

The Changing Horizons of Health and Healing and The Need for an Expanded Understanding of Mind/Consciousness, Part 2

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In Dossey's view, the major new move in the methodology of medicine is to Era III:

There are too many phenomena for which [Era II] cannot account, too many healing events left unexplained. In order to encompass these healing phenomena, we are compelled to describe yet another era -- Era III or nonlocal medicine -- Although it, like Era II, emphasizes the causal power of consciousness, there is a major difference: It does not regard the mind as operating only within an individual human body or even within a single lifetime of a person. In the Era III view, minds are viewed as spread through space and time; as omnipresent, infinite, and immortal; and ultimately one...In Era III, mind, not matter, is ultimately considered primary. (11)

In short, the legacy of era III (non-local medicine) was that the mind is not regarded as operating only within an individual human body, or even within the single lifetime of a person. In the view of era III, minds are viewed as spread through space and time; as omnipresent, infinite, immortal, and ultimately as one. Some examples of era III medicine are: distance healing; diagnosis at a distance; non-contact therapeutic touch; transpersonal imagery; and telesomatic illness. Significantly, there are some important implications of this new system for medicine. The non-local manifestations of human consciousness pose enormously important implications, especially in the areas of diagnosis and treatment in modern medicine. Then, there is the doctor-patient relationship and the importance of empathy, love, and compassion on the part of the healer. Finally, there is the issue of human relationships: "in some sense we are non-local entities who transcend the limitations of space, time, and the physical body -- thus unbounded, unitary, and ultimately one." (12)

This essay is concerned especially with the phenomena alluded to here, and seeks to demonstrate how *Unification Thought* can encompass these traditional methodologies (Eras I, II, and III) with its new perspective, and then go on to introduce a completely new paradigm (which might be termed era IV perhaps?), which can account for more healing phenomena than can the traditional perspectives. First, however, let me introduce some of the major characteristics to be found in the new healing therapies generally available.

New Age Health Therapies: Not Your Ordinary Medical Techniques

There are many "alternative approaches" available in new age thinking about health, from acupuncture and aromatherapy to Chinese herbalism and crystal therapy to Indian head massage and iridology to reiki and hydrotherapy to yoga and reflexology. The old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" never seemed as true as it does now. Increasing numbers of people rely on a mixture of both eastern and western approaches. Even some western-trained medical doctors are leaning this way in their thinking, and especially in their methods of treatment. Of special note is the fact that the importance of the mind and spirit, and especially of one's feelings, beyond mere consideration of the physical body alone, is more and more coming to be recognized, and not just simply recognized, but understood as playing a vital role in healing. Also, emotional support from other people may help protect us against

many diseases. Indeed, one's mind and spirit are seen not merely as another important factor in maintaining one's health, but as the most essential and critical factor. One of the most fundamental ideas in *Unification Thought* is that "each person is a dual being of spirit person and physical person...each human being is a being united mind and body...and each human being is a being with a dual mind consisting of a spirit mind and physical mind." Furthermore, the spirit person consists of "the spirit mind and the spirit body." (13) This means, indeed, not only that the mind is important, but that the relationship between mind and body is important; furthermore, it means that the (spiritual) health of our spirit self is something which must be taken into account when considering one's overall health. Health has to do not only with the body, but with the mind as well, and especially in their balanced and healthy interaction. We want to be healthy in body and healthy in mind or spirit. One's emotional feeling and well-being are understood to be important, even critical, components of good health.

This way of thinking might be a familiar notion in religious circles, where the power of prayer has been recognized and used for many years, but such an idea has not been commonplace in traditional Western medicine (Dossey's Era I and Era II), wherein even pleasant thoughts about someone many miles away are believed to have beneficial effects. Such a phenomenon is far beyond the explanatory parameters of traditional Western medicine (especially Eras I and II), but it is slowly coming to be accepted by the medical community.

A. The Mind/Body Relationship

A conspicuous feature of the new thinking in the area of health and healing, as mentioned above, is the conspicuous effort to seek for balance, harmony and/or unity between one's mind and body. It should be kept in mind that this is one of the central ideas in *Unification Thought*. "Today, scientists working in the new field of psycho-neuro-immunology (mind/body medicine) are finding that the health of mind and body are indeed inextricably linked, the state of one influencing the other." (14) The relationship itself is considered important and harmony is sought through a number of different methods, such as meditation. "Learning to relax and simultaneously concentrate the mind through the regular practice of meditation can help lower stress levels, replenish the body's resources, and refresh the spirit, offsetting the strain of illness." (15) Meditation is very popular for achieving inner peace, harmony, and balance, as are counseling, hypnotic biofeedback, relaxation therapy, etc. These are very common practices in Eastern medical practice; not so common in the West.