

THE SAFE BOX OF HEALTH

3 Steps to Heal Yourself

by

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INTRODUCTION

Imagine that you are a sixty year old librarian. You retired one year ago and have enjoyed having time to yourself. One day you bent over and picked up your twelve month old grandson. You felt a twinge of pain in your neck and wrist, but didn't think too much of it. It is now nine months later and the problem is getting worse. You decide that you had better do something about it. Your neck is now chronically sore and your wrist hurts all the time. You can't open a jar with your right hand anymore and are worried that you might lose the use of that hand. What do you do? Where do you go?

Suppose you come see me. You know that I am a chiropractor and have had many years of experience treating patients with similar problems. You think that I might know what to do with your neck and wrist to return them to normal. As we talk, you tell me that you enjoy being home, but that you feel guilty that you are not getting as much accomplished as you should. You wish, in a sense, that you had deadlines again to motivate you.

I tell you that I think that your ailments are more than physical, and are likely due to the guilt you feel. You look at me

a little surprised since that is not what you expected. I explain that if you relieve yourself of the guilt, you will also relieve yourself of your neck and wrist pain. You decide to give it a try. Within a week, your neck and wrist are back to normal, like they were nine months earlier.

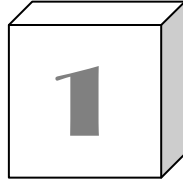
Though this story really didn't happen to you, it did happen to someone like you. If you are looking for answers to health problems, especially chronic ongoing ones, it's likely that a similar story could be written about you.

Most everyone understands that symptoms such as ulcers and high blood pressure can be related to stress. Few people are aware that a knee pain or shoulder pain may also be stress induced, or possibly related to diet. Even fewer know that ulcers, high blood pressure, knee pain and shoulder pain may be due to a memory of a past experience or a feeling that their bodies have been programmed to respond to.

While stress, memories, emotions, or diet are not the cause of all symptoms, they are the instigator of many. In fact, they are much more common causes than we generally suppose. You can easily treat the majority of your symptoms if you understand the **cause**.

Of course there are health care professionals who can answer questions and help with major or serious problems, and you should always consult them. But the more you learn and understand about how your body works, and why it is doing what it is doing, the more you will be able to take charge and heal yourself.

At the conclusion of this book, you should understand the **cause** of your symptoms and know how to fix them. I would hope that when you are done reading, you will know how to heal yourself, just like the librarian.



WHY DO I HURT?

Eric (all names have been changed) had a sharp pain in his neck and shoulders. He could hardly turn his head and had severe pain in his right arm. Eric worked as a mechanic. He found it almost impossible to work under any equipment where he had to lift his hands above his head, as that greatly intensified the pain.

Chiropractic treatments helped Eric some, but the relief didn't seem to last very long. I suggested stress could intensify an ailment and Eric volunteered that he was having money problems as well as some problems with his boss.

A few days later Eric came bounding into my office, 90% improved. He had solved his problem. He said he had had a slow time at work and had taken time off to go to the bank to resolve a few bounced checks. When he returned to work his boss blew up at him as he had not given Eric permission to leave. That was more than Eric could take. He threw up his hands and said, "*I quit! I don't need any more of this!*" As he drove home from work, he could feel the tension gradually leaving his neck and shoulders. By the next morning he was almost completely pain free.

Amber told me that if I couldn't help her, she was going to have her foot amputated. She'd had twenty surgeries on her foot in nineteen years, and was just getting out of the boot she had worn since surgery a year earlier. It had all started as a ten year old when she had caught her foot in a merry-go-round. She'd had constant pain in her foot since, and the surgeries hadn't helped relieve the pain. Now she was the mother of a small child and was expecting twins, and didn't know how she could continue the way things were.

I suggested to Amber that something was interfering with the healing message that normally goes from the brain to an injured area of the body, like a short circuit, the most likely cause being some emotional trauma from the time of the injury. She had a few ideas of what they were, and was able to start working on healing those negative emotions. To her amazement, as she was leaving the treatment room, for the first time in several years, she was able to take a few steps without any pain. It was the beginning of a wonderful healing process for her.

Dan's shoulder had been hurting for two months, and wasn't getting any better. It kept him from sleeping at night, and he couldn't get his arm above his head.

We treated Dan a couple of times, but it didn't improve very much. When I asked about his diet, I could see that this might be the source of some of his problems. So I asked him to cut back on his coffee, and add two fruits a day to his diet. In five days he had full range of motion, and was once again sleeping through the night.

The stories of these three individuals are actual case histories and are typical of many others. They all have two things in common:

- 1. Each person did not understand the cause of his or her symptoms.**
- 2. Each person was able to fix his or her symptoms once he or she understood the cause.**

There is a good chance you are like these people. The purpose of this book is to help you understand the cause of your symptoms so ***You Can Heal Yourself***. Physical and emotional trauma, bad memories, fears, worries, stress, and a poor diet affect all of us and eventually lead to unwanted symptoms. The body does not make mistakes! It is acting on the messages it is being given and it responds accordingly, even though we may not like what it is doing. Stress is a natural and essential part of life, yet our reactions to it play a much greater role in poor health than most people realize.

Before you continue, make a list of pain or other physical symptoms you have. Then rate those symptoms on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the worst. Having these symptoms in mind will help you relate to what you read, and help you better understand the solutions.

SYMPTOMS	SEVERITY
1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

There are Two Parts to this book and both are necessary to help you heal yourself and be well.

Part One, Understanding the Cause of Your Symptoms, is to help you understand how your body and mind work together, how poor nutrition affects you, and why physical symptoms become normal and necessary. If you have unresolved health problems, you should gain a great deal of insight to their cause from this section.

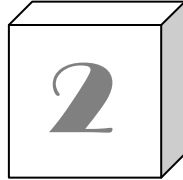
Part Two, 3 Steps to Heal Yourself is a 3 Step Guide explaining how to apply lessons learned in Part One. We will summarize and further expound on the steps you can follow to achieve healing and wellness so physical symptoms are no longer normal or necessary.

Why Do I Hurt?

Both parts of this book are important. As you incorporate these concepts and ideas into your life, you will be absolutely amazed at the healing experience you will have.

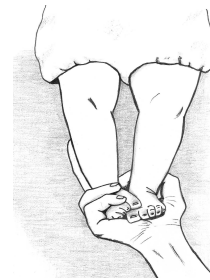
Part 1

UNDERSTANDING THE CAUSE OF YOUR SYMPTOMS



THE SAFE BOX AND THE UNSAFE BOX

Several years ago, I was asked to speak to a women's group about stress management. To enhance my presentation, I took along our 7 month old daughter, Brittany. As I began the class, I carefully stood Brittany up in my right hand, and balanced her in front of the audience. How do you think these ladies reacted?



Write down or mentally note what your reactions would be. To make it a little more personal, imagine that I am balancing your baby or grandchild in my hand. Identify what you think your emotions (feelings) would be as well as the changes your physical body (symptoms) would experience.

FEELINGS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

SYMPTOMS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

After a few muffled gasps from the women, I asked the president of the group how she reacted to the demonstration. She exclaimed, *“Oh, I’m sweating!”* Other responses followed. *“I was afraid!”* *“I felt anxious!”* One eighty year old lady was very irritated and said, *“I would like to hit people who do that! Suppose that baby fell!”*

We made a list on the chalkboard of reactions that the ladies experienced. Here’s the list.

FEELINGS

1. Fear
2. Anxiety
3. Anger
4. Worry

SYMPTOMS

1. Sweating
2. Increased Heart Rate
3. Tense Muscles
4. Nervous Stomach
5. Held Breath

It was obvious that these women were influenced by this little demonstration.

Now, consider Brittany. What were the feelings and symptoms she experienced? Here is the short list the women wrote down.

FEELINGS

1. Safe
2. Happy

SYMPTOMS

1. Smiling

The active participant in this experiment was Brittany. She was the one at risk, yet she displayed no sign whatsoever of stress. Meanwhile, every lady in the room was an observer, and yet almost every one of them experienced at least one of the previously mentioned reactions. Why was this?

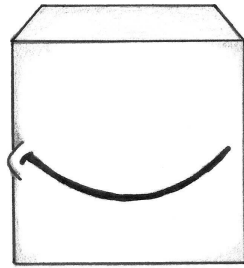
The response of a concerned individual will help us understand. *“I don’t like to see people take chances like that,”* she said, *“I’ve learned that things can happen.”* In other words, she was saying that, based on her previous life experiences, she was scared to watch me hold Brittany in the air, balanced on my hand. She was afraid that I might drop Brittany or that in some way my baby might get hurt.

But what about Brittany? Why did she not react the same

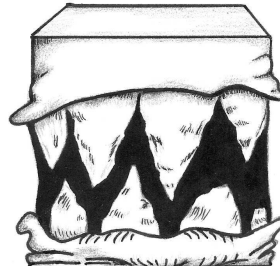
way? The conclusion we must make is that she had no reason to fear. She had an inborn “default setting” that she was safe. There was no reason for her to have an unsafe feeling.

Brittany was born into this world with no fear. A person could hang her from a twenty story building and it wouldn't matter to her. She would feel that she was safe because that is how newborns come into this world. Our older children were quite impressed by the fact that they could wave their hands in front of her face and she wouldn't even blink her eyes. She simply had no fearful response.

THE SAFE AND THE UNSAFE BOX



THE SAFE BOX



THE UNSAFE BOX

We might say that we each are born into this world with two empty boxes inside our mind. One box is a **Safe Box**; the other is an **Unsafe Box**. Each experience we have in life goes into one of these two boxes. Based on what is in our boxes, we know how to respond to the next similar experience that comes our way. From our story above, we see that Brittany was responding to the experience by feeling safe. That was her default box. She had nothing stored in her Unsafe Box that said standing on Dad's hand was unsafe or dangerous. Therefore, standing on Dad's hand was a safe experience, and perceived as such, allowed her to feel safe when doing it again.

The women, on the other hand, had “... *learned that things can happen.*” Based on experiences stored in their Unsafe Boxes, they saw Brittany standing on her Dad's hand as unsafe and dangerous. Why the different reactions?

All of us come into the world the same way as Brittany -

we are all born with a pattern or program in our brain that says we are safe. It is not something we choose, or decide upon. We just are that way. It is innate and natural to us. It is our default setting. However it doesn't take long for that setting to begin to be replaced. Replaced with what?

FEAR BRINGS A TEAR

Let's allow Brittany to teach us again. I noticed one day that Brittany had crawled up onto a big round foam cushion in the middle of our living room floor. It wasn't the first time she had been on the cushion, but this time she reacted differently. The foam was six inches high and she had previously rolled off it several times. This time, after playing for a while on top, she began to cry. She had crawled to the edge but wouldn't go any further. It was obvious to her that she was afraid she was going to fall again.

We see that Brittany now had experience and knowledge on her side. After falling off the edge of the cushion a few times, she recognized the edge as an uncomfortable place to be. She knew it was where a hurtful and startling experience had repeated itself several times, and she had stored that memory in her Unsafe Box. With this new recognition, she did not know how to handle the edge of the cushion, and being afraid of getting hurt again, she cried. I picked her up, gave her a kiss and hug, and she was once again safe and comfortable in her environment.

Fear is the first real negative emotion we feel. As a baby, it may be fear of falling, fear of being left alone, fear of going hungry, fear of rejection, or fear of being injured. Whatever the fear is that we develop, it is based on an experience or experiences that hurt us physically or emotionally, or make us feel unsafe. So we store them in our Unsafe Box. Those experiences teach us that the default setting of safety we are born with doesn't fit the picture anymore. We learn that there are things that hurt, physically and emotionally. Fear is a warning signal to avoid those things so we don't get hurt again.

The women in the class had a reason to fear for Brittany. In their Unsafe Boxes, they had many experiences that said what I was doing to Brittany was unsafe, and there was potential for

harm. Brittany didn't have any such experience in her Unsafe Box, so she had no reason to fear. She could stand tall and happy in my hand, and be fearless. Falling off the six inch cushion a couple of times was a different experience, and produced a different kind of reaction. Hurt was introduced, and she had now stored an experience in her Unsafe Box that caused her to be wary of six inch cushions.

TO STAY ALIVE IS OUR STRONGEST DRIVE

The strongest natural instinct humans have is self-preservation. Anything that hurts us is a threat to our very existence. In an effort to avoid that threat, we have a response we call fear. When the possibility of a harmful experience recurs, we feel fear, which causes us to do whatever is necessary to avoid going through the experience a second time. Brittany learned that falling hurts and her survival instinct told her that falling is not a good thing to do again. Therefore, when she approached the edge of the cushion, fear warned her of what could happen, so she started to cry.

Emotional hurts are just as threatening as physical injuries, though maybe not so obvious. They, too, produce fear in a person, which he or she subconsciously makes every effort to avoid.

Grace was divorced after twenty years of marriage, and lost everything important to her in the settlement. She had a good job in a hospital but was not enjoying it. One day she hurt her back lifting a suitcase. It wasn't long before she quit work, giving back pain as her reason. She went and lived with her mother for two years. During that time she very seldom went out of the house. She became very fearful. She would panic if she got very far from home or was out for any length of time. One day she realized how paranoid she had become and decided to force herself to go back to work. She obtained an excellent job but quit after only a couple months. She wasn't sure why.

I explained to Grace how fear could be involved. At one point in her life, before the divorce, she had everything and then lost it. That memory was stored in her Unsafe Box. I suggested that she was possibly afraid to obtain anything again for fear that it would once more be taken away. Therefore, there was no point

in working and, as a result, she didn't enjoy her work. Grace felt that this was, indeed, the answer to her paranoia and pain and resolved to change her attitude. She was successfully able to move this experience into her Safe Box and eventually take on and keep another job and be free of pain in her back.

IMAGINATION - A REAL SENSATION

In addition to our Unsafe Box being filled with real physical and emotional threats to our survival, there are also imaginary ones.

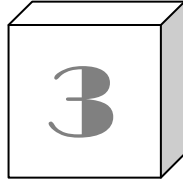
Susan was twenty-eight years old and had nightmares three or four times a week. This had been going on for as long as she could remember. When I met her she said that she would often wake up screaming and beating her husband. Those nightmares, while she was having them, were very real to her. The monsters, murderers, and other villains were not real, though she physically reacted as though they actually existed. In fact, the main person experiencing reality was her husband who was getting beaten.

I told Susan that fear was part of her survival mechanism and that some fearful memory from the past was probably responsible for her nightmares now. She told me that she used to watch a lot of horror movies. She also said she was raised on a farm where they had rattlesnakes, and it wasn't uncommon to find one in the house. As a child she would often dream that there was a snake in her bed.

Once Susan understood how her nightmares could be due to her fears, she resolved to work on letting go of their cause and placing them in her Safe Box. She was able to do so and has only had a couple of nightmares since.

- § **How did she do that?**
- § **What's the connection between the mind and the body?**
- § **How is our health affected by our feelings?**
- § **How does fear affect us physically?**

To really understand these questions and others, we need to go back to the beginning – the beginning of us.



THE BODY AUTOMATIC

THE AUTOMATIC MIRACLE

A human being is the greatest creation on earth. From the moment of conception, the body grows, develops, and functions without the need for conscious thought. What a miracle it is! Respiration, circulation, digestion, assimilation, and other processes run automatically, usually without awareness. For example, the liver performs about five hundred functions that we know of, none of which are under our conscious control. Just being able to stand is an extremely complicated interaction of nerves and muscles. We do all these things with hardly a thought; yet so do all other animals. What makes us different from them? Is it not our capacity to think, reason, and feel? Though some animals may have a minimal capacity to do these same things, our ability is immense.

Suppose a hunter is out chasing a deer. If they both run for two miles their physical reactions would be similar. Their heart rates quicken, their blood pressures increase, and their breathing becomes faster and deeper. When they stop running, their bodily functions return to their normal resting levels.

Compare that to eighty-three year old Mrs. Meyers. She complained that her heart was beating extremely fast, so fast that

it frightened her, and it was worse around two o'clock in the morning.

I explained to Mrs. Meyers how the mind can sometimes send a message to the body so it does the right thing at an undesirable time. A fast heart beat is a right and normal thing when the hunter is chasing a deer, but not if he is just sitting. I suggested that stress, and in particular, fear, can be responsible for the undesirable communication between mind and body.

Mrs. Meyers said she knew exactly when the rapid heart beat began. She was having new shingles put on her house and one of the roofers was drunk. His language was very offensive to her and she was afraid that he would do a shoddy job. She was rehearsing in her mind all the reasons why she didn't have to put up with such abuse and how to tell him he was fired.

Can you see why Mrs. Meyers was experiencing fear? She felt that she needed to tell this man to leave, and that was scary for her. She must have had an experience, or experiences, in her Unsafe Box that made her nervous to confront him. Just as Brittany didn't know what to do when she got to the edge of the cushion, Mrs. Meyers was afraid of her next step. If she told him to leave, would he cooperate? Would he use more foul language? Would he hurt her?

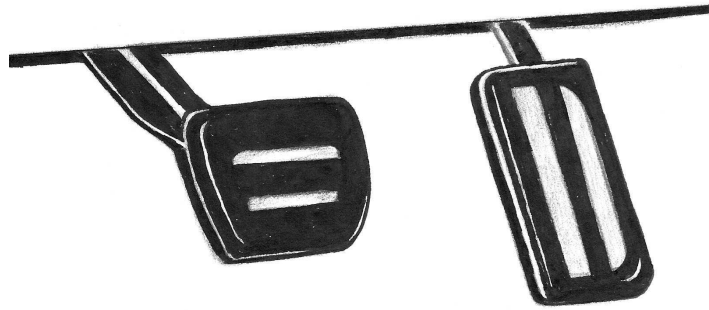
Brittany solved her problem by crying. In response to her tears, I picked her up and everything was back to normal. Mrs. Meyer's solution was not that simple. Instead of quickly resolving the problem, she continued to dwell on it. Her fear and the uncertainty of the roofer's response kept her from acting. Instead she dwelt on those feelings and didn't resolve them. She became more and more angry and confused. As a result, her heart started to race.

Why was it that it was her heart that was affected? To understand, we need to better understand the workings of the body.

AUTO PILOT

As indicated earlier, most bodily processes are automatic. Since survival is our strongest instinct, these processes are geared to keep us alive under any circumstance, if at all possible.

There are two important parts to our “survival system”. The first involves eating, sleeping, and healing. These are under the control of what is known as the *parasympathetic nervous system*. We could say that this part of survival is working the best when we are at rest or relaxed.



A simple analogy would be to the **brakes** on your car. Pressing the brake pedal is like activating the parasympathetic nervous system. When the parasympathetic nervous system is activated digestion is good, a person sleeps well and healing and repair is normal.

The second part of our “survival system” has to do with activity and emergencies. Our normal daily activities, plus our reaction to anything that threatens us, are mostly controlled by the *sympathetic nervous system*. This would be analogous to the **accelerator** pedal on your car. Pushing on the accelerator would speed up those body processes necessary to run or fight.

There must be a balance between these two parts of the autonomic nervous system (we’ll call it the *automatic* nervous system) for the body to work normally. This is done automatically with very little thought or awareness on our part. It is like being on Auto Pilot. If that balance exists, then health also exists as all body processes are generally working as they should.

What I have just described works for humans as well as animals. The deer in the forest is healthy for the same reasons. However, as mentioned earlier, humans have more extensive abilities to think, reason, and feel than animals. We have a mind that permits us, to a certain degree, to override what the body would normally do.

For example, a person can willfully interrupt his normal

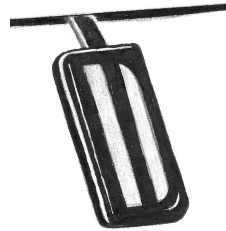
pattern of breathing and hold his breath. An animal cannot. Some people can hold their breath for a long time. In fact my nephew can hold his breath until he passes out; however, he cannot hold it until he dies. The body's survival instinct is too strong for that. As soon as he passes out, normal breathing returns.

Let's look, now, at how each of these two systems generally affects the body.

THE ACCELERATOR

Pressing the "accelerator" of the sympathetic nervous system will:

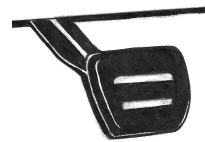
1. Increase blood pressure
2. Increase heart rate
3. Increase circulation
4. Increase muscle tone
5. Increase respiration
6. Increase body metabolism
7. Increase mental activity
8. *Decrease the ability to heal*
9. *Decrease digestion*
10. *Decrease ability to sleep*



THE BRAKE

Pressing the "brake" of the parasympathetic nervous system will do just the opposite.

1. *Decrease blood pressure*
2. *Decrease heart rate*
3. *Decrease circulation*
4. *Decrease muscle tone*
5. *Decrease respiration*
6. *Decrease body metabolism*
7. *Decrease mental activity*
8. Increase the ability to heal
9. Increase digestion
10. Increase ability to sleep



FIGHT OR FLIGHT

To make this a little easier to understand, we might think of the entire concept as a Fight or Flight mechanism.



Suppose a bear walked into the room where you are now reading. Imagine what your reactions would be as you hit the “accelerator” to deal with this emergency. By looking at the list, you can easily see why the first seven items would increase and the last three decrease. It wouldn’t

make much sense to have your digestive processes increasing when you’re being attacked.

Your body would go into emergency survival and the sympathetic system would dominate. Once you escape from the bear, flee the house, and find a safe place again, it’s easy to see the need for the parasympathetic to take over. You put on the “brake” so the body can slow down, rest and recover. Your Auto Pilot shifts gears. It is necessary to recharge your body for the next activity or emergency. Therefore, we could say that anything that causes a Fight or Flight reaction will trigger a sympathetic nervous system response.

We must remember now, that this is all done automatically. No thinking is involved. A different reaction would occur if you had a pet bear and realized it was only him walking into the room. Your thought would be, “*Oh, it’s only my pet bear, Teddy*”. Then your mind would send a signal to the nervous system that everything was okay and **this** bear was not a real threat, since this one was in your Safe Box. You would continue to sit and read in your easy chair with hardly a glitch in your heart beat. Your mind would override your natural reaction. Isn’t that fantastic? We are truly amazing creations!

The bear provides us an example of reality. What about its opposite, something imagined?

Let’s go back to Susan, the woman who was having nightmares. Her case is opposite to the scenario mentioned

above. Just as the pet bear, Teddy, was not a threat to you because of your mind, the imagined “bears” in Susan’s dreams, were threats to her, also because of her mind. You are able to sit and read a book when Teddy walks in because you perceive no threat. Susan couldn’t even sleep since imminent danger threatened as soon as she closed her eyes. It soon becomes obvious that what we **perceive** as a threat is what our body responds to, whether it is actually a literal threat or not!

Now let’s see if we can answer the question we posed earlier, “*Why did Mrs. Meyers’ heart begin to beat so fast?*” Maybe it would help if we asked another question first. “*Did Mrs. Meyers perceive a threat?*” Undoubtedly, she did. She was afraid of what the roofer’s reaction would be when she asked him to leave. That fear stimulated the sympathetic nervous system just like it is supposed to, and her body responded appropriately with an increased heart rate. The threat was very real to her and she physically reacted to it. How wonderful! Wonderful, because her body was doing exactly what it was told.

Let’s discuss another elderly person. *Mr. Moses was eighty-two years old. For three weeks he had been complaining of dizziness. Everything seemed to spin so badly that he frequently needed to lie down. His doctor had prescribed blood pressure medication hoping that it might help, though his blood pressure was relatively normal. Other tests had ruled out tumors. I asked Mr. Moses what he thought the cause of his dizziness was. He said that it was due to stress. He was sure of it. I asked what had happened three weeks earlier that could have brought it on. He was a rancher running thousands of head of sheep and several hundred head of cattle. Much of the land his livestock grazed on was owned by the government. He said that he had a run in with the guys from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) over some paper work. They had made him angry.*

Did Mr. Moses perceive himself as being threatened? Sure he did. Whether he was actually being threatened or not made little difference. He felt threatened, which hit the accelerator and stimulated the sympathetic nervous system, which automatically produced a physical response.

We mentioned in our bear story that once you escaped the bear and found a safe place again, your parasympathetic nervous

system would take over and your body would slow down and rest. You would be ready to digest food, to sleep, or to heal. Now suppose that Mr. Moses continued to think about those “bad” BLM guys that made him angry. Suppose he continued to perceive that he was being threatened by them. Would those thoughts continue to affect him physically? By all means! His body would still do what it had been programmed to automatically do. If his mind was continually sending a signal that he was being threatened, his body would physically react to preserve itself.

Can you see how this temporary emergency reaction could lead to a constant physical manifestation we call a symptom? Can you see why Mrs. Meyers would go to the doctor with a fast heart rate and Mr. Moses would feel dizzy for three weeks?

THE KEY THAT OPENS THE DOOR

Here is the key to many of the health problems we have:

We are reacting to something in our Unsafe Box!

We are reacting to something that we perceive or once perceived as a threat. Again, I must emphasize that it doesn't matter if it was a real threat or not. It's our perception of the situation that is important, and that determines which “Box” the experience is stored in. It also doesn't matter if the situation occurred twenty minutes ago, twenty years ago, or if we think it will happen in the future. Our minds are like a computer in that it doesn't matter when data is entered. Once there, it is stored and ready for recall. We react accordingly until the data is updated, and then we can respond to the updated version. As long as you're afraid there is a bear in the room, your mind will send that message to your body, and your body will automatically produce the appropriate protective response. If you update that information to say that the bear has left, your body will automatically respond differently, whether or not the bear was real or whether or not he actually left.

Hanging on to a perceived threat can lead to any health problem we can imagine. It is responsible for many more of our

health concerns and diseases than we are aware. By understanding this fact, we are able to open the door to better health. The two parts of the automatic nervous system we have talked about, the parasympathetic and sympathetic (the brake and the accelerator) run on Auto Pilot according to a perceived need. They must be balanced to be healthy. Our thoughts and fears can interfere with that delicate balance and affect us physically. Symptoms can appear in any part of the body, since the entire body is controlled by the automatic nervous system. Therefore, a person may develop headaches, backaches, depression, anxiety attacks, hormone imbalances, joint pain, gastritis, high blood pressure, diabetes, or tumors; the list is endless.

SURVIVAL REACTIONS

Sarah had been living with debilitating pain in her neck, back, shoulders, and arms for twelve years. She had a difficult time sleeping, and had problems with digestion. The diagnosis she was given was fibromyalgia.

As we apply what we have learned, we might conclude that Sarah's body's physical reactions are coming from some previous experience stored in her Unsafe Box. She started having these symptoms twelve years ago, so the obvious question to ask her was what was going on twelve years earlier in her life.

Sarah knew the answer to that. Her twin sister had died. For most people, that would obviously be a very stressful experience. Natural survival instincts would kick in and muscles would tighten up, sleeping would become difficult, and there would likely be no desire to eat. Sarah was no different than the average person, and had such reactions at the time of her sister's death. However, twelve years had now passed, and she was still in that survival mode. She was still tensed up, still couldn't sleep, and still had digestive problems when she ate.

Sarah was not consciously choosing her debilitating and frustrating symptoms. They were necessary because of how she perceived the loss of her sister. She was completely unaware of the connection between how she felt in the present, and what had happened in the past, and she didn't realize that she could do anything about it. She experienced a great sense of relief just knowing that there was a cause, and a solution. When I saw her a

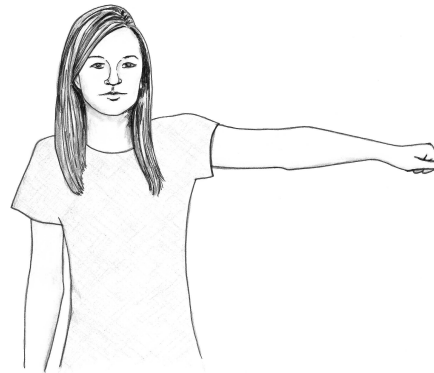
month later, she had hardly any pain, her digestion was significantly better and her ability to sleep was back to where it was before her sister died.

Over thirty years of clinical practice has taught me that virtually ALL chronic health problems have an emotional component associated with them. There is frequently a secondary nutritional component as well, which we will discuss later.

I must reiterate that the body never makes a mistake. It was created perfectly. The body does whatever it does for a reason. It is perfect in its expression of the message it is receiving. If we don't like what our bodies are doing, then we must focus on changing the **cause** of the symptoms. Focusing only on the symptoms is not nearly as effective in the long run as focusing on the cause of those symptoms.

Sarah's physical symptoms are a good example of the body's reaction to stress that triggers a long time survival response. We might say she has been stuck in the same emergency pattern for twelve years. It is impossible to maintain a survival reaction that long without having symptoms like muscle and joint pain.

This little experiment can show you why that is so. Hold one arm straight out to the side of you. Assuming no shoulder problem, that is easy to do. Keep holding it there for a minute. Are you feeling any discomfort yet? Now hold it for another minute. Keep holding it for five minutes. Can you do it? How about for ten minutes? For thirty? What about an hour, a week, or a month? How about for twelve years? How long can you hold it out before you are screaming in pain? The shoulder or arm pain you feel is not because there is something wrong with your shoulder or arm. It is simply because the muscles are too tight for too long. When you put your arm down, you get immediate relief.



Can you see how Sarah's muscles had been too tight for

too long? This whole explanation made a lot of sense to Sarah and she was able to face her emotions better and begin healing. She “put her arm down,” emotionally speaking, and quickly experienced relief.

Whether it is a death in the family, a dog growling, speaking in public, a car accident, or a myriad of other experiences, survival responses are the same. They are meant to get us away from the threat so we can be safe. Let’s look a little closer at a few more of our body’s survival reactions, and what may eventually happen if we hang on to them too long.

The chart on the following page shows how the various systems of the body respond to perceived threats.

The Column labeled #1 shows the body’s immediate physical reaction to stress, as if a bear suddenly came into the room.

Column #2 shows the symptoms that may develop if the stress is not resolved and the physical reactions continue. It is as if there is always a bear prowling around somewhere, and we never feel safe.

Column #3 lists chronic conditions that could eventually develop as a result of long-term unsafe feelings in Column #2.

The Body Automatic

BODY'S REACTIONS TRIGGERED BY A FIGHT OR FLIGHT SURVIVAL RESPONSE			
SYSTEM OF THE BODY	1. THE IMMEDIATE REACTION	2. THE LONG TERM REACTION	3. EVENTUAL POSSIBLE CHRONIC CONDITIONS
SKELETAL	Muscles, joints are tense and tight	Muscle pain, spasms, weakness. Joint pain and inflammation.	Fibromyalgia, cramps, tendonitis, arthritis, bursitis, MS, Parkinsons
CIRCULATION	Increased heart rate (need more blood)	Palpitations, arrhythmias	Anxiety, panic attacks, heart failure
	Elevated triglycerides & cholesterol (for energy production)	High triglycerides & cholesterol	Heart disease
	Increased blood pressure (to get more blood to the body)	High blood pressure	Heart disease, stroke
RESPIRATION	Increased (to get more oxygen to body)	Shallow, rapid breathing	Dizziness, asthma
DIGESTION	Slows down (need to run or fight, not digest)	Poor digestion, deficiency of acid and enzymes	Acid reflux, constipation, hiatal hernia
	Speeds up (need to evacuate bowels so can fight)	Rapid digestion, excess acid, frequent bowel movements	Ulcers, diarrhea, IBS, Crohn's
HEALING	Slows down (need to run or fight, not heal)	Weak immune system, injuries slow to heal	Colds, flu, cancer, autoimmune diseases
HORMONES	Increased energy from thyroid & adrenals	Exhaustion as can't run or fight forever	Chronic fatigue, thyroid, adrenal failure
	Decreased reproductive (can't get pregnant when running)	Hormonal imbalances, menstrual irregularities	Decreased sex drive, PMS, sterile, endometriosis
	Increased blood sugar (for energy)	Elevated blood sugar levels	Diabetes
SLEEPING	No desire for sleep (need to fight)	Inability to go to sleep or stay asleep, though tired	Exhaustion, fatigue
	Sleep all the time (need to escape)	Never can get enough sleep	Exhaustion, fatigue
MENTAL	Increased mental acuity (need to solve problem)	Think too much, mind races, can't turn mind off	Anxiety, panic attacks, ADHD, bipolar
	Decreased mental acuity (need to escape)	Depression, discouragement as no solution	Depression, bipolar, suicidal

FEARFUL CONSEQUENCES

If we analyze the thoughts and feelings that are the cause of the body reactions we don't like, we find that they are all negative. Fear, anger, jealousy, revenge, greed, guilt, hate, worry, rejection, selfishness, judgment, and many others will eventually unbalance the nervous system. Of these feelings, fear is primary; all the others are secondary. It is the fear of what people think, the fear of failure, the fear of missing out, the fear of physical or emotional pain, etc. that is the problem.

However, fear is not necessarily always bad. It can be used in a positive way provided it is temporary and we use it to handle the situation. Jumping out of the way of an oncoming car, avoiding a dark alley, or even paying taxes on time can be motivated by fear. But when we continue to hang on to the fear, it will eventually tilt our automatic nervous system out of balance, and a normal body reaction becomes an unwanted symptom.

Jeff was the star of his high school basketball team, averaging twenty points a game. His back was hurting so he came to my office for help. Jeff didn't remember doing anything specifically to hurt it. It just started hurting.

As we talked, it became apparent that Jeff's back was tense due to fear. He was afraid he wasn't doing well enough, that he wasn't meeting the expectations of others and especially himself. There was a lot of pressure on him to perform well. His back muscles had been too tense for too long and he had started to hurt. Figuratively, as described in our experiment earlier, "he needed to put his arm down". Once Jeff understood why his body was doing what it was, he was able to lighten up and not dwell on the pressure or expectations. He finished out the season without any more back problems.

Stress like Jeff felt can have a powerful effect on us. Suppose that you are in charge of the laundry in your house. You are behind schedule and the kids have no clothes to wear to school tomorrow. You put a load of wash in after supper and turn on the machine. You hear a clank and the washer stops. It won't start again. What is your reaction?

This is how Norma reacted. Her first thought was, "*Great! Now what? We don't have any money for a new washing*

machine!” Suddenly the memories began to come back to her. She remembered when she lived in a tiny little town in a tiny little house with no running water and no money. She especially recalled having to wash diapers by hand. *“There’s no way I’m going through that again,”* she thought. *“That was a horrible experience.”* The next morning she awoke with a terrible cough, the same terrible cough she used to have when she lived in that tiny little house. She also had the same terrible heartburn, only worse than before.

Your reaction would probably not have been nearly as severe as Norma’s. The idea of being without a washing machine was very frightening to her, due to her previous experience.

You will also notice how quickly Norma developed symptoms. These were not due to the stress of the washing machine breaking down – there had not been enough time for that. The symptoms were due to a **pattern** that had previously been established by a past experience stored in her Unsafe Box.

PERFECT PATTERNS

One of the miracles of the body automatic is its ability to establish patterns. What we persist in doing becomes easier and easier to do, or, as we often hear, practice makes perfect. The more we do something, the more engrained it becomes in both the mind and the physical body. This not only applies to things like learning to play the piano, but also in how we handle stress. Once we have found a way to relieve fear, we will use it again the next time fear comes along. If it works well again, the pattern becomes more established and will be even easier to use a third time. Norma’s symptoms appeared as quickly as they did because they were part of a pattern for handling fear that she had established a long time earlier. Though the symptoms were brought on through a subconscious process, the physical reactions were very real.

Lilly’s story makes this process even more clear.

Lilly was the mother of ten children and had experienced fourteen pregnancies. Every time she got pregnant, she would develop sciatic pain in her leg during the first month of pregnancy. By the fifth month, the pain would go away. This leg pain did not occur with just one or two pregnancies, but with

each of the fourteen pregnancies!

It was obvious that sciatic leg pain during pregnancy was normal for Lilly. But such a pain should never be normal, unless something had caused that pattern to become necessary.

I asked Lilly about her first pregnancy. She'd had the leg pain as mentioned, and the pregnancy ended in a miscarriage. I asked how she felt about that event at the time and she said it was very difficult for her. She said that her younger sister already had two children, and it felt so unfair to her that her sister should be "ahead" of her. She felt like a failure for having a miscarriage, and that she was a disappointment to her husband who was also anxiously looking forward to having a baby. Can you see what was happening here?

So I asked about her second pregnancy. Again she experienced the sciatica in her leg, not surprising considering her previous experience, but not necessarily a pattern at this point. How this pregnancy turned out would likely have a great influence on the pattern for future pregnancies. Lilly said this second pregnancy ended in a still born birth at five months, a much more difficult experience than the first. Lilly's fears of failure and loss had been confirmed, and the pattern was now set and every subsequent pregnancy began with sciatic leg pain. Interestingly, the pain disappeared in the fifth month of pregnancy. Any guesses as to why? It's likely that at that point Lilly was able to let go of her fears of not being able to carry the baby to term. Had Lilly's second pregnancy ended with a healthy baby, it is likely she would not have developed the sciatica in pregnancy pattern.

Chad had symptoms much worse than Norma's or Lilly's. He had severe chest pains off and on over many years. Four or five times they had been bad enough to put him in the hospital in intensive care. Many tests and specialists had failed to find a definitive cause for his pain.

After Chad's most recent attack, he and I determined that he was following a pattern. It appeared that each time he experienced an episode of chest pain, he had been under stress. He would be very busy, to the point of being overwhelmed with what he had to do. Fear that he could not get it all done would set in. Ironically, a solution that would relieve the fear was to have

chest pain. Why? Other people would not expect Chad to do all those things he was committed to do when they learned he was having heart problems.

Now, it's important to note, Chad was not doing this consciously. He did not think, "*I believe I will have a heart attack so that I don't have to do all these things.*" It was just a pattern that his mind and body had developed to deal with stress. It had become a normal pattern for him. Why this pattern appeared is the subject of the next chapter.

Now let's summarize what we have learned about the body automatic.

- 1. Self-preservation is our most driving instinct.**
- 2. Most of our body's functions are automatic.**
- 3. Our thoughts can override what the body would normally do.**
- 4. The parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems run on Auto Pilot and must be balanced for normal health.**
- 5. Hanging on to perceived threats in our Unsafe Box imbalances our automatic nervous system and leads to symptoms.**
- 6. Fear is the major perceived threat.**
- 7. The mind and body develop patterns to deal with stress.**

