

Images for A Healthy Heart

The leading cause of death in the United States for both men and women is coronary disease, which most often takes the form of a heart attack.

The heart is one of the most important organs in the human body. It is a pump composed of muscle, which circulates blood throughout the body, carrying all the vital materials that help our bodies function removing unnecessary waste products. The entire body is governed by the heart. If one's ankle hurts, it "throbs" with pain as the heartbeat is experienced there. The heartbeat is felt even in one's fingers and toes, which are farthest from the heart. Without an abundant and continuous blood supply, circulated by the heart in proper rhythm, the body weakens and dies.

The most common approach to treating the heart is viewing it as a body part that needs to be kept in good order to be healthy. The recommended regimen includes a diet low in fat, rich in vegetables, fruits and whole grains, as well as exercise programs to re-energize the body and strengthen the heart. Added to this list are vitamins and supplements to nourish and support the heart and lastly, there is a whole battery of prescription drugs for treating the ailing heart.

These approaches are helpful, but something fundamental is still missing. We have neglected knowing the heart itself and its mysterious workings as it interacts with our minds, bodies, and souls. In all of our standard treatments, we stand outside the heart and view it as a pump that needs something done or added to it from the outside. We have distanced ourselves from the heart's essence and from knowing its emotions, impulses, and complex subtle links to the rest of our bodies. We try to fix it without truly understanding it.

The heart, like the rest of the body, is made up of cells, which communicate with each other. Current researchers in the field of psychoneuroimmunology have discovered that the body and mind share a continuous uninterrupted flow of chemicals and electrical signals. In particular, they have researched the links between emotions, thoughts, and body chemicals, and know it is impossible to separate them. When a person has negative thoughts or feelings, whether based on past traumas or current life events, the brain responds to the strain by secreting certain stress chemicals. These stress chemicals, in turn, negatively affect the body and its organs. Conversely, positive, joyful thoughts and emotions secrete brain chemicals that are constructive to the body and its organs enhancing both physical and emotional well-being.

The heart is the organ most susceptible to stress. Medical science has documented that stress interferes with cardiac response and can cause heart weakness. Stress hormones suppress the ability of the heart to transmit signals to, and receive them from the rest of the body. Ultimately, stress can damage the heart.

Just as the heart rules our physicality, it guides our spiritual and emotional interaction with the world. When we go into the world we first register impressions through our hearts, not our minds. How we relate to others, the quality of our positive emotional response to them, or lack thereof, effects the outcome of our interactions. Others pick up our subtle positive or negative cues and respond in kind. These "feelingful" exchanges and their corresponding mental attitudes, originate from the heart. In turn, when people or life events impact us, our hearts receive the nuance of the situation or of the person's communications first, and then our brains respond secondarily. Our hearts may feel open and joyous or shut down in fear or threat in response. Thus, the functioning of our heart is not immune from the effects of our emotional lives. If we are with a positive person or in a positive situation our hearts will feel more open and receptive beating fully and freely. When we engage with a person or situation that is hostile or worrying, we constrict our hearts by squeezing the muscles around our hearts in a protective response, hampering the heart's optimal functioning.

Imagery Exercise:

To see how you are led by your heart and not by your head, try the following image instructions, either with eyes open or closed, whichever you prefer:

1. See an image in your mind of someone attacking you. What part of you responds first as you see the image? To this query, a client answered, "I get a fear response. A shakiness that I feel in my chest and heart, somewhat like a fluttering, before there is any interpretation in my mind."
2. Now take a moment and see that you are going to meet someone you dislike. When you see the image notice what part of your body responds first as you see the image? My client said, "I get a physical response of contraction in my chest."
3. Now see you are with someone you love. Notice what you see in the image and where in your body is the feeling? My client responded, "I have a sense of ease and feel open and flowing in my heart."

Clearly, then, our emotions and mental states are key to a healthy heart and color the ways in which we engage with others. However, it is hard to will ourselves to always be positive. Negative experiences have left each of us with a storehouse of learned responses we cannot easily control. Accumulated in images in the brain they are like mine fields waiting to explode. These responses are triggered automatically by life circumstances. How can we overcome them?

Through the pioneering work of Dr. Akhter Ahsen, the leading theoretician in the field of mental imagery, it is possible to

heal, energize and activate the heart, using the body/mind link of Eidetic Image Psychology. Dr. Ahsen has spent the last half century developing and laying the scientific groundwork of the Eidetic Image. Eidetic Images are clear visual images, stored in our brains, of all of our life experiences. When these images are seen and activated within us, the emotions carried within them send chemical and neural signals to the body, positively or negatively affecting organs and systems.

By working with our Eidetic Images, we can learn to direct our mental, emotional and physiological responses. We can change negative emotions to positive ones, thereby enhancing our hearts' health. Imagery tools have been developed specifically for the treatment of the heart, which can regenerate the heart and bring forth high states of optimism, hope and exuberance. In this manner, the heart is nourished through an influx of one's natural brain chemicals and signals.

Dr. Ahsen discovered that the genetic blueprint of a person's wholeness resides within the individual. It remains neurologically encoded for a lifetime. Therefore, even when a person has suffered from ongoing stress or from traumatic situations that have injured their physical hearts, they can reproduce their heart's original genetic blueprint. By activating these signals through Eidetic Images, one's heart can be restored. Instead of treating the heart mechanically, the Eidetic Image stimulates the wholeness of the heart and its functions from within. Through this process, the heart reverts back to its original healthy state as it has a natural capacity to regenerate. Thus, restoring the heart to its innate state of health and vibrancy is attainable.

I recall a very successful attorney who utilized Eidetic Imagery treatment for his ailing heart. He had suffered from several heart attacks and had undergone traditional and alternative treatments for healing it. He intuited that something more than genetics, bad eating habits or lack of exercise was at the source of his heart problems. By accessing the Eidetic Images stored in his brain of his early life experience, he experienced lucid visual images, recollections of growing up in a desolate household devoid of love. As he viewed these images in his mind's eye, he felt an ache in his heart at the loss of his father through an early death and he re-experienced how he had been raised by his mother, a cold, domineering woman who could not show love. As he saw these and other images of his mother during his childhood, he experienced physical sensations of contraction and tension around his chest and realized that he was tightening his heart to protect himself from her harshness.

He said, "I see that I protected myself from my mother's negative energy by constantly holding my chest tightly whenever I was in her presence. As I see the images, I feel the tension in my chest right now." He became aware that contracting the muscles around his heart had become a permanent, lifelong pattern since childhood. The chest tension was intact whether he worked, engaged in pleasurable activities, or had interactions with the women in his love life. He also realized he chose cold women as his lovers or wives, like his mother, who could neither give, nor receive true love. Thus, the lifelong tension around his heart muscles and the inability to energize his heart through feelings of love or desire finally weakened his physical heart leading to heart attacks.

Following these realizations, we worked with specific Eidetic Images designed to tap into this man's genetic wholeness. Thus, he was able to finally relax his lifelong pattern of contracting his chest muscles and was able to see positive images that invigorated his physical heart.

For this lawyer, his developmental history was the source of his weakened heart. Every person with a heart problem has a unique life history in which their hearts became hurt, compromised and damaged.

Imagery Exercise: Putting Your Heartbeat In All You Do

Putting your heartbeat into what you do activates the heart, energizes the body, and brings forth positive states of mind. In this image you see yourself engaged in a daily activity. You will be asked to see that your heart beats with you as you engage in the activity. Notice the transformations and changes in your mind, body and emotions:

1. See you are engaged in an activity that is part of your daily routine, such as walking, working at a desk, or gardening.
2. Feel your heart beating and observe that it pumps more strongly as you do the activity.
3. Feel your interest in what you are doing increase.
4. Let the heart pump faster. Many people tend to control their hearts when they engage in an activity. Do not control your heart. Let the heart beat go into what you are doing. Let your heart beat with it.
5. Let your heart keep pace with what you are doing.
6. Now let the heart beat more strongly and let the pace become faster and more gratifying.
7. As the heartbeat strengthens, see you are becoming more productive with less effort.
8. How does your performance change when you add the image of your heart?

Imagery Exercise: Heart And Desire

Many of us have closed off our deepest desires to have and to be all that we can be. We no longer feel entitled to wish or hope for things. By freeing our desires and letting our hearts beat with them, we activate and actualize our ability to manifest our deepest potentials in the world.

1. Think of all the desires you have.
2. Let all of these desires come into your mind and let your heart beat with these desires.
3. Let the world know your desires and let your heartbeat know the world.
4. Go with your desires into the world.

Once you have completed these images, you should experience more strength, vitality, and optimism. You are activating your heart and sending positive body chemicals to your heart, body and spirit. ■

Resource: Akhter Ahsen. 1999. "Hot and cold mental Imagery: Mind and body encounters: The liberation of images in consciousness." New York: Brandon House, Inc.

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