

Using Intuition to Self-Heal

Disease is as old as life, but the science of medicine is still young.

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In the beginning...illness was very different than it is today. Visualize Africa five million years ago: grasslands lush and green, the rolling fecund earth, sweet, fresh water. A branching occurred in the primate line which led to the first ape-women and ape-men. A mere three million years later our first ancestor Homo erectus emerged, upright (uptight yet? I wonder) and large brained, she/he discovered how to make fire, utilize stone tools, and speak. This genetic line led to Homo sapiens around 150,000 B.C. Carbon dating fills us in on our forebears' day-to-day health charts: they suffered injuries and arthritis; their life spans were shortened by a harsh environment--yet most infectious disease was nonexistent.

Our father and mother progenitors wandered from place to place, searching for food. Their small roving bands didn't stay put long enough to pollute water sources or create refuse that attracted disease-spreading insects. These early people were practically free of many of the health problems that plague "civilized" culture. As humans swarmed the globe, they were colonized by parasites, viruses, bacteria. The fittest of our predecessors developed immunity to compensate, surviving Darwin's age-old evolutionary struggle. The inception of our patterns was set in our primal blood.

What can our species' past tell us about illness? What archetypes have arisen over the eons? The "sick role" has taken on many personas. The leper: stigmatized because the disease was so disfiguring; the epileptic: deemed divine; the schizophrenic: the holy fool; childhood illnesses: a rite of passage into maturity. History also teaches us that most

cultures and healing systems have acknowledged the intuitive relationship of the sick person to the cosmos--planets, stars, oceans, rivers, ancestors, the interplay of heaven and earth. Where does healing originate, if not from our resonance with natural forces that affect our bodies?

Take the Grecian Isle of Cos in the fifth century BC: a sanctuary, created by Hippocrates, legendary father of medicine, where the sick were soothed by soft breezes, the restorative ebb and flow of the sea. A person recovered as the integrity of nature was allowed to reassert itself. How different from Western medical tradition, which reduces illness to the micro-mechanics of the body, tissues, cells, intricate strands of DNA's double helix. Our physical form now orbits in its own self-confining cosmos. Healing no longer comes from moonlight, sky, or trees.

I am presenting this chapter on illness as a call for integration. I want to counter what poet William Blake condemned as "single vision", the nineteenth century's obsession with the scientific method. I offer you a more organic approach. Hush...Become still. Tune in closely. Is there really a separation between the two thirds of you that is water and the pull of the sea, between the Earth's rotation, revolving night into day, and your circadian cycles of sleep? How can sensing these intuitive interconnections foster health? This is what I will show you. Ministering to your body, and all that harmonizes with it, will be your protection against illness. Your task is to realign with the positive forces within you and without--with everything.

Down this road, you'll have many decisions to make. Open heart surgery? Medication? Meditation? Should I wait to act? Look to my dreams? Even your manicurist has an opinion. How will you know what to do? Stop long enough to turn inside. Waiting for you, always, is your intuition. Whether you go the traditional medical route, dance wild-haired and naked at full moon on the stroke of midnight, do both, or pick something in between, your choice must come from an unbiased inner authority. It wants what is right for you. It will tell you when and how to proceed. It could care less about statistics

if they don't intuitively apply to your particular health situation. Even if chemotherapy is recommended, it must also feel right. The emphasis of this chapter will be to teach you how to know. In the face of illness, it's essential you remain centered, sort through the reams of information that may be thrown at you, discern fallacy from truth.

Illness, for many, is an initiation by fire. Take the warrior's stance: strong and sure in times of adversity. Something to strive for, intuition is the engine that drives. There is much to learn--enormous possibility. I want to reiterate: our healing may take the form of getting well. It also may take the form of acute or chronic illness. Great compassion is required. No judgment. No failure. No blame. My spiritual teacher says, "If it is true gold, you need not be afraid of the furnace." When illness comes, adopt this strategy: search for the white light in everyone who treats you, the interventions you decide upon, and all that you do.

STEP 1. NOTICE YOUR BELIEFS

Who gets sick? How can we get well? Is illness simply a result of genetics and other physical factors, or does something else come into play? Intuition? Spirituality? Your mindset is the stage on which your health history plays out. What you believe is not purely of intellectual interest. The views you hold must be able to soothe you like a lullaby when it really counts. It's good to read books, attend lectures and workshops about healing--but in the end, your convictions must get you through. Start now. Claim for yourself a sound vision of what health and illness mean.

Let me tell you a story....

There was once a little old man who lived in a pine forest. He was known far and wide as the Great Healer. His cottage was filled from floor to ceiling with stacks of books: magic spells, sorcery, medicine, science, a whole section devoted to jokes that would crack him up. Animals would come to visit. By firelight, he'd teach them the healing arts. They'd all curl up and read long into the night. Man, deer, coyote, rabbits,

frogs, the great owls. They'd turn each page and learn the Secrets: ways to heal with energy and dreams; love of the body; power of the heart; communion with nature; simplicity; kindness to the self and each other; and of course a good hearty belly laugh. They believed in the Secrets, lived by them.

In our society, we're too often separated from such harmony with the natural world and ourselves. Healing is something we do when we get sick--not a way of life, as in my story. It's important to clarify: What beliefs do you live by? Are they sustaining to you? Can you depend on them in periods of crisis and despair? Determining your stance on illness is pivotal whether you ever get sick or not. Why? Because it crystallizes your priorities--not just about health issues, but how you face everything: your faith, courage, compassion, humor, intuition and hope. Don't wait until the last minute to find them. How you cope with getting ill is how you cope with any stress. The difference may be that with poor health the volume is turned up, your limits stretched.

Is crisis an opportunity, as the components of the Chinese ideogram suggest? Or is this only a rationalization for a situation that is really unredeemable? To clarify, let's learn from intuition. It tells us that everything is not as it seems. There are layers of perception; layers of meaning upon meaning. Talk about magic and mystery! Yes, illness is challenging, as is any hero's path. What is being asked of us? All heroic challenges, physical or not, have one thing in common: a call for heart. What I'm proposing is that this call is more important than anything else we will ever do, the *raison d'être* of being alive. Especially if we're sick or in pain, the lessons of love don't always come easy. We must fight for self-compassion and the intuitive link with a loving force that heals. Of course, none of us would ever want to be sick or in pain. But if we are, loving kindness, in all its ramifications, will offer us the strength we need.

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-REFLECTION

- Do your beliefs give you strength during illness? If not, are you ready to find ones that do?
- In a health crisis what role does your intuition play? How far would you trust it?
- How do you treat yourself when you get sick or are in pain? If you're self-critical, how can you turn this into self-compassion?
- Can love heal? How about humor? Are you willing to put them to the test?

A healing life, in periods of illness or health, requires that you embrace a positive belief system. But before you do, you must bite the bullet: address upfront all the internalized negative voices that sabotage your getting well. Hear what they have to say. Allow the whole unseemly cast of characters we all know so well to surface: the martyr, the victim, the persecutor, the wounded child, the critical parent, and the faithless one. You must recognize your opponents in order to defeat them. If I miss anything, you fill in the blanks. Does any of this sound familiar?

What did I do wrong? Why me? It's hopeless. It's unfair. I'm worthless. I'm a bad person. Poor me, I'm a victim. I'm being punished. I'm never going to feel better. I'll have chronic pain all my life. I'm destined to inherit the same disease as my mother. I'm no good. I'm powerless. I'm weak. I deserve to be sick. I can't heal myself. I caused it. I'm cursed. I'm not spiritual enough. I hate myself for getting sick. I don't have options. There is no God that would allow me to be in such pain. God has forgotten me. God is angry at me. What's the use? I might as well give up...

Many of us spend a lifetime creating and listening to negative voices. Where do they come from? Why do they so inexorably persist? To begin with, they echo the words of parents, teachers, and other authority figures as well as normal individual insecurities. Further, body chemistry plays a role: when serotonin levels are low, depression can ensue. Also, our species' history makes us anticipate danger to survive. In addition, we

use anxiety to motivate ourselves or to defend against being let down. If we expect the worst, it's harder to be disappointed. The problem is we become driven by negativity, addicted to it. Consider the endless mayhem in the evening news. Finally, bear in mind, in intuitive terms, negativity has an inherently noisier, frenetic, and stronger charge than the more even, subtler signal of the positive. Generally, as a novice when you first tune in, you pick up traumatic events and emotional upheaval before anything else. Even in ordinary life, our attention is compelled more by the train wreck than by the system that works nearly all the time.

As you can see, negative voices have many sources, much power. To exorcise them requires a reconditioning of focus, replacing fear with faith. First, expose the tirade. Hold nothing back. Go straight for the boil. Charge like a samurai--lance it in one swift blow. Second, summon every ounce of compassion you can muster to combat these untrue, unkind beliefs. Don't buy into the fear. Third, tell these insufferable voices, "Thank you for sharing"-and keep moving on. I ruefully appreciate from my own experience how tenacious negative voices can be. They feed on our apprehensions and on the part of ourselves that is reluctant to be large. Just when you think they're gone-they're back. Nonetheless, there comes a point when you must decide if you want a life that is fear-driven or one founded on love and hope. Establishing this premise is tantamount to bringing your healing to the next level. Remember, each gain will be incremental. You'll catch the negative voices faster; you'll dismiss them more quickly. Significant improvement, but it's also true that the process is ongoing. Here's a perspective to help silence the negative voices.

Starting Points of a Positive Belief System

• **The Body Is Holy**

Your body is a temple. It houses spirit and blood, light and the interweaving of the material you. Everything about your body is holy: every secretion, every orifice, every physiological function contributes to your survival and well-being. Why in our culture are parts of the body taboo? Who do you suppose was one of the most respected physicians in ancient Egypt? Iri, Keeper of the Royal Rectum, the Pharaoh's enema expert! Enemas, believed to have been of divine origin, were a widely touted Egyptian practice to purify the gastrointestinal tract. What areas of your body do you appreciate, perhaps even slave over to be attractive; your skin, your hair or your eyes? Not surprising, given our culture's narrow definition of glamour. To heal, we must expand our notion of what is beautiful. Send love everywhere. See where you hold back. What about your body evokes shame, self-loathing: your internal organs, your secretions, sweat, tears, or Saliva? What about excretions: urine, feces, menstrual blood? Reassess what is devalued, even unmentionable. Take an honest inventory.

For vibrant health (not just making it through the day), you must slowly but surely recondition your biases. If necessary, reinvent the wheel and rebel against our culture's myopic vision of the body. Counter conformity. Unlearn what you've been taught. You do this case by case. For instance, do you think of menstrual blood, as a source of shame? No. Think of it as part of the cycle of preparation for creating life. Do you think of tears as something to hide? No. They're a form of release, a healing. And so on. With each bodily function we have to appreciate such a miracle. Meditate on it. Contemplate it. Pray to be able to fully apprehend such truth. Beauty comes from the inside out--literally! Whenever, even on an unconscious level, you abhor an aspect of your anatomy, you deprive it of energy and love, the essential fuel for healing. Create a more positive vision of your physical self. Then if illness comes, you won't be trying to heal a body you may hate.

• It's Healthy to Express Your Emotions about Illness

If you get sick, express yourself. Feeling upset, angry, depressed or afraid about your illness or another's can be stepping stones to compassion. Give yourself permission to be who you are. The patients I'm most concerned about are those who go numb, suffer in silence, or are stoic to the point of shutting down. Each of us is entitled to our own coping style, but we must ask ourselves: Does it bring peace? Will it facilitate healing? Give strength? Whatever your way of expression, be authentic. The goal is to shine light through darkness, never dwell in it. You have the right to voice even what may seem not allowed. For example, I got very angry as my father's Parkinson's disease was getting worse. I agonized watching him deteriorate. I wanted to a good daughter, to love, to stay on top of things, support him one hundred-and-ten percent--but the pressure kept building. My life was besieged with demands: nurses, hospitals, physical therapists; he couldn't walk; he couldn't sleep; his mind was confused; he required twenty-four hour care. All this plus he became irritable, constantly snapping at me. One night I cracked. On the phone with a childhood friend who's been with me through thick and thin--and whose mother was also chronically ill--I blurted out: "I wish he'd just die!" There was silence. Had the line gone dead? Finally my friend said, "Judith! That's horrible! "How can you say that about your own father?" Then click. She hung up on me.

What had I done? Was I wrong to express such a thing? Was I a monster? Well, no. What my friend didn't understand was that I really didn't want my father to die. But I did need to vent. Not to my father, of course. I had to find another outlet. By surfacing the feeling, I was able to let it go, to regain compassion. My process was a progression. I inched forward. I fell short. I tried again. To feel love, all obstacles must be removed. What if I'd denied my feeling, held it in? Where would it go then? For even the best of friends, sharing taboo emotions may be new territory. This will be safer with some people than others, but it's worthwhile to explore. Just know that if anger, fear, resentments about illness become frozen they'll keep you from your heart. We are human beings, not

saints. Cut yourself some slack. Feelings are not facts, they're energy. If your aim is compassion, releasing this energy productively can get you there. Believe in love that much.

• **Spirituality Will Help You Heal**

Are science and spirituality mixed an odd couple? Not at all, over two hundred scientific studies have shown that spirituality is good for your health and promotes recovery from illness. Take cardiac disease. In 1995, the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center found that for heart surgery patients a major predictor of survival was religious faith. For those without spiritual beliefs, the death rate was three times higher. As for blood pressure, another survey reveals that churchgoers have lower blood pressure than non-churchgoers, even when smoking and other risk factors are considered. Let's also look at the elderly. The National Institute of Aging conducted a study which found that geriatric patients were physically healthier and less depressed if they attended regular spiritual services. Across the board, research underscores the necessity of not waiting until illness or pain comes to draw on spirituality as a resource for healing and health.

Is there a center in our brain for spiritual experience? Our prefrontal cortex, which evolutionary biologists connect to forming complex beliefs, as in religions, is two hundred percent larger than expected in a primate our size. Simply put, we're wired to come to grips with spiritual issues. But can the transcendental experience itself be pinpointed? Scientists currently associate it with a part of the brain, the limbic system. When this area is electrically stimulated during surgery, some patients report visions of angels or devils. And brain tumors, which over-excite the limbic system, can trigger enhanced, sometimes obsessive, spiritual awareness. Which came first, God or the brain? Intuition aside, as detective Joe Friday of *Dragnet* always said, "Just the facts, ma'am". What scientists are willing to conclude is that the brain and spirituality are interrelated; if

you cultivate a belief in something greater than yourself--traditionally religious or not--you'll have a better chance of staying healthy longer and healing faster if you become ill.

• You Don't Have To Act Out Life's Traumas in Your Body

It is not necessary to resolve an emotional trauma by getting sick. What happens is this: a trauma occurs--a heartbreak, death or loss--then your body intuitively encodes it as energy. If you do your best to deal with the difficulty, you can get a jump on resolving it. If not, the conflict will fester, may translate into physical symptoms or emotional distress. Without even realizing it, many of us wait for a health crisis to give a more lucid perspective on our lives, make long overdue changes, or motivate us to work through past traumas. We use the energy of crisis to create change. I'm asking you to reappraise this strategy. By doing so, you may spare your body much pain and suffering.

At a recent workshop I was giving, a woman told the group a touching story. Her mother was a Holocaust survivor. Thirty years after the war ended she was diagnosed with uterine cancer. After the malignancy was surgically removed, she said to her daughter, weeping. "Thank God. Now the Nazis are finally out of my body."

Think about it. The significance this woman attributes to her cancer poignantly conveys to us the impact our beliefs can have. Must we develop an actual tumor to exorcise the demons in our lives? Please be clear, this woman never sat down and said to herself, "Okay, to heal I must get cancer." Who of us would? The process is treacherous because it's subliminal. Your body takes your beliefs, conscious or unconscious, seriously. Whether you're ill or not, examine your beliefs, retain only those that serve you. Do you unknowingly use illness or pain as a means of conflict resolution for traumas of the past? If so, take a second look. What other options do you have: Psychotherapy, Energy work, Meditation, Asking your dreams for guidance, consulting a spiritual counselor, Prayer, or talking with a good friend? Do whatever it takes. Formulate a life-

affirming belief system about how to prevent illness and heal. It is the underpinning upon which a sustained recovery is based.

What other factors contribute to illness? Take the classic overachiever. Slaving away late at the office one night, he practically blacks out, is rushed to the hospital with a perforated peptic ulcer. You could easily conclude it was caused by a combination of stress and his gastric acid skyrocketing from one too many spicy enchiladas. Or, even, that unconsciously he'd become sick in order to receive the much-needed nurturing that would come from a good doctor's care. What other "secondary gains" did he accrue from being ill: love, attention, time off from work, time out from a relationship, peace and quiet or a good rest? Whenever any of us get sick, there are always numerous physical and emotional components.

With this in mind, even so, I want to caution you against a too facile or simplistic explanation of illness. There are other meanings too. The ecosystem of man and nature is intuitively bound. No life form, human or not, stands alone. We all swim in the same waters, can feel our collective reverberations. How is it possible to talk about any individual's health without also considering the overall health of the planet? Could illness, in part, be our body's desperate attempt to re-equilibrate itself with a planet fighting to survive? Depression, chronic pain, autoimmune diseases where the body literally attacks itself, is growing at apocalyptic rates. There's a parallel between our suffering and the relentless assault on the earth, the ravaging of rain forests, underground nuclear testing, pollution of air and oceans. Can we empathically feel our planet's cry? Do our bodies mimic the disease we are inflicting? How do we reconcile this breach?

However you conceive of illness, an element of mystery always exists. Still, there's so much we don't know. It's been popular the past decade to assign all kinds of meaning to symptoms, but this isn't always possible. As a physician, I've learned to have awe for what is unknowable in ordinary terms. It's fine to seek a rational explanation for why you or someone you love becomes ill. But sometimes there just doesn't seem to be

one. Your four-year-old develops a brain tumor. How could there ever be a good reason for that? It's impossible to fathom. And yet you must accept the situation and not lose faith in God, yourself, or your child. Is this too much to ask of you? Or is this single act alone, faith in the face of the greatest possible loss, more significant in the cosmic scheme of things than any one life itself, no matter how dear? This is an extremely hard call. Each of us must grapple with these self and universe-defining spiritual issues.

In all types of illness, from cancer to shaking a cold, never fail to remember the mind's capacity to heal, even what has been deemed un-healable. By lovingly learning to focus your intuition you can strive to cure or at least improve any health situation. I first came to understand this in a roundabout way.

In 1970 I was working as a research assistant in a parapsychology lab at UCLA. Part of my job was to follow up on calls from people reporting "ghosts" in their homes. It's always amused me how many people in Los Angeles believe their houses are haunted. They'd describe electronic machinery flipping on and off uncontrollably, objects flying around the room, unidentifiable voices, footsteps, apparitions. Wild stuff! What we investigators mostly concluded was that even if the manifestations were authentic, they were misinterpreted. In general, they seemed an extension of the anger and frustration in the family, rather than related to any specific house. When the family moved, the phenomena followed them. As tempers flared, episodes increased—psychokinetic energy in action. A living laboratory of how the power of the mind literally alters its surrounding environment. The real revelation for me was: if the mind can make a cupboard door flap open and shut, it can also--if properly directed--physically heal the body as well.

This brings us to an appreciation of a world where positive beliefs, emotions and actions are prime factors in our getting well, can even stimulate our immune response. A world where our defense against illness is related to a body-wide communication network we can take an active part in programming. A mix of science, instinct and mystery, this is how intuitive healing can benefit you.

STEP TWO. BE IN YOUR BODY

You can't heal your body unless you're in it. Sounds reasonable, right? Then how come the instant most of us get sick we check out, the sooner the better? We feel pain or discomfort. We get scared. We withdraw. We're out of our bodies so fast, the last thing on our mind is to rally every iota of awareness and energy to the part of us that most needs attention. You might ask, "How would this help?" Let me explain. Intuitive truth #1: The more love and consciousness you bring to your body when it is ill the better chance you'll have of mending it. Intuitive truth #2: If you resist discomfort it will persist. If you soften around it, it will lessen.

Let's get specific. You have what you're going to discover is appendicitis. The first signs are that you're in agony, curled in the fetal position on your bed. Your body is sending out a frantic SOS. Something's really wrong. You have no choice but to listen. You head for the Emergency Room. You need surgery. No way out. Next thing you know, you wake up in recovery, sans appendix. You made it. Your acute pain obviously had a purpose. It got you, fast, to the hospital. Some pain is short-lived. You have it. It's treated. It's gone. Even with pain of this kind, however, there's no question that informed attention is an asset. From the onset of a health crisis, focusing your intuition can get you past all-too-human resistances. For instance, people frequently die of heart attacks, failing to heed the warning of their angina. As they say, Denial is not just a river in Egypt. Intuition combats denial. By tuning into pain you'll get a more incisive take on how to deal with it. But in general, here is a strategy that never fails: loving kindness, conscious softening, releasing resistance and fear and not forsaking the body. This is where you begin.

But what if pain becomes chronic? My patient, Meg, a corporate attorney used to being in charge--a control freak really--was diagnosed with a bulging lumbar disc in her spine. Compressing the sciatic nerve, this disc caused excruciating pain in her lower back

and down her leg. Pain became Meg's enemy. Drawing on techniques honed in years of legal warfare, she went on a crusade to eradicate it: anti-inflammatory medication, icepacks, acupuncture, physical therapy, and gradual exercise. She did everything her doctor told her. Still the pain was there. The more she dreaded it, the worse it got. One day, she hobbled into my office, cane in one hand, and cell phone in the other (an impossible juggling act, heartrending to see). On the verge of tears, she said, "I can't take it anymore. I hate this pain. I just want to get rid of it." Of course she did. Any of us would. But Meg was working against herself.

What I had to do was teach Meg something contrary to her style of being in the world. Meg just wasn't going to be able to conquer her pain. She'd have to harmonize with it. For a bold spirit like Meg this would be no easy task. Nor was this issue hers alone. So often in medicine we have it backwards. We attempt to repair the body without consulting it. Pain has its own spirit, language, intelligence, and rhythm. Pain is absolutely alive. It will speak to you, not in the usual sense, but on an intuitive level. First, open up communication. Odd as it may seem, ask your pain--or any illness-- for help. Healing is a collaboration, an opportunity to learn from a sometimes demanding, but most enlightened, master. Approach your pain with deep respect. If you do, it will respond, point the way toward getting well.

All this I was communicating to Meg. Not surprisingly, she listened with visible skepticism. Perhaps you too have doubts. To further explain let me tell you of the ancient Buddhist practice of Tonglen. Tonglen says to heal from illness you must actually become it. This seems a phenomenal idea. The paradox is that by taking illness on with compassion you may be released from it. Aversion only worsens suffering. In The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying Sogyal Rinpoche tells this story: "...There were many extraordinary cases of people, who when they heard they were dying of a terminal illness, gave away everything they had, and went to the cemetery to die. There they practiced taking on the suffering of others; and what is amazing is that instead of dying, they

returned home fully healed." Rimpoché also tells of lepers who cured themselves by breathing in, actually becoming one with their terrible disfigurement and pain, then transforming it with compassion. We in the West must understand that compassion is more powerful than pain and provides a potent protection against it.

As a physician, I wasn't about to ask Meg to go to Tibet or take on the misery of the world. I did want her, however, to apply aspects of Tonglen to managing her pain. The use of breathing for pain relief is hardly alien to our culture. Lamaze, a breath technique for natural childbirth has successfully brought lots of babies into the world, eased many mothers through labor. Building on this principle, I worked with Meg first to develop compassion for her body. Second, to embrace her pain, breathe it in, no withholding and third, to utilize compassion to abate it. Drawing on Tonglen and my own intuitive practice, I gave Meg these guidelines. For relief of pain, or as an approach to resolve illness, you can apply them too.

MEETING THE MASTER

A MEDITATION FOR DEALING WITH PAIN AND ILLNESS

- Relax into the discomfort. Don't try to change it or rid yourself of it. Simply let the pain be. Gently breathe through any tightening, fear, resistance. Loosen your grip. Get to know the geography of your pain. Map it out. Become familiar with it.
- Intuitively tune into the discomfort. Does it have color, texture or motion? Is it hot, cold? Does it move or stay in one place? Do you notice images, Sounds, scents or memories? Ask the discomfort: What can I learn from you? How can I ease my pain?
- Focus lightly on the discomfort. Feel it completely. As you inhale, breathe all your pain in. Visualize it as a cloud of dark smoke. Let it flow throughout your body right to the core of your compassion. Now, picture every last bit of the black smoke dissolving, purified by love. As you exhale, imagine this love as clear white light. Send it back to

your area of discomfort. Breathe in pain. Breathe out compassion. Breathe in pain. Fill the pain with the healing breath of compassion.

Meg initially struggled with this meditation. But despite her forceful nature, she began to see progress. Her pain gradually let up. For Meg--and most of us--the premise of this meditation is radical. It says that by actively engaging discomfort we can transmute it, a form of mystical alchemy never to be misconstrued as succumbing to weakness or admitting defeat. HARMONIZING WITH PAIN OR ILLNESS WILL RELIEVE THEM, NOT MAKE THEM WORSE. I know this goes against much of what we've been taught. Still, the fact remains that Meg--and each of my patients who've trusted enough to explore this in therapy--have experienced significant reduction in pain or improvement in an illness, even when all else had failed.

Working with Meg, I also saw more clearly the difference between pain and suffering. At the risk of oversimplifying, pain is a physiological sensation. Chinese medicine sees pain as a blockage of chi, our life energy. Suffering, on the other hand, is our response to pain, not necessarily related only to the present. Pain adds up, both physical and emotional. Unresolved pockets of pain fester. Any or all of them can be unconsciously reactivated with a new illness or injury. In Meg's meditation, the difficulties of her past surfaced: an image of a childhood blanket she'd wrap up in to feel safe. Memory flashes of parents who ignored her. She never had anyone to turn to for comfort. One pain ricocheted off another, then another. Her lumbar disc was merely the focal point of an entire constellation of pain. Though Meg didn't realize it, this compounded her suffering. Here I could help.

The practice of Tonglen gave Meg the courage to mend past wounds and change present behaviors. It allowed compassion into many areas of her life. She never expected that part of her healing would be to allow other people to support her: letting a friend drive to the movies; asking a stranger to carry her bags when traveling. Meg's success

wasn't only that her back pain subsided. Much about her started to melt: her rigidity, her tendency to beat herself up whenever she'd make a mistake, her impulse to give to others, rather than taking time to savor or receive. She has become more mindful of beauty. The glistening sunlit bows of magenta bougainvillea arcing over her front porch don't go unnoticed anymore. Of course, Meg didn't achieve this overnight, but an extraordinary new pattern had begun. Self-compassion is the most enduring antidote to pain or illness I know, a kind of oxygen that can revitalize. Moving toward it is a life-long path.

I never lose sight of how relentless chronic discomfort can be. Try to consider it a Zen koan, a spiritual riddle containing layers of meaning. Look to your body for the answer. Feel into the pain or illness. Listen to it. Learn from it. If you do, there's no guarantee your distress will miraculously lift, though it might. But what will happen is that you'll enter into a relationship with a force that will provide clues of how to heal. This is a very different philosophy from just swallowing a pill, sitting back and waiting for the pain to leave.

Your body also gives you leads about recovering from pain or illness through its internal pictures. If you get sick you may have to undergo certain tests: x-rays, ultrasound, CT scans, MRIs, endoscopy, some more grueling than others, but all with their intuitive up-side. I'd like you to begin see these tests differently. Consider them a training ground where you learn to intuitively zero in. I can't overemphasize the importance of having a distinct mental image of the part of you that needs to be healed. These tests offer you that. Their visuals are a structural reference point that further grounds you in your body.

Only in the last century was gazing into our body even possible. In the early 1800's, Dr. Rene Laennec, invented the first stethoscope. Instead of using the traditional

ear-to-chest method he rolled up a tube of paper to keep a proper distance between his ear and a female patient's well-endowed breasts. This fastidious improvisation, amplifying her heartbeat, was in fact a major breakthrough into hearing the noises of our bodies. Later, the first gastroscopy (a test using a scope to look into the stomach) occurred when a professional sword swallower, at the request of a physician, ingested a pipe a foot long containing a lamp and lens. By the turn of the century there were X-rays, and by the 1950's there was ultrasound, sound waves too high to be heard by the human ear. The era of 3-D imaging took off in 1976. First, CT-scans were discovered utilizing X-rays; later Magnetic Resonance Imagery (MRI), eliminating the need for radiation.

Such cutting-edge technology, making our bodies transparent, opens doorways of mystical perception. Of course, most of us don't look at it this way. With good reason, we abhor going through tests (some are truly unpleasant). Our doctors rarely think to show the results to us, let alone instruct us with them. And be honest, do you ever ask to see the actual studies? We have a conditioned squeamishness, viewing the interior of our bodies as forbidden, repugnant, alien. I'm suggesting that you re-evaluate this mindset, discover the luminous essence the structure of our body imparts.

My patient Ralph just underwent a colonoscopy. He'd been dreading it, putting the appointment off for months. I thought they might have to handcuff him to get him there. Actually, his wife drove him. At the hospital, a specialist inserted a flexible scope up into his colon. A video monitor magnified everything to detect disease. His doctor was a cheerful sort. During the procedure, he asked Ralph, "Do you want to see your colon? Just watch the screen." Ralph cringed, broke out in a cold sweat. "I was scared to death," he admitted. "Gross. The last thing I needed to see was the inside of my own colon. Besides, what if there was something wrong?" Ralph kept his eyes locked shut the entire time.

During our next session, I reviewed a copy of Ralph's study with him. His diagnosis was spastic colon, probably due to stress. "How about going over the pictures

together?" I suggested gently, fully respecting his right to say "no". "Use this test as a road map. Intuition's a laser. Target your focus. Then you'll know where to direct your intention to heal." Ralph rolled his eyes. "I'm afraid to look. Why should I? I'm no doctor. I won't understand what I'm seeing. I won't like what I'm seeing anyway." Honoring Ralph's not unreasonable anxieties about the sanctity of his colon, I walked him through his resistance. Though viewing tests is usually seen as the province of doctors, I explained to Ralph that it doesn't take a rocket scientist to get a general understanding of them. The films of his colon provided a clear picture of his problem. With it Ralph had a focal point with which to intuitively tune in, gather information, and send energy.

Intuitive healing is always body-interactive. Why not put your medical procedures to intuitive good? Why deny yourself such an asset? When traveling in a foreign country wouldn't you prefer to have a guidebook? I know tests can be scary, especially if something is wrong. Even so, don't miss the magic of seeing your body transparent, a connector to you and the substance of which you are made. The martial arts concept of "mu-shin" or "no mind" means no separation between mind and body. Power flows from this unity of our physical self, our emotions and a healthy body or an organ with disease. Our capacity to heal strengthens as we become one with it all.

STEP 3. SENSE YOUR BODY'S SUBTLE ENERGY

When my mother was dying of cancer I used to hold her in my arms in the hospital. Plagued with insomnia, she'd toss and turn all night. Tranquilizers or pain killers didn't solve the problem. What did work was for me to cradle her head in my lap and send energy to her. She told the nurses proudly, "I don't need sleeping pills when my daughter comes to visit. She puts me in a trance with her hands." My mother would often drift off hugging a tiny carved statue I'd given her symbolizing longevity, an old bearded

Chinese man whose eyes were looking up at heaven. My mother was slowly slipping away. My heart, my energy was the gift I had to give.

Never underestimate the ability of your energy to ease suffering, accelerate healing, or even cure disease. Building on our discussion in chapter two, our bodies are composed of energy centers known as chakras. In Sanskrit *chakra* means wheel or circle, is often portrayed in sacred art as a lotus blossom or a spinning wheel. Medical intuitives are trained to make a diagnosis by sensing their imbalances.

Now I'd like to focus on the heart chakra. If you or a loved one becomes ill, your heart is a priceless resource. I don't mean this in a metaphoric sense. I'm referring to a specific energy center in your body which directly affects your health. The heart chakra is one to four inches in diameter, located in the middle of your chest. You can sense it by placing the palm of your hand over this area. Whenever I do energy work on a patient or myself I focus on my heart, allow its force to move through me into the other person. It is the main generator that fuels our healing system. What does it feel like? How can you activate it? Here is what you do.

MEDITATION: OPENING THE HEART

Get very quiet. Relax your body. Breathe in... Breathe out... Your breath provides a focal point to come back to center. Gently place your palm over your heart chakra. Now get ready to visualize. Concentrate on a person, special place, or animal that you really love. For starters it may be simpler to picture cuddling your Pomeranian or taking in a gorgeous sunset rather than selecting a person. Whatever moves you. There is no right or wrong. The purpose is to feel love, in a general sense, but also noticing how its energy-equivalent localizes in your mid-chest. Pay attention to sensations in your heart chakra, no matter how subtle: warmth, cold, tingling, vibration, pressure, constriction, expansion, compassion and joy. Let it happen. Don't hold back. Even discomfort...let it open. It will evolve. As you practice, a vortex of positive energy in your heart will build. This is the hub of your healing. During illness or pain tap into it.

First, get used to sensing heart chakra energy. Then, when it's real to you, learn to impart it. The secret: be a vessel through which love flows. No need to strain. You aren't doing it. The instant you over-personalize the process or claim credit for it, you'll become drained, the current will cease. Practice sharing energy with a friend. Place your hand over her chest. Focus on your heart chakra opening. Spend a few minutes allowing love to freely go from your heart, down your arms, out your palms into your friend. Then reverse roles. Have her direct energy back to you. This technique can be used to help anyone in need, not just friends. The quality of love I'm asking you to access is selfless, unconditional. No ego involved.

This concept took me quite a while to understand. Patients would come into my office sick or in pain. I wanted to make them feel better. Me. Not some elusive universal force. True to my medical training, I tried hard but at what cost? At night I'd drag myself home, flop into bed, depleted. I had to learn surrender. To become empty so I could be filled. You know you're doing something right when you come away from sending energy refreshed. Love feeds you as much as the person you're healing.

You never know when this technique will come in handy. While speaking at a local book club, my presentation was interrupted when Jane, my hostess, broke down in tears. "I'm in terrible pain," she apologized. "I think it's a gallstone attack. Can you help me?" The room fell silent. All eyes turned to me. Now, these twenty women--mostly housewives, living in privileged Palos Verdes Estates--had no experience in sending energy. My book, *SECOND SIGHT*, which they'd just read, was their only reference. Still, here we all were, faced with someone in pain. I asked Jane to stand next to me. I placed my hand over her gallbladder. I took a breath. I focused on my heart chakra. I requested energy to flow through me, out my hands. I instructed the women to do the same. We all formed a circle around Jane. As if by instinct, one-by-one each woman lovingly came forward sending her energy. A sea of hands on Jane, in a living room decorated for Christmas with the faces of radiant angels.

The power of the moment was that Jane's pain eased, then stopped. This was atypical--usually her attacks persisted for hours. Relieved, she felt strong enough to call her doctor. The next day her gallbladder was taken out. Jane swears, "The ladies of my book club saved me." The energy we sent got her through the night until she could have surgery. This evening was remarkable: these women experienced for the first time what it was like to take part in a healing, a down-to-earth demonstration of how effective working with subtle energy can be.

Practice makes perfect. This is a skill everyone can learn. The more you do it the better you'll get. When you're injured or ill, direct energy to yourself where it is needed and be specific. If you have tendonitis in your elbow, place your hand over the area--aim energy right toward it. What about cancer? In the same way, visualize saturating every last millimeter of your tumor with love; ditto for a broken arm, migraine headache, or aches and pains. What results can you expect? In most cases, at the very least, you'll feel replenished. Sending energy gives your body stamina when it has stalled. I've also seen a dramatic turnabout of symptoms. Asthma in a child disappears. Arthritis pain resolves. Fibroid tumors shrink. I believe that many so-called spontaneous remissions from disease occur because the body's energy system becomes realigned. A wild card, that traditional medicine has no logical way to account for. Subtle energy has an integrity of its own, goes where it's needed at the proper time. Try to let go of expectation. Come from your heart--that's what's important. You can't dictate the outcome. Then trust your body's response--whether it's a return of vitality or a complete reversal of illness.

I strongly encourage you, especially if you're sick, to get comfortable working with your own energy. Along with this, you may also want to consult a doctor of Chinese medicine, savvy in balancing your body's energy, or a practitioner who's an energy healer. Either approach will augment conventional therapy, not conflict with it. Most physicians diagnose and treat illness on a gross level predicated on what is seen or measured by tests. A lot of good can be accomplished on this basis. However, sometimes

much more is needed. Particularly when you feel no positive response I urge you to draw on all available options.

Many Western physicians lack the training to identify subtle energy disturbances which cause symptoms. Too often, people with real physical problems are written off as "hysterical", "hypochondriacs," or "malingerers". Where does this leave you? You're being told nothing physical is wrong, yet you don't feel well. This is crazy-making. If your symptoms escape medical definition, don't give up: fatigue, pain, nausea, insomnia, headaches, urinary frequency, and muscle spasms. These are just a few of the usual culprits that go unexplained. Maybe your doctor isn't knowledgeable about energy. Then I suggest you refer to the skills I presented in Chapter Three to seek out a practitioner who is. When your energy needs are met, "unexplainable" complaints can resolve and your wherewithal to heal will peak, bolstering your body's defenses to fight disease.

Being accountable for your subtle energy can counteract illness, safeguard your health. Take contagion. Germs are everywhere. Why do some people fall prey to them and others don't? Did you catch the flu just because that man on the subway kept sneezing on you? If so, why didn't your friend sitting next to you get it too? What constitutes immunity? Let's look at the extremes. On numerous occasions, performer Michael Jackson has been photographed wearing that infamous surgical mask in public. Must we go to such lengths to prevent infectious disease? Our society puts a premium on hygiene, as meticulously detailed by Nancy Tomes in [The Gospel According To Germs](#): cough shielding; the white toilet designed to be easily scoured of microbes; vacuum cleaners ridding households of disease-spreading dust. Even women's hemlines were purposely raised in the 1800's to avoid collecting bacteria.

Are infections merely about the transmission of germs? Immunity depends on white cell function, genetics, environmental pollutants, our thoughts, emotions, stress level, personality styles. Psychoneuroimmunology, a groundbreaking field linking immunity and the mind, correlates life-affirming attitudes and behaviors with wellness.

Given this, again consider the Buddhist belief that compassion (your heart's expression of subtle energy) is our greatest defense against disease. How can all these factors work together? By opening your heart you can create an immuno-supportive system in your body. Positive thoughts, a loving perspective about your illness and yourself, as well as the ability to consciously direct energy gives us potent ammo against disease.

Building heart builds immunity. There are numerous causes of illness. Rest assured, you have many more means of combating it than you're told in traditional settings. One of these is subtle energy. Sensing it fine-tunes your body's functions and will point the way to heal.

STEP 4. ASK FOR INNER GUIDANCE.

Being ill can be confusing. You're on an emotional roller coaster. Statistics, probabilities, therapeutic options, survival rate projections will be swirling around in your head. It's natural to feel overwhelmed. How do you make an informed decision about treating an illness; decision that you'll feel good about twenty years from now? What should you do? First, collect the facts but don't stop there. Take all the time you need to also intuitively listen. No matter how impressive the scientific evidence, your choice must sit well with you. Slow down. Don't panic. The patients I've worked with who've felt happiest about their selection of therapy have consulted their intuition at every stage.

When you're deciding on the best way to treat an illness ask yourself:

- What does my gut say? Is it tied in knots or relaxed? Does an option feel "right" or "off"?
- Do I sleep better or worse at night thinking about a particular approach? Does going ahead with it make me feel more at peace?

- When I quietly tune in, what images, impressions, or knowings come?

Are they telling me to go ahead or wait; seek out another alternative? Pose specific questions to your intuition. Evaluate the response.

Succinctly formulating questions and requesting guidance for intuitive problem solving is a form of remote viewing. Put this question-answer strategy into action. You'll gain a more rounded picture of how to proceed in the here-and-now as well as in the future. Recall that remote viewing is not limited by the constraints of time or space. It is a technique whereby you can access your intuition to obtain foresight about people, places, and health-related interventions. Simply center yourself, setting aside the ups and downs of the day. Ask your question. See what intuitions come. Factor them in your decision. For instance, will a treatment succeed? Visualize yourself going through it. Do you see a positive outcome? If so, what are the details? Are you healthier and more energetic? Free of pain? If not, think twice about proceeding. Whenever possible, get a clear sense of the results.

How do you know if your intuitions are accurate? Can you separate them from your hopes and fears? To make sure the process is pure do this: Be an open channel. Don't micro-manage your intuitions. As I've emphasized before, pay special attention to those that are either completely neutral, with no emotional charge, or else are conveyed with compassion. I've come to depend on these factors to gauge reliability.

I was once in session with a patient I've known for years and cared for very much. While she was talking about job stress, I suddenly had the strong intuition she had diabetes, though nothing she related even remotely pointed to it. My first reaction, naturally, was dismay. But I knew from experience to slow down the inflow of information to determine my intuition's validity. Once I did, I realized my impression, as it came though, was neutral. My instinct was to hold off mentioning it. I only suggested, on the basis of her stress symptoms that she go get a physical exam. She agreed. Her doctor ordered a routine blood panel and an elevated glucose was found, diagnosing early

diabetes. Just as I have, train yourself to separate your emotional reaction to what you're sensing from the original intuition. Then you'll have a more astute take on whether it's authentic.

I'm also privy to another form of intuition in my work. When it first happened, it took me by surprise. In the middle of a session with Larry, a teenage boy, I suddenly saw another male face superimposed on his. I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me. I blinked--still it was there. Nobody ever mentioned this in medical school. Had I totally lost it? Fortunately I didn't go down that road. Instead I decided to focus on the face, inquire directly how it could assist Larry. To my delight, I received extremely pertinent input such as, "Ask him if he's been suffering headaches." I did and he had. I was on to something. By exploring his headaches--their psychological and physical roots--Larry found his symptoms gradually ameliorating. With another patient, the face of comedienne Gilda Radner, who died of ovarian cancer, appeared. Sadly, it forewarned that my patient, too, would share the same diagnosis.

In my workshops, I started to feel out if other therapists experienced anything similar. Bingo! Many had--but were skittish about all the raised eyebrows they'd encounter if they dared mention it. The magic of surfacing such "taboo" intuitions is the relief it brings. Now, out in the open, a professional exchange could begin. Whether this face represents a visual premonition, a benevolent guide, or a reflection of a past life, it is a therapist's friend. When it occurs I pay attention, take advantage of this worthy intuitive asset.

Asking for inner guidance is very practical when it comes to your health. You can count on it during a medical crisis. For me it has been a life saver. Let me walk you through how it can work. Over a few short months, I watched the ravages of my father's Parkinson's disease take his life, as he had known it, away from him. My dear father who was totally dependent and I, his only child, could only watch powerless and heartbroken. "We can't handle him any longer," the kindly nurse from his retirement home told me.

"You'll have to find a facility providing more comprehensive care." Oh God, a nursing home. Part of me had sensed this coming for a long time but I couldn't bear to think about it.

So my journey into the netherworld of nursing homes began. Envision it. Not being able to care for yourself or think straight, needing constant supervision and having to rely on the good graces of caregivers you'd just met. I plunged into this very real aspect of elder-care in our society, one that is almost too painful for many people to face. I asked to be guided. I clung to my intuition for clarity. I prayed for my heart not to shut down. Sometimes this is all you can do. I was my father's only advocate. I couldn't afford to succumb to fear. There was an answer for him, a place where he'd be well cared for and happy. This, my intuition told me. It was a compassionate truth I felt down to my core. Also, I kept seeing an image of a sun, which carried no emotional charge. It was related in some way to my father's solution, but I didn't know how. Was I imagining things? Was I just making up what I badly needed to believe? My intuition, a blend of compassion and neutrality, told me otherwise.

I kept going. In the worst of nursing homes I witnessed near Auschwitz-like conditions, dormitories of demented patients stacked inches from one other. I fought not to be sucked into this vortex of despair. Not my father. Not there. Even the "better places" didn't feel right. It seemed I was getting nowhere. Could my intuition have been so off? I doubted myself. Even so, I struggled to re-center.

Way down on my list was a facility called Vista del Sol outside the neighborhood I'd been considering. When I visited there I immediately breathed a sigh of relief. The place was perfect: garden apartments connected to a nursing home that my father could transition to when the time came. It wasn't until that moment that I understand the significance of my recurring intuitive image. A chill shot through me. In Spanish, Vista del Sol means "view of the sun." In the chaos of my search, I just hadn't made the connection.

The purpose of my story is to give you a realistic appreciation of what asking for guidance will bring. Don't wait for a miraculous vision that will magically make your health concerns fall into place. It could happen, but more often your intuition will be a compass pointing the path to wellness. At first, you may not have the slightest clue what a particular intuition signifies. Don't dismiss it just because it doesn't make apparent sense. The events of your life will serve to explain its relevance. Keep your eyes open and stay with it. Discover your answer. If doubts come (they do even for those of us who have great faith in intuition) bring yourself back to center again. Clarity will return. When it comes to your health or a loved one's trust intuition and you'll never go astray. Your challenge, as mine was, is to keep the faith in what your guidance tells you.

I look at guidance as a kind of prayer; a way of seeking an inner direction and contacting a spiritual force which can heal. We don't have to deal with illness all by ourselves. There are others out there--people we've never even met--waiting to assist us. During my father's illness I discovered prayer lists. Groups of dedicated people all over the world, related to various churches and humanitarian organizations (see resource section) who will pray for you or a loved one if you are in need. There are literally thousands of volunteers rotating in round-the-clock shifts that send positive thoughts and healing energy your way. Cardiologist Randolph Byrd's pioneering study of cardiac patients at San Francisco General Hospital showed the power of prayer to heal. Those who were prayed for had a higher survival rate, were less likely to require antibiotics, and had fewer complications than the non-prayed-for group. This is impressive statistical findings. I have my father on every prayer list I could get my hands on. You can take advantage of them too. Even in health situations that don't seem to have an obvious answer, prayer is another resource to which you can turn.

STEP 5. LISTEN TO YOUR DREAMS

Over two thousand years ago in ancient Greece dreams were sacred. Healing shrines honoring them towered over the cobalt Mediterranean Sea. Pilgrims who were sick flocked on foot--or were carried on litters--from all parts of the world to visit the renowned Temples of Asclepius. The Divine Physician, Asclepius, was not human, but God: son of the mighty hunter Apollo, he was the giver of dreams that cured. Special incubation chambers were set up for the sick, who'd enter into "temple sleep," and request a dream. In preparation they were bathed in rose water, the sweet scent of incense wafting through the air. After a night in this sanctuary, priests, not physicians, would interpret their dream. The temple walls were inscribed with dramatic testimonials of cures: "Hermodikes of Lampsakos was paralyzed in body. In his sleep he was healed..." The Greek culture revered the therapeutic properties of dreams in a way we've forgotten.

In our world, science's vigilant efforts to quantify illness could profit by collaborating with dreams. Relegating hard science to one camp and visionary dreams to another is a no-win proposition for everyone. The two can work together. We, in our sleep, have inhibitions that fall away. Dreaming is hinged on the surrender of our thinking minds. More healing is possible without our ordinary walls intact, when creativity is at its peak. Healing=Creativity. In terms of your body, dreams offer brilliant solutions to health issues that may never have dawned on you before: how to diagnose and treat symptoms, relieve discomfort, even forewarn of illness. If I get sick, dreams are the first place I turn. It doesn't matter how worried I am about my situation, the sanity, ego-free perspective, and wisdom of dreams anchors me.

What can dreams reveal about your body that even your doctor doesn't know? Can dreams diagnose illness? Listen to what happened to author Marc Barasch. While putting in demanding hours as former editor of *New Age Journal*, he had an unusually vivid dream. It made him afraid he had cancer, though he had no specific symptoms. Still the dream haunted him: *"An iron pot filled with red-hot coals hangs under my chin....I feel the heat sear my throat, and I scream, the sound becoming hoarser, a raw animal*

desperation, as the coals gnaw my larynx. 'Please God, bring me out of here!'...I feel a black no-exit despair."

The next morning, Marc awoke devastated. The all-too-real clarity of the dream, its utter sense of immediacy, compelled him to seek a medical opinion. Can you imagine going to your doctor symptom-less, with only dream in hand, requesting a physical? In ancient Greece that would have been no problem. But in today's world, Marc had trouble convincing anyone to take him seriously. People reassured him: "It's just a dream," "You're overly stressed," "It's a metaphor for your fears." All the answers were plausible, but for Marc, they were too pat. Blessed with chutzpah and an abiding belief in intuition, he persevered. Finally, he persuaded a doctor to examine him. A tumor was found in his neck, which turned out to be thyroid cancer. This was surely, not his desired outcome. Even so, prompted by Mark's dream, timely treatment was initiated, halting the spread of cancer.

If you have a dream about your body, consider its message. As with Marc, it may be offered to you. Or you can formulate a question regarding your health. As I've previously suggested, before you go to sleep ask for a specific and straightforward dream to explain. Record the response in your journal. If the answer isn't clear, continue doing this for a day, or a week, until you're satisfied. Maybe you're exhausted but don't know why. Perhaps you're torn about whether or not to have surgery. That's okay. See what your dream has to say. In those notoriously treatment-resistant illnesses--chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia (spasms of the neck and shoulders, AKA the "computer disease"), or other intransigent pain--dream-solutions can be of real value. It's the equivalent of getting a second opinion. Avoid the trap of being locked into linear, medically-definable interventions as the only way. Be aware that intuitive dream-wisdom does exist--whether it comes straight from the spirit of Asclepius, a higher power, or your higher self. It has something useful to say about your healing.

There are touchstones you must always return to indicating if a healing dream is intuitively right-on. Remember to look for these tried-and-true giveaways:

- Exceptionally vibrant imagery, colors, or sounds
- An oddly impersonal tone, neutrally imparting information
- A sense of indisputable "knowing" in your body
- A crispness and clarity to segments, making them stand out.

Your relationship with dreaming is dynamic: you ask for a dream, you receive one, you interpret it. It may take a while to get in sync with the flow, but it will soon feel natural. You'll learn to work with your own symbols to get the knack of intuitive dream interpretation. Dream books, spelling out what imagery means, will give a starting point, but ultimately are limited. I would suggest reviewing Carl Jung's, Man and His Symbols, as a reference. For instance, you'll learn that ocean, in Latin *mare* or mother, is associated with emotions, feminine energy, the collective unconscious; fire associated with passion; birth with creativity, new beginnings. Acquaint yourself with these kinds of traditional interpretations. Apply each to your dream, but don't stop there. Build on them by seeing what unique truths your symbols hold for you. The Talmud says an unanalyzed dream is like an unopened letter. There is a simple technique I use when intuitively interpreting my dreams. I'd like to share it with you.

4 TIPS TO INTUITIVE DREAM INTERPRETATION

1. On awakening, record your dream immediately in a journal.
2. Notice those images and dream symbols to which you're especially drawn or that move you. Highlight them in your journal so they stand out.
3. As soon as possible go into meditation. Enter a neutral, receptive state. Gently hold the symbol in your mind. No analyzing. Just let it hover. Specifically ask to be shown its significance.
4. Pay particular attention to any images, scenarios, memories, or physical sensations that arise. These intuitions come from the deepest part of you. They will explain your symbol.

Let me take you through a few examples of interpretation. In Freud's psychoanalytic practice, he noted that dreams can be physiologic premonitions of illness. Still, two dreamers may have identical images about their health with radically divergent implications. What then? Watch carefully the elegant role your intuition plays.

A few years ago I dreamed I was diagnosed with leukemia. At the time everything seemed to be falling through. Projects, relationships, vacations and even the plumber couldn't seem to get it together to fix my toilet. I started getting grouchy, complaining a lot, becoming generally ungrateful. Then the dream came. It was so agonizingly realistic that I woke up with my heart palpitating, panic stricken. "Thank God, I was only dreaming," I thought the first nanosecond my eyes cracked open. I rallied to attention. From that day on, I counted my lucky stars to be alive. There's nothing like the threat of loosing your health to give an instant attitude adjustment! But how did I know my dream wasn't a premonition? To determine this, I had to try to set aside my fear--not easy, but essential--so I could accurately see. Next I got very quiet, and inwardly posed a hard question: "Is my dream telling me I'm going to get cancer?" I stayed open. As I listened with my intuition, it didn't ring true. No goose bumps. No light bulbs flipping on. No affirming imagery or waves of recognition. I trusted myself. My dream was not about illness but about life: it was an urgent, attention-getting plea that succeeded in renewing my appreciation for living.

Now shift gears. Consider again the same theme, different interpretation. My patient Gail also dreamed she had leukemia: *I'm wasting away in a hospital bed. My son is trying to murder me. He's injecting cancer cells into my veins through my IV. I feel strangely detached, like a witness to the scene. I watch myself struggling to stop him but I'm paralyzed.* This is chilling vision. What kind of statement is this dream screaming out? In actual life, Gail's son was a heroin addict who was emotionally and financially sucking her dry. She had enormous difficulty setting limits with him. This, the dream emphatically announced, was killing her. Was the threat of leukemia literal or was Gail's dream simply a graphic expression of anguish and fear? How did she find out?

I helped her focus. As I did with my dream, it was necessary for her to become as neutral as possible. Then I had Gail intuitively project into the future. Did she see herself with leukemia? What was the connection with her son? These were unbearably wrenching issues for her to honestly confront. "It's like a gong went off in my solar plexus," Gail reported about her meditation. "I felt sick in every cell of my body. If I didn't act...if I didn't do something different with my son....I had the awful sense that the dream would come true. Heaviness hit me like I was sinking into a bed of quicksand." Gail's dream was a harsh reality check which she was wise to take seriously. It was a battle--but to preserve her health (and not enable her son), she changed her behavior. What would've happened if she hadn't? What if she had ignored her dream? Would you have taken that risk? What does your intuition say?

Some dreams paint an uncompromising picture of the stakes involved. The signs Gail attended to--the detached witness state she experienced, and the total body confirmation--gave credence to the dream's intuitive content. Watch out for these qualities. If they're present, it may be you need to take your dream on face value, a radical leap that could have far-reaching implications on improving your health or another's.

There are also dreams that communicate a preview of what's to come, though you might not be able to avert it. It's the night before your camping trip to the Sierras. You dream you break your leg. You're not happy about it but you heed the warning. While hiking you're especially careful--and yet an accident still happens. Why did you have the dream? How can it benefit you?

I have a friend who is a Benedictine monk and a healer. In Brother James' original letter to me he wrote: "In the midst of my life as a religious monk people look to me for answers. I sometimes have dreams foreseeing illness in others that I can do nothing about. This upsets me tremendously." He told of the following dream: *"I see a man I know from church. At a distance I watch as a bolt from a crossbow pierces him in the heart. I just stand there. It's clear. There's no way anyone can stop it."* The next day Brother James did some frantic phoning. Sadly, he discovered that the man he dreamed of just had a heart attack. Confusion set in. Here was Brother James' dilemma. Coming from a spiritual tradition dating back to 500 AD, where prayer can heal, he wasn't even given a chance to implement it. What purpose did foreknowledge of his parishioner's heart attack serve?

I see it is this way. Prescience, whether in dreams or awake, is light-producing. There is something sacred about bearing testimony or being a witness to events as they unfold. Everything I see, whether a patient's illness or a joyful celebration, reflects the fullness of life, the ebb and flow I'm privileged to be part of. I need to be quite clear: being intuitively receptive doesn't guarantee having the power to change everything you see. If you dream of illness you can't prevent, it's not purposeless or a foreshadowing of doom. View it as a healing light, a good omen. It's a tribute to the depth of intuitive resources you have available to meet the challenges ahead. Monk, therapist, or housewife, in the intuitive realm you must avoid getting hooked by codependency issues; shouldering too much responsibility for what is not yours. The wise and necessary imperative is to know what you can reasonably take on.

Sometimes, however, it is appropriate and possible to intervene in health matters. To clarify, your intuition will guide. To know if, when, and how to tell someone about a dream, you had about them, always ask yourself the following.

•Will this information benefit the person?

A “yes” may be a comfortable gut feeling, a burst of energy, a light bulb flipping on, and a sense of moving forward. A “no” can feel like you’re hitting a brick wall, a thud, a hand pushing you away, a knowing of “don’t go there”. With practice, you’ll learn what “yes” and “no” feel like to you. If unsure, don’t act. Keep tuning in until you get a clear message.

•What is the most sensitive way to communicate?

Before speaking, put yourself in the other person’s position. How could you best hear this news? Be kind and never present yourself as the sole authority (Even experienced intuitives are sometimes wrong.) For instance, while a friend is painting his study you dream he falls, breaking his leg. You could relate your dream, saying, “In case it’s true, it may be worthwhile to be extra careful.” This alerts the person without causing panic. An approach to avoid: “Watch out. I dreamed you’re going to break your leg!”--a set up for a self-fulfilling prophecies. Get used to checking in with your intuition about phrasing: sometimes saying less is more. Err on the side of understatement, not hyperbole. If you dream a cousin has cancer, you might express only, “I dreamed you had a health problem. To tell you the truth, I don’t know if it’s accurate. Would you be willing to indulge me and see a doctor?” The ideal strategy is to be gentle but persuasive.

Dreams offer insight and at times can also heal. Often the change can be subtle: a kink in your neck is gone, cold symptoms wane, a headache vanishes. Over the years I've dreamed that my spiritual teacher literally performs energy work on my body. I wake up invigorated. You may not even remember the details of your dream but the next morning

you indisputably feel better. Rarer, but still possible, are dramatic examples like the one my friend Linda told me.

When Linda was a freshman psychology student she developed a lipoma, a benign fatty tumor at the base of her spine. In one month it had enlarged to the size of a billiard ball, causing considerable pain. She consulted a doctor who suggested surgically removal. But Linda wanted neither a stressful operation nor the toxic side effects of general anesthesia. At home before she went to sleep Linda prayed, "Please show me what to do." That night she dreamed there was a huge syringe next to her bed. Seemingly on its own, the syringe pierced the side of her neck, traveled down the length of her spine, and extracted a milky fluid from the lipoma. When she awoke she recalled everything, rushed straight to the mirror. The lipoma was gone.

We are capable of dreams that mend the body. We can invite them in or they can be offered as a gift. Most of us will experience more toned-down versions of healing than Linda, yet she illustrates what can take place. When we interact with our dreams, tap into their curative potential, we cross into a realm many people deem science fiction. I am here to say that it is not so. As a physician, I've seen the down-to-earth therapeutic impact dreams have had on my patients' well-being and my own. My hope is that I've imparted to you the health-enhancing implications of the intuitive messages your dreams convey. Witnessing such positive change so consistently over years of clinical practice has sustained me before the science behind it is fully documented.

Healing our bodies--how far does the mystery go? Neurochemicals; troops of white cells poised to protect; the right balance of medication/meditation; intuitive guidance; dreams; our subtle energy and positive beliefs. These elements constitute the core of our healing system. The intelligence of our bodies is programmed to help keep us well. But to what extent will it go? How can we maximize a conscious link with our physiology? There is exciting evidence surfacing that our organs, themselves, contain

intuitive blueprints for our healing. That they literally possess a "cellular memory" for all that happens to us in our lives, including our medical conflicts and resolutions. Could it be that it's possible to intuitively communicate with our organs and them with us? If so, what would the implications be for our health?

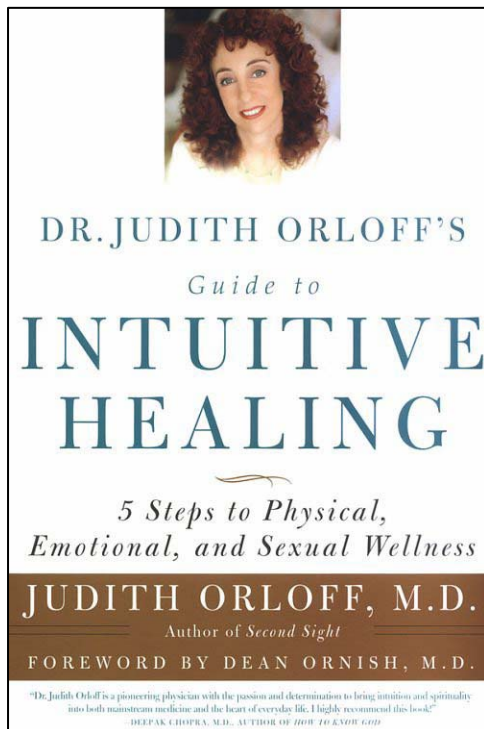
In *A Change of Heart*, Claire Sylvia, a high school teacher, gives an intriguing account of her heart-lung transplant. According to hospital policy, the donor's anonymity was to be preserved--yet she started dreaming of him. In dreams she actually saw what he looked like, learned his name, got to know him. Never had she experienced anything like this. Post-transplant, she developed odd cravings for chicken nuggets, green peppers, and beer, took on different personality traits, memories, behaviors. Desperate to make sense of these baffling changes, she used clues communicated to her by the donor in dreams to track down his parents. To Claire's amazement, she located them. Upon meeting, they affirmed that her unfamiliar food cravings and behaviors all belonged to their son; it was his name and appearance that kept showing up in her dreams!

The concept of cellular memory is not new. It was first recognized when describing the immune system. Decades after being inoculated with the polio vaccine, for instance, our bodies still retain an active recall of that viral antigen. In the same way, it follows that our organs, tissues, and blood may contain concrete memories too. Claire Sylvia is the living testament. Many more transplant patients are reporting similar experiences. Relating this to the five steps I'm presenting, we'll see that illness can be understood and more readily abated by looking further than even the brain--toward an intuition that is organically seamless with our body's atomic core. There is a certain humility to this stance, a fairer distribution of instinctual knowledge. Thus, during illness, contact the intuitive information your body stores and let it work for you.

There are possibilities within illness that you may not anticipate. Who of us would ever choose the prospect of disease? Still, if it is upon you, begin to look at it as a form of healing, not punishment. The shamanic premise that illness is a profound spiritual

initiation applies here. See all health challenges with these eyes and the night sky will be lit up with a million stars. If not, there will be only darkness. It is your decision. Illness is not failure. Approach it as a student; accept what it has to teach. Ride the dragon. Let your spirit grow strong. *Vocatus atque non vocatus deus aderit*. Invoked or not invoked the god is present.

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Judith Orloff, M.D. is an assistant clinical professor of Psychiatry at UCLA and intuition expert, synthesizes the pearls of traditional medicine with cutting edge knowledge of intuition and energy. She is author of the bestsellers *Positive Energy*, *Guide to Intuitive Healing*, and *Second Sight*. She passionately believes that the future of medicine involves integrating all this wisdom to achieve emotional freedom and total wellness.

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