



True Health

Physical-Mental-Spiritual

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Heredity And Health

Beyond the Human Genome

In most cells of virtually every living organism, there exists a complete set of instructions (genome) for creating that organism and regulating its cellular structures and activities over its lifespan. With recent breakthroughs in deciphering the human genome, predictions of miracle cures for many diseases have been forecast.

Beyond the prospect of understanding the genetic basis of specific diseases, there is a further potential for individualized medicine in which drugs can be tailored to the unique genetic code of each person. Whereas a particular drug might be toxic to one individual, a customized version based on genetic compatibility may be optimally effective for someone else.

And yet heredity is only one factor in the equation of health and illness. In most illness, genetic predisposition in itself is not sufficient to produce disease. Numerous retrospective studies of identical twins (hence identical genes) document that in most illnesses, one twin may develop a specific disease while the other sibling can remain free of the disorder. Thus, it is the entangled interplay between heredity and environment (internal and external) that results in the complex manifestations of health and illness.



When I was in graduate school, the question of “nature vs. nurture” was raised in virtually every class. The technical term for the complex relationship between heredity and environment is *diathesis/stress*. *Diathesis* refers to an underlying vulnerability or predisposition. *Stress* is any trigger that activates the vulnerability into expression. So just having a genetic tendency for a certain disease does not necessarily mean that you will develop that illness.

In addition to the biopsychological problems surrounding human genome research, the conceptual and philosophical issues (for example, free will vs. genetic determinism) are also daunting. In other words, is there room for the soul in all of this?

Edgar Cayce often spoke of the role of heredity and environment with respect to the principle of cause and effect, both in this lifetime and others.

Interestingly, Cayce’s system includes the Hindu concept of karma. As Cayce put it, “Karma is cause oft of hereditary conditions so called. Then indeed does the soul inherit that it has builded in its experience with its fellow man in material relationships.” In another instance, when asked, “From which side of my family do I inherit most?” Cayce replied, “You have inherited most from yourself, not from family! The family is only a river through which it (the entity, soul) flows!” Thus the transformational potential of illness is inherent in many Cayce readings, which cite heredity as a contributing factor of disease. Considering the current excitement surrounding the human genome project, the possible manifestation of karmic patterns via heredity

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Acid-Alkaline Balance

Acid-alkaline balance has become a popular topic among alternative medicine practitioners and researchers. Commonly referred to as “pH,” the acid/alkaline continuum ranges

from 0 - 14, with 7 as neutral. The lower end of the scale (below 7) is acid and above 7 is alkaline.

Views on this subject range from an almost total disbelief that pH is a significant factor in disease to the opposite extreme, as exemplified by Theodore Baroody in his book *Alkalize or Die*. Even the experts, who acknowledge that a neutral or slightly alkaline pH is good, disagree on what this means with regard to body fluids. For example, some researchers consider a slightly acid urine pH to be normal (healthy) because it might indicate that the body is eliminating acids that are a natural product of metabolism. Other experts maintain that the urine should be close to neutral or slightly alkaline.

Acid/alkaline balance is extremely important to normal physiology. For example, the blood will maintain a slightly alkaline range of 7.35 to 7.45. Extended pH imbalances of any kind are not well tolerated by the body. The management of the pH factor is so important that the body’s primary regulatory systems (especially breathing, circulation and eliminations) closely regulate acid-alkaline balance in every cell and system of the organism.

Some researchers believe that high acidity can deplete bones, because the body has to steal alkalizing minerals (especially calcium) from bones to keep the blood from dropping into the acid range. Thus acid/alkaline balance may be relevant to diseases such as osteoarthritis and osteoporosis.

How to Maintain Acid-Alkaline Balance

Alkalinity can be increased by consuming less meat and sweets and more vegetables and fruits. Although eating fruit to increase alkalinity may seem to be a contradiction because some fruits (especially citrus) are acidic outside the body, digestion uses up their acidic components, leaving an alkaline residue (ash). Thus the net effect is alkaline-producing in the system.

Edgar Cayce consistently emphasized the importance of maintaining a proper acid/alkaline balance in the body. For most individuals, Cayce noted that “a normal diet is about twenty percent acid to eighty percent alkaline-producing.”

According to Cayce, numerous factors can increase acidity, including negative emotional states, inadequate chewing of food, and poor eliminations. Perhaps the most common factor cited by Cayce is diet. Eating acid-producing foods or combining foods improperly (even alkaline-producing foods) is said to lead to hyperacidity, even to “superacidity” in some instances.

High systemic acidity was consistently noted by Edgar Cayce in conditions such as arthritis. He sometimes observed that infec-

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How do you feel about the drugs that are used to treat mental illness? J.H., VA

This is an emotionally charged issue. Mainstream practitioners are increasingly using a “medical model” of mental illness that views mental symptoms as ex-

pressions of biochemical imbalances that can best be addressed with medication. Persons not accepting this view may be regarded as needing some medication, if you catch my drift. On the other hand, alternative medicine advocates frequently have a knee jerk reaction against almost any kind of medication, and especially for mental illness.

I like what Edgar Cayce said about healing – “the attuning of the divine within the living tissue of a body to Creative Energies. This alone is healing. Whether it is accomplished by the use of drugs, the knife or what not, it is the attuning of the atomic structure of the living cellular force to its spiritual heritage.” In fact, Edgar Cayce did recommend some powerful medications for all sorts of conditions, including mental illness. In general, his approach was to use relatively natural treatments, except in acute and/or dangerous situations.

I have seen psychiatric patients greatly benefit from medication. I have also seen some serious sideeffects and, in some instances, a tendency to over-medicate patients to maintain control. So the issue is complex.

I encourage individuals to become educated about the pros and cons of specific medications and make informed choices based on investigation. This kind of process is using the will, which is good for soul development. Patients need to be informed about all the therapeutic options, including alternative treatments. Some of the modern psychiatric rehabilitation programs provide a wonderful opportunity for growth and development. So ultimately, the question of medication is a personal matter. - DM

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calls into question a strictly materialistic/reductionistic interpretation of genetic data. The potential relationship between heredity, illness and spiritual development represents a typical example of how the Cayce philosophy integrates various disciplines into a unitary worldview.

Most importantly, the Cayce readings also provide some practical suggestions for dealing with hereditary predisposition for illness. The first step is positive attitude. A woman asked Cayce if she could inherit or pass on to her children the mental illness that ran in her family. Her brother had just had a breakdown and an aunt had spent years in a mental institu-

tion. Cayce acknowledged the hereditary factor and told her that she would only be affected if “the mental self dwells upon same and thus creates a field, an attitude for such reactions as to cause a disturbance.” He stated that a blood test could determine the nature of the genetic factor. For those family members at risk, specific supplements were recommended.

The same type of advice was repeated in a similar case involving an elderly, demented woman. The concerned family members were told that they would not inherit the condition, “UNLESS the mental selves of such individuals were to dwell upon same.” Of course, telling someone not to worry about something is like saying “don’t think about pink elephants.” The mind can easily become fixated or obsessed when left on its own. The spiritual ideal can help redirect the mind in more constructive patterns. As Jesus observed, “perfect love casteth out fear.” Keeping the mind entrained to the spiritual ideal is a good strategy for reducing worry and fear.

As with many of the Cayce health concepts, that which is preventive is often helpful as a curative measure. In cases involving karma (and thus a high probability of heredity), the mental and spiritual aspects of healing were strongly emphasized. Some individuals were told to make

progress in the mental and spiritual area before even beginning the physical treatments.

Besides psychological stress, several other key factors were often cited in the Cayce readings as potential triggers that can activate genetic factors. Nervous system incoordination resulting from injury to the spine was cited in many cases as a trigger for genetic tendencies. The really fascinating aspect of this type of trigger is how the trigger can be so unique to each individual. For example, Cayce observed that an injury to the coccyx (tailbone) can produce more different types of illness than any other part of the body except for the brain itself. The readings involving this type of injury bear witness to this point. Coccyx injury was cited in disorders ranging from epilepsy to hemorrhoids. What I have come to understand is that the nerve reflexes and subsequent nervous system incoordination from the ganglia at the base of the spine stress the entire system. It is the weakest parts of the system that are most affected and tend to break down. Hereditary factors can produce weak links in the system. Cayce’s frequent referrals for spinal manipulation attest to the importance of this therapy as a means of reducing stressors to the nervous system. Likewise, keeping all the basic systems of the body in a healthy state is an excellent strategy for decreasing the effects of genetic predisposition.

Eventually, as work on the human genome project expands, medical applications will provide relief to many who suffer from illness with genetic cause. It will be important to recognize the broader implications in this field by maintaining a holistic perspective that includes prevention as well as treatment, the soul as well as the physical body. The possible linkage of genetics and karma raises some interesting questions. If future gene therapy is able to cure diseases that have a karmic cause, how will people meet their karma? Will the disease just keep coming back or manifest in another form?

Of course we really don’t know what the future holds in this area. Perhaps gene therapy can provide a way of meeting karma. Edgar Cayce discussed healing temples in ancient Egypt where individuals could receive curative treatments for serious conditions of a karmic nature. From Cayce’s description, a holistic approach was used that provided for spiritual growth and physical healing. Hopefully we can cultivate such a holistic perspective as we unravel the genetic code.



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Bipolar Disorder

Balancing Creative Energies

Bipolar disorder is a psychiatric illness characterized by mood swings between mania and depression, hence its previous designation as manic-depressive illness. Mania can be thought of as the opposite of depression. Whereas depression typically involves sadness, hopelessness, and despair, mania often manifests as high energy, inflated self-esteem, and increased creativity. As mania becomes more extreme, other less desirable symptoms may be present, including pressured speech (more talkative than usual), racing thoughts or flight of ideas, and excessive involvement in pleasurable activities that have a high risk for painful consequences.

In her book "Touch With Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament," Kay Redfield Jamison documents the emotional roller coaster of bipolar disorder in the lives of many of the greatest artists and creative individuals throughout history. Jamison is a professor of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University Medical School. I highly recommend this fascinating book to anyone dealing with this illness, not only because of the remarkable content and style, but also because Jamison has herself struggled with manic-depressive illness. The power of her personal experience shines through the text.

Creative Energies & Mania

Jamison's theory that bipolar disorder can be linked to increased creativity struck a chord with me. Having worked for several years in a public mental health setting with clients diagnosed with this illness, I was certainly aware of the high *creative energy* associated with this pattern. Interestingly, during that period, I also provided counseling in a private practice setting to many "new age" clients who were experiencing some bipolar symptoms. The curious difference was that the new age clients appeared to have intentionally precipitated the bipolar symptoms as part of a transformational process involving psychic development or deep meditation. The psychiatric clients were largely unaware of any transpersonal aspects of the condition, and for the most part, wanted to be rid of it. As I worked with these two groups of clients, I became aware of a commonality – the ebb and flow of creative energies.

An Edgar Cayce reading given for a young woman with manic symptoms provided me with important insights into the role of creative energies in this pattern.



Reading 2501-6 linked manic symptoms (periods of "wild hilarious reaction") with certain phases of the moon. Historically, persons with this illness have been called "maniacs" or "lunatics" (moon = luna). Even more fascinating was Cayce's insistence that the osteopathic physician treating this patient should study the last book of the Bible, the Revelation, for a better understanding of the nature of the problem. This simple suggestion eventually led to numerous readings on the Revelation in which Cayce explained the complex symbology of the mystic vision of John the Beloved.

The Revelation & Kundalini

Cayce's view is that the Revelation is a great psychological study describing the process of enlightenment. According to Cayce, the Revelation uses symbols to describe the flow of creative energies through spiritual centers in the body. In some of the yogic traditions, this creative energy is called "kundalini" and the spiritual centers are known as *chakras*. Kundalini yoga involves the raising of this powerful energy along the spine through the centers, culminating in enlightenment.

In the case of the young woman with manic-depressive illness, Edgar Cayce wanted the attending osteopathic physician to become aware of the imbalance in creative energies that were causing this woman's mental and emotional problems. Pressures in the lumbar region of the spine (lower back) were said to be causing a deflection in the natural flow of the creative energies. The osteopath apparently got the message, because the follow-up documentation indicates that the woman recovered and went on to live a healthy, normal life.

As I studied deeper into the phenomenon of bipolar disorder, I noted that the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM) used by psychiatrists to diagnose mental illness contained some important clues as to how the condition manifests. I found a correlation between the psychiatric symptoms of the illness and the spiritual centers described by Cayce and the yogic traditions. As I worked with clients with this problem, I became more aware of the

role of creative energies manifesting through spiritual centers in the expression of specific symptoms. For example, increased and inappropriate sexual behaviors may be indicative of problems with the first (gonad) center. Anger and aggression may correlate with the third (adrenal) center, and so forth.

From a practical standpoint, these insights provided me with some useful tools for helping clients with this problem. The first step is understanding the nature of the problem. In counseling terms, this initial step is called a "reframe." In other words, the client comes to a new understanding of the problem that allows for a change in attitudes and emotions. Instead of seeing himself as a victim of an incurable and devastating illness, the client becomes open to the possibility that the condition has a deeper significance. The basic problem may be an imbalance of "creative energies," a phrase often used by Edgar Cayce as synonymous with the God force or divine energy that is the basis of life and health.

I like to use the book by Jamison as illustrative of the effects of creative energies in the lives of great creative geniuses. To be sure, the effects are not always positive, especially when the energies become extremely out of balance, resulting in suicide or total debilitation. It is important to keep in mind that illness of any sort basically involves imbalance, whether biochemical, psychological, or spiritual. This applies to spiritual seekers as well as psychiatric patients. The reframe process must not encourage the individual to stay sick (out of balance).

The net effect of reframing is that the tremendous burden of stigma and self-condemnation associated with a major mental illness is usually lightened. The individual sees himself and his condition in a new, more positive way. Family and friends may also benefit from such reframing, resulting in a further lessening of stigma. This form of healing can be almost instantaneous.

The writings of mystics such as Gopi Krishna can also be helpful for persons seeking understanding of this form of mental illness. Gopi Krishna practiced deep meditation on his own (without a guru) for years before dramatically awakening the kundalini energy. The mental and emotional imbalances that resulted caused him considerable grief until he was able to maintain a balance of creative energies. Krishna later came to recognize his condition as a form of "divine madness"

Health News



Organic More Nutritional

After comparing the published nutritional measurements of organic and conventional crops, researcher Virginia Worthington concluded that there appears to be a genuine difference in the nutrient content. Reporting in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* (Vol 7, No 2, 2001), Worthington noted that organic crops contained significantly more vitamin C, iron, magnesium, and phosphorus and significantly less nitrates than conventional crops. The nutrient difference may reflect the effects of chemical fertilizers and pesticides on soil ecology and plant metabolism.

Implant For Spinal Injury

The first human clinical trial of a new treatment for spinal cord injuries is underway at Purdue and Indiana University. The project involves the implantation of a small device (about the size of two joined lipstick cases) called an extraspinal oscillating field stimulator. It produces a weak electrical field to stimulate nerve growth. This approach is based on previous work done at Purdue in which dogs suffering paralysis from natural causes regained partial function with the treatment. For more information contact the Indiana University Department of Neurosurgery at spinal@iupui.edu.

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tious agents (such as viruses) do not thrive in an alkaline environment: "cold CANNOT - DOES NOT - exist in alkalines." In another instance when asked how to prevent colds, Cayce responded, "Keep the body alkaline! Cold germs do not live in an alkaline system! They do breed in any acid or excess of acids of any character left in the system."

Several solid scientific studies are supportive of Cayce's assertion that alkalinity can provide protection from viral infections such as cold or flu. Interestingly, many viruses, including the rhinoviruses most often responsible for the common cold, infect host cells by fusing with the cell membrane in an acidic environment.

Edgar Cayce insisted that acid/alkaline balance could be easily checked. Numerous readings encourage the measurement of pH balance in saliva and urine as an objective means of monitoring this crucial aspect of physiology.

A research conference provided an excellent opportunity to apply Cayce's suggestions and measure the results. The conference participants included seven people suffering from arthritis, three persons with high blood pressure, a man with diabetes, and five support persons. We asked these individuals to provide urine samples during eight days of the conference.

We collected a total of 472 samples that were measured for pH. We used simple digital testers to measure the pH of the urine. We decided not to test saliva, as

the instruments require a significant amount of material, making urine much more practical for a large group of individuals.

As the conference proceeded, there was a trend for the group as a whole to produce higher levels of alkaline urine with regard to total number of samples that reached neutral (7.0) or above (indicating alkalinity). Also, the percentage of individuals whose urine reached 7.0 or above increased during the conference. Statistical analysis demonstrated that the results were statistically significant, an important research criterion. Thus we concluded that following the Cayce diet does produce a more alkaline system (remember, higher pH is more alkaline, lower pH is more acidic).

You can work with Edgar Cayce's suggestions for measuring your own pH (urine and saliva) and making adjustments to your lifestyle accordingly. Here are points from the readings to keep in mind as you analyze your findings:

- Gulping food or washing it down with liquids increases acidity. Chewing mixes alkaline-producing saliva with food particles to prepare it for digestion.
- Exercise reduces acid load on the system.
- Being upset while eating (especially anger) increases acidity. Never eat when angry or upset.
- Combining citrus with grains produces increased acidity.



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that is described in various mystical traditions. The numerous books by Krishna are particularly helpful for the new age client seeking to understand and resolve the problem of "kundalini crisis."

After reframing the problem, the next step is increased awareness and self-regulation of creative energies. Persons experiencing the manic-depressive pattern need to self-monitor the changes in creative energies and how these energies are experienced and expressed as specific emotions and behaviors. This self-monitoring process is essential so that help can be requested if needed, and actions can be taken to keep the creative energies in balance. This step allows for choice with regard to treatment options. If the imbalance becomes too severe, choice of treatment declines as others assume legal responsibility, sometimes resulting in hospitalization and involuntary treatment.

For seekers on the spiritual path, an awareness of the basic concepts of creative energies and spiritual centers is important. The traditional yogic approaches to deep meditation provide certain safeguards in terms of supervision (guru), supportive community (ashram), disciplines (chop wood and carry water), and high purpose (enlightenment). Similarly, Edgar Cayce's approach to enlightenment also emphasizes attunement to the divine within (for guidance and protection), high purpose (ideals), creating interpersonal support (a study group), and practical application. Either format will help to ensure that the creative energy that is awakened will be constructively expressed rather than being deflected into a destructive expression.

Cayce's recommendations with regard to the physical body are also important. Maintaining the health and integrity of the spinal nerve centers and endocrine glands is a high priority. These are the physical centers through which the creative energies are channeled. Spinal manipulation and purification via diet and hydrotherapy are reasonable preventive measures to help ensure a positive outcome for those practicing deep meditation and psychic development.



Visit the *True Health* website at: www.edgarcayce.org/truehealth.html for more information on bipolar disorder and pH testing.