

Whitney

That is, when you let negative emotions take over your body, every system of the body goes out of balance, an indicator of stress.

How does stress manifest itself physically? Childre: "When we feel edgy or stressful, we create a chain reaction in our bodies: our blood vessels constrict, our blood pressure rises, and a lot of energy is wasted. If this happens consistently, the result is hypertension (high blood pressure), which greatly increases the risk of heart disease and stroke."

The answer to stress is entertainment, synchronization, between heart and mind. The body actually works better. Childre: "When your body is in entertainment, its major systems work in harmony. Your biological systems operate at higher efficiency because of that harmony and as a result, you think and feel better."

"Because the heart is the strongest biological oscillator in the human system, the equivalent of the strongest pendulum in a collection of clocks, the rest of the body's system can be pulled into entertainment with the heart's rhythms."

Emotions, not thoughts, give us meaning. Childre: "Emotions alone give us meaning to our lives. The ability to laugh or cry, to feel alternately pensive and blissful, imbues our existence with beauty and value. We crave feeling because the experience of emotion makes life matter. It transforms our world from an objective, conceptual fact into a living, breathing experience."

But emotion can work for or against us, as evidenced by the fact that negative emotion has caused a millennia of

global wars and conflicts.

Scientists have discovered that emotion is indeed faster than thought. Childre: "Scientists have repeatedly confirmed that our emotional reactions show up in brain activity before we even have time to think. We evaluate everything emotionally as we perceive it. We think about it afterwards."

And in fact, because of the cumulative effect of emotion called the "cascade effect," which means past experiences become tacked on to emotional experiences happening in the present moment, it takes more than the mind to control emotion. It takes the mind working in sych with the emotional center, the heart.

Why is "Heart intelligence" a revolutionary "new" idea? Because while science is proving the mind-body-heart connection, humankind has not consciously tapped into this idea until this century. Childre likens the average person's ability to manage emotion to the maturity level of a 10-year-old who has just been given the car keys.

Childre: "When life conforms to the standards set by our minds, it's easy to keep a light rein on our emotions and still feel pretty good. But if one little thing happened that we think shouldn't have happened, it's over. We have not yet learned the skills to move to the next level emotionally. We're still like adolescents."

Research is showing that meditation, controlling the mind, is not enough to control emotion. The HeartMath solution involves two problem-solving techniques, FREEZE-FRAME (similar to a 5-step "time-out"); and CUT-THRU – a way to recognize and reprogram subconscious emotional memory. Cultivating "heart intelligence" is the differ-

ence between poise and poison, the difference between acting proactively to manage our emotions or reacting out of emotions we cannot control.

Last month, the HeartMath Institute announced three 2018 Humanitarian Heart Award Recipients who have achieved success through using HeartMath techniques – psychotherapist Steve Sawyer; University of Arizona physiology and psychology professor Ann Linda Baldwin; and public school science teacher and SUNY assistant professor David P. Parisian.

Sawyer's New Vision Wilderness Therapy, uses backcountry expeditions with intensive clinical immersion to help struggling preteens and young adults. Baldwin's Mind-Body-Science uses Reiki, equine therapy and bio-feedback to help people and animals reduce stress. Parisian uses HeartMath techniques to help students and young teachers control emotion and reduce stress.

"The Birdwatcher" is a beautiful print by Beth Krommes that sits over my desk, reminding me about heart intelligence. A woman stands at the shore, with glasses on, binoculars around her neck, as she looks through a telescope. It seems to me that heart intelligence invites us to look through multiple lenses to obtain a "birdseye" or aerial view of ourselves. The wide-angle view can be the most forgiving, as we look at ourselves and at others. The fact is that we use less energy and use our energy more efficiently when we control stress by managing our emotions. It turns out that forgiveness is actually "energy-efficient."

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