

Healthy Longevity

Charak, the sage physician of ancient India enunciated in the following two immortal lines, the necessary attributes of a man to remain healthy. He said:

“He alone can remain healthy who takes regulated diet and exercise, who deliberates all his actions, who controls his sensual pleasures, who is generous, just, truthful and forgiving and who can get along with his kinsmen.”

Universal Healing Program

While conducting a program for integral management of coronary heart disease, it dawned on us that it not only healed the coronary arteries, but healed the individual as a whole. Hence the program has come to be known as Universal Healing Program (UHP). It reduced anger and hostility in the participants and created a feeling of oneness amongst them. The feeling of oneness and harmony was a great rejuvenating stimulus for the cells of the body.

Consciousness

Physical body, mind and intellect are our outer layers enveloping our Inner Self. We are that Supreme Self. All the time, our attention is upon body, mind, intellect and their functioning. We identify ourselves totally with them. Our identification with these gross components of our personality causes all sorrows. “We are both actors and spectators in the great drama of existence,” says Niels Bohr. The actor I is the I that goes through one’s roles in life, the agent, sowing actions and reaping fruits. The spectator I is the pure Self, pure Consciousness, Atman, the silent Observer.

Universal Mind

In a dramatic experiment by Paramhansa Yogananda, he wondered why a rose plant should have thorns. He went to a rose plant near his house and identified his consciousness with that of the plant. He coaxed it not to have thorns and promised that it would be protected. He did this for several days and eventually the plant stopped growing thorns and the thorns that were on it dropped off. It never grew new thorns.

Law of Attraction

The strides of progress by medical science during the last few decades for ensuring long healthy life have clearly shown that feelings influence every function of the cell. Discord weakens the lifeward processes of the cells. Harmony enhances lifeward processes of the cells.

A mighty wonderful law of attraction prevails in nature. According to this law, the way we feel is the way we attract. This means; things take shape in our life according to our inner world of thoughts and feelings. Forces get drawn from the whole universe to create such happenings. All our successes, failures and troubles depend on our inner feelings. We should be careful every moment to watch whether our thoughts and feelings are of indifference and despair, or have happy high vibrations of joy and hope. Whenever we face an undesirable situation, we should avoid frantic attempts to fix the solutions. Instead, recollect some past happy event, develop feelings of joy and be happy. We should then experience the joy that we would get if things happen as we wish. If we experience such feeling of joy for 16-20 seconds three or four times a day happy events will be drawn from the universe.

Stress

Life is in a constant flux, continually changing. There are a number of changes which cause stress, e.g. failure in studies, death of a parent or a dear one, prolonged illness of a member of the family, a serious accident, financial crisis, etc. Chronic stress accelerates the aging process, thus shortening the lifespan. Excessive secretion of stress hormones such as ACTH, Cortisol, and catecholamines are blamed for such life-shortening effect. The effect of any stress also depends upon its perception by the individual; what a person makes of that situation is important.

Isolation

Isolation should be clearly understood. Solitude is not isolation. A person can experience union with the whole universe when he is alone. He may feel isolated even in the midst of family, companions and friends. The causes of isolation are numerous and complex. In modern times isolation creeps in from all directions. Isolation breeds indifference, anger, selfishness and contemptuous criticism. These attributes are poison for health.

We are all separate individuals but have a single Source of origin. The qualities of the Source are love, compassion and harmony. We are limited in time and space. We are impermanent. The Source which unites us all is eternal. When the manifest form is separated from the Source isolation occurs, resulting in impairment of health. When the manifest form experiences the Source, one feels a sense of oneness and healing follows.

Healing System

Over the years, the medical science has identified the various primary systems of the human body; circulatory system, digestive system, endocrine system, nervous system, autonomic nervous system and the immune system. Two other systems crucial for the proper functioning of the human body are frequently overlooked. They are the Healing system and the Belief system. They work hand in hand. Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, said that the healing power is inherent in the body. When disease occurs, the body makes every effort to regain ease that is health. What we believe is the most powerful option of all. The main function of a doctor is to engage to the fullest, the patient's own ability to heal, by strengthening his belief system. Panic adds acute stress to the existing disease. It creates an environment conducive to illness and antagonistic to treatment. No responsible physician would purvey panic, whatever his obligation to the truth. A responsible physician is the one who awakens the patient's will to live.

Hippocrates also observed that the doctor, while treating his patient, should remember his first duty, *Primum Non Nocere*. In other words, he may not always be able to cure the patient, but his prime concern ought to be that he does no harm to the patient.

What is the most painful aspect of modern medical practice? It is not whether most physicians are up to date in their knowledge or in their techniques, but whether too many of them know more about the disease than about the person in whom the disease exists. The overriding issue before medicine today is not one of proficiency but of humanity. In any science of healing, healer has to heal himself. Even though the only source of income for a doctor is the patient, when he treats the patient he should not treat him only as a source of income. Rich and influential patients need more compassion and love in their management.

Present Moment

The present moment is of vital importance in creation of health. Life is not last year, or ten minutes from now; it is NOW, this very moment. The past is unalterable; the future is beyond our control. All we have is NOW. When one lives fully in each moment one opens oneself to beauties that might otherwise escape one entirely. The quality of the present moment can be known with the awareness of the quality of breathing during that moment. With practice of Shavasana and Meditation, one can easily know the state of one's mind. With consistent effort, one can alter the thought and state of mind by abdominal breathing.

I will look to the moment, and miraculously, the future will take care of itself.

Abdominal Breathing

Abdominal breathing is one of the simplest, yet most powerful stress management techniques. Diaphragm is a large muscle which is located between the chest and abdomen. When we breathe in, diaphragm moves down and our abdomen swells up; when we breathe out the diaphragm moves up and abdomen moves in. A new born child breathes with the abdomen. During sleep and relaxed state the breathing automatically becomes abdominal. During the anxiety state, breathing becomes rapid and is fully inter-costal. When the individual purposely breathes slowly and deeply through the abdomen the effect of stress on the body is reduced. This is borne out by a favourable change in the brain wave pattern (alpha) during slow abdominal breathing.

Deep Breathing

Deep breathing prevents harmful reactions to stress. If you practice deep breathing for a few minutes each day, you will find that events do not upset you as much as before. Also, whenever you feel upset, taking few slow deep breaths can help break stress cycle and clam you down. Even when you can not control the situation, you can always control your breathing and thus change your reactions to those circumstances.

Science of Shavasana

Shavasana has been practiced from ancient times in different ways. Physical and mental relaxation achieved by Shavasana has no equal.

Shavasana and Meditation explain scientifically how you could exercise your optimum capacity for efficient and productive action. Your present actions are not tuned for maximum output. As you are acting in the present, your mind rambles into the past and fantasizes about the future. It broods over memories of what has been done earlier or over expectations of results to come. Your mind hardly remains in the present. Shavasana and Meditation provide you with the ways and means of controlling the mind. They help you to concentrate, to channel your mind towards the present activity.

Science of Meditation

The practice of meditation helps to overcome the worry and stress of modern life and achieve a state of calmness. This at once refreshes the mind, relaxes the body, and thus achieves a balance between the spiritual and the physical.

The human mind seldom remains in the present. It is estimated that an average person remains in the present for hardly an hour and a half during 16 hours of his

waking period. This wandering state of mind causes stress, which alters the immune response and causes many stress-related diseases.

Remember an activity in which you were totally engrossed. In such a state you did not realize how the time passed. Even when several hours passed you felt as if hardly a few minutes had elapsed. It is a wonderful experience. Your vision widens. Your time-sense expands. Such a condition is called "Meditation".

*Awareness of each moment is meditation.
Meditation gives an experience of eternity of time.*

With only three minutes of meditation, oxygen consumption is reduced by 20% as compared to 8% reduction of oxygen consumption after six hours of sleep. The rate of increase of entropy (wear and tear) which is common to all living things also drops during meditation. Meditation can be extended to many other areas of life. For example, if you bring your awareness to the process of eating, you will not overeat. Even while you are walking, if you bring your awareness to the process of walking, the benefits of walking are increased.

Visualization

Visualization is creating a picture in your mind. It is easy to do after meditating because meditation helps to focus one's awareness. Visualization is not wishful thinking or fantasy, both of which are unfocused and passive. It is direct and active, and is a therapeutic use of meditation. Visualization is the most powerful technique used for healing. Stress can be resolved by forgiving the person during visualization. We forgive not to be a good person but simply because it is in our own interest to do so. By forgiving, we feel free of stress.

Prayer

When one prays, one instantly becomes one with one's expanded Inner Self. Prayer done with deep faith is always answered. When one looks back some unanswered prayers have also benefited us. Dalai Lama's Guru explained to me that in one experiment of benefits of prayer and meditation, participants prayed for the good of their adversaries. It helped the persons for whom they prayed, but it helped the participants even more. Heart full of love and prayer for the good of all is an elixir for healthy life.

Coming of New Age

Humanity has been involved in developing our individuality without much attention to the larger whole of which we are a part. All the challenges we face today started

with a consciousness that had forgotten our essential connection to the larger whole of life. At this crucial time in the evolution of humanity, we are beginning to learn how to reconnect with ourselves, with each other and with the Earth. Shavasana and Meditation are handy tools to develop a sense of oneness and facilitate the birth of a new age- a new man.

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Publishers: Navajivan Trust: • Primer of Universal Healing • Wealth of Food - Health of Heart • Heart Disease - A New Direction • Heart Disease - Science & Spirituality • Spinning One's Own Health • Heart to Heart • Prevention of Heart Attack • Shavasana - Key to Health and Bliss

Publishers: R. R. Sheth & Co: *Swasthya Sudha* in Gujarati and Hindi * Health &

Harmony * *Niramay Dirghayu* * Total Health