

Healthy Living

Focusing Inward

Energy workers and lightworkers work with the varying energy fields of the human body and consider the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of the client. Energy practitioners work to cleanse and balance the energy system of their clients and to promote increased vibrancy. While energy work will certainly produce these results, there are daily behaviors that one can adopt that are holistic in nature and serve to nurture many facets of health. Total health of the physical body, mental body and energetic body requires attention to all facets.

As a professor, I have spent my entire career teaching students about what foods are best for varying conditions and how to prepare food that is optimally healthy. In private practice, I coach and guide clients to make better choices that can heal their bodies. When it comes to healing the body there are many aspects that may interplay to produce disease. Clients show up and are usually looking at their problem from the viewpoint of the symptoms they are experiencing. Of course, these symptoms are what need to be healed and food can and will help to reverse many symptoms. Sometimes it is adding foods (like antibacterial foods) and other times it is removing foods (like those that cause allergies). Other times, making many changes only helps so much. Then the client-practitioner

relationship takes on a role of sleuthing out the root cause of the problem.

From a functional medicine perspective, finding the root cause of disease is the strategy to healing conditions. Somatic disorders is the broad category to diagnose when patients have medically unexplained symptoms.¹ However, these disorders are underdiagnosed, which becomes problematic in the integrative medicine model.² The reason is that if the root cause is mental, emotional, spiritual or energetic in nature, the tools in a traditional tool kit will be of limited use. Western culture is only beginning to accept the varying modalities of healing that are well accepted in other cultures.

I often discuss “finding the metaphor” or taking a somatic approach to discovering a root cause of what appears to be a physical problem but may be deeper. True behavioral change may mean releasing energy that is no longer serving a client. Sometimes clients seek me out specifically because they are ready find their metaphor for illness and reach new levels of healing. Although, they usually do not come in thinking that is why they are there!


Finding the metaphor involves digging into the physical, mental and spiritual to see where those energy systems collide to create a problem. For example, a person with hunched shoulders or a kink in their neck may be “carrying the weight of the world on their back.” A person with degenerating arthritis in their hip may have had a “crippling experience” or feel “crippled” about moving forward in life. A person whose gut is expanding and dense may be “harboring resentment” or “feel like they got a kick to the gut.” An anorexic may feel “invisible” to her family or spouse. An obese person may want to “barricade themselves from hurt.”

In the clinical setting, diet and exercise will only go so far to resolve physical symptoms or ailments if the root cause is psycho-somatically linked. Broadly characterizing these ailments under the heading of mental health still does not adequately address issues of the spirit or soul. Traditional Andean societies use whole plant-based medicine in cleansing rituals to treat these ailments that are viewed as quite common.³

A whole body and mind approach to cleansing and healing can be employed by anyone to increase health through better food choices and ultimately their vibrational level as well. This is not a prescriptive diet but rather, a way of looking at one's food view, body view and world view through the same lens. The seven chakras are each assigned different



colors, of which most reading this are aware; but traditional cultures also assign foods for each chakra. The first step to promote healing of psychosomatic conditions is to consciously choose to eat foods from all colors of the rainbow paying particular attention to foods that correspond to the chakra that is out of balance. For example, if an individual is suffering with degenerative arthritis and feeling “crippled,” one could associate that condition with issues of digestion, absorption and transformation (lack of nutrients to promote joint and bone remodeling). The yellow chakra or solar plexus is associated with the digestion system and vital energy. Traditionally, grains are associated with this chakra although a more modern approach is to link beautiful vibrantly yellow foods to this chakra. Herbs like cinnamon, mint, ginger, turmeric and cumin benefit this chakra.

I conducted my doctoral research on spirituality and weight-loss maintenance. My reason for choosing this topic was that I noticed that all of my eating disorder patients and obese patients shared a commonality which was a profound lack of self-love and ability to self-care. Thinking vibrant colorful thoughts, wearing colorful clothes and seeing beautiful colors in life will help to stimulate the entire being. Attending to the body, mind and spirit as one unit has the capacity to heal the whole organism. 



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