fire of purification, called agni in Sanskrit, is ignited and literally burns through unhealthy habits, physical toxins and emotional hang-ups. Studying and memorizing the Yoga Sutras, Sanskrit words or contemporary philosophy alone will not give you peace. Information alone is not knowledge. Guruji always emphasized the necessity of experiencing the true effects of a daily practice within your own practice, body and life. Only in this way can students integrate the wisdom of the sacred, eternal teachings of yoga into daily life and know firsthand the empowering self-knowledge that is the essence of yoga. Yoga transforms people not by demanding change, but by inspiring change from within and it is daily practice that provides the breeding ground for this phenomenal transformation.

Anything really meaningful in life usually comes at the expense of a little hard work and yoga's great promise of transformation is no different. One thing that most practitioners feel is that yoga is hard and demanding. The reason the exercises, practices and observances are so challenging is because true self-knowledge demands it and our attachments to the six poisons are deeply entrenched. Before the brilliant light of absolute existence can be felt there is often a due diligence that needs to be taken through the doldrums of these obstacles. Attachment, anger, delusion, envy, laziness and so many more detrimental states of being must be understood and transcended before we can know lasting peace.

We all have a place inside of ourselves that we are not one hundred percent comfortable with. We have all done things that we are not completely proud of. And we have all fears, insecurities and idiosyncrasies that we hide from the world.



The practice of yoga is a slow retraining of our bodies and minds to make us comfortable with the scary places inside and outside of ourselves. Yoga can be the first step along an arduous path towards unconditional acceptance of all life, including our own.

On many of my trips to Mysore students would often share their elaborate stories of discomfort with Guruji and the majority of the time he would say, "Pain good." The second book of the yoga sutras begins with an axiom that defines a key element of yoga practice as accepting pain as help for purification, known in Sanskrit as "tapah". The only way that the inner fire of purification, agni, works is if you learn to stay in it and not run away. The natural human response to pain is fear, avoidance and denial, yet yoga uses pain as a method of awakening. By learning to accept pain within the safe space of yoga you learn to create a pause between the stimulus of pain and the response in your body and mind that wants to run away. In that powerful pause you are able to choose your course of action instead of being driven by reactionary patterns from the past. The store of accumulated reactionary patterns amount to what is called in Sanskrit the samskaras and these set ways of being, reacting and running create the negative karma that adversely affects our lives.

So yoga teaches you how to react painful situations as opportunities for growth, expansion and success and thus you learn not to run away. If your tendency is to focus on the problem when it arises yoga retrains your mind to focus on the solution. If you run away from pain yoga teaches you how to accept it and then move through it. While you might not want any type of pain in your life, the truth is that pain is pretty much unavoidable. There will always be a squeaking thing you could do without, a person who aggravates you or a life situation that saddens you. Yoga gives you the unique chance to change your reaction patterns and thereby tap into an eternal, abiding peace. The stability of the dedicated yoga practitioner means that peace is possible to experience regardless of what circumstances arrive at the doorstep. In other words you can lessen the impact of the six poisons and the samskaras by accepting pain and practicing true kriya yoga when pain comes so that you will experience a more peaceful life.

While the acceptance of pain as help for purification is sometimes the most difficult step to take along the journey of yoga it is one that will help you move through pain, suffering and injury into healing, peace and joy. After you maintain a steady yoga practice over a long period of time the immeasurable benefits begin flowing through your life. Yoga gives you direction and pointers to show you how to excavate layers of yourself hidden below dirt, debris and toxins, and in doing so you experience the deep peace that is inherent in your nature. Whenever there is tension, stress and unhappiness it is because the connection to your higher self has been lost in the sea of the six poisons and the samskaras. In order for you to transcend these unhappy states of being and experience the true luminosity of self-realization you must first accept the inevitable pains of life as help for purification. Yoga reconnects you with your inner world so that you can make contact with the indescribable space of ultimate knowingness where transformation happens. ▲

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Dreams Teach Education

IS THERE A MOMENT WHEN WE ARE NOT TEACHING OR WHEN WE ARE NOT LEARNING? We teach by our Presence, our sparkling eyes and ready smile. We teach by the words we speak and the sounds that envelop them. We teach by our attention to others, our steady posture, and respectful eye contact. We learn from our sharing with others, their jewels that they radiate before us. Teaching and learning are the two artists equally participating in the rhythms of the dance of education. And the DreamTime interjected and spoke in this manner.

A woman teacher taught special education. This Dream shows that the special educator is a woman. It is the Feminine that nurtures her children from her Heart. When teachers come from the Heart, their teaching is always special. The surface would suggest that education is an activity of brain and mind. While it is true that we often teach information, the gift of education comes from the Heart. When a student asked a respected teacher what was the most important quality of a good teacher, the teacher replied, "Love your students." It is the flow of Love that transports the student from the sharing of knowledge to the full integration of Wisdom.

A teacher in bliss walked the school. He helped where required. He helped the slower students. He saw the 9th graders who would grow into 12th graders. He saw the 12th graders who were always there. He felt the rhythm of the education cycle.

One of his mentors walked the same halls. This teacher is in bliss because he moves in harmony with his True identity, a Being of Spirit disguised in Hu-man form. This bliss frees his body from the outward rigors of education. He re-cognizes those in need and aids their process. He feels the Energy of education itself and mirrors that rhythm with his every step and supportive word. He re-members those Great Ones who taught him and Knows that his movements are the totality of his own unique Gifts accompanied by those of his Beloved Mentors. It is this rhythm of wholeness that manifests as bliss within this special teacher.

I taught new students. They were unruly. I started from scratch to train them for their highest education. I did not Know all their names yet. I physically moved a girl thinking she was a boy. When a boy threw a book at another student, I wrestled him to the floor, raised him, and corrected him. Though it appears that the Dreamer is now teaching a class, he is actually training the primitive aspects of himself. The students are "new" indicating that the Dreamer is developing these personal parts for the first time. The Dreamer intends the training for their highest good. Until the male becomes violent, the Dreamer cannot tell the difference between his male and female aspects. By taking the unruly aspect to the floor, he digs to the depths of the Energy, raises him to his full stature, and balances him at

his highest level. As we balance the unwilling parts of ourselves, so we can walk in anointed stature and share that exalted vibration with others.

There were adjustments that had been made in education. The teacher taught Eastern youth. The Dreamer is updating his store of Ancient Wisdom. The wise teacher knows that Energy is constantly moving and advancing to higher levels. In order to share his Wisdom and Love effectively, he knows that he must update his Energy daily through his chosen practice of Spirit.

I was completing my degree in education. I would speak to a counselor to be sure that I had enough credits. I would go to summer school. I heard classical music on the radio. The Dreamer is completing her latest level of integration. She checks with her Higher Self and/or Spirit Guide to be sure that she is complete. She goes to summer school, the time of the warmth of the sun, the Masculine Principle. This final requirement balances her Feminine with her Sacred Masculine. As a sign of this integration, she hears the music of the spheres and realizes that her newfound balance has fully prepared her for the sublime role of teacher.

From our conversations with the DreamTime, we can suggest a unique view of education. If music consists of the rests between the notes; and drama, the pauses between the lines; we can assert that education is the Profound Permeating Silence between the words. ▲



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Penny Kulp grew up in Chester Springs, PA, in a caring family environment. After a short time in business, her concern for others led her into a career as a Massage Therapist.

A graduate of Episcopal Academy and Gettysburg College, Penny completed her professional training at the Pennsylvania School of Muscle Therapy in 1998. She started practicing at her current location in June of 1999, and has since gained the respect of many clients.

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Sphere College: Rising from the Ashes in Phoenixville?

THE TIME IS FIVE YEARS FROM NOW. The active lives of four hundred highly motivated college students are centered in and around Phoenixville, PA. Drawn from all age groups and walks of life, they attend classes in town and do projects in the arts, sciences, and humanities. These are located temporarily wherever room is available. In the meantime, the students are also renovating buildings--soon to house more classes and offices. They interact in productive ways with the local business community. Their course of studies emphasizes first, truly finding their passion, second, acquiring the tools to successfully pursue it, and third, completing some closely related project using those tools. Oh, and yes, once admitted—they pay no tuition. Their college education is absolutely free.

This is the vision for Richard Liston's brainchild, Sphere College, now in startup mode in Phoenixville. What's the current reality? At the moment, a total of twenty students and two classes. Relations with the town and business community are already good. A steering group and other committees plan, act, and work to raise funds. The college is close to an initial form of non-profit status. And Richard himself, like most visionary entrepreneurs, works all day, most every day, to realize a beautiful dream.

How did this come about? With a Ph.D. in computer science from Georgia Tech, Richard Liston spent five years on the faculty at Ursinus in Collegeville. He was deeply moved by his participation, not so much in his specialty, but instead in the college's CIE ("Common Intellectual Experience") and core studies program—the arts, science, and humanities courses taken by all students. In his fourth year, he learned he would not receive tenure.

At this point, his software engineering skills emerged to help with an important life decision. Should he go on in higher education as it has evolved today? Or do something different? His "requirements analysis" always came back to: (1) stay in Phoenixville; (2) continue teaching; and (3) find some way to provide to talented, highly-motivated people of all ages, who would benefit from a different approach, with an education that works.

Of course, the term "requirements analysis" does not begin to do justice to the level of courage and dedication displayed in Richard's final decision. "OK," he said, "I'll just found an alternative college in Phoenixville." No biggie...

But why this town? Why Phoenixville? "It began with an attraction to the Colonial Theater," says Richard, "with its special programs and selection of films." To him, the borough has a good feeling. There is a mix of different kinds of people, who mostly get along with each other, and come out for regular activities and festivals. "I can set up a table in Earth Mart, the holistic department store, during the yearly Firebird event," he points out, "and shoppers will be interested in our project."

In fleshing out his dream, Liston looks back to Black Mountain College, an alternative university that flourished near Asheville, North Carolina, between 1933 and 1957. Black Mountain took the arts very much to heart, as well as John Dewey's ideas about the importance to a healthy democracy of interdisciplinary, liberal education. It also fostered more than a few cultural luminaries. Buckminster Fuller and Kenneth Snelson improvised the first geodesic dome there. Merce Cunningham formed his dance company on the



campus. Richard talks freely and with passion about doing the same thing in Phoenixville.

What's lacking in higher education Richard sees it? Why is he striking out in this direction? With the financial constraints present in most modern universities, and the emphasis on getting ahead fast, he says, students have neither the safety nor enough support to really examine themselves. There are very often personal transformations involved in finding a true calling that resonates also with the community. Too many in modern faculties and administrations don't embody and foster the kinds of changes students need to make.

So, will it fly, this idealistic and ambitious bird? It's a little early to say. Still, if it does, it ought to be good for Phoenixville and the surrounding regions—not to mention a lot of motivated students. If they are going to be renovating buildings, maybe some crafts might be added alongside the arts. *Learn more at spherecollege.wordpress.com.* ▲



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FALLACY OF DIAGNOSIS; or The Power of an Un-Diagnosis

THE WORD "DIAGNOSIS" IS DERIVED FROM TWO ROOTS, "DIA" AND "GNOSIS". "DIA" MEANS "THROUGH"; "GNOSIS" MEANS "KNOWLEDGE OR RECOGNITION".

So, diagnosis means "through knowledge" or "through recognition", by which we explain what is going on in our bodies. In western medicine, diagnosis determines treatment.

When we seek a diagnosis we also seek a "pro-gnosis", which is similar in origin except the "pro" means "in advance" or "to proclaim". Prognosis is a prediction of what's to come based on our knowledge. The strength or weakness of a diagnosis and prognosis are buried in these definitions as will be discussed below.

People usually seek out medical attention for one of two reasons: 1) relief of pain and suffering, and 2) to determine a diagnosis and prognosis. A diagnosis is not needed to relieve pain and suffering--narcotics will relieve (mask) pain whether it's from a minor sprained muscle, an acute infection (such as appendicitis), or advanced cancer. However, without diagnosis, treatment is limited, and we cannot get a prognosis, which predicts the future--whether will we get better or worse, and how long that will take.

THE STRENGTHS OF DIAGNOSTIC CATEGORIES

To optimize public health, society needs diagnostic coding in order to watch for trends such as the obesity epidemic and the appearance of Swine Flu.

Diagnosis is also important for the advancement of medical knowledge. By putting constellations of symptoms (subjective experience) and signs (objective observations) into diseases, such as "diabetes", we begin to collect and share experience that improves treatment and prognosis. As we get better at diagnostic processes, we then qualify and sub-divide diseases into sub-types, such as diabetes type I and II, each with a different treatment and prognosis.

Historically, medicine has made a distinction between a "disease" and "syndrome". In a *disease*, we allegedly know the cause; while a *syndrome* is a collection of symptoms and signs without a known cause. For example, pneumonia is caused by bacteria; diabetes by a lack of insulin; while Fibromyalgia syndrome has no known cause.

When we know the cause of a disease, we can theoretically find a cure. In pneumonia, antibiotics are the cure. In diabetes, insulin is the cure. The discovery of antibiotics and insulin

in the early 1900's was so powerful, that it enabled the pharmaceutical industry to gain hold of the consciousness of America as the "magic bullet" solution to illness and aging, a hope that continues today and which is bankrupting our society out of health and money.

While the discovery of antibiotics and insulin were indeed important landmarks, there are inherent fallacies in the conclusions and industries that were built upon these discoveries. The "one-disease, one-cause, one-cure" model of illness works fairly well only for a handful of diseases. For the majority of today's problems that bring people to their doctors, plague adults and children, and cost of over one tenth of our gross national product, not including the cost of lost productivity and quality of life and greed of various industries, it is this model that is in many ways the root cause of the current failure of the health care system.

THE LIMITATIONS OF DIAGNOSIS

To understand the limitations inherent in a diagnosis, let's look in greater detail at the prototype of modern medicine, pneumonia. Is pneumonia truly "caused" by bacteria? Well, bacteria and other organisms are present all the time, on our skin, in our mouths, other crevices and all surfaces; we even carry three pounds of organisms in our small and large intestines. So, if pneumonia is caused by bacteria, shouldn't we all have pneumonia all the time?

This question seems preposterous, because we know that our immune system protects us! Ah-hah, so the immune system enters the equation. Well, why did the immune system falter? Poor sleep, stress, genetics, aging, toxicity, nutritional deficiency, other illnesses, medications, hormonal imbalance, etc. So, when looking closer, even a simple disease such as pneumonia is "caused" not by a single agent, but by a web of factors that all add up to a perfect storm of immune system dysfunction enabling bacterial invasion.

Yes, antibiotics can "cure" pneumonia by weakening the bacteria and giving the immune system a chance to catch up. However, in many cases, such as with ear infections in kids, bacteria are not the cause, and using antibiotics only manage to kill off good bacteria, changing the ecology of our bodies and our environment, allowing more dangerous bacteria (and yeast) to establish themselves and set the stage for a future more severe attack.

In adult onset diabetes, the web is even more complex. It involves genetics, aging, gender, sleep, exercise, stress, hormonal systems, and most importantly, diet. And considering diet, it is not as simple as "carbs", but the balance of nutrients².

Furthermore, no two people with the same diagnosis or disease have the exact same pattern. Some diabetics respond to treatment A, while others need treatment B, or C, or D. At best, a diagnosis is a general or average pattern that exhibits

continued on page 34

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extraordinary variability when it comes to the individual. Likewise, prognosis is quite variable.

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS: STRUCTURE VERSUS FUNCTION

These days, many patients request MRI's and other high-tech tests, hoping that such tests will objectify their vague symptoms by providing a diagnosis. In fact, diagnostic tests have become such an important part of our medical culture, that (in addition to the destructive effect of HMO's) interaction with a physician--history, physical and counseling--have become a minor part of the process over evaluation and treatment. The problem with many of these tests is that they are "structural", only showing changes in the physical state of the body. They do not show how the body is "functioning"--how the organs and biochemistry of the body are working. The diagnosis that they provide is therefore delayed and reflects the later stages of a process that has been in place for years, sometimes decades.

Western diagnosis of a chronic condition is often not helpful, because treatment is not aimed at a root cause, and prognosis is usually un-predictable.

SYMPTOMS

The earliest signs of dysfunction, the earliest knowing, are when the body-mind sends warning signals to consciousness that something is wrong. These signals are called *symptoms*. Pain, anxiety, mental fog, and other symptoms are not produced to cause suffering--they are a gift from evolution--a warning email from the body-mind that something is wrong. We don't want to mask our symptoms with "pain killers"--we want to understand these messages--to know what they mean. However, after a patient goes to several doctors complaining of a symptom, and the conventional tests don't show anything, the patient feels invalidated or stupid and the doctor tells them "there's nothing wrong", "to live with it", or to try a free sample of anti-anxiety or anti-depressant drug.

The powerful inner message that symptoms could and should be corrected is what usually drives a patient to a holistic practitioner.

ANCIENT METHODS PROVE SUPERIOR FOR CHRONIC AILMENTS

The ancient Chinese and Indian (Ayurvedic) Medicine paradigms recognize that illness proceeds from vague symptoms, to functional problems, to biochemical changes (such as high blood sugar in diabetes) and lastly to structural changes. Waiting for a symptom to progress to a clogged artery or detectable tumor is not what we want. As the Chinese saying goes "one should not build weapons after the war has started or dig wells after the drought has begun". The diagnoses in these ancient paradigms are functional, much more individualistic, and require a multi-dimensional approach to understanding and healing.

The current major diseases of our society, which we call "chronic" (a euphemism for "no solution") including arthritis, pain, heart disease, cholesterol, hypertension, obesity, cancer, autism, ADD, GERD, depression/ anxiety and sleep disorder have even more complex webs. The sad truth is that we begin to spin these webs in early childhood². The lucky truth is that all these chronic conditions are preventable and reversible, in many cases to a large degree. While conventional medicine, at best, can only "manage" these diseases, a

euphemism for "masking" (or in my words "nuking") the symptoms, using a web-based approach, holistic medicine can help unwind the body, mind and spirit from such conditions and improve treatment and prognosis.

IS THERE SECURITY IN NOT KNOWING, OR UN-DIAGNOSIS?

Eastern philosophy teaches us about the limitations of cognition or thinking. The mind, while powerful, like a computer, is limited by the quirks of its hardware and software. Human spirit, intuition and emotion, while immeasurable and elusive, are powerful, and provide the underpinning for our function and structure. The hard part of accepting this different paradigm is the "not-knowing"--accepting the fact that we can't muscle our way through this process with our brains--that we need to accept the totality of our experience. Yes, we want information; but all the information may not be interpretable by thought--that vague ache that is associated with a memory or body position has meaning; but the exact meaning may not be articulated with words. Refusing to be put in a diagnostic prison, allowing the anxiety of not knowing, listening to the body-mind, is a different but important paradigm for healing of chronic illness. Every sensation, intuition, memory, flash of insight, worsening of symptoms, moment of confusion, coincidence and synchronistic event is important in finding a root cause and tweaking treatment.

A yoga practice is often critical for this process, as it provides a survey of the body-mind, and through the process, postures and breath provides new and important information. Working with a holistic practitioner who can help interpret and balance the subjective and objective can enhance the efficiency and enjoyment of this life-long process of achieving and maintaining optimal health. ▲

IMPORTANT NOTE: This educational material may not be used to make decisions about medical care without the oversight of an experienced practitioner.

FOOTNOTES (see reading list for more information)

- ¹ Joel Fuhrman MD, one of the most successful doctors in healthfully "reversing" diabetes, obesity and heart disease explains the importance of nutrient-to-calorie ratio in his book "Eat to Live" below.
- ² See Fuhrman's "Disease-Proof Your Child", below.

FOR MORE INFORMATION (Books followed by ISBN number)

- Ballentine, Rudolph: *Radical Healing: Integrating the World's Greatest Therapeutic Traditions...* Three Rivers, 2000. 0609-804-847
- Sivananda Center: *The Sivananda Companion to Yoga*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983. ISBN: 0684-87000-2.
- Pitchford, Paul: *Healing with Whole Food: Asian Traditions and Modern Nutrition, 3rd Ed.* North Atlantic, 2002. 1556-434-308.
- Fuhrman MD, Joel: *Eat to Live*. Little Brown 2003. 0316-829-445.
- Fuhrman MD, Joel: *Disease-Proof Your Child: Feeding Kids Right*. St Martins, 2006. ISBN 0312-338-082
- Peck, M. Scott: *Road Less Traveled*. New York: Touchstone, 1978 (1997). 0684-847-248.

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Educating the Nervous System

LAST SPRING, TOWARDS THE END OF A SIX-WEEK AYURVEDIC CLEANSE, A LOOSE STEP PROPELLED ME DOWN THE STAIRS OF MY HOME ON MY BACK.

While I luckily escaped major injury, the fall both added to and uncovered layers of pain that I realized I had been simply patching over; I needed a deeper healing than I was capable of administering through the usual avenue of yoga. A dear friend had recommended Network Chiropractic, so I decided to give it a try.

What I did expect from Network care was relief from back pain and possibly some emotional release; what I didn't anticipate that the re-education of my nervous system's response to stress would become such an important adjunct to my yoga practice and spiritual path.

The approach of Network is to first develop a strategy to connect the brain to the body more effectively and to develop a capacity for self-correction of the tension patterns; spontaneous stretching and breath movements that help release tension in the spine are encouraged.

At my first visit, (fully clothed on a massage table in a room with three others) I realized that this was energy work. Through a gentle touch of the lower spine, I felt a release that reverberated through to my digestive system. Another series of gentle strokes at the nape of the neck had my breath moving in a wave pattern, known in Network Spinal Analysis (NSA) as the respiratory wave that releases tension throughout the spine and body. A little later in care I began to feel the somatopsychic, or body-mind wave that is an undulation of the spine that develops seemingly unique to Network care.

During the first phase of care, I experienced a series of emotional releases that sometimes resulted in bursts of tears, deep exhalations, or extended laughter followed by a rush of pure energy to certain areas of my body. I felt underlying patterns of tension shift and move as nerves adjusted to new ways of responding. As the somatopsychic wave occurs, there is a realization that we spend so much time fighting against the natural inclination of our bodies to be in motion.

On the table, I started to move spontaneously into yoga poses and breathing patterns that facilitated the release I needed at that time.

The first time I found myself lifting into a full backbend on the care table, I knew this work was pretty magical. It had always been a challenge for me to do a full backbend as I seemed to lack upper arm strength to hold the pose for long enough to get that nice arch, but it was such a natural movement that it seemed effortless.



As my body became more accustomed to flowing in care, when on the yoga mat, I started to feel a flow from one pose to another without thinking about the next logical or physical step as if I am being moved upon instead of me doing the moving. When I encounter stress, my reaction is no longer an assured series of tension from the neck to the spine resulting in my lower back locking up. Instead, I feel my body acknowledging the tension and making adjustments to bring me back to more natural posture.

It was explained to me that part of NSA care is to make the brain aware of tension and temporarily amplify that tension and redirect it so it becomes the fuel for further healing and transformation. When you don't feel safe in the world at

a very deep level, physiological stress occurs. This stress is directly connected with the way we experience the world. After several months of care, I am very aware how deep patterns of tension from childhood on have kept me bound to certain emotional reactions. Letting go has felt very safe in the NSA environment, as my body has moved at its own pace. Certain patterns are easy to let go; you've been ready for years, but couldn't quite loosen the physical binding. Others may take longer, but throughout, you find yourself answering to life differently; feeling a freedom to respond from a place that feels like the voice of your Self before the world and its pressures had its opportunity to work on you.

Because the touches are so gentle, NSA is an approach to wellness that embraces everyone; babies, children and seniors can all develop strategies that allow a higher level of function. I view the care as one of the greatest gifts I can give my daughter for her future. ▲