

UNCOMMON SENSE AND THE ADVENT OF GOOD MENTAL HEALTH

Dr. Mel Gill, Mag. Natalija Postružnik

Abstract: Too many people are focused on the Physical Health of a country's population, but spend not enough time thinking about Mental Health and how it is indirectly linked to Emotional health, which in turn translates directly to better Physical Health in most people. The common wisdom of the day is that the Physical Body's Health is dependent solely upon Nutrition, Environmental factors and exercise and although this is largely true much has been ignored in the area of the Mind's influence on the Body's Health. Author present excerpts from his international best-selling book UNCOMMON SENSE.

Key words: Physical Health, Mental Health, Emotional health, Mind's influence on the Body's Health, UNCOMMON SENSE book.

NEOBIČAJNA LOGIKA IN PRIČAKOVANJE PRIHODA DOBREGA DUŠEVNEGA ZDRAVJE

Povzetek: Vse preveč ljudi se osredotoča na telesno zdravje prebivalstva neke dežele, premalo pa se posvečajo premisleku o duševnem zdravju in njegovi posredni povezanosti s čustvenim zdravjem, ki nazaj vpliva neposredno, da ima večina ljudi boljše telesno zdravje. Dandanes pretežno menijo, da je telesno zdravje odvisno samo od prehrane, okoljski dejavnosti in gibanja; četudi to v veliki meri drži, preveč zanemarjajo dejavnike vpliva miselnosti na zdravje telesa. Avtor predstavlja povzetke iz svoje mednarodne uspešnice NEOBIČAJNA LOGIKA.

Ključne besede: telesno zdravje, duševno zdravje, čustveno zdravje, vpliv miselnosti na telesno zdravje, knjiga UNCOMMON SENSE

Introduction

It will be surprising for most people to know that HOW a person feels about one-self or his or her life situation determines how the body responds in terms of immunity against disease. This Mind-Body connection goes back to the time of Pericles, Pythagoras and Hippocrates where - most people will be surprised to learn - was the source of everything we have come to know as the psychosomatic response. In fact the Hippocratic Corpus in the original Greek version included a section on the Mind's crucial role in the elimination of the known common diseases, the crux of which lay in the individuals' ability to pay attention to their own Thinking Process and Emotional State.

Impact of one's Thoughts under conscious control to affect one's Emotional State

The theory is as simple as the Cure is elegantby bringing one's Thoughts under conscious control, one could affect one's Emotional State; these prolonged emotional states can augment a person's "Energy" and Enthusiasm levels to the point of exuberance and an enhanced or renewed overall immune response or these states in their negative polarity may diminish the immune response by reduced energy levels and enthusiasm which can lead to severe depression as well.

There are more than 15 known Cognitive Distortions which can, if identified and reversed, help a person to live a happier, more purposeful and more productive life. I put them all as well as several Thinking Strategies into my book UNCOMMON SENSE which has become a best-selling Self-help Primer for many people across 75 countries and will soon be available in Slovenian! Some of the concepts I share in the book are what follows as excerpts which may be useful in areas of your Life where you find yourself "Doing" more than just simply "Being" more.

Some excerpts from my book UNCOMMON SENSE

Human beings are 'doing' creatures. When we are not doing something, we are thinking about doing something. This, in itself, is 'doing'. When we sleep, we dream, and this is also 'doing'. Unlike other organic creatures on this planet, our emotions veer from happy to sad and back again, in a day. Our environment is transforming. Sometimes we protest against our environment, we must keep up with change and move in tandem with our environment, we must keep up with this constantly changing environment. The greatest acts of creativity occur when we are in harmony with nature.

Life is about connecting with our environment. We go about our daily living; we enjoy leisure activities and travel around our Earth for new experiences. If we are limited by resources in such actions, our thinking transports us to places we can't go to physically. Thinking offers us options from the past. Intelligence brings these options into the present. And imagination wings them into the future.

We need to question our reality.

Noam Chomsky observed in "Philosophy of Societies" that

Societal dynamics in a city environment seem very much like an anthill

(Though the activity of ants is not mindless). People are grouped into

Hierarchies, all busy jostling about. They have no thought as to the purpose of

their activity. Out of that army of millions of ant-like, busy people, only a

handful are asking: "What is the purpose of life?"

Are we not, after all, more than the things we do. The stuff we collect, and the lives we control? Are we not meant for much more? We must, of course, 'do' things in order to keep going. Perhaps our 'doing' allows for learning, without which we may feel insignificant. But somewhere along the way we have forgotten what it means to be human beings – just 'being'. It is recognizing our place in this sensory smorgasbord of life, our spiritual quest on Earth and understanding that our lives are precious. "Being-ness" seems to be a silent mandate from heaven. To those of us that say: "It's time to wake up." I say: "It's time for us to have not just a spiritual reawakening but a spiritual orgasm*!"

The way to 'be' is through learning, and enjoying every experience in a 'full sensory' way. To understand that, is the beginning of the next step. Every act of learning gives birth to new learning. The vast magnetic fields of unlimited personal power have the capacity to illuminate our future. This happens through progressively unfolding levels of enlightenment. Ultimately, our quest for the best on this journey brings us to Super-consciousness. We begin to recognize that those molecules of emotion we call desire and faith and peace and love, can find a oneness that inspires our children to dream impossible dreams, achieve miracles, and find a way home. Perhaps we may then find the centre of creation, that infinite force with many names, one of which is God.

In our quest for 'being' versus 'doing', action may accomplish much. The empires of the soul, however, are conquered by another wonder of the world. That wonder is our ability to experience life through our five senses; sight (visual), sound (auditory), touch (kinaesthetic), smell (olfactory) and taste (gustatory). We need to ask ourselves: Are we sensing every moment of our lives? - or are we just allowing these Sensory pleasures to drift into oblivion. This is the basis for Cognitive Distortions based on Thinking Skills which can no longer serve to ground us in "Reality".

We can change the way we live. We can become more aware of everything in our world. We can experience life through 'being'. The sixty-four billion dollar question is: "Do we want to?", "Would we want to?"

Few people are willing to make changes. This is because it is hard work and the thought of opening themselves up to risk and vulnerability is daunting. Some people can handle physical pain and hardship. Some are willing to do so in order to accomplish a goal or objective. But ask them to face the possibility of emotional pain and you will have a stampede in the reverse direction: much like in cartoons where you see the ants rapidly reversing over the hill in terror of an approaching Tasmanian Devil.

Our bodies are designed for pleasure. Our souls are designed for love. Learning is our birthright. But our minds have become our mortal enemies, turning shadows into obstacles, and angles of change into messengers of doom of messages of Hope. I am such a messenger.

The message is simple: Life is a gift from a Higher Force. You are its expression. Everything you see, hear, taste, feel and smell, every thought you think, every word you speak, and every deed you do, is your gift in return. So, let the journey begin. Awake, experience and enjoy your 'being'.

In my 55 years of living, I have noticed one thing: that we are asked to learn. From the time we are enrolled into kindergarten, we learn how to draw; we learn the alphabet and numbers; we learn about colors, about our friends and especially how to write our names. In elementary school, we learn the intricacies of language and mathematics and science. In high school, we learn more of how the world around us works and about people we know of only by reputation and accomplishment: people like Shakespeare, Sartre, Winston Churchill and other figures in history who have changed the planet in some significant way.

Learning happens in many ways. It comes from everything that we do, from everyone we meet, and every situation that we get entangled in. Every article, like this one, that you read, and yes, Miranda, every program that you watch on television and every movie you see, influences your life decisions and shapes who you will be in the long run. The more we learn, the more the mysteries of life will be peeled away, like an onion.

So the older we grow, the more we, presumably, learn. Not for everybody, though, is this true. For some, they have thirty years of Life experiencing. For others, they may have one year of Life experiences, thirty times! Some people truly have the ability to learn, adding understanding and wisdom to their knowledge. In so doing, they unlearn 'truths', which they may have accepted before, but now realize, are not everyone's reality. (Yes, I know..... truth is a relative term.)

I have heard people lament that life has not given them a full and complete deck of cards. (No, they're not from Las Vegas!) They were not born with certain requirements so they cannot go the distance to manifest those dreams that they wish for. For others, they were given a 'bad hand' in life, or they declare that they do not have enough money, or education, or opportunities, or looks. They cocoon themselves in this trained way of thought that only with genetic advantages, only then can they achieve those goals that they want.

My response is this is that we must learn more from the process of living. It does not matter what happens to you. It is what you gain from it and what it teaches you about who you are that matters. When you know who you are, you begin to realize that you are unique. You are the only YOU on this earth. Then, you can do what you need to do to achieve the goals you desire.

Life is a rich banquet of opportunities. Yet many people are found lacking for some strange reason. Let's begin to explore some of the reasons why people are not achieving the joys of living. And then we will begin to understand why we do not have the things we need. Along the way, we will find out more about love and why it 'hurts' to love, why are certain situations painful, why do people 'suffer' in the name of love.

Have you heard that old adage from the great Teacher, "Ask, and you shall receive"? Have you asked? When you asked, have you received? If you have asked and you have not received, why is that so? It's simple. The word 'ask' in the Greek language, is not, as we understand it, a request. The word really means to 'Claim' as if it is yours. We are to claim our share of this planet's abundance and prosperity. We may even come to a point when we can finally 'claim' that, which was ours from the beginning; abundance, joy, happiness and peace of mind.

If life is a classroom, perhaps the syllabus is to experiment with new ideas and experience new emotions, with everything and everyone. To be involved means to be consciously 'aware'. We must be aware of our moods, of our ideas of success and failure, of everything that we do. Through this conscious awareness, we discover the purpose of our every activity and the people we surround ourselves with. Everything that we choose to do on this planet should bring us closer to a strategy for daily living successfully and happily. (Isn't that the keyword...happily?)

Some people, coming to terms with terminal illnesses or serious physical or mental diseases, have a tendency to become alienated, not only from others, but also from themselves. This alienation and senses of separateness, affects their physical ability to apply their five senses in perceiving the world normally – in being able to feel it or hear it or smell or taste it or sense it. Everything they do requires extra effort and time passes slowly like a river of mud for them. This sets them apart from other people and out of this sense of difference; they will feel cut off from the rest of the human race, as if they are looking at the world through dark or distorted glasses. They can see the other people and they know others can see them, but they feel as if they cannot reach out to touch them or to be with them. They may, sometimes, feel as if other people do not want to listen and understand or share in their life's experience. This sense of isolation, of being separate from those around them, who are involved in their own activity, in their own goals, can be as painful as the worst treatment or symptoms people go through in order to cure the disease – the 'dis-ease'. It is loneliness in its most profound form.

This loneliness is, often, a product of their own perceptions. It is one of the most difficult concepts to grasp, and consequently, one of the most challenging to let go. Many psychologists, philosophers and spiritual leaders have said that being human is to feel lonely. Whether we are normal (whatever 'normal' may mean for us) or mentally ill, we crave the approval and acceptance of our peers and we seek out companionship.

I believe in a natural process that moves us towards wholeness. That natural process is what we call Healing. We are becoming aware of losing our ability to connect with our environment, the people around us, and even ourselves. We can, however, correct that, because we are essentially self-improving and self-correcting creatures. The pain in us guides us to better appreciate the healing. This is not just physical healing, but emotional and even spiritual healing. Emotional healing helps us to look beyond the surface, off the physical aspects of pain, to overcome our feelings. Feelings, then, reach beyond our beliefs to get in touch with that part of everyone of us, that is at the heart of... the nucleus... of all life – this is to be spiritual.

Then: why do we resist learning and change? As human creatures, part of our marvelous makeup involves the ability to be 'in stasis' or to keep everything stable and predictable. We have, inside of our bodies and our minds, an attitude of stability, of seeking a constant – a constant body temperature, a constant flow of neuro-transmitters, a constant flow of enzymes, a constant flow of blood and other fluids. It's a Paradox that this very Homeostasis is dependent on "Flow", which is the signature of change. Major Change, therefore, seems like a threat, not only to the physical system but also to the already settled emotional systems of this, our fragile self.

For most of us, the source of changes in our lives is external. I say to you, the key to being happy is within us. It is recognizing that our perceptions of what life 'should be' are not fixed. They are not carved in granite, but are like movies playing in our minds and projecting out through our minds and projecting our through our actions. Our perceptions are how we think about what we see, being played outside ourselves. It is only one way of interpreting things from an infinite number of choices. We need to recognize that the 'movie' – the life we're living, the perceptions that we are projecting out into the world – can be altered. We can choose to rewrite our inner "movie" scripts and change our perceptions with different interpretations of our reality to make our lives more meaningful and fulfilling. We have choices in every facet of living, regardless of what we encounter, even if it causes us emotional or spiritual distress (and it makes no difference if we are damsels or not.) We need to look back to the original, 'authentic' self, to who we are. This process of 'going back' is a form of healing. Healing comes when we realize this fact. It is also the basis for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

Yet we are creatures living in constant fear of change, of experiencing anything that might be out of the norm. Every time changes take place in our lives, we feel powerless. We seek predictability on a daily basis. If we want to create an extraordinary life, we need to have extraordinary experiences and learning. How else can we attain this unless we expose ourselves to change?

It's fine if we respond to the changes with fear. Fear triggers off an internal mechanism that protects us. There is a part of our brain called the "limbic system" and it is designed to deal with sudden changes like these. It is built to protect and preserve our rather fragile bodies in this predatory earth environment we call home. It creates this 'fight or flight', adrenaline-rush response that, in our past, protected us from Sabre-toothed tigers lurking in every corner, and Pterodactyls that flew down to snatch our young.

Several hundred thousand years ago, those responses served us well, warning us to back away from high, dangerous cliffs and stopping us from falling into deep, dark holes. Today, it is a different ball game altogether. The predators that we fear are unseen. They are invisible creatures called Divorce, Retrenchment, Stock Market Crash, Fair Weather FaceBook Friends and a host of others. Since they are unseen, they are not easily defended against, but can be anticipated. It is this anticipation that causes Stress in our Mental and Physical systems. We can't help it. (It's not our fault).

We started life in a cozy, warm, insulated and dark place called the womb. In the womb, all the sounds we heard around us were muffled and quiet and there was this soft cushiony waterbed-like barrier. Besides this protective barrier, was also the sound of a soothing, drumming, regular heartbeat, like an auditory night-light, providing security. After nine months, suddenly, the safe haven that we called our home started contracting, saying "Hey, you can't live here anymore!" The cocoon that we had been living in suddenly wanted to shove us out and there was this wonderful light at the end of the tunnel. For some of us it was a long tunnel. Eventually, we were thrust into the light. (Light! What on earth is that?) Then we saw faces, smiling faces. As far as we little ones were concerned, they could have been creatures with these threatening ivory daggers called teeth. (Will they eat me with those things?) As if that was not enough, the 'torture' continued. They started to pour water all over us that was colder than anything we could ever hope to experience. Then they took a rough sandpaper-like cloth and rubbed it all over our sensitive skins. Then instruments and fingers are thrust into our mouths and ...Good Grief! What an amazing assault on our senses! We have not recovered since. This was our first introduction to change. The Womb-to-World shock.

When we open ourselves to the possibility that there may be another way of perceiving our lives, we find ourselves discovering reality in more ways than one. The 'loneliness' that we often experience (which grows out of the wounds we've suffered) can bring us healing and the love we need, which is always around us. And they are there. But we don't see them because our eyes are fixed on what we imagine to be threats.

There is a way that our perceptions of the world can propel us forward. The things that we consider 'bad' or life-threatening, like illnesses, or loss of a love or something important, can help us to appreciate and enjoy our humanness more than ever. That's basically what life is about. It's about sharing with others what we can, to get in touch with our humanness and the strength and the joys that we may not have guessed that we possessed.

Some conclusions

In reality we are faced with many great challenges and the greatest of all is to learn to trust in Life again. Having, suddenly, moved from the womb out into the world, we feel vulnerable and fragile and perhaps even fragmented at times. So much so, that even without our conscious awareness, we seek out 'safe' shelters, in other people, crusade-like pursuits, accumulation of material objects and addictive intoxicants of one kind or another as a symbolic 'return to the womb'; our cock-eyed attempt to return to innocence.

We should, instead, trust our ability to deal with our own pain, fear, guilt and grief – to transcend this loneliness and become more in touch with who we are and the spirit within us; that magnificent, free, unborn, undying spirit within all of us. With that, a simple Truth becomes evident; that we are not human creatures having occasional spiritual experiences; we are spiritual beings, having a uniquely human experience. Up there, on higher realms of existence, according to Psychiatrist Carl Jung, everything is ONE. It's a Collective Unconscious Mind, the repository of ALL that is Possible for the Human Species. What happens to each one of us individually, happens to all of us collectively at a level beyond the perceptible. It is simply a place where 'knowing' is the only way to be.

*Readers interested in pursuing this should refer to the annals of tantric philosophy.

References

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