

Four Premises of Shifting Who We Are: Brain/Body Research Implications by Carol Harris-Fike © 2010

"It is impossible for a person to learn what he thinks he already knows."
Epictetus

You may be curious about the science behind the new (and not-so-new) ideas around creating our own reality or around energy healing... or whatever you have read or heard or thought. However, you may wonder how these ideas fit with your basic beliefs of how life works. Please be aware that our beliefs may limit our capacity for new understandings that could make a huge difference in our lives and the lives of those around us. So open your heart and mind and explore some ideas with me.

Ontology is the study of "being"... how we are in this world. Ontological coaches (like me) work with the whole being of a person through the understanding of the coherence of the body, emotions, and language. Because the body, emotions, and language are a cohesive unit... constantly influencing each other... transformation and lasting change happen more easily and usually more quickly by intentionally working with all three domains. Movement, feeling, and thinking within our "being" can never be disconnected. We can begin with any of the three and affect the other two. We can shift the energy and how it is felt and moves the body, which will alter an emotion, which then changes our thoughts (and/or words). Or we can think a different thought (use an affirmation); which shifts an emotion, when then shifts the energy flow through and around our bodies. Our body visibly shifts position as a result. Finally, we can shift the energy flow, which may release an emotion, which shifts the body position and then alters our thoughts. A person can make this shift by intentionally thinking about how he would like for the energy to flow in and around his body—what would best serve himself and those around him— and then support that intention by shifting his body position. This will affect emotions and moods, which influence thoughts and spoken language. In 1643, Master Samurai Miyamoto Musashi wrote in *A Book of Five Rings*: "To realize the principle within your own heart, do not just read, memorize or imitate. Instead, study hard to absorb these things into your body." Musashi understood the coherence of body, emotions and language. He understood how energy uses the connections to shift our very being.

The use of new technologies has increased the number of studies on the brain/ body that focus on what many have understood and practiced for thousands of years. Let's explore some of the brain/body research findings through four premises that explain who we are and the very real choice we have in shifting our energy flow to affect our thoughts, feelings, and movement.

Premise One of Shifting Who We Are:

The human body is a collective consciousness of a community of cells.

Bruce Lipton¹, cellular biologist, has discovered some amazing things while searching for answers to questions such as: What controls life? How does life work? What is the brain of the cell? How much of life is growth vs. protection? (Lipton has published over 21 research articles and 5 books on his study of human cells.) Lipton says that the 50 trillion cells in our bodies work cooperatively as a community to make life happen for each of us. Recent studies are concluding that the membrane of each cell in our body is the “brain” that controls our life (instead of the idea that everything is controlled by our genes). The cell membrane allows signals to enter our cells when there is a like vibration within the cell. These signals are what we read from our environment as well as the chemicals from within our bodies... they are our perceptions (or misperceptions). The signals that enter the cells can be harmonious or disharmonious with what is good for our bodies and also constructive or destructive. When the signals enter our cells, protein is changed which affects our body functions, our emotions, and our thoughts. If we bring our perceptions (these signals from within our bodies) into our consciousness, we can choose to accept them, ground them (determine what is really real), and/or change them to something that is good for us. We act on what we believe; we act on what we think. These actions are taken within cells or by our whole body. We can choose to spend most of our life in growth, which is what life is about... or in protection, where the body shuts down many functions necessary for growth and health, including the immune system.

Our perceptions of our environment control our lives. There is now a huge body of work in the study of biology and neuroscience in epigenetics. Epigenetics refers to the changes in gene expression within our cells. The changes--turning on or off of certain gene components--happen based on our perceptions of the world.²

Our bodies are a psychosomatic network. This word is literally defined as mind, “psyche” and body, “soma.” The term is used to show the interconnectedness of the mind/body. The movement of energy within our body is controlled by our perceptions... it is how we function both consciously and subconsciously.

Implication For Your Life:

The way we are in this world is determined by our whole body, not just our consciousness. We shift who we are by shifting our energy, which shifts our thoughts and feelings. We shift our energy because we react to energy around us or because we “intend” a shift.

¹ Lipton, Bruce: The Wisdom of Your Cells: How Your Beliefs Control Your Biology CD Set; 2006.

² See references for more studies at the end of this article.

Premise Two of Shifting Who We Are:

The human body is an energy being connected to everything.

Jill Bolte Taylor in *My Stroke of Insight* says: “Everything around us is composed of spinning and vibrating atomic particles. We are swimming in a turbulent sea of electromagnetic fields.”³ Taylor is a brain anatomist who suffered a stroke at the age of thirty-seven and after a complete recovery is devoting her life to helping people understand how we can choose to be in our right brains more of the time. While her left hemisphere was shut down from the stroke for about two weeks, she experienced life completely from her right hemisphere. Bolte explains that we perceive the world energetically, especially from the right hemisphere of our brain. Candace Pert⁴ says: “The body is more like a flickering flame than a hunk of meat.” I love that quote and use it often with clients as it expresses the energy we are as well as the ability we have to shift our perceptions and change our world.

One growing body of research that began in about 2000 is the study of “mirror neurons.”⁵ These studies are providing us information on how one person’s actions activate a corresponding part in another person’s brain. When different parts of the brain become more active, perceptions are shifted. The new perceptions are reflected in our thoughts and feelings and the new thoughts and feelings lead to new or more choices for our resulting actions. One of my conclusions from these studies is that the activation of my mirror neurons happens as a flow of energy between my body and those around me. This energy affects my mirror neurons as well as other cells within my body.

Bruce Lipton and Candace Pert have helped my understanding of how it all works... and it works (no surprise here) with energy. Perceptions come from everything that can be taken in by our senses. Our senses, in the larger definition include sensations from both without and within us. As perceptions cascade into and/or through our bodies, receptors⁶ are vibrating on every cell in our bodies. If a perception from our environment is vibrating at the same frequency as a specific cell receptor, they will connect. Whether the vibrations are expanding from cells within our bodies or outside of our bodies, the Law of Entrainment⁷ takes effect. After connecting, change takes place within the cell... within us... determining who we are.

³ Taylor, Jill Bolte: *My Stroke of Insight*; 2006.

⁴ Pert, Candace: *Your Body is Your Subconscious Mind CD Set*; 2005.

⁵ See the references for additional resources for further study on mirror neurons at the end of this chapter.

⁶ . Cell Receptor: site on cell membrane that binds with a specific molecule of energy, hormone, etc. vibrating at same frequency; 100,000+ on human cells

⁷ Law of Entrainment: attraction takes place between entities vibrating at the same frequency

Another part of the explanation of interconnectedness is in regard to the life energy, Chi, which is in and around our bodies. Chi is part of this mystery of attraction including many forms of healing. We are energy beings designed to be able to connect with everything around us. Synchronicities are one phenomenon of this interconnectedness. The Encarta Dictionary defines a synchronicity as “a coincidence of events that seem related, but are not obviously caused by the other.” These events are the coincidences that are more than just chance. My interpretation of some of the latest research is that they happen because of like attracting like. Pert calls this, “...a pulsing, electrical, informational phenomenon.”⁸ My understanding is that the energy we are vibrates to attract like energy and, voila, the person we need at a given moment may appear and we make a connection. (If we don’t pay attention we may miss the opportunity to connect!) Carl Jung⁹ was the first to use the term synchronicity in the 1920’s and published a paper on it in 1952. This is not a new paradigm!

Eastern thought has long held that consciousness is followed by manifestation in the physical: spirit and mind come before the tangible. Western thought has been that the physical universe is “real” and consciousness is a secondary phenomenon. The relatively new Quantum Physics Theories say there is no one, indisputable reality. Tai Chi Master B.K. Fantzis says, “We become what we practice.” Thus, each of us resonates what we know to be “true.” David Bohm¹⁰, quantum physicist, added to this idea when he wrote that the “observer” and the “observed” are indivisible. There is only an illusory sense of separation of the two. Finally, these premises teach us that we can become observers of the 5 Life Energies as expressed through our body, emotions, and language. Adjusting one then affects the others to realize a shift in who we are in this world.

Implication for your Life

How we move, feel, and express language or thoughts influences our body functions and other people’s bodies. How other people move, feel, and express language influences our body. Shifting the energy in and around our body changes the influence.

Premise Three of Shifting Who We Are:

Emotions are the key to how we function as energy beings.

“We are feeling creatures that think vs. thinking creatures that feel.”¹¹ Emotions influence... even literally control our very lives. We can all recall incidents in which emotions influenced our minds, what we thought, said, and did. The intensity of

⁸ Pert, Candace: Everything You Need to Know to Feel Go(d); 2006.

⁹ Jung, Carl: “Synchronicity—An Acausal Connecting Principle”; 1952.

¹⁰ Bohm, David: Wholeness and the Implicate Order; 1980 (reprinted 7 times through 2000).

¹¹ Taylor, Jill Bolte: My Stroke of Insight; 2006; p. 19. 32.

each emotion actually determines the path of brain cell activation. And emotions influence our subconscious ... even to the point of determining what we are attracting into our cells. They have the same effect on cells as drugs. I agree with Candace Pert (who has published over 250 scientific reports on molecules of emotions) and others when they talk about how emotions are the key to how we function. "The body is the subconscious mind," says Pert.¹² I agree with her discussion of how emotions are the key to how energy heals in healing touch methods such as Reiki. They are the key to how the mind becomes matter and how we can create our own reality through the use of ideas such as the Law of Attraction¹³. And they are the key to how we link to each other and our Higher Self... our God.

I also agree with Mona Lisa Schultz¹⁴ when she emphasized the importance of feeling a balanced variety of emotions each day. Allowing negative emotions to rise to our consciousness where we can "ground" (check out whether they are true perceptions or not) and then let them go is key to our emotional health. Choosing bodywork of all kinds; i.e. massage, chiropractic adjustments, Chi Gong, Reiki, acupuncture, yoga and Tai Chi, shift our energy flow, which also releases emotions from our bodies. A balance of emotions and a balance of the 5 Life Energies (Center, Earth, Fire, Water, and Air) is a goal for each day. All have beneficial aspects... it is how we choose to use them or allow them to use us that makes the difference. This idea supports the importance of learning to observe the interaction of our energy flow with the energy flow of those around us so we can know when a shift might better serve us and those around us. The writings and presentations of Daniel Goleman¹⁵ have facilitated the understanding of the importance of emotional and social intelligence. It is becoming more acceptable to talk about them in our schools and organizations.

Throughout the years, many people have understood the importance of emotions. Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890), the supposedly 'crazed' artist, demonstrated his understanding of emotions in this famous quote: "Let's not forget that little emotions are great captains of our lives and we obey them without realizing it." We now know that even subtle shifts in the flow of energy in and around our bodies can dramatically affect our lives.

Implication for your Life

The flow of energy in our bodies reflects our emotions. Our health is affected by our energy flow. Our presence... what others sense about us and whether they connect with us or not... reflects our flow of energy.

¹² Pert, Candace: Your body is Your Subconscious Mind CD Set; 2005.

¹³ Law of Attraction: Based on the idea that "like attracts like". Wikipedia.org explains it as an idea that people's thoughts (both conscious and unconscious) dictate the reality of their lives.

¹⁴ Schultz, Mona Lisa: The New Feminine Brain: Developing Your Intuitive Genius; 2006.

¹⁵ Goleman, Daniel: Social Intelligence; 2006, and Emotional Intelligence; 1994.

Premise Four of Shifting Who We Are:

We are physical, emotional and linguistic beings.

Anthropologists, psychologists, and others have estimated that 65%-99% of our communication is nonverbal. My experiences lead me to conclude it is much closer to 90%, possibly more. Your presence is seen and felt before what you are saying registers with another person.¹⁶ Presence is the expression of the whole person... a thought... a feeling... a posture; the energy that you are. Martha Graham, of modern dance fame, once said: "Movements never lie." As a public educator for more than thirty years I witnessed an imbalance of time in schools spent on the linguistic part of the students vs. the nonverbal side. The result is that many U.S. states now support a "nonverbal learning disability" category for special services offered to qualifying students. While I still believe that we need a strong focus on the linguistic part of students, during my public education career, I always supported a balance with the physical and emotional development (including time for the arts and physical movement) because of my understanding, intuitive during those years, of the cohesiveness of the three domains. My belief is that as we learn to intentionally shift our energy flow it will affect the "presence" we reveal to others, which will in turn influence their energy flow... with or without words.

Try This:

Curl your upper body down, draw your arms across your chest, lean forward, look down to the floor, and say: "I love my ___!!!" (Pick something you truly love; your job, a child, chocolate.) Can you really say it from this position with great expression? Can you really feel it with true joy? When your energy is pressed down, and your heart literally closed off, you cannot truly feel the love in the way you do in a more open with energy flowing up position. So, switch to an up and open position. Bring your arms out to your sides, lift your head, lean slightly back, and say: "I hate ___!" (Choose something you hate at this moment; overdue taxes, brussels sprouts, an ex-spouse.) Can you say it without a smile in this position? Can you feel it deep in your bones? It is difficult to do because you are shifting your body... thus your energy, to an uplifting, open position, which shifts your emotions away from "hate." Now, do this exercise in reverse. Are you more easily able to really express the love you feel for whatever you chose?

We develop habits and beliefs, based on our perceptions... or misperceptions, and they are expressed in the way energy moves in our bodies, the thoughts we think or

¹⁶ This idea is taught by Stuart Heller who supports clients and ontological coaches with his research, practices, and understanding of the cohesiveness of body, emotion, and language. (Heller was one of my teachers through my training with Newfield.) Visit www.CultivatingExcellence.com to learn much more through his website, books, and articles.

say, and the emotions we experience. We hold onto these habits until we observe things differently and thus allow our body, emotions, or language to change and form new habits. Remember also that there are many emotions within the cells of our bodies that do not rise to consciousness. They are expressed in our energy flow that is observed as our presence. Our presence affects how others observe us and it also affects how we observe the world. Julio Olalla¹⁷, founder of Newfield Network¹⁸, writes:

“... the kind of individual and collective ‘observer’ we are defines, to an important degree, how we go about living and taking action. Different individuals, different organizations, different cultures bring forth a different world and act in different ways. Transformational learning is a shift in our coherence that allows the emergence of a new observer, one who is able to embrace the mystery of life, aware of the power and limits of conceptual learning, and capable of foreseeing new actions and producing unprecedented results (Olalla, 2004).”

Individuals or organizations can learn to become different observers so that habits and limiting beliefs that no longer serve can be changed. When I coach a person or group, I use challenging questions that focus partially on grounding judgments (discovering the truth behind the judgment) held by an individual or group, which allows them to see things in a new light. When we take action based on a false belief... actually a judgment that is not true, we are experiencing what Candace Pert is meaning when she says: “We only see what we want to believe.”¹⁹ Any reaction to our action is interpreted as proof of our belief. We can “ground our assessments” and discover the truth behind the judgment using our language skills; i.e. having a conversation to determine if our belief is the truth. We can also change our energy habits of thought and body position, allowing the body, emotions, and language to shift. This shifting of energy can actually allow us to observe in a way that will allow new beliefs, not possible before we shifted. Also, as we become different observers, we change how we move, feel, and communicate because our beliefs about something or someone have changed. A famous quote from Anais Nin is: “We don’t see things as they are... we see them as we are.” If we change beliefs by finding the truth behind them or if we shift our energy flow in and around our bodies, what we experience will be different because we (as “energy beings”) have changed.

Implication for your life

We can learn to shift our life energy flow to affect our bodies (movement), emotions (feelings), and language (thoughts)... thus shifting our habits and our beliefs.

¹⁷ Olalla, Julio: From Knowledge to Wisdom; 2004.

¹⁸ Newfield Network states their mission as providing individuals and organizations learning experiences that enable them to inhabit the Earth in joyful and responsible ways. They also provide ontological coach training. Go to newfieldnetwork.com.

¹⁹ Pert, Candace: Your Body is Your Subconscious Mind CD Set; 2005.

Conclusion

Brain/body research studies are providing scientific evidence for what many people have understood... some for thousands of years. We create our own reality, and thus have great effect on what we become as we live this life. Because of how energy flows in and around us, our bodies, emotions, and language (including our thoughts) are one cohesive entity. They are inseparable and we can more easily become what we want (what we know we came to this life to be) by working in all three domains. We are constantly vibrating and attracting our life to us as we use the 5 Life Energies to shift our bodies, our emotions, and our language. If we choose to practice ways to intentionally shift our energy flow, we can attract new ways of being into our lives vs. continuing to attract what we always have.

Additional Resources for Further Study of the Body, Emotion, and Language

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