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WAYS TO REACH YOUR SPIRITUAL HEART

Bruno Cortis, MD

The heart is a spiritual organ

Traditionally, cardiologists are trained to consider the heart as a muscle whose primary purpose is to pump blood. When it malfunctions, they believe it needs to be medicated, cut, sutured, by-passed or transplanted. Despite the best efforts of conventional medicine, the American Heart Statistics indicate that the Cardiovascular deaths in the States are 2,600 a day.

I came to the realization that the heart is also a spiritual organ—the site of the soul, the center of peace, and the source for the prevention and healing of heart disease. As I began sharing my feelings and emotions with my patients, they opened their hearts as well, and I discovered that our hearts were the same. Then, I began to practice meditation with them and observed: weight loss, less need for medications, smoking cessation, and increased happiness. The Spiritual energy within the heart had allowed these lifestyle and behavioral changes.

Which part of our body do we identify with the most? The part of our body we most identify with, that represents your true self, your higher self, is in your heart. We feel the emotion of love most strongly in our heart. The most profound qualities we seek in life are all to be found in the heart – love, inner peace, happiness.

The Healing Power of Spirituality. The failure to prevent and treat heart disease effectively cannot be laid at the door of modern medicine. It is a personal failure of communication between each person and his or her spiritual heart. With spiritual medicine we come to understand why the very organ that causes such dire mortality statistics also holds the spiritual core that needs to be awakened if we wish to cure our own heart disease.

The mind/body/spirit connection

There has been a recent move away from traditional medicine, which treats only the body, toward mind/body medicine, which acknowledges the interdependence of the physical and the psychological. To care more fully for your heart, enter into the world of spiritual-based medicine, which emphasizes that the maintenance and healing of the physical heart depends not only on modern medicine and mind/body exercises but on the health of the spirit as well.

The intelligence of the heart

When we think of intelligence, we think of the brain. We have not been trained in Western medicine to think of other organs as repositories of understanding and intelligence but I have learned through the stories of heart transplant patients and my experiences with cardiac support group that there is cellular intelligence in the heart. This intelligence is not the source of the voice that says, "Make more money," or "work harder; be the best," or even, "slow down," or "relax." It is the voice that speaks for the soul – the center of intuitive intelligence and of infinite emotional knowledge. It is the place where love lives.

The benefits of a spiritual heart

For those who have not yet experienced the physical, emotional, and mental changes brought about through spirituality, I suggest focusing on the benefits of spiritual medicine. These benefits affect health, happiness, fulfillment, self-knowledge, interpersonal communication, life goals, and intimacy.

The heart has its own memory.

The words of the Bible are often the best support for the transferred memories of heart transplant patients. In interviewing transplant patients I learned that some of them have experiences which belonged to the donor. The best explanation is that within the heart there are memory cells that are transferred to the recipient (Clair and Novack).

- "Deep within them I plant my law, writing it on their hearts. (Book of Jeremiah)
- "Let these words I urge on you today be written in your heart." (Book of Deuteronomy)
- "God gave us a heart to think with." (Book of Sirach)

The spiritual heart in Biblical scripture

A voice that cries out for attention to the spiritual heart is not a new one – its message has been loudly proclaimed in the Bible 592 times in 550 verses (Bovenmars). Biblical passages support and illustrate the presence and function of the spiritual heart.

A sacred view of the heart.

- "God create a clean heart in me, put into me a new and constant spirit." (Psalm 7)
- "More than all else, keep watch over your heart since here are the well springs of life." (Book of Proverbs)
- "A glad heart is excellent medicine." (Book of Proverbs)
- "God is the shield that protects me; He preserves upright hearts." (Psalm 7)

Heart exercise.

Explore what the references to the heart in the Bible mean to you.

Listening with our heart

God invites us to connect with the Divine through our heart

- "Let your heart treasure what I have to say." (Book of Proverbs)
- "Teach us to count how few days we have and so gain wisdom of the heart." (Psalm 90)
- "Those who fear the Lord keep their hearts prepared and humble themselves in His presence." (Book of Sirach)]
- "The Lord is good to pure hearts." (Psalm 73)

QUIETING THE MIND TO HEAR THE HEART

It is sometimes very difficult to hear the heart because the mind is so loud and overbearing. It talks to us unceasingly of should-of's, could-of's, and must-dos. And it drowns out the heart's pleas for acceptance and patience. Quieting techniques will help you stay in touch with your heart and hear its messages.

Affirmations

Positive affirmations have been scientifically shown to affect one's state of being. Louise Hay has many suggestions for affirmations you can practice, such as, "I deserve happiness. I am healthy. I have a healthy heart." Speak directly to your heart to drown out the disruptive noise of the mind and strengthen the health of the heart. Just as water dripping on a rock can physically change the rock, simply repeating, "My heart is strong," for example, will make a physical difference in your heart.

Visualizations

Cancer patients have learned to weaken the power of mutant cells by visualizing the body's fight against the cancer (Simonton). Heart patients can receive the same physical benefits by visualizing clear arteries and a strong, healthy heart (Ornish). Once you get to really know your heart, you can use visualization to nurture it.

Meditation

Mindfulness meditation enables you to become aware of the silence within. When you meditate, you quiet the activity of the mind and get in touch with your heart; it is like discovering an inner space of complete peace. Use meditation to hear what your heart has to say, to grow spiritually, and to heal heart disease. Meditation heals the heart by causing physical changes in the body such as lowering heart rate, blood pressure, oxygen consumption, and levels of stress hormones (Benson). As the activity of the mind lessens, the number of thoughts is less and silence may occur between one thought and another. In that silence, at that moment we are in touch with the Spiritual part of ourselves. THIS IS meditation.

Listen to your heart

The messages of the heart are profound and life changing. Tune into the voice of your heart, turn up the volume, direct your attention to the healing power of every heartbeat. You will learn, as many of my cardiac patients have learned, to use your spiritual heart to activate a powerful biological force for healing within yourself (Cortis 1995; 2003).

Heart Exercise - filling your heart with love

Your awareness of the spiritual heart will teach you how to activate the powerful biological forces for preventing and healing cardiac disease.

In our society, the symbol for love is a heart. Think back on your life to the heart-felt, heart-warming, heart-ache, heart-wrenching, and broken heart feelings that prove that love really does live in the spiritual heart and how this love (or lack of it) affects heart disease. Write these down in a journal, to which you can add further notes as you begin to resonate more with your heart awarenesses.

The heart in love

We find references to the heart and its relationship to love throughout time and literature. I have heard many heart comments and feelings of patients who have felt the effect of love on their heart. The essence of God's spirit is love – whenever love is in the heart, God is present in us. A heart full of love is armor against heart disease.

Self-love

In order to open the heart to receive and nurture love, you must first make room in your heart for self-love. Value self-love, which is silent, gentle, kind, and forever. Fill your heart with self-love so that you can create in you a fortress of safety, an island of peace, and a center for your spiritual universe. Use this self-love to better love others – with acceptance, courage and understanding.

Love's enemies

A person with heart problems has a particular need to rid the heart of two enemies of health: perfectionism and guilt. The perfectionist is driven by an ego that lives in constant fear that love will be taken away if he or she does not act in perfect fashion. The guilt-ridden person needs to find self-forgiveness so the mistakes of the past, the heart problems of the past, do not block the flow of self-love, which brings good health.

Heart exercise

The tendency to perfectionistic behavior originates from the natural need to please our parents. "If you study and bring home an 'A,' I will love you." In reality, what we gain is not love, but approval. True love comes when we come to the realization that we are unique and nobody is perfect. Sense the level of perfectionism and guilt in your heart now and rid your self of these health enemies (Benor).

BUILDING A SPIRITUAL HOME WITHIN YOUR HEART

This is like spring-cleaning for the spirit. It is the place where you will decide what to keep and what to throw away; what to focus on and what to ignore.

The contents of your heart

What do you carry with you in your heart?" Is it heavy? Light? Burdensome? Enriching? Do the cells of your heart hold spiritual memories of love? Joy? Hope? Patience? Humility? Simplicity? Or do you fill this space with self-doubt? Anger? Resentment? Pity? Find out what's in there and decide what you want to keep and what you need to get rid of to keep the heart healthy and strong.

The inner child

If you want to build a spiritual home in your heart, you must go back to the time when you were an innocent child: spontaneous, joyful, happy, creative, and free. Through the child in you, you can experience yourself uncontaminated by negative beliefs and judgments. You can see yourself as God sees you – the real you. Become re-acquainted with this child who needs to be recognized, loved, and accepted. With mindfulness by selectively focusing our attention we can choose positive emotions.

Replacing negatives with positives

Once you realize what you harbor in the cells of your heart and decide what kind of spiritual home you want to build there, you can nourish, magnify, and emphasize the positive aspects of your life, and withdraw your attention from the negative elements so they lose their power.

Heart exercise

Allow yourself to lighten the load of heaviness that now lives in your heart and replace it with uplifting emotions like love, patience, and acceptance.[HOW?]

Case example

I remember Mary, a middle-aged woman who had been to the emergency room numerous times with an irregular heartbeat. One day, she decided to talk to her heart. "I don't want to go to the hospital any more," she told her heart. "I don't want to be stuck in a room and have to pay all those hospital bills. I don't want to be away from my family and I don't want this to keep happening."

Suddenly, her heartbeat became regular again. Mary discovered for herself that just by communicating with her heart, she solved the problem. On the way to the hospital she felt the difference. What a phenomenal experience! I began to tell people this story. I encouraged them to communicate with their heart, express their gratitude.

Conclusion

Being in touch with your spiritual heart will raise the level of your consciousness, and this will bring you closer to God. Ultimately, this experience will change your life and allow you a new freedom.

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Bruno Cortis, M.D., is a cardiologist with a major interest in Spirituality and Health. He authored 2 books *Heart and Soul*, and *The Spiritual Heart*. He is Assistant Professor of Medicine at Rush University, Chicago. He is member of the National Speakers Association.

Contact:
 708-366-0117
www.brunocortis.com



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