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# When the Limits of Western Medicine have been reached

Choosing Natural Alternatives



Fall 2013

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## INTRODUCTION

### WHAT DOES COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE MEAN?

“Complementary medicine”, “Alternative medicine”, “Integrative medicine” are so popular terms that are used in order to describe the unconventional and unorthodox medicine. The National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), which is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), defines, through rigorous scientific investigation, “the usefulness and safety of complementary and alternative medicine interventions and their roles in improving health and health care”<sup>1</sup>. It describes complementary and alternative medicine, today known as CAM, as a “group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices and products that are not presently considered to be part of conventional medicine”<sup>2</sup>. In opposition to conventional Western medicine, which treats diseases with treatments approved and acknowledged by the scientific researches, CAM considers the patient as a whole unit – soul, body, mind, environment and society are treated altogether. NCCAM defines and classifies complementary and alternative medicine into five major categories:

#### 1. Alternative Medical Systems

Alternative Medical Systems are completely based on practice and theories. They have emerged prior and aside to the conventional Western medicine. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) including Acupuncture, Moxibustion, Herbs and Ayurveda is a representative example of systems that have established in the Eastern culture. On the other hand, homeopathic and naturopathic medicine is the two main alternative Western systems.

#### 2. Mind Body Interventions

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<sup>1</sup> “NCCAM Facts at a glance”, National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, US Department of Health and Human Services, <http://nccam.nih.gov/about/ataglance> (09/12/2013)

<sup>2</sup> “What is Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)?”, Get the facts, National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, <http://cim.ucdavis.edu/clubs/camsig/whatiscam.pdf> (09/12/2013)

Mind-Body medicine uses the power of thoughts in order to influence and affect bodily symptoms and functions. It focuses on the relationship between the brain, the body and the spiritual mind. The most known techniques are support groups and cognitive-behavioral therapies. They are today accepted and offered as conventional medicine. Other scientifically unproved CAM techniques such as meditation, yoga, hypnosis, biofeedback and art therapies (music, dance, etc.) reduce the level of unhealthy stress hormones, so the body is ready to fight eventual illnesses and diseases.

### 3. Biologically Based Therapies

According to the NCCAM Biologically Based Therapies involves supplementing one's diet with botanical extracts found in nature (herbs, vitamins, minerals, fatty acids, amino acids and proteins) in order to balance and heal the body. For example, patients with Crohn's disease suffer from mineral and vitamin deficiencies and are truly encouraged to eat a supplement of Vitamin B12 and Vitamin D.

### 4. Manipulative and Body-Based Practices

The CAM Manipulative and Body-Based Method involve the movement and manipulation of one or several parts of the body. The most common examples are chiropractic, osteopathic and massage.

### 5. Energy Therapies

Energy Therapies are based on the belief that rebalancing energy fields that go through the body can restore health. The practitioners of energy medicine are trying to heal the body by activating and restoring energies that have become weak, disturbed or out of balance. We distinguish two types of Energy therapies:

- a) Biofield Therapies, which intend to affect energy fields that go through and around the human body. Examples include Qui Gong, Reiki and Therapeutic Touch.
- b) Bioelectromagnetic-based therapies use electromagnetic fields from magnets or electrical current to make a significant impact on the human body.

Energy therapies use vibrations and electromagnetic forces to treat illness.

As observed in our daily lives (newspapers, magazines, internet, etc.), many different and various nouns are used in order to define Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Most of people do not perceive the – subtle but significant - difference between Complementary, Alternative and Integrative Medicine. The following points will help you understand and distinguish them better.

#### 1. Complementary Medicine

Complementary Medicine is intended to be used together with mainstream medicine and treatments.

#### 2. Alternative Medicine

Alternative Medicine refers to using unconventional medical techniques in place of conventional medicine.

### 3. Integrative Medicine

NCCAM defines Integrative Medicine as a “combination of mainstream medical therapies and CAM therapies for which there is some high-quality scientific evidence of safety and effectiveness”<sup>3</sup>. For example, many cancer treatment centers offer massage, meditation and acupuncture in order to reduce the side effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

Despite the astonishing advances made by medical science – gene therapy, MRI and PET scans, organ transplants and vaccines – the popularity of Complementary and Alternative Medicine continues to grow. Although many different approaches of CAM coexist, they all seem to share the same characteristics. Patients usually try CAM when they have a long-lasting medical issue that cannot be cured with traditional Western medicine. For example, a patient with persistent headaches or high blood pressure might try complementary and alternative medicine, in addition to a conventional treatment.

We often wish that medicine would be as sturdy as a three-legged stool, balanced equally by three healing resources: medications, surgeries and self-care approaches. Ideally, medicine would call upon self-care for 60 to 90%. In reality, Western medicine had dismissed the third-leg aspect thinking: “Why bother trying to take care of problems ourselves when we have such wonderful pills and procedures?” The first consequence we observed was the deterioration of the doctor-patient relationship.

Western medicine is all about modern treatments and pills. Not matter what disease you suffer from, you’ll always find a pill to cure it. An acute condition is severe and sudden. The symptoms appear and change or worsen rapidly. If you suffer from an acute disease, which includes conditions from a broken bone to a heart attack, western treatments are very effective. By contrast, a chronic condition is a long-developing syndrome. The symptoms develop and worsen over a long period of time. With 133 million Americans having at least one chronic disease, it’s not a surprise that many of these patients take multiple medications. Each medication has its own side-effects. Some medications may interact with each other, either be super-effective or ineffective, lack of specificity for an organ or receptors, etc. Most of the time, side-effects are predictable. In contrast, some side-effects depend of the immune and genetic patient’s constitution. Americans are getting used to the withdrawal restriction of drugs previously thought to be safe. The estimated number of iatrogenic deaths, which include deaths caused

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<sup>3</sup> “NCCAM Facts at a glance”, National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, US Department of Health and human Services, <http://nccam.nih.gov/about/atag glance> (09/12/2013).

by inadvertence by a physician or surgeon or by medical treatments or by diagnostic procedures, in the US is about 784,000 annually. The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) published a study conducted by Dr. Barbara Starfields, a medical doctor with a Master's degree in Public Health, which revealed that Western Medicine was the third leading cause of death in the US, after heart disease and cancer.

The US National Healthcare Expenditure (NHE) was close to 2,7 trillion \$ for 2012. This amount is more than two and a half more than most of the rich European countries. On a more larger scale, US spend 17,6% of GDP in Healthcare. According to the OECD, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the US healthcare system is far from being the best healthcare in the world compared to the NHE:

- US lack physicians. There are fewer physicians per person than in most other OECD countries. For example, in 2012 the US have 2,4 physicians per 1,000 people. Notice that the OECD average is 3,1.
- US lack number of hospital beds. There are 2,6 hospital beds per 1000 people. The OECD average is 3,4 beds.
- US life-expectancy is under the OECD average. Americans now live 78,7 years. It is one year below the average of 79,8 years.

According to a national study carried out in 1998 by PhD John A. Astin, 40% of the 1035 patients interrogated find CAM to be more compatible with their beliefs and values toward life<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, CAM appears to be “natural”, “pure”, “organic” and “healthier” in opposition to the “synthetic” and “artificial” Western treatments. Patients usually associate “natural” with “safe”. With complementary and alternative medicine patients can take responsibility for their own health and emphasize emerging lifestyle issues, such as appropriate nutrition, exercise, emotional and spiritual balance. Choosing CAM brings a more efficient and productive conflict-free lifestyle.

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<sup>4</sup> “Why patients use alternative medicine”, The Journal of the American Medical Association, <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=187543#RESULTS> (09/12/2013).

PART ONE

**COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE FROM  
THE PERSPECTIVE OF WESTERN INSTITUTIONS**

## MAYO CLINIC

One leader of Western medical institutions is Mayo Clinic, Minnesota. According to medical organizations, such as U.S. News Best Hospitals Honor Roll or UHC Quality Leadership Award, Mayo Clinic has been highly ranked for quality more than any other academic medical center in the nation<sup>5</sup>. The medical and health care team working at Mayo Clinic believes that the treasury of medical knowledge and research, in addition to the highest-value care offered to patients, is what sets this medical institution apart. Mayo Clinic share strong values of hope and advances in medical technologies through integrated clinical practice, education and research, especially in complementary and alternative medicine. Mayo Clinic spends each year about 634\$ on medical studies, which makes it one of the bests medical centers for patients who are willing to try safe and evidence-based CAM. There are many reasons to choose Mayo Clinic for CAM. Mayo Clinic has developed for ten years an Integrative medicine Program, which combines the most effective traditional cares and the best evidence-based CAM. The therapies listed below are meant to complement rather than replace conventional Western medical care.

1. **Physician Consultation:** This service is provided by a physician in Integrative Medicine. During the consultation, the physician defines the patient's needs and develops an accurate treatment plan. Recommendations may include use of dietary supplements, mind-body therapies such as meditation, acupuncture and massage, and alternative medicine systems such as traditional Chinese medicine or traditional Indian medicine such as Ayurveda.
2. **Stress Management:** Stress, either positive or negative, is part of everyone's life. However, the negative stress can decrease one's health. Stress causes high blood pressure, tiredness, depression, etc. The Stress Management therapy helps people learn to manage general daily-life stress or situational stress, in order to increase patients' quality of life.
3. **Resilience Training:** Physicians define resilience as the ability of recovering quickly from stressful situations, such as illness, trauma or surgery. The resilience Training takes place in order to develop a resilient state of mind in order to maintain the highest level of psychological wellness in the face of life's challenges. A lack of resilience leads to a state of depression and anxiety. Factors such as a close relationship to family and friends, a positive opinion of yourself, finding a meaning in life and staying focused contribute to resilience.
4. **Massage Therapy:** Massage Therapy includes many different techniques. Physicians usually press and manipulate body muscles or soft tissues (tendons, ligaments and skin). They usually use their hands, but may also use elbows, forearms and feet depending on your specific needs. Studies published on Massage Therapies show that it is an effective treatment for reducing stress, pain and muscle tensions. However, more research is needed in order to confirm the benefits of Massage Therapy for anxiety, digestive disorders, fibromyalgia, headaches, Insomnia

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<sup>5</sup> "Top Ranked More Often", in Patient Care, Mayo Clinic, [http://www.mayoclinic.org/quality/rankings.html?wt.srch=1&wt.mc\\_id=quality&campaign=reach&state=national&kw=unspecified&ad=\[ranking\]&Network=\[Mayo\]&SiteTarget=\[dotorg\]](http://www.mayoclinic.org/quality/rankings.html?wt.srch=1&wt.mc_id=quality&campaign=reach&state=national&kw=unspecified&ad=[ranking]&Network=[Mayo]&SiteTarget=[dotorg]) (09/13/2013)

related to stress, myofascial pain syndrome, paresthesias and nerve pain, soft tissues injuries, sports injuries, immune system, Nicotine dependence and joints pain.

5. **Acupuncture:** Acupuncture is one of the oldest medical therapies. It involves the stimulation of different points of the body using very different techniques. The most studied technique involves inserting hair-thin solid metallic needles into the patient's body, in order to stimulate nerves manually or electrically, connective tissues and muscles. Acupuncture increases the release of natural painkillers and helps treating chronic pain, migraines, stress and anxiety, post-surgery nausea, hot flashes and even women's infertility.
6. **Hypnosis:** Hypnosis uses guided relaxation and intense concentration to achieve a state of deeply awareness that is sometimes called "trance". Hypnosis may help you become deeply relaxed and leave your unconscious mind open to suggestions that can help improve your health. Hypnosis may be suggested for patients dealing with a variety of conditions, ranging from Phobias, sleep disorder, depression, post-trauma anxiety to grief and loss.
7. **Meditation:** Meditation is the practice of focusing your attention to help you feel calm and give you a clear awareness about your life. It brings inner peace. There are many forms of meditation, but most of them require a quiet location, a specific comfortable posture and a focused attention. Meditation helps relieve anxiety, depression, pain and insomnia. When combined with conventional medicine, meditation may improve physical health, such as heart health, rheumatologic conditions and digestive problems.

By conducting dozens of clinical studies every year, physicians at Mayo Clinic are able to select effective therapies from ineffective ones. They can then include those therapies in the Complementary and Integrative Medicine Program and help Mayo Clinic maintain its leadership position in providing excellent health care - mind, body and spirit.

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## THE BENSON-HENRY INSTITUTE FOR MIND-BODY MEDICINE

The Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital has been a leader for over 40 years in the study and the practice of complementary and alternative medicine, especially in the mind-body medicine. The Institute is related to the Harvard Medical School. The mind-body medicine is based on the inseparable connection between the mind and the body. This institution studies the way stress impacts our health and provides treatments in order to fight it. Dr. Herbert Benson, Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, first introduced the mind-body medicine in the late 1960's. 50 years ago, this notion was unknown and the link between stress and physical health was denied by scientists and physicians. The mind-body medicine is today a scientifically-validated field.

Scientific studies show that between 60% and 90% of medical visits are for complaints that are stress-related. The Benson-Henry Institute treats patients with a combination of relaxation response techniques, healthy nutrition and exercise. Clinical studies over the years have shown the effectiveness of these interventions on a wide range of medical problems caused or made worse by stress, such as hypertension, cardiac arrhythmias, pain, insomnia, allergies, premenstrual syndrome, menopause symptoms and infertility, among many others. Practicing the relaxation response daily can boost the immune system and make one more resistant to the harmful effects of constant stress. By taking advantage of the cost-free, self-healing resources, the United States stands to save over 50\$ billion in wasted health-care each year.

Dr. Benson describes medicine as a three-legged stool, balanced between three healing resources. The first leg is medication, the second leg is surgery and the third one is self-care approaches. Mind-body medicine incorporates the followings:

1. The relaxation response
2. Positive coping strategies (cognitive behavioral therapy)
3. Physical activity
4. Nutrition
5. Social support

This institute offers a large range of specific treatments and services, including:

- **Cancer Program:** in addition to the conventional treatments, the cancer program helps patients manage their pain and stress, and gives them hope.

- **Cardiac Wellness Program:** Heart disease is the number one leading cause of death in the US. Poor lifestyle choices have a significant influence on one's heart and cause heart attacks or strokes.
- **Chronic pain services:** This program helps patients to manage physical symptoms that accompany a pain-related illness. Those symptoms can be anxiety, frustration and depression.
- **Health and Fertility:** It helps women who face infertility problems. Women learn how to deal with the heavy treatments and medications. It also decreases symptoms of distress and guilt.
- **Mind-Body program for women:** This program is based on the mind-body medicine and helps women to reduce the impact of stress on their body. It improves medical symptoms, mood and well-being in general.
- **Successful aging:** The successful aging program is designed for people older than 65 years old, who want to understand the link between stress and aging and who want to become a more active participant to their health. Patients will learn the tools to age with wisdom, health, humor and gratitude.
- **Tai Chi and Qigong program:** This program uses Chinese Medicine such as Tai Chi and Qigong to boost your energy, improve your health and reduce your stress.
- **Yoga:** The Benson-Henry Institute offer different yoga classes: Kripalu Yoga, Yoga Nidra (Yogic conscious deep sleep) and Laughter Yoga.

The Mind-Body Medical Institute is also ensuring that the next generation understands the value of self-care better. Their main goal is now to build a doctor-patient relationship with a mind-body component to it.

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## THE CONTINUUM CENTER FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

The Continuum Center for Health and Healing is a national leader in integrative medicine, research and education. The medical Center, located at 245 5th Ave, New-York, is willing to develop “a new type of medicine that combines the best of conventional medicine, traditional indigenous medicine and expanded healing approaches”<sup>6</sup>. This approach is based on the patient and a trustful doctor-patient relationship. The Center provides opportunities to educate patients about new health-care options and redefine health priorities, starting with lifestyle management (diet, exercise and stress management).

The Center offers a large choice of different services:

- **Primary care and family medicine:** This integrative perspective includes all aspects of an individual’s life: family, lifestyle, community. Diet, exercise, stress reduction, self-care and spirituality are included in this holistic approach. Practitioners support their patients toward an optimal balance of mind, body and spirit. Integrative family medicine practitioners incorporate nutrition, massage, aromatherapy, acupuncture and homeopathy to relieve symptoms and support you and your family’s overall health. Cares at the Center are offered to adults, adolescents, children and infants.
- **Integrative & Preventive Cardiology:** This program combines conventional and alternative healing options to prevent and treat cardiovascular disease. By determining the root causes (including genetics, lifestyle, and emotional stress or health risk factors) and actually change them, we are able to prevent heart disease long before it appears.
- **Dermatology:** The dermatologist proposes a whole body approach to skin care and wellness. The Center offers medical and cosmetic dermatology. Each patient’s treatment is customized, with specific and carefully selected skincare products. The objective of the Dermatology program is to improve the skin’s appearance.
- **Integrative Gynecology & Women’s Health Services:** Women of all ages have complex and specific health needs. Services include sexual and reproductive health, fertility, and peri-and post-menopausal health. Each treatment program is adapted to the particular needs of the women. The gynecological care combines western herbs, natural hormones and other therapeutic approaches offered by Center practitioners including acupuncture, homeopathy, integrative nutrition and mind-body medicine.
- **Orthopedic and Sports Rehabilitation:** This program helps healing muscle, bone and joint injuries and conditions. The program uses a large variety of appropriate recommendations, medication prescriptions, injections, manual therapies, acupuncture, athletic counseling and collaboration with Center nutrition services.

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<sup>6</sup> “Services of the Center”, in At the Center, The Continuum Center for Health and Healing, <http://healthandhealingny.org/center/servcen.asp> (09/20/2013).

- **Integrative Ear, Nose and Throat medicine (ENT):** The physician treats acute and chronic ear, nose and throat diseases, without necessarily using conventional western treatment or surgery. Integrative treatments include dietary interventions, herbal supplements, homeopathy, manual approaches such as acupuncture, myofascial release and craniosacral therapy and mind-body interventions including meditation and healing visualization.
- **Integrative Chiropractic:** Physicians describe chiropractic as the interdependency of all systems of the body. The body functions as a unit. Chiropractic can heal a wide range of conditions with minimal side effects by combining Western and Eastern medicine. Dr. Cooper, who is the chiropractic practitioner, focuses on neuromusculoskeletal conditions, orthopedic injuries, sports injuries, pregnancy, and wellness care using multiple modalities.
- **Podiatry:** The Center encourages practitioners to use biomechanical devices such as orthoses, cold laser for tendonitis, laser treatment for nail and skin conditions, surface skin debridement to relieve pressure points, botanical topical and injection formulations, and pharmaceutical topical cream and gel compounds to address many localized conditions without potential systemic side effects.
- **Integrative, Functional, Holistic & Sports Nutrition:** This nutrition program is more about prevention rather than symptoms management. Nutritional advices are based on nutrigenomics, which is the interaction between diet and genes) and the dynamic balance of all body systems. The nutritional therapy considers both short and long term maintenance. This program boosts the human capacity for healing through nutrition therapy. Practitioners may utilize diet modifications, dietary supplements, medicinal foods, functional foods, therapeutic teas, herbal extracts, culinary spices, edible flowers and essential oils.
- **Holistic Psychotherapy/Stress Management and Wellness Services:** This program is a comprehensive treatment approach to emotional and physical health. The method is scientifically proven. The goal is to improve your well-being in your everyday life. Approaches include group, couples and individual therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, psychodynamic psychotherapy, short-term counseling, stress management/skills training, wellness and mind-body techniques including relaxation, breath work, autogenic relaxation training, guided imagery and meditative techniques. These approaches is helpful for depression, anxiety, psychological distress, coping with a chronic illness, stress management, work-personal life balance, wellness counseling, loss and bereavement, life transitions including pregnancy, child-rearing and retirement, and social phobias.
- **Acupuncture & East Asian Medical Care:** Acupuncture therapies are used to treat infectious diseases, chronic conditions and any condition involving pain. Research has advanced in the last decade proving acupuncture is effective in treating headache, neck, back and knee pain, nausea and vomiting whether related to illness, chemotherapy or a result of surgery and surgical medication. The Center incorporates Traditional and Classical Chinese and Herbal Medicine.
- **Massage Therapy:** This program helps people reduce muscular tension and restore joint mobility.

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PART TWO

**COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE FROM  
THE PERSPECTIVE OF EASTERN INSTITUTIONS**

## **BASTYR UNIVERSITY**

Bastyr University in Washington State is a regionally accredited and globally respected institution of natural sciences. According to James Wharton, PhD, “Bastyr University has played a bigger role within medicine than any other non-allopathic institution, bringing scientific legitimacy to natural medicine”<sup>7</sup>. In 1978 Bastyr University was founded by Drs. Les Griffith, William A. Mitchell, Jr. and Joseph E. Pizzorno, Jr. It was named after their favorite teacher, Dr. John Bastyr, who also is a naturopathic physician. Dr. Bastyr ran a thriving business. He encouraged his patients to take responsibility for their own health. The patient, not the doctor, should do the curing and be active in seeking wellness. He believes that patients should open up their hearts to physicians, so they can detect the source of the illness. Dr. Bastyr relied on the physical manipulation of the human body and assumes that the laying of hands make cures more effective. He believed that a trustful doctor-patient relationship encourages wellness.

Through the years, the vision and mission of Bastyr University hasn’t changed. Bastyr University desires to transform the health and well-being of the human community. It recognizes that body, mind and spirit are intrinsically inseparable. The University delivers undergraduate and graduate degrees, in order to become a Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine (ND). It offers a wide choice of study areas:

- Naturopathic Medicine
- Acupuncture
- Herbal science
- Exercise science
- Human biology
- Nutrition
- Psychology
- Midwifery
- Ayurvedic sciences

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<sup>7</sup> “Founding of Bastyr”, in History and Heritage, Bastyr University, <http://www.bastyr.edu/about/about-our-university/history-heritage#Founding-of-Bastyr>, (09/23/2013).

## THE PACIFIC COLLEGE OF ORIENTAL MEDICINE

The Pacific College of Oriental Medicine is a leader in serving the healthcare needs of the modern world through its diverse programs of study, clinics, centers of learning, and research. Pacific College is a preeminent resource for traditional East Asian and integrative medicine. It teaches crucial values, such as education, compassion, excellence, integrity, mindfulness and self-care. Pacific College of Oriental Medicine believes that and energetic and physiological principles of Oriental medicine belong to the laws of nature. It is knowable, teachable and accessible. The University has identified 10 main goals, relating to their educational philosophy<sup>8</sup> :

1. To train qualified practitioners of Oriental medicine
2. To enable graduates of its Master's degree programs to function as primary healthcare providers, to apply the principles of Oriental and natural healing, and to become an integral part of the modern healthcare system
3. To provide graduates of the college's body therapy programs with the skills necessary to deliver safe and effective Asian bodywork therapy, to apply the principles of Oriental and natural healing, and to become an integral part of the modern healthcare system
4. To inspire, through the presentation of Oriental and natural healing, a deep and lasting respect for the integrity of the human body, mind, and spirit
5. To provide continuing education and post-graduate programs for graduates and other practitioners of Oriental medicine and body therapy
6. To provide a supportive, educational environment conducive to personal growth and academic advancement
7. To further the understanding of the profession of Oriental medicine and bodywork therapy through dialogue with other members of the healthcare community and the public at-large
8. To participate in state and national Oriental medicine and bodywork therapy issues and convey the essence of professionalism to its students
9. To provide a center for the research and modern validation of Oriental medical principles
10. To provide Oriental medical services to the community

The Pacific College of Oriental Medicine offers bachelors and masters degrees in Acupuncture and Massage Therapies.

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<sup>8</sup> "The Goals of Pacific College of Oriental Medicine", in Pacific College Mission Statement, Pacific College of Oriental medicine, <http://www.pacificcollege.edu/acupuncture-massage-college-campus/mission-statement.html>, (09/23/2013)

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## **MAHARISHI UNIVERSITY FOR MANAGEMENT**

For more than 40 years Maharishi University for Management (MUM) has introduced a new learning approach called Consciousness-Based education (CBE). The founder of Maharishi University of Management was Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. He introduced the effortless technique of transcendental meditation in the West. TM is an effortless technique that consists in the mental repetition of a word, a phrase or a sound – a mantra. This is an automatic self-transcending technique that allows your mind to reach a state of pure awareness. He founded MUM in 1971. It utilizes TM as a component of Consciousness-Based Education, so that students could reach a state of pure consciousness within themselves, as a source of knowledge. All students and teachers in the faculty are practicing transcendental meditation (TM) twice a day every day. Many scientific studies have found that transcendental meditation increases creativity and intelligence. TM also helps reducing stress and improving learning capacity, academic performance (GPA), ability to focus and general health. MUM offers a wide range of Bachelor's, Masters and Ph.D. degrees in traditional and alternative fields. You can actually study business, media and communication, art, literature, education and computer science. The Maharishi University of Management offers exciting new disciplines such as Sustainable Living and Maharishi Vedic Science. The Maharishi University for Managements offers a stress-free routine and a nourishing environment. The daily meals offered by the University are pure, organic and vegetarian and MUM encourages their students to go to bed early so they are fresh, awake and alert on the next day. MUM is also one of the only Universities to teach one course at a time, so students can go deep into one subject. MUM does not require students to juggle as many as four or five classes at the same time. This learning technique makes it much easier for the brain to integrate the new knowledge.

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PART THREE

**COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE FROM  
THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHRONIC DISEASES**

## SLEEP DISORDERS

Each year, millions of Americans are affected by long-term, chronic sleep disorders. Those disorders usually interfere with work, driving, social activities, and overall quality of life. They also can bring serious health complications. According to NCCAM, sleep disorders cost the US government 16 billion \$ each year, in addition to the indirect costs due to lost productivity. The most common sleep disorders are insomnia (difficulty falling asleep, difficulty staying asleep, and/or poor sleep quality), sleep apnea (breathing interruptions during sleep), restless leg syndrome (a tingly or prickly sensation in the legs), and narcolepsy (daytime "sleep attacks"). Simple lifestyle changes, such as establishing a regular sleep-schedule, relaxing before bed, exercising regularly, and avoiding alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine can sometimes bring great improvement in the quality of sleep. Sleep problems aren't to ignore. It is as important as a healthy diet, since it boosts the immune system. No matter what problems cause the sleep loss, insomnia has an impact on the mental and physical health, in addition to a low energy and mood level. The impact can be cumulative. People with chronic insomnia are more likely than others to develop psychiatric problems such as depression and anxiety disorders. It is also responsible for chronic diseases, such as high blood pressure and diabetes. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, more than 100,000 crashes each year are due to drivers falling asleep while driving. People with sleep disorders may try CAM as a cure. The most known and effective nonconventional treatments used to relieve sleep disorders are:

1. **Melatonin:** Melatonin is a hormone naturally released by the brain. This non-addictive hormone may be used either for prevention of jet-lag, or sleep issues. It helps regulate sleep and wake cycles. Melatonin seems to be more effective for older people.
2. **Valerian:** Valerian is a perennial plant. It helps you get to sleep faster and improve the sleep quality. Valerian is a safe plant at recommended doses. If you combine valerian and hops, the positive effect on insomnia is even better. It is also used to cure stress and anxiety.
3. **Acupuncture, hypnosis, lavender and music therapy:** The research is still unclear about those alternative therapies against sleep disorders. However, the risk of trying them is relatively low.

There are many environmental factors that cause insomnia and sleep disorders in general: dietary factors, lack of exercise, drinking coffee and psychological factors such as anxiety, worry and stress. To have naturally healthy and deep sleep, we should receive periodic massage. Abhyanga is an ayurvedic oil massage that helps inducing sleep. Having a cup of milk before bedtime also helps.

## **HYPERTENSION**

The United States are in the midst of an epidemic. The name of this epidemic is hypertension. This is the medical term for high blood pressure. Hypertension is an aggravating factor for atherosclerosis, heart attacks and strokes. Blood pressure is determined by the amount of resistance to blood flow in your arteries. The more blood your heart pumps and the narrower your arteries, the higher your blood pressure. The higher your blood pressure, the greater the risk. High blood pressure is insidious because people aren't generally aware that they are suffering from hypertension. The disease is slowly developing within us. According to the US government, various degrees of hypertension are present in 15 to 33 percent of the adult population and it causes 2 deaths every minute in the United States alone. 3 main factors have been scientifically identified as an explanation for hypertension in the West: inappropriate diet, lack of exercise and family genetic disposition. Yet there is another factor, which has often been ignored: environmental stress. It is not difficult to understand the correlation between mental stress and the pressured society we live in with its influence on heart disease.

High blood pressure or hypertension is very dangerous because it increases the hardening of the arteries, also called atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is the deposition of blood clots, fats and calcium within the walls of the arteries, causing normally soft, elastic and open arteries to become hard, inelastic and partly to completely blocked. If the arteries to the heart or coronary arteries are obstructed, it causes the death of heart cells and a heart attack or an infarction. Strokes or kidney failures occur in the same way.

In the past, the fight-or-flight response played a major evolutionary role. It was a way to survive more effectively. However, modern society doesn't accept the fighting or running response. Since we cannot easily change the nature of modern life, perhaps better prevention and therapy of hypertension and other diseases related to the fight-or-flight response might be achieved by actively practicing the Relaxation Response. The physiologic changes of the Relaxation Response are associated with what is called an altered state of consciousness. An altered state of consciousness includes a synthesis of feelings, such as ecstasy, selflessness, calm and serenity. A way to achieve this altered state of consciousness associated with the Relaxation Response is through the practice of what is called meditation. There appear to be four basic elements underlying the elicitation of the Relaxation Response.

1. The first element is a quiet environment. One must not be distracted by the external world.
2. The second element is an object to dwell upon. This can be the repetition of a word or a sound. The repetition of a syllable helps clear the mind. If distracting thoughts occur, one can return to this repetition of the syllable to help chasing those disturbing thoughts.

3. The third element is a passive attitude. It is an emptying of all thoughts and distractions of one's mind. It is important not to be concerned with how well he or she is meditating.
4. The fourth element is a comfortable position. The comfortable posture should allow an individual to remain in the same position for 20 minutes.

The Relaxation Response through meditation gradually brings inner peace, stability and increases awareness into the patient's lives.

Another way to heal hypertension is yoga. According to yogic science, the correlation between the effects of the emotional states upon the heart and mind and cardiac conditions is fundamental. The healing of cardiac conditions is achieved through the practices of yogic relaxation, yoga Nidra and meditation. By practicing yoga, the individual, who is frequently deeply entwined in the emotional complexes of fear, anger, stress, etc., provide a mental and cardiac relief for his heart. Yoga against heart diseases is now a proven method: it liberates the heart from strain and illness. Regular yoga practice is, first able, a great aerobic exercise. Then, it also helps lower stress levels, which we know is linked to hypertension.

## DIABETES

There are two main types of diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is a juvenile disease. It means that your immune system is destroying the islet cells in the pancreas, which manufacture insulin. Insulin regulates blood sugar. Type 2 diabetes is adult diabetes; however children in grade school are more and more affected. This type of diabetes is mainly due to the emergence of the obesity throughout the population. The pancreas cells manufacture normal amounts of insulin, but the body becomes resistant to its effects. As a result we notice the rise of the blood sugar. US citizens have 1/3 risks to develop type 2 diabetes during their life. Western treatments against type 2 diabetes are insulin injections, oral medication and dietary measures, in order to improve blood sugar control.

Type 1 and 2 diabetes both have important health consequences, including blindness, kidney, strokes, heart attacks, failure and amputation.

However, with type 2 diabetes, more than almost any other conditions, your behavior toward your health can have a tremendous effect on whether you develop it or how it progresses if you are already affected. If you are overweight, have a family history of type 2 diabetes, suffer from the metabolic syndrome or have gestational diabetes while pregnant it means you are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Fortunately, you are able to prevent it by exercising regularly, keeping your weight down and taking measures to fight stress. In addition to lifestyle changes, doctors favor aggressive drug treatments. Also, the better you control your blood sugar levels via such measures as diet, medication, exercise and yoga practice, the lower your risks for heart attacks, strokes and other life-threatening problems.

According to Sandra Summerfield Kozak, a yoga teacher, “Both yoga and Ayurveda can have a great effect on diabetes. They can increase willpower, self-confidence, strength, flexibility, contentment and discipline, which can be a great help with weight loss and other health issues”. Another way yoga can help preventing type 2 diabetes is its efficacy as a stress-reduction measure. Stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol raise blood sugar levels. In fact, high cortisol levels also tend to encourage the accumulation of intra-abdominal fat, which contributes to insulin resistance. Many people that are affected with diabetes also develop problems with their autonomic nervous system. The movement of food through the bowels can become complicated and the body may have trouble regulating the blood pressure when you stand up quickly. Peripheral nerves and blood vessels in the legs may be damaged. It often creates very painful sensations, also called diabetic neuropathy. Yoga is known to improve the functioning of the autonomic nervous system. As the nerves and blood vessels in the feet are

dangerously altered in people with severe diabetes, the blood flow in lower limbs is reduced. Consequently, even a superficial cut can progress to serious infections requiring amputation. Studies showed that the regular practice of standing yoga poses helps in maintaining a more even distribution of weight across the bottom of the foot, lessening the pressure on any one spot, which lowers the risk of skin ulceration.

Ayurveda, yoga's sister science, may also help to control or prevent type 2 diabetes. However, it's important to know what combination of vata, pitta and kapha the patient is. Obese person have a predominant kapha constitution, because they have a tendency for inactivity and weight gain. Ayurveda treatment for diabetes include a meat-free, sugar-free, salt-free and dairy-free diet and breathing exercises, such as the Alternative Nostril Breathing .

## CANCER

Although heart disease comes first in the number of deaths, cancer is the most feared disease in the modern world. There are 3 main causes to various varieties of cancer: lifestyle choices, genetic and environmental factors (air, water, etc.). Doctors define cancerous cells as abnormal cells with the ability of uncontrolled growth. A healthy immune system kills those cancerous cells, even before a tumor develops. On the other hand, subtle abnormalities in the immune system play an important role in the disease, since it allows tumors to form.

The prevalence of cancer continues to rise. But thanks to the modern medicine, survival rates have improved. According to *The Lancet*, the world's leading general medical journal and specialty journals in Oncology, twenty-year survival rates were almost 90 percent for thyroid and testicular cancer, better than 80 percent for melanomas and prostate cancer, about 80 percent for endometrial cancer, and almost 70 percent for bladder cancer and Hodgkin's disease. The study estimated a twenty-year survival rate of 65 percent for breast cancer, 60 percent for cervical cancer, and about 50 percent for colorectal, ovarian and kidney cancers. These numbers are all considerably better than in the past, at least in part due to improvements in treatment. Even in cancers where the survival odds are lower, some individuals beat the odds and are either cured or live far longer than doctors might have guessed<sup>9</sup>.

Yoga practice may be helpful for patients with cancer. Yoga reduces stress and helps managing side effects due to chemotherapy and medical procedures. If people treated with cancer don't have enough strength to do a vigorous yoga practice, poses and postures may be adapted in order to be both energizing and relaxing. Other yogic tools, such as relaxation, meditation and breathing exercises reduce pain, which is a common cancer symptom. The slower, the deeper and the more regular you breathe, the calmer and more energetic you feel. It helps handling the stressful period of being diagnosed with cancer and enduring treatment for it. Yoga philosophy has very practical implications for people with cancer. Yoga science encourages you to listen to your body and its physical and emotional messages. Cancer make people feel like victims of their own body. Feelings of powerlessness are natural. Yoga can change the whole psychology of the experience: people affected by cancer learn that they can still find relaxation and even joy in the body.

Dietary measures may be important in both preventing and treating cancer. For example, recent studies show that olive oil in the Mediterranean diet helps protecting women in that region from breast

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<sup>9</sup> McCALL Timothy, M.D., *Yoga as Medicine: the Yogic prescription for health and healing*. Bantam Book. United States of America: Bantam Dell, August 2007. 592 pages.

cancer. Women living in countries like Japan eat a lot of soy products, which tend to be a protective factor against ovarian and uterus cancer.

Depression is a common side effect in people that have been diagnosed with cancer. In addition to psychotherapy and antidepressant medication, yoga and meditation can improve mood and sometimes the prognosis.

Acupuncture or acupressure can reduce pain after a medical surgery procedure. Used on the point P6, located three finger breadths up from the wrist crease in the center of the wrist between the two rope-like tendons palpable just beneath the skin, reduce nausea and vomiting induced by chemotherapy.

Massage is now often used to reduce pain and anxiety. It is a great complementary and alternative hands-on therapy.

Antioxidant vitamins C, D and E are able to prevent some cancers. On the other hand, it is more prudent not to take them while undergoing traditional treatment. They could interfere with the effectiveness of the radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

Herbal medicine and herbs, such as ginger, valerian or marijuana, are used to control side effects due to conventional therapy. Any form of ginger relieve nausea and marijuana stimulate appetites (however cannot be used legally in most States). Valerian helps with insomnia and anxiety.

## DEPRESSION

Feeling sadness from time to time is normal. On the other hand, depression is a life-threatening medical condition in which sadness and other symptoms are overwhelming. In the United States, 16% of adults will develop symptoms of depression. It affects your thoughts, moods, feelings, behaviors and even your physical health. According to doctors, to meet the criteria for clinical depression, an individual needs to experience at least five of the following nine symptoms, for a period of two weeks:

1. Depressed mood on most days and for most of each day
2. Loss of pleasure in formerly pleasurable activities
3. Significant increase or decrease in appetite, weight or both
4. Sleep problems, insomnia or excessive sleepiness, nearly every day
5. Feelings of agitation or a sense of intense lethargy
6. Loss of energy or excessive fatigue daily
7. A persistent sense of guilt or worthlessness
8. Inability to concentrate, occurring nearly everyday
9. Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

Doctors observed that depressive patients have an abnormally low level of excitatory neurotransmitters like serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine in the brain. The primary and often only treatment prescribed for depression is drugs. The two most prescribed ones are Prozac and Zoloft and they increase the level of excitatory neurotransmitters. Included in a multidisciplinary approach, drugs can be lifesavers, as long as the side effects are tolerable. Anti-depressors can give energy and strength to engage in health-promoting alternative activities, such as yoga, exercise and meditation.

Unfortunately, most people who suffer from depression are never diagnosed, because of the weakness and embarrassment feelings that are strongly associated with this disease. In fact, depression is not a weakness and not something you can treat on your own. It is a real medical disorder with biological and chemical basis.

Part of yoga's effectiveness in treating depression comes from its proven ability to relieve stress and tension. People who suffer from depression tend to have a persistent activation of the sympathetic nervous system, which is related to the fight-or-flight response. Their cortisol hormone, which is the stress-related hormone, is sky high. As proven by scientific studies, yoga decreases the cortisol level and has the ability to lift the mood.

Traditional Chinese medicine, including acupuncture, herbal remedies and massages are very helpful for patients. Furthermore, self-expression through art therapy may help patients deal with anxiety and stress, which are strongly related to a depressive state of mind. Music therapy enhances mood and promotes relaxation. Lastly, prayers and spirituality may help you develop stronger coping skills.

PART FOUR

**COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE FROM  
THE PERSPECTIVE OF NATURAL THERAPIES AND  
TECHNIQUES**

## TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

Of all the energy-based therapies, the most well-known is acupuncture. Acupuncture is part of the traditional Chinese medicine and is 5000 years old. It uses thin filiform needles, which are inserted at variant depths and manipulated into specific points in the body.

However acupuncture seems to be a treatment by itself, it is most of the time used as integrative medicine, in conjunction with conventional medical treatments. For example, in order to control pain after surgery, doctors may combine acupuncture with medication. Research shows that acupuncture is effective in treating various medical problems, such as fibromyalgia, headaches, nausea and vomiting, osteoarthritis and pain management. Clinical studies showed results of the effectiveness of acupuncture in reducing symptoms in people with cancer.

Acupuncture invokes an impression of simplicity and complexity at the same time. A needle is a quite simple sharp object, while the surface of the body offers a limitless number of locations where the needles can be inserted in. The needle can be associated with the “yang”, because it’s sharp, metallic, focused and intrusive. The body represents the “yin”, because it is soft, organic and complex.

Traditional Chinese medicine is based on the belief that the body contains a vital life energy – called qi (pronounced chee) – that runs through the body. Qi flows comprise all of the essential aspects of life – physical, emotional and spiritual. We name those life-energy pathways meridians. They are accessible at approximately 400 different locations on the body. Practitioners of acupuncture attempt to rebalance patient’s energy flows by inserting fine needles into those points in various combinations. Acupuncture increases your natural body’s natural healing.

During a typical session, the practitioner use sterilized, individually wrapped stainless steel needles. Patients may feel a brief sharp sensation when the needle is inserted. However, the procedure isn’t painful. By practicing acupuncture, patients feel either energized or relaxed.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), researchers have found three possible explanations for how acupuncture works:

1. Opioid release: During acupuncture your glands release natural pain-killer – endorphins – into your central nervous system (CNS).
2. Spinal cord stimulation: the “gate-theory” suggests that acupuncture stimulates the nerves in your spinal cord, which releases pain-suppressing-neurotransmitters.
3. Blood flow changes: Acupuncture needles may increase the amount of blood flow in the area around the needle. The increased blood flow may supply additional nutrients or remove toxic substances, or both, promoting health.

Chinese Herbal Medicine is also part of the Traditional Chinese Medicine, which teaches that the body falls out of balance due to an imbalance of two forces that comprise Qi: Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang are opposite forces, like the positive and negative forces surrounding an atom. When there is too much Yin or too little Yang or too little Yin and too much Yang, the Qi is disturbed and there is illness. Through years of research and natural selection, traditional Chinese medicine has been able to identify combinations of herbs that are particularly effective in restoring the balance between Yin and Yang under many different conditions. The result is a return of the flow of Qi throughout the body and an improvement in general physical and mental health. The most common methods of applying herb therapies are through teas and pills.

#### *PERSONNAL EXPERIENCE*

Acupuncture isn't only about yin, yang or Qi Gong, but rather the interactions, relationships and systems of ideas between our external and internal body signs. I practiced an acupuncture session myself, at Dr. Ming's office, located at 71 Park Ave, New-York. The consultation began with the review of my medical history this step informs the clinician about where the needles should be inserted, of what diameter and length, for how long, at what angle, with what movements, and with what intentions. I told Dr. Ming that stress and its negative effects are my main health issues. She inserted needles in my back, my forehead, my thumbs, my forefeet, my forearms and around my belly button. The insertion of the needles didn't hurt at all. Then she left the room very quietly and I had to rest about an hour with the needles in. After a few minutes, I could feel a heat flow going through my body, which seemed as heavy as stone. When the consultation was over, I felt deeply relaxed and my mind was far away from the present world. Dr. Ming also gave me some Chinese herbal medicine to help slowing down my digestion. On the next day, my body and mind were deeply relaxed and light and I feel that the herbal pills really helped.

## AYURVEDA

Ayurveda comes from India and is probably the world's oldest system of natural medicine. Ayu means "life" and Veda means "knowing", so it literally means "science of life". Ayurveda concerns 8 main branches of medicine: pediatrics, gynecology, obstetrics, ophthalmology, geriatrics, otolaryngology, general medicine and surgery.

Ayurveda is a science, a religion and a philosophy at the same time. Ayurveda is the love of truth and promotes happiness and health. According to the teachings of Ayurveda, every human being has four biological and spiritual instincts: religious, financial, procreative and freedom instincts. The fulfillment of these instincts is the foundation of a good balanced health. In opposition to the Western mind, Ayurveda considers normality as individually evaluated. Every human being is unique and different.

Ayurveda distinguishes 5 fundamental elements: Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth. A vibration came from a unified state of consciousness and made Ether (space) appear. Ether began to move and its movements created the Air. Movements of Ether also created friction and heat. Through that friction Fire element manifested itself. Certain ethereal elements dissolved and liquefied, manifesting the Water element and then solidified to form the molecules of Earth.

The human being is a microcosm, a small universe within himself. Within the human body:

- Space includes the mouth, the nose, the digestive tract, the thorax, etc.
- Air includes the movement of muscles, the pulsations of the heart, the expansion and contraction of the lungs, etc.
- Fire includes all metabolic activities, such as the body temperature, the digestion, etc.
- Water includes secretions of the digestive juices and the salivary glands, the plasma and the cytoplasm diffusion, etc. Water is vital for the functioning of the tissues, organs and bodily systems in general.
- Earth includes bones, cartilages, nails, muscles, skin, hair, etc. It is all living and non-living substances.

Those 5 basics elements are manifested in the human body as 3 basic principles or humors, also called tridosha. Ether and Air are manifested in the body as Vata, Fire and Water are manifested as Pitta

and Earth and Water are manifested as Kapha. The 3 humors govern biological, psychological and physiopathological functions of the body, mind and consciousness. Each individual is determined at conception by the permutations and combinations of bodily air, fire and water that manifest in the parent's bodies. We count 7 different constitutions: vata, pitta, kapha, vata-pitta, pitta-kapha, vata-kapha and vatta-pitta-kapha.

People of vata constitution are generally physically underdeveloped. Their chests are flat and their veins and muscles tendons are visible. The complexion is brown; the skin is cold, rough, dry and cracked. There usually have a few moles present, which tend to be dark. Vata people generally are either too tall or too short, with thin frames which reveal prominent joints and bone-ends because of poor muscle development. The hair is curly and scanty, the eye-lashes are thin and the eyes are lusterless. The eyes may be sunken, small, dry, active and the conjunctiva is dry and muddy. The nails are rough and brittle. The shape of the nose is bent and turned up. Physiologically, the appetite and digestion are variable. Vata people crave sweet, sour and salty tastes and like hot drinks. The production of urine is scanty and the feces are dry, hard and small in quantity. They have a tendency to perspire less than other constitutional types. Their sleep may be disturbed and they will sleep less than the other types. Their hands and feet are often cold. These people are creative, active, alert and restless. They talk fast and walk fast but they are easily fatigued. Psychologically, they are characterized by short memory but quick mental understanding. They will understand something immediately but will soon forget it. They have little willpower, tend toward mental instability and possess little tolerance, confidence or boldness. Their reasoning power is weak and these people are nervous, fearful and afflicted by so much anxiety. Each constitutional type also exhibits certain patterns in interactions with the external environment. Vata people tend to earn money quickly and also spend it quickly. Thus, they intend to remain poor. When vata become unbalanced, some of the most common things it can physically lead to are: joint pain, chills, gas, constipation, lower back pain, tremors, loss of appetite, insomnia, fainting and various other disturbing irregularities. The skin can also show signs of dehydration, flakiness and premature wrinkling. Psychologically, out of balance Vata will be restless with anxiety, worry and lack of focus.

People of Pitta constitution are of medium height, slender and their body frame is delicate. Their chests are not as flat as those of vata people and they show a medium prominence of veins and muscle tendons. They have many moles or freckles which are bluish or brownish-red. The bones are not as prominent as in the vata individual. Muscle development is moderate. The pitta complexion may be coppery, yellowish, reddish or fair. The skin is soft, warm and less wrinkled than vata skin. The hair is thin, silky, red or brownish and there is a tendency toward premature graying of hair and hair loss. The eyes may be gray, green or copper-brown and sharp; the eyeballs will be of medium prominence. The conjunctiva is moist and copper-colored. The nails are soft. The shape of the nose is sharp and the tip tends to be reddish. Psychologically, these people have a strong metabolism, good digestion and resulting strong appetite. The person of pitta constitution usually takes large quantities of food and

liquid. Pitta types have a natural craving for sweet, bitter and astringent tastes and enjoy cold drinks. Their sleep is of medium duration but uninterrupted. They produce a large volume of urine and the feces are yellowish, liquid, soft and plentiful. There is a tendency toward excessive perspiring. The body temperature may run slightly high and hands and feet will tend to be warm. Pitta people do not tolerate sunlight, heat or hard work well. Psychologically, pitta people have a good power of comprehension; they are very intelligent and sharp and tend to be good orators. They have emotional tendencies toward hate, anger and jealousy. They are ambitious people who generally like to be leaders. Pitta people appreciate material prosperity and they tend to be moderately well-off financially. They enjoy exhibiting their wealth and luxurious possessions. When pitta is out of balance, some of the most common symptoms are hypersensitivity of the skin, blotchy redness, rashes, hives and dry patches, inflammation, ulcers, acidity, excess heat, thinning hair, high blood pressure and insatiable hunger. Acne or eczema may also develop. Psychologically out of balance pitta, is prone to frustration, anger, jealousy, aggression, arrogance, irritability and impatience. Exacerbated pitta can also become spiteful, critical and judgmental.

People of Kapha constitution are large with a well-built frame. They are evenly proportionate. The skin is clear with large pores and the eyes are moist and prominent. The lips are full and pale. Kapha people have large and strong. Their hair is thick, lustrous and usually wavy. They have a constant appetite, due to their great endurance. They have a deep and long sleep. Psychologically, kapha people are caring, steady and calm. They are not easily irritated, very strong and stable. They are very loving and self-sufficient people. The mental and physical energy is steady and enduring, with a great long-term memory. Loyalty is one of their main qualities. When Kapha is unbalanced, some of the most common things it can physically lead to are lethargy, weight gain, congestion, asthma, prolonged sleep, excessive oiliness, blackheads, cystic acne, cysts, edema, water retention and swelling. Psychologically, emotions of depression, attachment, greed or envy can emerge. They can also be possessive and withdraw.

Ayurveda may be very helpful for people suffering from cancer, diabetes, allergies, heart diseases, hypertension and insomnia. Here are some examples that explain diseases from an ayurvedic perspective.

The Ayurvedic approach to cancer is fundamental and radical. The treatment varies from an individual to another. An Ayurvedic physician should determine what doshas or organs are affected. Depending on the specific symptoms, Ayurveda has many protocols that can be chosen, including: surgically removing the tumor, cutting the nerves that carry the pain, herbal therapy and Ayurvedic immunotherapy. Ayurveda oils and herbs can also be used to decrease the side effects of chemotherapy and radiation, since we know that those treatments cause create anorexia, nausea, hair loss and pain.

The modern Western definition of diabetes differentiates two main types of diabetes, mellitus (insulin-dependent diabetes (IDD) or non-insulin-dependent diabetes (NIDD)) and insipidus. There are 20 types of diabetes identified in Ayurveda. Each type corresponds to specific signs and symptoms found in diabetes syndromes. Ayurveda propose a specific treatment for each of the 20 types of diabete.

The Ayurvedic perspective on allergies is very different from Modern medicine. Conventional medicine treats allergies with antihistamines and steroids. Ayurveda places emphasis upon clinical observation of the signs and symptoms of allergy. Every bodily parts and systems are examined thoroughly. Certain Ayurvedic herbs contain natural antihistamines and steroids. The Ayurvedic approach falls under 2 categories of treatments. One is called Shamana and is a palliative therapy for acute phase of allergies. The second one is called Shodana and is a detoxification program to remove doshic causes of allergies.

Ayurveda says that the causes of heart disease are overwork, excessive eating, intense grief, sadness and biochemical stress. Other pathological conditions such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension and rheumatic conditions may affect the heart. All symptoms can be classified according to vata, pitta or kapha. Heart disease is a very serious condition and should be treated by a cardiologist. However, an individual should use Ayurvedic remedies (Powders, diuretics, anti-inflammatories, yoga postures, etc.) in a preventive manner.

Ayurveda describes 3 types of hypertension: vata, which begins in the colon; pitta, which starts in the small intestine and kapha which originates in the stomach. Ayurvedic literature has specific recommendations for each type of hypertension and its corresponding etiology. In general, a person with hypertensions should follow a lifestyle and diet that reduces the symptoms. In addition to this, there should be no consumption of caffeine, salt, sugar or fatty and fried food. Deep breathing, daily walks of three miles and meditation are beneficial as well.

## **MEDITATION**

The term meditation includes a myriad of different techniques and approaches. Today, people may use meditation for health and wellness purposes. Meditation is the perfect method to combine with a busy and complicated life. By practicing meditation, one is able to reduce stress in his life and lower his blood pressure. Research says that meditation has a very positive effect on anxiety and stress: meditation has been proved to reduce anxiety, decrease anger and lower stress level in people with cancer or depression. This CAM mind-body technique is also very helpful with asthma and fibromyalgia (chronic widespread pain).

Meditation affects the body and induces opposite changes to the fight-or-flight response. The autonomic nervous system, also called the involuntary nervous system, is responsible for this response. It regulates many body actions such as heart rate, breathing rate and digestion. This nervous system is divided in two parts:

1. Sympathetic nervous system: it mobilizes the body into action, when you are facing a stressful situation. The most representative example is the fight-or-flight response: heart rate and breathing increases, blood vessels narrow and muscles become tense.
2. Parasympathetic nervous system: it creates the “rest and digest” response. The parasympathetic system is opposite to the sympathetic system. It slows the heartbeat, dilates the vessels, improves blood flow and increases the activity of the digestive tract.

Meditation actually reduces the activity of the sympathetic nervous system and increases that of the parasympathetic system.

Most types of meditation require four elements: a quiet place, a specific posture, a focused attention and an open attitude. We are going to focus on 2 types of meditation: Transcendental Meditation and Mindfulness meditation.

### ***TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION***

Transcendental Meditation, or TM, is a technique of the mind that can be practiced by people of any religion or of no religion at all. The technique goes back thousands of years and was taught to

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi by his own teacher in the Himalayas. Maharishi extracted the TM technique from its religious context and distilled it to its essence. He first brought the technique to India and then to the rest of the world. The worldwide Transcendental meditation program was born.

But what exactly is transcendental meditation? TM is a way to relax, a technique to promote health, vitality and longevity, a method that develops creativity and IQ and a path to inner-peace and enlightenment.

TM does more than correct symptoms. Transcendental Meditation allows one to enter a place inside the mind that is difficult to describe with any better word than transcendence. If we compare the brain to the ocean, our daily lives and thoughts would be the waves: ups and downs, constant agitation, etc. Through TM you get to take your brain under the waves. The deeper you go, the more you reach a blissful state that combines elements of serenity, peace and acceptance, but also exhilaration and a sense of new possibilities, both for now and the future. David Lynch once said: "Ideas are like fish. If you want to catch little fish, you can stay in the shallow water. But if you want to catch the big fish, you've got to go deeper". During the transcendental state of mind, the attention is turned powerfully within to deeper levels of human intelligence. The mind and the body are deeply connected and reach a restful state, which is deeper than sleep.

Transcendental meditation falls into the group of automatic self-transcending style of meditation. It is very easy and effortless. TM is to learn with a guide, who teaches you a mantra – a word, a sound or a phrase. Effortlessly repetitively thinking the mantra takes you beyond the mantra and into the fourth state of consciousness. The first three are waking, dreaming and sleeping. Two important aspects of the mantra are that it has no specific meaning to the meditator and it has to remain secret. Not discussing it with other people helps maintaining a sense of specialness and privacy. When you are able to meditate on your own, TM has to be practiced 20 minutes twice a day (usually in the morning and in the afternoon).

Fred Travis, director of the Center for Brain, Consciousness and Cognition at Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa, has studied the effects of meditation on the brain and the body. Travis has shown that transcendence brings with it a special way of breathing, that is way slower than usual. We count about 600 scientific studies that analyze the mental effects of transcendental meditation. The most studied ones are:

- Reducing trait anxiety and consequently lower the blood pressure. If one can bring silence into his mind, so does his body. Scientists have proven that transcendental meditation is more effective than anti-hypertensive drugs.

- Decreasing the use of cigarettes and alcohol. Transcendental meditation is effective in treating addictions. Since practicing TM usually goes with the desire of a healthier life, alcohol or cigarettes seem repulsive.
- Positive effects on the metabolic syndrome. The metabolic syndrome is now considered as an epidemic because it affects both adults and children. The three components of the metabolic syndrome are high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. It gets worse with stress and age.

During transcendental meditation, the brain activity is literally improved. The right and the left brain hemispheres are deeply connected and playing together. The brain reaches a global EEG coherence: it is the optimization of the brain functioning. The EEG coherence involves the increase of creativity, transcendental consciousness, concept learning, emotional reactivity, alertness and IQ. We normally use 5-10% of our brain. TM is the only experience that engages the total brain.

### *PERSONAL EXPERIENCE*

Transcendental Meditation is easy to learn and provides a lifetime of benefits. It is a 3 steps program. The very first step of the learning process consists in a preparatory talk and a personal interview. I had the opportunity to meet Rachel Ratz, a certified TM teacher of the David Lynch Foundation. She has been my guide and mentor. During this first meeting, she explained the mechanics of the TM technique—how it works, why it's easy to learn and effortless to practice, how it's different from other forms of meditation, and the origins of the technique. Through my personal interview, she also had a general overview of my personality. The TM teacher seemed to know what she was talking about - not just on the level of thinking or belief, but from direct experience. I was impressed by her confidence and clarity. Learning how to practice transcendental meditation takes 4 consecutive days. On the first day, you receive your personal instruction, which actually is the second step of your learning. At the beginning of the session, Rachel organized a quick ceremony in honor of Maharishi, who first imported transcendental meditation in the United States. We made offerings of rice, spices, flowers and 2 sweet fruits, while Rachel was singing a religious song. Afterwards, she told me my life-lasting personal mantra. The word literally means, "To free from the mind." It is used to transcend the mind and experience consciousness without the limitations of thought. There are currently 16 mantras in use, which should never be revealed between transcendental meditation students. During this session, I meditated for the first time guided by Rachel's soft voice. She was telling me what to do, and how to do it and I just let myself go into a deep state of relaxation. The other 3 days, I joined a small group of women. This is the third step of the program. The tradition says that women TM teachers should teach women and men TM teachers should teach men. During each class, we received theoretical clarifications. Rachel explained us, amongst other things, how TM increases the frontal brain coherence, the use of hidden brain resources, creativity, the ability to focus, self-development, self-satisfaction,

calmness, strength of self-concept, and how it decreases anxiety, stress, illness and blood pressure. We also shared our own meditative experiences.

Learning how to meditate was easy and effortless, just as promised. TM should be practiced for 20 minutes twice a day, while sitting comfortably. We meditate in order to enjoy our daily-life activities. TM makes us more aware of what is happening within us. It helps meditators better manage stress and improve their attempts to cope with stressful experiences.

The four days practice is very useful to understand the functioning of transcendental meditation. The TM teacher is here to reassure his/her students, so they understand the dos and don'ts. Every meditation is different and feels different. We purge our body from any destructive feelings or emotions, which change from a day to another. It is ok to fall asleep, to have thoughts during meditation, to lose the mantra. If we notice that it's happening, we simply have to start thinking about the mantra again.

One of the important things about transcendental meditation is learning how to regain the surface after the twenty minutes of meditation. Students have to rest, without thinking the mantra, for two to three minutes. Transcendental meditation has been a wonderful experience, which I intend to practice from now on.

### *MINDFULNESS MEDITATION*

Mindfulness meditation is a Buddhist practice. It is the science of waking up and living in harmony with a mind-body-soul connection. John Kabat-Zinn, the founder of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program at the University of Massachusetts, says: "Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally." Mindfulness engages a conscious direction of our awareness. In order to be mindful, one has to be purposely aware of him/her and not just being vaguely and habitually aware. Brushing your teeth mindfully isn't the same as knowing that you are brushing your teeth. Mindfulness meditation helps you noticing the sensations and our response to those sensations. The purposefulness is a very important part of mindfulness. Having the purpose of living our own experiences, mean that we are actively building and shaping our mind. The mind experiences all kind of thoughts: anger, craving, envy, depression, revenge, etc. As we have those kinds of thoughts, we reinforce those emotions in our hearts and it causes suffering. Most of those thoughts are about the past or future. The past does no longer exist and the future is just a fantasy until it happens. The one moment we actually can experience is the present. Olivier Wendell Holmes once wrote: "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

When we are in a mindfulness state of mind, we start to notice what is happening right now. When thoughts about the past or future take us away from our present moment, we try to notice them and just come back to now, the present time. Mindfulness meditation decreases the effect of those thoughts in our lives and creates instead a space of freedom, where calmness and contentment can grow. In order to live life fully, you have to be present for it. If you lack awareness to your moments, you may miss many of them.

Mindfulness is an emotionally non-reactive process. We don't judge that this experience is good and this one is bad. We simply accept whatever arises. We observe it mindfully. Whether it is a pleasant or a painful experience, we treat it the same way. Mindfulness meditation teaches its students not to react on an emotional level.

Mindfulness meditation programs are being conducted in hundreds of hospitals, wellness centers, prisons, etc. In addition to significant reductions in stress, proven benefits of mindfulness meditation include<sup>10</sup>:

- Elevated immune system function
- Less frequency and duration of illness
- Improved management of pain
- Decreased heart rate and blood pressure
- Improved sleep and digestion
- Increased energy
- Improved mental function, intelligence and memory
- Improved decision-making ability
- Less irritability, anxiety and depression
- Improved interpersonal relationship
- Increased resilience to change
- Aid smoking cessation effort

Mindfulness meditation requires kindness and gentleness toward yourself. Through meditation we are not trying to create a special feeling or experience. We simply need to realize that this moment is already special, because you are living it right now.

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<sup>10</sup> "What is mindfulness?" in *Mindfulness in daily life, Wildmind Buddhist Meditation*, <http://www.wildmind.org/applied/daily-life/what-is-mindfulness>, (10/03/2013).

## THE RELAXATION RESPONSE

First discovered at Benson-Henry Institute for Mind-Body Medicine, Massachusetts, the Relaxation Response is now used to fight negative effects of stress in a large number of ways.

Dr. Herbert Benson started his medical practice as a young cardiologist. His work on mind-body medicine started when he first noticed that a lot of patients had high blood pressure or hypertension during their check-ups. In order to prove that stress or any negative emotional activity was the cause, he returned to Harvard Medical School to try to establish a correlation between stress and hypertension. With a team, he created an animal model, rewarding trained monkeys for increases and decreases in their blood pressure. They found that the monkeys were able to control their blood pressure with brainpower and the monkeys who were "rewarded" for higher blood pressure went on to develop hypertension due to their own behaviors. In the meantime, Dr. Benson was approached by practitioners of Transcendental Meditation. They believed that their blood pressure was decreasing when they were meditating but had no way to scientifically prove it. Dr. Keith Wallace and Dr. Benson found incontrovertible results. TM practitioners were able to decrease their metabolism, rate of breathing and heart rate, and brain activity. They labeled those physiologic changes the "Relaxation response". The relaxation response is the foundation of mind-body medicine as practiced at the Benson-Henry Institute. Dr. Benson performed these studies in the same room at Harvard Medical School where Walter B. Cannon had discovered the "fight-or flight response" 50 years before. Cannon revealed that human beings have a physical ability to react to stress that evolved as a survival mechanism. When we experience very stressful situations, our bodies release stress hormones such as adrenaline, noradrenaline, epinephrine and norepinephrine, to increase heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, metabolic rate and blood flow to the muscles. Dr. Benson's studies revealed that the opposite physiological state was also true, since he describes the relaxation response as an inducible, physiologic state of quietude. The relaxation response can prevent and compensate for the damage due to frequent nervous reactions that pulse through our hearts and bodies. Dr. Benson noted that relaxation response can be practiced by a variety of meditative techniques, such as prayer, qi gong, tai chi, yoga, progressive muscle relaxation, jogging and even knitting. A mental device and a passive attitude are the only two components required. The necessary basic step which is taught today is the repetition of a sound, a word, a phrase prayer or a movement.

It is actually quite easy to elicit the Relaxation Response. The generic method that is taught at the Benson-Henry Institute includes 9 steps<sup>11</sup>:

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<sup>11</sup> "Eliciting the relaxation response", in Mind-Body Medicine, Benson-Henry Institute of Mind-Body Medicine, [http://www.massgeneral.org/bhi/basics/eliciting\\_rr.aspx](http://www.massgeneral.org/bhi/basics/eliciting_rr.aspx), (09/30/2013).

1. Pick a focus word, short phrase, or prayer that is firmly rooted in your belief system, such as "one," "peace," "The Lord is my shepherd," "Hail Mary full of grace," or "shalom."
2. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
3. Close your eyes.
4. Relax your muscles, progressing from your feet to your calves, thighs, abdomen, shoulders, head, and neck.
5. Breathe slowly and naturally, and as you do, say your focus word, sound, phrase, or prayer silently to yourself as you exhale.
6. Assume a passive attitude. Don't worry about how well you're doing. When other thoughts come to mind, simply say to yourself, "Oh well," and gently return to your repetition.
7. Continue for ten to 20 minutes.
8. Do not stand immediately. Continue sitting quietly for a minute or so, allowing other thoughts to return. Then open your eyes and sit for another minute before rising.
9. Practice the technique once or twice daily. Good times to do so are before breakfast and before dinner.

Regular practice of the Relaxation Response has been scientifically proven to be an effective treatment for various stress-related disorders. Since any disease is made worse by stress, the relaxation response can help.

## YOGA

Yoga comes from India. It first came to the United States in 1893. It is a technique that helps improving the body, understanding the mind and freeing the spirit. By practicing yoga regularly, one is able to strengthen and calm the nervous system. The blood flow to internal organs is increased and your cells receive more oxygen. Yoga allows you to cultivate the spiritual muscles in a way that can make you happier, less anxious and more at peace. Yoga practice includes various stretching, breathing, movement, balance, meditative and strength practice. Yoga is strong medicine, but it is also slow medicine.

Common misconceptions exist about yoga and yoga therapies. Yoga isn't only for the flexible and fit people. Some people avoid yoga classes because they think they aren't young, strong, athletic and flexible enough. However, scientific studies show that people with no experience often make quicker progress than students with years of experience. Yoga isn't only for those in good health. It is very common to meet yoga practitioners, who suffer from all kinds of physical, mental and emotional conditions.

Many of yoga's benefits are now supported by Western evidence. Here are 40 ways in which yoga increases health, both as prevention and as treatment.

1. **Increases flexibility:** Yogic postures ask you to stretch and bend yourself in a way you would never have thought of. We also observed that tight areas open up over time and postures that were once impossible become possible. Increasing one's flexibility of muscles can lower the risk of joints pain and muscles tightness.
2. **Strengthens muscles:** Strong muscles help avoiding health issues, such as arthritis, back pains and falls in the elderly. Many of physical limitations that people associate with aging, for example weakness and progressive disability, are due to a loss of muscles. Yoga is about balancing strength and flexibility.
3. **Improves balance:** By regularly practicing yoga postures, you are able to improve your balance and avoid falls, which are a leading cause of fractures. It also helps minimizing the muscle imbalances that often lead to bothersome symptoms, pain and injuries.
4. **Improves immune function:** Meditation appears today to be the most helpful technique that improves the immune system. Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, former director of the University of Massachusetts Stress Reduction Clinic, conducted a clinical trial with moderate to severe cases of psoriasis. Patients, who listened to a meditation tape while they received the standard treatment of ultraviolet light therapy, were almost four times likely to have a complete healing of their skin. He said: "The power of that study is that it shows that the mind can influence a

healing process all the way down to the level of what has to be gene expression and cell replication.

5. **Improves Posture:** Having a bad posture often causes back, neck and other muscles and joints problems. Yoga can actually improve that. Your head weights 1/8 of the human body. When the head is held a few inches forward, a common postural habit, it can lead to back pain because it takes much more work for the neck and back muscles to support it. A bad posture also contributes to such problems as headaches, arthritis, carpal tunnel syndrome and even fatigue. Studies showed that slouching compresses the heart and potentially compromises its blood supply. Yoga helps you improving your posture and expand your chest and lungs.
6. **Improves lung Function:** Yoga improves lung function through posture and breathing. By practicing yoga specific postures, you'll learn to use abdominal muscles to exhale more fully and take in more air on the subsequent breath. It improves the vital capacity, which is the total amount of air you can blow out.
7. **Leads to slower and deeper breathing:** Compared to other people, yogis tend to take fewer and more efficient breaths of greater volume. And we know now that slower breathing is calming the nervous system.
8. **Discourages mouth breathing:** Yoga promotes breathing through the nose on both inhalation and exhalation. The nasal passage is used as a biological filter. It removes pollutants and pollen from the air before it gets to your lungs. There is more resistance to air flow in the nasal passage than in the mouth, which tends to slow the breath and calm the nervous system as well.
9. **Increases oxygenation of tissues:** If lungs get more oxygen, it also means that brain and other tissues, including those areas that are in process of healing, are receiving more oxygen too.
10. **Improves joints health:** The cartilage in joints such as the knee acts like a shock absorber. It makes the bones glide smoothly one over another. Movement, such as yoga practice, releases synovial fluid, which nourish this cartilage. If movements are limited, the cartilage degenerates due to the lack of synovial fluid.
11. **Nourishes intervertebral disks:** A yoga practice that includes backbends, forward bends and twists of the spine helps lubricate these disks. Preventing the drying out and degeneration of intervertebral disks actually protects the spinal column nerves from compression and impingement.
12. **Improves return of venus blood:** Unlike arteries, veins can't push the blood back to the heart. Movement of the body helps to move blood back from the periphery to the center. Upside-down yoga poses allow venus blood from the legs to flow back to the heart, which helps with such problems as swollen ankles.
13. **Increases circulation of lymph:** There are three systems of vessels that circulate throughout the body: arteries, veins and lymphatic vessels. The lymphatic fluid is very rich in immune-system cells. The lymphatic system fights infections, cancer cells and removes toxic substances that circulate through the body. Yoga postures improve the lymph flow and with it the immune system.
14. **Improves function of the feet:** Feet are the foundation of a good posture. Alignment-based yoga helps stabilizing this base and prevents problems in the ankles, knees, hips, lower back and beyond.

15. **Improves proprioception:** We define proprioception as the ability to feel where your body stands in the space, even with your eyes closed. The regular practice of yoga increases your ability to perceive what your body is doing.
16. **Increases control of bodily functions:** Yoga helps you being more aware and taking more control over your body.
17. **Strengthens bones:** Yoga prevents osteoporosis. Indeed, many yoga postures involve bearing weight, which strengthens bones.
18. **Conditions the cardiovascular system:** Yoga lowers the risks of heart attacks, when it is done a vigorously way. Scientific studies have proved that yoga practice lowers the resting heart rate. It also increases the maximum oxygen uptake by the organs. During exercise, you are also able to improve your endurance.
19. **Promotes weight loss:** Yoga helps people, who want to lose weight. In fact, yoga brings consciousness into one's life, in a way that can make him want to change his dietary habits and poor lifestyle habits in general. Yoga is a very good exercise to lose calories.
20. **Relaxes the nervous system:** when people talk about stress reduction, they often mean decreasing the activity of the sympathetic nervous system SNS (hypervigilent state) and increasing the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system PNS (relaxation state). Yoga helps changing this balance, so your heart rate, breathing rate and blood pressure decrease. This is called the Relaxation Response, studied by Dr. Herbert Benson, and is the opposite of the Fight-or-flight response.
21. **Improves the function of the nervous system:** Through yoga postures, which are a combination of stimulating and relaxing practices, the nervous system becomes more flexible.
22. **Improves your brain function:** Yoga improves coordination, reaction time, memory and other brain functions. It also teaches you to stay focused and pay more attention to the environment. Science has now proven that continuing learning new things as an adult increase neuroplasticity. The brain and its electric connections are always in movement.
23. **Activates the left prefrontal cortex:** The left prefrontal cortex is the brain area that is correlated with happiness, a better immune function, a temperament that is harder to anger or fluster, etc. Studies conducted by Richard Davidson, a neuroscientist, showed that the left prefrontal cortex is more active in people who meditate and practice yoga.
24. **Changes neurotransmitter levels:** Yoga raises serotonin levels and decreases cortisol and monoamine oxidase levels. Such changes improve mood and a long-term practice lessens depression.
25. **Lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol:** When human beings are facing a stressful situation, the adrenal gland releases hormone cortisol. When people are regularly stressed, their cortisol level may be chronically elevated. Elevated cortisol levels have a negative impact on the immune system, on body weight and on memory.
26. **Lowers blood sugar:** People with diabetes are able to lower their blood sugar, due to the decrease of cortisol and adrenaline levels. Yoga may also help lower high blood sugar levels, via weight loss and yoga appears to improve sensibility to the effects of insulin.
27. **Lowers blood pressure:** Heart attacks, kidney failure and strokes are induced by a high blood pressure. Yogic relaxation and the weight loss are very effective in reducing the blood pressure.

28. **Improves levels of Cholesterol and triglycerides:** Yoga is an antidote to stress. Therefore, it can lower the level of blood fats, including LDL (bad cholesterol) and boost the ratio of total good cholesterol HDL, which protect from heart diseases.
29. **Thins the blood:** The most common cause of heart attacks and strokes is the formation of blood clots. They are formed by an accumulation of blood platelets that stick together. Yoga reduces the tendency of platelets to aggregate into clots, by cutting the level of fibrinogen and fibrin, which are two clot-promoting.
30. **Improves bowel function:** Stress can lead to constipation or diarrhea. Specific yoga posture can either help you move food and waste products through the bowels, or compress the large intestine and interfere with normal movement of stool.
31. **Releases unconscious muscular gripping:** Unnecessary and unconscious gripping such as clenching your teeth and holding a pencil or a telephone, can lead to chronic tension in the wrists, arms, shoulders, neck and face. It can level your level of stress and mood. During yoga practice and through the awareness you build up during classes, you begin to notice which muscles you contract unnecessarily.
32. **Uses imagery to effect change in the body:** Visualization in order to change the body actually seems crazy. However, Dr. Vinoth Ranganathan of the Cleveland Clinic conducted a study in which subjects were trained to imagine contracting specific muscles in their arms for 15 minutes five times a week. After 3 months of this training, tests showed that people who imagined the exercises had developed significant increases in strength in those muscles compared to the control group.
33. **Relieves pain:** Yoga and meditation, especially mindfulness meditation, reduce pain in patients with arthritis, back pain, fibromyalgia, carpal tunnel syndrome, and other conditions.
34. **Lowers need for medication:** Yoga help people with asthma, heart diseases, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and obsessive-compulsive disorder to lower their dosage of medication. Patients sometimes get off them entirely. It is generally a good idea to take as few medications as possible, considering the large range of side-effects.
35. **Fosters healing relationship:** A good partnership with a yoga teacher can have the same therapeutic effect as a good doctor-patient relationship. The concepts of trust, love and caring facilitate healing.
36. **Improves psychological health:** Yoga has a great influence on mood, self-esteem and sense of equanimity. It also lowers level of anger. Yoga generally improves the quality of life, which has a huge impact on physical health.
37. **Leads to healthier habits:** Regular yoga practice is correlated to the improvement of our lifestyle habits. Yoga encourages people to make healthier choices, such as eating better, doing exercise or quit smoking.
38. **Fosters spiritual growth:** By regularly attending yoga classes, feelings of gratitude, empathy, forgiveness and the sense that you are part of something bigger than yourself grow in you. Yoga guides you in a different side of you.
39. **Elicits the placebo effect:** Scientists today act as if something that works by eliciting the placebo effect somehow isn't to be considered. But people just want to be helped, even if it "only" through the placebo effect.

40. **Encourages involvement in your own healing:** Yoga is part of the complementary and alternative medicine. It means that you stop being passive, and take responsibility for your own health. The essential element in yoga is what you do for yourself.

## *YOGA NIDRA*

Yoga Nidra is also called Yogic Conscious Deep Sleep. Yoga Nidra is a guided relaxation, while lying in Savasana, which is a lying position. You may be guided either by a teacher or a recorded voice. This practice requires very little effort. We distinguish four states of consciousness: Waking, Dreaming, Deep Sleep and Objective Consciousness and three states of mind: Conscious, Unconscious and Subconscious mind. During the Waking state of consciousness, we utilize the Conscious mind. It is the gross reality of our daily lives and experiences. Unconscious and Subconscious minds are being used throughout of the Conscious perspective. During the Dreaming state of consciousness, we lose awareness of the gross vision of the reality. We utilize the Unconscious mind. The Subconscious mind is still accessible, as vague impressions and feelings arise into the Dreaming state. We have access to a subtle realm. During the Deep Sleep state of consciousness, we definitely lose the perception of the gross and subtle realm. Conscious and Unconscious minds withdraw, which allows the Subconscious mind to control the brain activity. In the Subconscious state of mind, we perceive neither impressions nor images.

In meditation, you remain in the waking state of consciousness. The mind is gently focused and thoughts, emotions and sensations are allowed to come and go. You are deeply relaxed. In fact, unconscious and subconscious experiences come forward to the conscious mind. We learn the art of no-attachment to objects and thoughts: we let the Conscious state of mind expand through the Unconscious and Subconscious mind. In Yoga Nidra you leave the Waking state of mind, go past the dreaming state and go to deep sleep, while remaining awake and alert. The four states of consciousness are Waking, Dreaming, Deep Sleep and Objective Consciousness.

As mentioned above, we distinguish three different states of mind: Conscious, Unconscious and Subconscious states of mind. The Conscious mind is the part we experience in our active lives. However, unconscious and subconscious are also actively being used in service of the conscious mind. We normally experience the Unconscious state of mind during dreaming sleep. Many images, thoughts and impressions combine and recombine to form inner realities. Impressions that arise from the Subconscious state of mind influence Conscious and Unconscious thoughts or emotions, as well as they may lead to actions and speech in the external world.

By practicing Yoga Nidra you are able to reach an incredible state of quietness, calmness and clarity. It is better to practice yoga Nidra in a peaceful place: calm, comfortable and clutter-free. You should keep yourself cozy. Yoga Nidra guides encourage students to cover themselves with blankets to stay warm. The more comfortable you are, the more your mind relaxes. Listening to a gentle music can also help.

It is very fascinating to see how yoga Nidra, where we literally do nothing but lying down, can do wonders for the body and the mind. If you experience negative and unnecessary thoughts in your life, changes after a yoga Nidra class are impressive. A cluttered mind clears up. You begin to think positively and the energy to work is tremendous.

By accessing the deepest layer of the Subconscious mind, you are able to eliminate the root cause of all negativities, like stress related disorders, hypertension, depression, insomnia, asthma and digestive disorders and realize your true self.

Yoga Nidra releases muscular, emotional and mental tensions. One hour of yoga Nidra is as restful as four hours of conventional sleep. Studies have showed how yoga Nidra positively affects the body:

- Change the nature of mind along the positive lines.
- Improve the quality of sleep
- Remove stress
- Cure diseases like insomnia, hypertension, depression, asthma, digestive disorders and migraine.
- Improve the capacity of focusing and learning.

Since the Subconscious mind is much more receptive than the Conscious logical mind. Whatever positive thought, impression or feeling you plant in the Subconscious mind will grow and enrich your life.

## CLEANSING, FASTING & DIET: “LET FOOD BE THY MEDICINE”

Over the past hundred years, our society has been facing major health dilemmas, including overweight, type 2 diabetes, stroke, abuse of drug prescription, etc. A study from the science journal *Public Health* reported that the incidence of death from brain diseases, such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and motor neuron disorders, was found to have tripled in nine Western countries, including the United States, during the period of 1974 to 1997. The most likely causes researchers identified were exposure to pesticides sprayed on crops, synthetic chemicals from the processed food that we consume and industrial chemicals used in almost every aspect of our modern lives<sup>12</sup>. Food seems to be the major cause of this toxicity. Toxins may come from:

- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Medications
- Pesticides
- Smog
- Artificial sweeteners
- Sugar
- Impure water

Modern medicine tends to become superspecialized and forgets to look the root causes of diseases and symptoms. Medicine is like gardening. Western practitioners got better at cutting dead branches and replace them with healthier ones. In fact, you have to treat the roots to cure the problem that is on the leaves. We now know that your overall health is connected to your gut. Gut dysfunction causes inflammation, which causes chronic diseases. The roots of almost all chronic diseases start in your digestive tract:

- Heart diseases
- Cancer
- Autoimmune diseases
- Insomnia
- Depression
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Arthritis

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<sup>12</sup> FITZGERALD, Randal, *The Hundred-Year Lie: How to Protect Yourself from the Chemicals That Are Destroying Your Health*. Plume. United States of America: Penguin Group, July 2007. 292 pages.

Anti-inflammatory treatments help, but gut repair corrects the problem right at his source. Many minor ailments you may be suffering from, including tiredness, aches and pain, allergies, mood swings, lack of libido, bad breath, body odor, eczema and constipation are due to a gut dysfunction. Focusing on gut health is a proven pathway to prevent and cure chronic diseases for a long time.

The liver, intestines, kidneys, lungs, skin, blood and lymphatic system work together to transform toxins into less harmful compounds and excrete them from the body. When the gut damage is beyond “natural self-repair”, simply reverting to a healthy diet is sometimes not enough. A cleansing diet, also called a detox diet, will remove poisons, toxins and pesticides that are left in your body.

Detox diets are designed to help the body clean itself. To attempt a detox diet, you temporarily give up certain kind of foods. This is called fasting/purging. Then you gradually reintroduce organic, pure and healthy food. You may start with juicing for one to two days. Juicing is a liquid diet that contains a reduced number of calories. Then, you might move to four to five days of brown rice, fruits and raw vegetables. Finally, you might add other food but without red meat, wheat, sugar, eggs and fast food. There are many different types of short-term cleansing diets that minimize the amount of chemicals and toxins ingested, increase foods that provide the vitamins, nutriment and anti-oxidants that the body needs for detoxification, and contains high-fiber food and water, that eliminate toxins by increasing the frequency of bowel movements and urination. Many cleansing diets exist today, and it’s sometimes hard which one is beneficial or harmful for the body. The most famous examples of detox diet are:

- Master Cleanse or lemonade Diet
- Fat Flush Diet
- Liver Cleanse Diet
- Martha’s Vineyard Diet Detox
- Raw food diet

Cleansing and fasting help us to clear the body of poisons, to lose weight and regain a greater energy level and strength to prevent and cure chronic diseases.

However, some people are more vulnerable to detox diets. You should absolutely not go on a cleansing diet if you have diabetes, low blood sugar eating disorder or a heart condition.

## **CHIROPRACTIC**

Chiropractic was founded in 1895 by Daniel David Palmer, a magnetic healer, in Iowa. Chiropractic is a drug-free approach that involves patient examination, diagnosis and treatment. Chiropractic focuses on the interplay between the musculoskeletal system and the nervous system. It is an helpful therapy for people who suffer from back pain, neck pain, pain in the joints of the arms and legs, headaches and arthritis. Chiropractic belongs to the hands-on therapies. It works by a way of sudden and controlled physical forces applied to the joints of the body. Hands-on therapies have been developed to help correct abnormal or inefficient motion. Chiropractic treats joints that have become hypomobile, as a result of tissue injury. A single traumatic event or repetitive stresses can cause tissue injury.

Chiropractic treatment is based on the concept that abnormal movement in the spine can lead to pain and causes muscular reduced function. In fact, spinal manipulation is the main component of chiropractic therapies. The spinal manipulation is also known as the chiropractic adjustment. It is based on the fact that health and disease are directly related to the neuromusculoskeletal system. And with proper manipulation and alignment of your bones, joints, muscles and nerves comes health and healing. Chiropractors may also use massage and stretching therapies to relax muscles that are in pain, shortened or in spasm.

Chiropractic adjustment rarely causes discomfort or pain. However, some patients may sometimes experience cramp or aching following treatment.

PART FIVE

**THE PLACEBO EFFECT**

## **A MYTH WE CHERISH: PLACEBOS DON'T REALLY HEAL**

The argument usually used by scientists to discredit complementary and alternative medicine in general is the suggestion that the patient's healing is nothing more than the observation of the Placebo effect, also called "remembered wellness". The placebo effect is the measurable, observable, or felt improvement in health or behavior not attributable to a medication or invasive treatment that has been administered. In other words, patients are "self-subjected" and "simulating/creating their own healing". The placebo effect is a result of the patient's expectation that the treatment will help. Critics said that by believing they could lower their blood pressure, patients had been able to do so. They basically say that belief in CAM is the key of its success. The fact is that placebo is based on thoughts and not on pills. Most allopathic physicians consider it unethical and deceitful to actively encourage a placebo response. However, from the perspective of Eastern medicine placebo effect is something good. You want to get as much placebo effect as possible because it heals. It is something real and it's not because it's based on thoughts that it doesn't work. Placebo effect actually dilates bronchi, heals ulcers, makes warts disappear, drops your blood pressure, and even grow hair. The placebo effect is not mind over matter; it is the power of thoughts on other thoughts, of a mind over another mind. Placebo effects can arise not only from a conscious belief in a drug but also from subconscious associations between recovery and the experience of being treated by a practitioner. It can happen because of the pinch of a shot or a doctor's white coat. Such subliminal conditioning can control bodily processes of which we are unaware, such as immune responses and the release of hormones. In other words, you heal because someone, who has bigger and more influence thoughts than yours, tells you that you are going to heal. For example, if you are very sick and a priest prays for you, it will have more effect on you than a friend's prayers. Indeed, the priest has more credibility and influence, so it is safer to rely on his words and thoughts. Your mind accepts to be returned over: a new program is settling inside you and creates a new and different reality.

Medical studies showed that the placebo effect was 50 to 90 % successful. In truth, both conventional and alternative medicine owes some of their effectiveness to the placebo effect. The main difference between conventional and alternative medicine is that most conventional treatments will heal you whether or not you believe in them. For example, you don't need to believe in antibiotics for them to work. This is the main difference between scientifically approved and alternative treatments. One works without the influence of remembered wellness, the other does not.

The placebo effect is related to the Relaxation Response and meditation in many ways. If you manage to get into a state of deep relaxation and great alertness, you are way more aware and sensitive about the thoughts coming through your mind. Consequently, thoughts become more powerful and the more power they have, the more effect.

## **NOCEBO EFFECT**

The placebo effect has an evil side: the nocebo effect. Nocebo effect is also known as “placebo’s evil twin,” or the “negative placebo effect.” The same mind-power that can heal you can actually harm you too. Practitioners observed that 25% patients in double-blinded clinical trials, who are aware of the potential side effects they may experience if they are given the real drug, actually experience severe side-effects, even when they are only taking the sugar pills. When a patient anticipates possible side effects, he is more likely to suffer from them. Negative placebo effect may cause fatigue, vomiting, muscle weakness, colds, ringing in the ears, taste disturbances and memory disturbances.

PART SIX

**IT'S TIME TO CHANGE OUR LIFESTYLES**

## BEYOND APOCALYPSE NOW

Poor lifestyle choices, such as lack of exercise, poor diet, smoking, use of alcohol, stress and lack of sleep contribute to develop preventable chronic diseases including type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, depression, nervous conditions and several types of cancer. Those chronic diseases, which were until now concerning adults, are affecting children in grammar school too. The United States of America are now facing a major health crisis. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, unhealthy eating and inactivity cause 310,000-580,000 deaths every year<sup>13</sup>. 1/3 of people born in the US will develop diabetes during their lifetime. Almost 40% of US citizens suffer from obesity. The facts are dramatic: we are the first generation in the US that could live less than our parents.

The United States spends an estimated \$2,7 trillion annually on healthcare expenses, more than any other industrialized country. The paradox is that we are sicker than ever. It's now time for people to change their bad habits, and the answer isn't another pill.

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<sup>13</sup> "Why good nutrition is important", in Why Policy, *Center for science in the public interest*, [http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nutrition\\_policy.html#eat](http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nutrition_policy.html#eat), (09/16/2013).

## PURE FOOD IS GOOD MEDICINE

Scientific studies observed that bad health is generally related to bad food. We are what we eat! As mainly explained in the documentary FOODMATTERS, directed by Carlo Ledesma and James Colquhoun, a rich organic raw food diet can stop and even reverse the chronic diseases mentioned above. Eating a diet of fruits, raw vegetables, superfoods and nuts, combined with an active lifestyle lowers the risk of all diet related diseases. A diet consisting mainly of uncooked, unprocessed plant foods leads to a cleaner body, clearer skin and higher energy. It also cuts the risk of diseases. The principle behind rawism, also called raw foodism, is to consume foods in their more natural state: unprocessed and uncooked. Staples of the raw food diet include seaweed, sprouts, sprouted seeds, whole grains, beans, dried fruits and nuts. It excludes refined sugars, caffeine and alcohol. Medical literature on the raw food diet tends to show that cooking foods kills important nutrients and vitamins. Another study in which researchers reviewed findings of about 50 medical studies on raw vs. cooked foods showed that eating raw vegetables helps reduce the risk of oral, pharyngeal, laryngeal, esophageal, and gastric cancers. Nowadays scientists know how to create natural vitamins and put them into pills. However, synthetic vitamins are chemically and structurally different from those found in natural food. Fruits and vegetables contain a myriad of vitamins, minerals, and disease fighting antioxidants, including anti-carcinogen, anti-nausea, anti-fatigue and anti-migraines. Those properties are not found in synthetic pills. Superfoods have an even greater concentration of antioxidants elements. Superfoods increase wellness and vitality: they are natural, living food sources that contain amazing concentrated amounts of quality nutrients and bioavailable minerals. They are renowned for their medicinal properties. Staples of organic superfoods include:

### Green Superfoods:

1. **Wheat grass:** It increases the general health, energy and wellbeing. It is a great detoxifier and helps neutralize the pH balance of the body, which can become too acidic through the consumption of coffee, processed foods, and alcohol. It also assists the digestion through its high enzyme content.
2. **Barley grass:** Barley grass is an incredible food. It contains 11 times more calcium than cow's milk, 5 times more iron than spinach and 7 times more Vitamin C and bio-flavonoids than orange juice.
3. **Wild blue-green algae:** Algae has immense powers. It is a phyto-plankton and contains virtually every nutrient. It contains 60% protein and a more complete amino acid profile than beef or soy beans. It is one of the best known food sources of beta carotene, B vitamins and chlorophyll. It has been shown to improve brain function and memory, strengthen the immune system and help with viruses, colds and flu.
4. **Spirulina:** It has 60-70% complete protein. Spirulina is highly digestible, protects the immune system, aids in mineral absorption, helps control blood sugar levels and reduces cholesterol. Spirulina is so nutrient dense that you could survive on it and water alone.

5. **Chlorella:** It contains a complete protein profile, all the B vitamins, vitamin C and E you need and many minerals. It is helpful for the immune system, for reducing cholesterol and preventing the hardening of the arteries, a precursor to heart attacks and strokes.
6. **Green leafy vegetables:** Fresh raw green leafy vegetables contain high doses of chlorophyll, easily digestible proteins, enzymes and a wide range of vitamins and minerals. These particular vegetables act as mini-transfusions for the blood, a health tonic for the brain and immune system and a cleanser of the kidneys. Try any of the following: rocket, spinach, dandelion greens, kale, watercress, parsley, lettuce, endive, chicory, broccoli sprouts and mustard sprouts.

### **Fruit and Nut Superfoods:**

1. **Goji Berries:** Those berries have 500 times more vitamin C per ounce than oranges. They are a great source of vitamins A, B1, B2, B6, E and protein. It is a wonderful help for reversing aging and protecting against disease.
2. **Raw Cacao:** Raw cacao beans contain the world's most concentrated source of antioxidants found in any other food. They also are extremely high in magnesium and iron (it contains 21% of the recommended daily allowance of iron. Furthermore, raw cacao contains 21 times more antioxidant than green tea.
3. **Acai berries:** They actually have highly powerful antioxidant, anti-carcinogen and anti-aging properties.
4. **Coconuts:** Electrolytes are ionized salts in our cells that transport energy throughout the body. Drinking the juice from a young coconut is like giving your body an instant blood transfusion and a shot of energy.
5. **Noni:** Research documents that the noni fruit has amazing anti-bacterial properties, even against E-coli. It has anti-tumor activity, anti-inflammatory properties, is very effective as a pain reliever. It generates cell repair and strengthens the immune system. It has a beneficial effect for colds and flu's, digestive disorders, skin disorders, pain relief, headaches, infections and more.

### **Seaweed Superfoods:**

Seaweeds that you can enjoy every day include **Nori, Dulse, Kelp, Arame, Wakame** and **Kombu**. They have great healthy properties, such as blood purifying, high in Calcium, alkalizing, antioxidants effects, detoxifying and boosting weight loss.

### **Herb Superfoods**

1. **Nettle:** Nettle is also known as the "bowel mover". It is great for weight loss since it releases mucus in the colon, in order to flush the excess of wastes.
2. **Aloe Vera:** This plant has about 75 healing compounds, including natural steroids, antibiotic agents, amino acids, minerals and enzymes. It is also an amazing alkalizer and prevents the over-acidity of the digestive tract.

3. **Echinacea:** This herb stimulates the immune system and can be used as a natural antibiotic. In fact, it stimulates the lymph flow, which runs parallel to the blood flow and carries toxins out of the body.
4. **Ginseng:** Ginseng helps in managing stress and fatigue. This herb is used after a surgery or illness, because of its great restorative and anti-infections powers.

In this meat-free diet, proteins come from different kinds of nuts: almonds, walnuts, Brazil nuts, pecans, etc. An ounce of nuts can go a long way in providing key heart-healthy fats and proteins along with hunger management. Other benefits are a dose of magnesium and fiber.

A highly-representative example that shows the influence of a good diet for preventing chronic diseases is to compare the rates of cancer in US and in Japan. An unfortunate reality is that breast and uterus cancer are the most common cancers among women. In Japan, where people eat fresh fish, raw vegetables and a lot of oligo elements (Omega 3, selenium, zinc and germanium), the breast cancer rate is less than 1%. If we transfer a Japanese woman into the US, she will change her lifestyle and her dietary habits. Her risk of having a breast cancer will reach 13%.

This diet is a cheap, simple and safe way to improve one's health and quality of life. But then, why is it so unknown? Mostly it's because people don't know and they don't know because doctors don't know either. Doctors don't know because they didn't study orthomolecular, also called therapeutic nutrition, in medical school. The problem takes place at a higher level: the government doesn't know anything when it doesn't come from medical lobbies and pharmaceutical industries. Changing one's diet doesn't make any money and you can't destroy an industry that makes 200 billion \$ a year.

Many of us are truly scared by the notion of being responsible for our own health. We prefer to hand control over to doctors and alternative physicians, and to rely on their prescriptions and directions rather than adopting healthier habits. People have to be taught how to be healthy: they need education and no medication. The best doctor in the world and the best nutritionist in the world is YOU. You don't need any medical degrees to eat good food, drink water and exercise. The primary prevention health strategy should be nutrition and should correlate with the desire of improving the quality of our lives.

## ACCESS TO OUR CONSCIOUS AND SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

Changing our lifestyle and poor habits is hard. It requires taking responsibilities for our health and accessing the highest level of the mind. All habits are regulated by the subconscious mind. Despite being partners, subconscious and conscious mind seem to have different characteristics. We use the conscious mind to make our daily decisions like how I want to dress, how to logically answer questions asked during the day, what am I cooking for dinner, etc. The conscious mind enables us to think, respond, reason, focus, etc. On the other hand, the subconscious mind is the aspect of mind that takes care of everything you do without having to think about it. Many everyday activities we do such as brushing our teeth or washing our hair and vital activities, such as breathing, are controlled by our subconscious. It is also responsible for our memories, habits and storage our lives experiences. The conscious mind focuses on a limited amount of activities and information it receives. It would be too much effort to accomplish all our daily activities if we relied solely on the conscious mind. On the contrary, the subconscious mind is unlimited in the amount of information it can process. According to many scientists, 95% of what we do is controlled by our subconscious. In order to understand more precisely the difference between the conscious and subconscious kind, here are some examples.

<b>Conscious Mind</b>	<b>Subconscious mind</b>
Logic and intellect	Bodily functions (breathing, heart rate, digestion, cell activity)
Decisions making	Memories
Details of life	Feelings and emotions
Planning	Beliefs
Communication via language	Gut instinct
Organization	Protection from trauma

When you tap your subconscious, you develop new channels and paths in brain that were latent and unused within you. We have to enable the people to use their high psychic powers in everyday life. Your higher, also called subconscious, mind is able to achieve objects of your dreams: thoughts become creative. In order to satisfy your needs in life and change deeply ingrained habits, you have to take possession of the subconscious mind.

Here is a clear example of your “higher mind” power. You really want to fly. But your conscious mind tells you that the human body is physically and morphologically unable to fly and this reasoning is based on logic. But in your dreams you go above the law of nature and you see yourself flying. This example proves that even if the conscious mind expresses something, your subconscious mind can

express something very different. The subconscious mind is the window of our hidden feelings and emotions; we need to explore it.

Yogis say that petty decisions are made by the conscious mind and large decisions are made by the subconscious mind. When you are facing a major problem in life, you'll find the answer by dipping in into your subconscious mind. Your subconscious mind makes you strong enough to solve the problem rather than the problem being stronger than you.

Accessing the higher mind isn't as difficult as it seems when you know the working progress. If many people are not aware of and do not use their higher mind, then it means that the higher mind uses them. The subconscious mind never ceases to operate, no matter if people are aware of it or not. Only recently the West has become awakened to the power of the mind. Modern science supports and admits that mental states, feelings and emotions are materialized in physical conditions. Glands and the body secretions are the foundation of your health. Inner thoughts create the chemicals for your blood. Depressing and negative thoughts (hatred, jealousy, fear, anger, etc.) can affect the glands and make them secrete poison into the blood, thereby altering blood circulation, respiration, digestion, assimilation, elimination and nutrition. On the other hand, happy thoughts secrete healthy substances such as hormones. They help maintaining one's biochemical balance and emotional stability. Molecules engendered by negative thoughts neutralize all healthy chemicals in your blood. It means that as a person takes ample rest, breathes fresh air and drinks fruits and vegetable juices, negative thoughts are able to destroy all those healthy nutritive chemicals. By operating on your thoughts, you can control and direct your physical condition. The subconscious mind makes your blood circulate, your heart beat, your respiration to work and your food to digest and assimilate; it's very important to control these higher forces of nature, otherwise they control you.

Mind and thoughts are in symbiosis with each other. Mind cannot exist without thoughts. When one's able to control his thoughts, he also can control his mind. The easiest way to explore the subconscious mind through the body is yoga or meditation. Yoga classes help you develop a system of attaching and detaching the mind from one part of the body to another. Yoga is a science of mental, physical and spiritual development. You learn to drive your conscious and unconscious mind, your thoughts, your emotions and your internal higher forces. Many progressive authorities and modern science have advanced to the point where they are able to corroborate the findings of the yogis, which say that your emotions and mental patterns are reflected and materialized in your physical condition, thereby creating in you a state of health or disease. Through yoga postures and deep concentration you may be able to reverse your negative thoughts or habits and bring changes into a physical condition and therapeutic results to your soul and mind. When you find yourself in a deep meditation state, you are able to slow down the rhythm of breathing. And we know that the rhythm of breathing controls the

state of mind, which controls the body chemistry. If you know the secret of your subconscious mind, you can speed up the process of healing consciously.

## THE LAW OF ATTRACTION

The Law of attraction is the name given to the belief that “like attracts like”. When something comes into our way, we are as much attracted to it as it’s attracted to us. The law of attraction is that our thinking creates and brings to us whatever we think about. Whatever thoughts you hold in your mind persistently, will eventually appear in your physical world. We are using the law of attraction every second of every day. Negative thinking can keep you from obtaining things that you really want in your life. On the other hand, good and happy thoughts will attract positive results into your life. Scientific studies have proven that positive thoughts are a hundred times more powerful than negative thoughts. We create our own happiness through the Law of attraction.

It is easy to monitor our thoughts and emotions, since we know which are making us feel good (love, excitement, gratitude, joy, etc.) and which are making us feel bad (hate, depression, guilt, revenge, anger, etc.). Whatever you are thinking and feeling today is creating your future.

The Law of attraction is a 6 steps process:

1. Be sure about what you want. You are sending a request to the Universe, which responds to clear thoughts. Don’t doubt yourself.
2. Ask the universe for it. Let the universe know what you deeply desire, so it can provide it to you. Visualize what you want and send mental pictures to the universe. It will respond to you.
3. Write your wish down. Write in the present tense, as if it was happening right now. Every day, close your eyes and imagine your desire as if it was true.
4. Feel it. Feel exactly the way you would feel after receiving your wish. This is the more powerful step in using the Law of attraction. Sometimes, you won’t feel that you need your wish anymore because you intensively FEEL that your desire is already yours. Albert Einstein once said:” Imagination is everything. It is the preview of life’s coming attractions.”
5. Show gratitude. Notice all the things the universe has already given to you. Be thankful for what you have. It is normal to notice things that you don’t have – you’re human after all. It doesn’t mean you should focus on them. By showing gratitude, you will accelerate the universe’s response.
6. Trust the universe. If you rely on the universe, you’ll be surprised by how fast you’ll have what you truly want. Universe knows the best, fastest way to access your dream. You don’t need to know how the process works, you just know it does. Be patient.

While using the Law of attraction, you are trying to generate good and happy feelings that bring positive results into your life. The visualization of thoughts helps materializing them. This is the main power of the process. Clement Stone, a brilliant philanthropist, said:” Whatever the mind of man can conceive, it can achieve.”

We count three recurrent wishes: Love and Relationships, Money and Work and Health.

- We all want to love and feel loved, no matter how many times we have been hurt. We are seeking for love feelings toward a friend, a family member, a lover or a pet. Unfortunately, we often suffer from its disappointments and sadness; we often discover that people don't live up our expectations. The Law of attraction helps people learn how to make love flow again. We can stop trying to change people, be thankful for their presence and accept them the way they are.
- Money, success, financial health – all these things can be manifested by believing in and using the Law of attraction. You just have to ask for more money or more success to the universe. It will respond. Happiness is the fuel for success.
- The human body is wise. The immune system is made to heal itself. No disease is able to develop in a unhappy and emotionally stressed body. Happy thoughts bring a happier biochemistry.

Universe is a masterpiece of abundance, bliss, joy, wealth. Good, great ideas, etc. Every human being deserves a thriving life. You have to change the circumstances of your life and expect greatness. You have to love and have a healthy respect for yourself. We are the creators of our own destiny, as observed by Joseph Campbell: “Follow your bliss and the universe will open doors for you where there were only walls.”

## EVERYONE IS HIDING SOMETHING

Most of us are vaguely aware of the existence of a subconscious mind, but aren't familiar with its functioning and how to master it. When you have no control over your subconscious mind, it drives the direction of your life in undesirable ways.

The subconscious mind is part of our lives and helps create our own experience. Though your life, you have programmed your subconscious with thoughts, habits and beliefs. Since repetition create habit, all the thoughts that you have repeated to yourself are now printed in your subconscious mind. The subconscious mind has absolutely no creative purposes. Its job is to store, organize and interpret your predominant thoughts. Your subconscious mind creates circumstances that match the thoughts you have programmed in it. It is responsible for much of your behavior and thought patterns. The problem is that some things that have been imprinted are considered as programming mistakes. If you keep repeating to yourself that you aren't good enough, it becomes part of your brain.

When you learn to control you subconscious mind and print the right program in it, you become unstoppable. You are aware of the people, opportunities, situations that you need and want to live a meaningful life. Manifesting what you deeply desire becomes easy when you control what's happening in your subconscious mind.

Most of the time, we are not aware of our inner speech. We function on an autopilot mode. Most of our actions and speech are programmed in our subconscious mind, so we don't have to really think about what's happening. It makes life easier.

Awareness of your inner thoughts gives you're the information you need to control your mind. By noticing your inner speech, you become able to imprint new programming into your subconscious mind. You start feeling powerful again and totally change the direction of your life. Change comes from within you. You can easily make superficial changes into your life: quit an unhappy relationship, change of career, move to a new house, etc. Unless you make changes in your subconscious, you'll keep attracting the same situations.

We all have something we wish we could change in our subconscious. As a young teenager, I had always the feeling that it wasn't good enough: not good enough grades, not good enough at sports, not friendly enough, etc. Unconsciously, my subconscious mind overcompensated this feeling and

replaced it with the desire of being better than everyone else. No one but me put pressure on myself. The result of this pressure is a permanent stress and anxiety feeling, rashes and eczema on my skin, weight loss, etc. As I grew up, it became better. Today, I still experience extremely stressful period, especially during the exam period of medical school. The competition between students reaches its extreme levels. We all want to be better than the person sitting next to us. It becomes our daily unhealthy obsession. My choice of studies has awakened my previous symptoms. When an exam is approaching, my eczema comes back on my elbows, eyelids, neck and knees. I lose my appetite and become very irritable, impatient, and sometimes arrogant. Therefore, I pushed a lot of my former friends away when I started medical school. They started to perceive changes in my behavior and had the feeling that I wasn't here for them anymore. And those behavioral changes were due to stress. It's scary to see how a single repeated thought can have noticeable physical and social negative consequences

Through yoga and meditation, I'm now trying to access my subconscious mind and change this deep-rooted idea.

## CONCLUSION

The use of complementary and alternative approaches is increasing in the United States, and there is no reason why it should not rise further. The boundaries between CAM and conventional medicine are not fixed, and because CAM has recently become more accepted, the treatment combination of CAM and conventional medicine increased. The growing interest in CAM can be due to a new awareness and the need of individuals to take control of their health. CAM allows more flexibility with treatment and rely the control back to patients. New researches surface often and while some treatments still do not have scientifically background to support their claims, others have proven effective into treatment of some chronic diseases or health conditions. Unlike Western medicine, Eastern medicine considers the patient as a whole unit- a mind and a body evolving in a society and an environment. Complementary and alternative medicine offers a wide range of healing possibilities, which go from psychological to physical illnesses.

I wrote this practical guide to satisfy people's growing interest for complementary and alternative medicine. This practical guide is short but gives a representative overview of alternative techniques offered by the Western countries. First able, I wanted to raise public awareness about the fact that there is an alternative to pills, expensive and painful treatments and superspecialized physicians. It is time for people to know it. The second goal of this practical guide is to encourage doctors to combine Eastern medicine with traditional treatments. During their consultations, physicians should consider patients' background, environment and lifestyle, before prescribing another pill.

Changing the facet of health care won't be easy and will take some time. It also means changing our lifestyles and make more "natural", "pure" and "organic" choices.

## ANNEX

### 1. IMPACT OF STRESSFUL EVENTS

According to the doctors, change, whether for good or bad, causes stress to a human being and leaves him more susceptible for disease.

Here is a list of stressful events one will experience during his life and a scale of their impact.

Events	Scale of Impact
Death of spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Jail term	63
Death of close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Fired at work	47
Marital reconciliation	45
Retirement	45
Change in health of family member	44
Pregnancy	40
Sex difficulties	39
Gain of new family member	39
Business readjustment	39
Change in financial state	38
Death of close friend	37
Change to different line of work	36
Change in number of argument with spouse	35
Mortgage over 10,000\$	31
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
Change in responsibility in work	29
Son or daughter leaving home	29
Trouble with in-laws	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Wife begins or stops work	26
Begin or end school	26
Change in living conditions	25
Revision of personal habits	24
Trouble with boss	23
Change in work hours or conditions	20
Change in residence	20
Change in school	20
Change in recreation	19

Change in church activities	19
Change in social activities	18
Mortgage or loan less than 10,000\$	17
Change in sleeping habits	16
Change in number of family get-togethers	15
Change in eating habits	15
Vacation	13
Christmas	12
Minor violation of the law	11

## 2. PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE HELPED BY YOGA FOR SPECIFIC CHRONIC DISEASES

Medical condition	Number of people reporting	Percentage helped by yoga
Alcoholism	26	100
Anxiety	838	94
Arthritis and Rheumatic Disorder	589	90
Asthma and Bronchitis	226	88
Back Disorders	1,142	98
Cancer	29	90
Diabetes	10	80
Duodenal Ulcers	40	90
Heart Diseases	50	94
Hemorrhoids	391	88
High Blood Pressure	150	84
Insomnia	542	82
Menopausal Disorders	247	83
Menstrual Problems	317	68
Migraine	464	80
Neurological and Neuromuscular Diseases	112	96
Obesity	240	74
Premenstrual Syndrome	848	77
Smoking	219	74

Source: The Yoga Biomedical Trust, London

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