

Health

A holistic definition of health is the compatible **oneness** of body, mind, and spirit which supports the activities that are driven by our innermost or spiritual values. In layman's (like me) understanding, the absence of disease, illness, etc. which impairs optimum bodily functioning. Spirituality is present when we experience peak performance, whether the **activity** involves sports, writing, acting, dancing, singing, surgery, speaking, supporting, teamwork, or leading. The **values** driving these activities may include family, service, religion, helping others, creativity, empowerment, spirituality, art, inner exploration, and numerous other **sources** of human expression. The first point is that there is a distinction between a **value** and its **expression** by an individual or a group. An inherent value, which is associated with a variety of expressions, reflects the numerous ways a specific passion can be expressed as a human activity.

A passion is the source which naturally propels us to express compatibly driven activities. For example, **"helping others,"** might be expressed as "teaching," "curing," "healing," "exploring," "seeking," "facilitating humanism," "caretaking," "coaching," "painting," "dancing," "preserving," and "promoting world peace." In other words, there are numerous ways one's passion might be **expressed** over a lifetime as a function of one's age, knowledge, skills, and interests, based upon one's mastery of an activity—for example, a musician to a conductor to a composer and other associated activities over time.

It would appear, from experience, that one's passion in life is inherent although the extent of its expression depends on circumstances, resources, and opportunities available. Therefore, the quality of health an individual experiences is commonly associated with **"doing what he or she loves."** For example, tangible indicators of a successful transformational orator or facilitator are how well she or he performs in terms of communicating, informing, influencing, and facilitating others to explore and incorporate ideas and processes corresponding to working together in greater harmony.

If an individual is a creative change agent, the expressions of writing, painting, or experimenting commonly produce "tensions" with respect to what already exists and is accepted. This phenomenon is sometimes

referred to as the “creative tension” (or possibly confrontation) which leads to an “inductive leap” and a completely different way of approaching a challenge or a problem. For example, Einstein showed that classical mechanics was inadequate to define a framework and the dynamics of characterizing subatomic phenomena, which, in turn, led to his General and Special Theories of Relativity. The era of human revolutions was sparked by the desire for self-governance, control, and the opportunity to forge one’s own reality. The creation of concepts such as human rights, and even human equality, as an inherent part of one’s natural being provides a redefinition of oneself, inclusive of spirituality and his or her holistic health.

The point is that these are all expressions sourced from one’s creative passion that gives rise to one’s health, happiness, and well-being—inseparably. Most of the *expressions* of one’s passion require a highly functional body relatively free of chronic illness—especially in the areas of sporting or any form of physical exertion. Popular literature is filled with care of the body by novice, professionals, and experts, so it is unnecessary to replicate that subject here. What does appear to be believed among the public and some physicians is that body and mind are separate and serious doubt about any significant impact of mental fitness on the health and well-being of one’s body.

From personal experience, I have learned that my body and mind are inextricably coupled. This is, of course, not a revelation to many, if not most, of us. Presumably, we all have unique ways and places we somatize pain, migraines, back pain, stiff neck, or restricted internal functions and organs. These experiences typically show up as minor to progressively severe conditions requiring psychological, surgical, and/or medical attention. The obvious implication is that well-known, unresolved mental patterns of conflict result in physical malfunctions. The greatest stigmas associated with the mindbody connection are due a lack of awareness, education, perception, and fear associated with being labelled as mentally ill. (Radies Health and Lifespan Outpatient Psychiatry) The connection and discussion of resulting mental and physical conditions have been expertly catalogued in an extremely popular book written by Louise Hay (Deceased August 2017),

“You Can Heal Your Life.” It is among nine other publications written by her which are specifically written for lay people.

Throughout these conversations, I have suggested that mental health is inextricably connected to a dedication to personal self-understanding. Self-understanding is a process (not an event or a finish line) of seeking an **experiential understanding** of how major cognitive and behavioral patterns affect our physical health. The physical impact is commonly associated with unresolved occurrences associated with a major theme in our lives, such as Control, Power, Domination, Wealth, and most of all, Change. Some of us thrive on change because it necessitates creativity and innovation as major forms of adaptation. Others view change as threatening, commonly of the unpredictable and unknown. Although change is an external phenomenon of human existence, it is most compatibly addressed by a reconfiguration of our internal programming to accept the new reality, before reacting or responding in a personally appropriate manner. Change is inescapable. The relationship between the two is that external change, such as technology integration via AI applications or diversity, requires adaptation in our mental programming. Oftentimes, this adaptation is referred to as personal transformation, particularly where resistance to change is present. Therefore, the most proactive way of maintaining a healthy body is **learning** to accept inevitable external changes which are emotionally challenging to us. Particularly, those which appear to provoke or exacerbate existing physical conditions. Once the connection is **realized**, we have the freedom of choice-making, which did not previously exist as an alternative.

It appears that the major strategies for many of the physical and psychological symptoms or conditions described above are exercise, meditative activities, and appropriate drugs to alleviate pain and or undesirable physical and/or mental conditions. The focus of this discussion is on the recognition that unresolved programmed reactions that many of us experience may be the source of much of the mental distress and anxiety we commonly experience. More importantly, when exercise and diet are combined with a regimen of personal growth, often with a therapist specializing in this area, we have a magic combination for maximizing the health and performance of the human body—within its inherent and natural

limitations. For example, I do not have the passion to be an NFL lineman at 5'9" and 160 lbs!

The major question resulting from this brief conversation is “how do we begin to *integrate* mental health interventions involving personal growth, as discussed, into our life?” In response, the following suggestions might be helpful:

1. First and foremost, consult with a licensed therapist and discuss these suggestions with your family, as is appropriate for you.
2. If (1.) presents difficulties for some reason, acquire a trusted friend you can confide in and talk with regularly—preferably, someone who successfully uses personal growth in his or her life.
3. Start by purchasing and reading magazine articles on newsstands, at markets, and in drugstores about Emotional Intelligence and Mindfulness—as well as other materials provided by your support network. They provide valuable information and insights about these subjects.
4. Make a connection between these articles and your personal experiences to simply learn more about the connection between body and mind.
5. Begin to have conversations about important events that shaped your life and led to life-long decisions involving—successes, challenges, and undesirable outcomes and patterns. I personally believe that knowledge and wisdom from within are the most powerful sources for designing your life.
6. Do a mind-map using your five (5) innermost values as spokes and discuss each spoke with a trusted friend, therapist, or spouse. Create a single statement which characterizes each spoke. This exercise can be a powerful learning experience for self-understanding.

William A. Guillory, PhD
President
Innovations International, Inc.
bill.guillory@innovint.com