

Health

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A loving heart is good medicine for the whole body

Scientists once thought that emotions such as love and admiration were purely mental expressions generated by the brain alone. We now know that this is not true. Emotions have as much to do with the heart and body as they do with the brain. As Dr. Charles H. Mayo noted: "Worry affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, the whole nervous system and profoundly affects heart action."

The effect of emotions on the heart has been studied intensely by the Institute of HeartMath, a research center dedicated to the study of the heart and the physiology of emotions. Their research has shown that the heart has much more influence over the body and the brain than the brain has over the heart. Negative emotions such as anger, frustration, anxiety and insecurity cause heart rhythm patterns to become erratic. The erratic heart rhythms cause a chain reaction to start that includes: increased stress hormone levels, constricted blood vessels, an increase in blood pressure, weakened immune system and an inability to focus thinking. It is obvious that consistent negative emotions will, therefore, put a strain on the whole body and create poor health.

However, if we experience positive emotions, such as love, gratitude, appreciation and compassion, the heart produces a very different rhythm. The rhythm of the heart in the presence of positive emotions looks like gently rolling hills that let the brain know the heart feels good and the overall effect on the body is one of calm, balance and health.

The observation that the mind and the heart are connected has been recognized by scientists, philosophers, religious leaders and others throughout the centuries. Traditional Chinese medicine says we not only have a physical heart, but also a spiritual heart that carries the most powerful healing energy of love and compassion. Frank Lloyd Wright believed that if you begin the day with "love in your heart and peace in your nerves" you and everyone in your presence will benefit.

J. Krishnamutri stated that, "to understand anything, the mind must listen completely - the mind being your heart, your nerves, your ears".

So what does all this mean to you and to your loved ones?

1. Understand that we are not three separate entities of mind, body and spirit. **We are one: mind, body, spirit.** Each affects the other to create health or disease. Each interacts every minute of every day to bring us peace and healing, or chaos and stress.
2. Let go of the negatives in your life.
3. Find something to genuinely appreciate and feel grateful for and bring it into your heart daily.

4. If you have trouble finding something to appreciate, recall a past memory that has warm feelings attached to it.
5. Don't focus on the mental image of a memory: Remember the positive emotions that the memory creates (love, appreciation, gratitude, connection, etc.). Mental images alone usually do not produce the same significant results that have been seen when you focus on a positive feeling.
6. Connect with friends and family
7. Write down three things you are grateful for each day
8. Tell someone you love him or her, starting with yourself.
9. Incorporate relaxation techniques into your daily life.

The concepts of love and the heart have been called the most powerful forces in life. It can help you heal and stay healthy as well as bring love to the world. The heart has many lessons to teach us so remember to listen.