

PTSD and the Brain

It is becoming increasingly clear that combat related stress in general, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in particular, not only changes brain chemistry, but brain physiology as well. What is less clear is whether brain damage from PTSD can be reversed.

The brain, once thought to be hard wired at birth, appears now to be a far more plastic organ than was ever imagined. With the advent of ability to scan the brain, comes the knowledge that this mysterious organ is actually quite malleable. Enormous fear and severe trauma (the causes of PTSD) catastrophically influence the brain. Can the catastrophe be reversed? Can we find a solution to brain damage?

The answer is a qualified "yes;" qualified because those dealing with brain trauma must be willing to suspend western notions that the only answer to medical problems, particularly brain damage is medicine (or drugs) and the only answer to mental or psychological problems is psychotherapy. Too many living veterans from all wars—WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Afghanistan, the Gulf War—are suffering from PTSD to spend more time on what doesn't work.

Why continue a practice that isn't working well to cure a condition so pervasive and one that causes so much suffering? Worse, some of the therapies such as virtual reality therapy and talk therapy currently used to treat PTSD retraumatize patients and cause even more suffering.

Since neither the medical nor the psychological community has come up with much in the way of answers for veterans with severe brain trauma, one must look elsewhere for answers. For that we have to look to other cultures. Western science has been slow to accept that ancient cultures throughout the world may have ancient answers to modern problems.

These answers are far more simplistic than we are used to in our society. They include natural vibrational energies found all around us:

- flower essences
- gemstone elixirs
- aroma therapies
- homeopathic remedies
- acupuncture
- PsyK
- Acupuncture
- Emotional Freedom Technique

All of the above remedies are ones that remove blockages from the meridian system. Removing blockages from the energy system relieves depression,

anxiety, hyper-tension, high blood pressure, and the myriad other symptoms of PTSD.

We, in this western culture, have a habit of assessing worth according to complexity, cost, taste, and whether or not it hurts. If we can't see it, it doesn't come in a capsule or bottle, it doesn't taste bad, it doesn't have side effects, and it isn't complicated, it must not be any good.

Flower remedies, aroma therapies, gemstones, and homeopathics come from nature and have the huge advantage of having a long history (though no double-blind studies) of success and, unlike their chemical counterparts, of doing no harm.

One physician, when asked about homeopathics, told her patients, "Sure, go ahead and take as many as you want. They can't hurt you because there's nothing in them." When she said there was nothing in them she referred to their chemical content; she was totally unaware of their energetic content.

This attitude is common among the medical community who learned in Medical school about chemistry and the elements you can manipulate physically to create "medicine" or "drugs." Only a very few Medical schools have courses in the physics of energy, a more elusive, but equally important, subject matter. This has led to an imbalance in our western medical treatment.

Europe and Asia are much more open to and conversant with energy therapies. Pharmacies in France, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany all carry homeopathic remedies, and many carry flower and gemstone remedies. One can find them only in holistic healing stores or organic grocery stores in the United States. It is also easy to find practitioners who work with the energy system.

The fact that both physical and emotional trauma are causing similar brain pathology suggests that finding a solution to reversing that pathology requires new thinking. Now is the time for western science to catch up to their Asian and European counterparts in learning about energy flow—what keeps it flowing, what inhibits its flow.

Dr. Richard Gerber, an American M.D. has made an exhaustive study of energetic healing and natural remedies. In his book, *Vibrational Medicine*, Dr. Gerber discusses flower essences which have regenerative effects upon the nervous system.

For example, certain flower essences can ease seizure activity, alleviate various forms of schizophrenia and autism and balance motor neurological tissues including those caused by stroke. In addition, these same flower essences stimulate neurological tissue regeneration by increasing the ability of the cellular structure to hold an electrical charge. This in turn activates cellular memory.

Though brain trauma is not mentioned specifically by Dr. Gerber, flower essences obviously have implications for healing brain damage and the medical community would do well to study their impact on the traumatized brain.

In addition to "flower power," Dr. Gerber discusses in some detail the benefits of other natural therapies such as gems, sound and light therapy, and aroma therapy. For instance, the olfactory nerve is the only nerve in the body that is connected directly to the brain. All other senses are routed through the thymus. It is this instantaneous connection to the brain that causes odors such as cordite, blood, fuel spills, and other smells of war, to evoke such powerful memories in returning vets. These odors are one source of triggers and delayed reactions.

Besides remedies which come from nature, there are energy treatments that use the body's built-in healing mechanism by increasing energy flow. Energy treatments work with the meridians within the body. Of these, the best known in this country is acupuncture.

Acupuncture, and Asian therapy, was introduced to Americans by missionaries who came home from China with astonishing tales of healing with needles. Acupuncture inserts needles at certain points called acupoints to stimulate energy flow through the meridians. Acupuncturists determine where energy is blocked by "taking the pulse" of the patient at a variety of points along the meridians points.

For many years acupuncture seemed very far out and "woo-woo" to westerners. But since the early '70's when it was formally introduced to this country, it has become a credible and accepted treatment for many medical conditions, so much so that most insurance now cover acupuncture treatment.

There are other less invasive treatments that use the same points acupuncture uses, but they don't use needles. Rather they use energy on the points called "acupoints." These treatments include, but are not limited to EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique), sono-puncture, color-puncture, even laser-puncture. These simple and inexpensive, but effective, treatments are far more apt to make lasting recoveries in PTSD than the more familiar medical and psychological treatments in United States.

Because meridians are not easily mapped like the circulatory and digestive systems, they have been largely ignored by a society that believes "seeing is believing." We are loathe to accept anything we can't see, map, x-ray, or touch.

However, Asian physicians **have** mapped the subtle meridian systems and now believe that these systems carry the blueprint or circuitry for all the bodily systems. Simplistically, the first meridian system seems to be the circuitry for the circulatory, digestive and lymphatic systems; the second is the blueprint for

organs; the third runs along the outer walls of the vascular, lymphatic and nervous system and is the one acupuncturists and energy healers use; the fourth is the guide for the nervous system.

Not only does the meridian system carry the design for our physical body, the meridians are interconnected and in communication with each other and with all systems within the body. For this reason, they are extremely effective in healing completely and permanently.

We are electrical beings. We measure our heart activity with electro-cardiograms; we measure our brains with electro-encephalograms. Just like any other electrical appliance in our home we need "current" or energy to make our bodies work.

When energy is blocked, our bodies function like our computers or our televisions function when they are subject to power variations: **poorly or not at all!**

That being the case it only makes sense to keep the flow of power or energy free and unencumbered. Anything that blocks energy flow causes problems or what we refer to as "disease" in our bodies. With chemicals, the medical community is often able to miraculously cure symptoms that cause the problems we experience in our bodies. Chemicals, though marvelously effective with symptoms are less often effective with the causes of the disease.

One of the easiest and least invasive means of clearing the energy system of even severe trauma is EFT. Its biggest appeal is that it is easily learned and can be used by patients to heal themselves. This is a radical departure from the western thinking that we need to be "fixed" by a doctor.

The energy system does not care how we **experience** a problem. For example, three soldiers might witness the same horror. One soldier might exhibit an aggressive, hyper-vigilant reaction to it; another might react with depression and exhaustion; and a third might be physically ill. Although the **cause** of the problem was the same, the **symptoms** for each person are quite different.

The energy system reacts to the **cause** by blocking energy and EFT works to release the block. Traditional methods might prescribe a depressant for the first soldier, a stimulant to the second and an anti-nausea drug to the third, thus treating each **symptom** differently.

While treating symptoms might help each soldier function temporarily, the underlying cause (the initial horror) is never addressed. The cause could lie undetected and untreated in the energy system and memory for years, causing subtle or not so subtle behavior or physical problems until the blockage is released. Treating the cause with EFT can resolve the block immediately.

Brain trauma is a disease that is baffling the VA. Veterans are coming home by the thousands with brain trauma. Sometimes it is caused by physical injuries to the brain which we have in the past referred to as "severe concussion." Other times it appears to be caused by emotional trauma or PTSD.

Besides damage to the brain, damage occurs to the central nervous system. Trauma, injuries, and diseases in the brain and central nervous system currently stymie our medical community. While they are brilliant at repairing enormous physical trauma, they need to look at alternative energy therapies for mental and emotional trauma to be able to answer the question, "Can damage from brain trauma be reversed?"

This powerful technique, EFT, which can be easily learned and used for self-treatment would not only give hope of recovery to the thousands and thousands who are suffering from PTSD; it would save the Veterans' Administration millions (maybe billions) of dollars.

The very plasticity that allows brain damage to occur in the first place is the same characteristic that will allow it to heal. But the answer to recovery lies not in drugs or additional traumatization to the veteran. It lies in energy or vibrational healing. And one of the best and easiest of these natural therapies is EFT.

www.healingveteransptsd.com

About the website designers:

The web site ptsdforveterans.com is a web site designed by EFT practitioners Nancy Dunkin, Evergreen, Colorado and Lisa Lindsey-Brändli, Geneva, Switzerland. Their company is called "Joy." Both women are experienced in working with PTSD and are most concerned about the tragic suffering experienced by veterans of all wars.

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