

An Exciting Trip to the Dentist

November, 2013 Newsletter

A week ago I had a dental appointment for the first in a series of visits to receive an implant to replace a missing tooth. My dentist did a flawless job installing a 10 mm screw into my jaw that will in a few months time be the anchor for the new tooth. (Novacaine was thankfully included in the procedure). Needless to say my body wanted to make sense of the whole affair and to help it along, Dr. S.F. (the dentist) prescribed a course of antibiotics to ward off possible infection along with some medication for pain. I took these medications as indicated and, supplementing my self-care with tea tree oil and a Cranio-Sacral session I was up to full speed in no time.

Today was my follow-up visit with Dr. S.F. and he told me that everything looked great. Swish the area with saltwater every night for a few weeks and we're good to go.

"The antibiotics, the Cranial work and tea tree oil did the trick, I said.

"Actually, the dentist responded, it was your immune system that was responsible for healing."

Now this was a conversation I could sink my teeth into. It was a conversation that intrigued Dr. S.F. also and he took some time out of his busy schedule to explore the issue. He was of course correct in saying that while we supported the body in creating the best conditions for healing, it was the precise and dare I say miraculous workings of the immune system that was at the root of the process.

Dr. S.F. and I discussed bacteria in general (a fun topic) and agreed that if we disposed of all the bacteria that exists in our bodies we would die in short order. We need those bacteria to survive and thrive. And yet the predominant germ-based view of health posits that a constant war with bad bacteria, viruses and cells is necessary to keep us free of pathology and in good working order.

Another view of health, the one Dr. S.F. and I were speaking about, is based on the symbiosis. Definition: the interaction between two different organisms living in close physical association, typically to the advantage of both. Health in this view is the balance between the organisms we carry within us and the organism we call the human body.

Pathology occurs when things are out of balance. This can lead to an overpopulation of

particularly aggressive or unusual organisms that the immune system simply can't handle. In these cases medication may be needed to help restore balance. If I step on a rusty nail and my body is invaded by clostridium tetani, a bacteria normally unknown to the body, I could be headed for a painful and untimely death. Here a tetanus vaccine in retrospect would have been a very good idea. Yet in most cases our own Innate Intelligence with the help and guidance qualified practitioners will keep us quite healthy.

Illness from the the symbiosis point of view is a direct result of disconnection from the whole. The foundation of symbiosis is relationship: a relationship of mutual benefit or dependence in which growth occurs in the context of the entire organism, giving to and receiving from other organs, tissues and cells. Anything that exists in isolation, growing solely for its own benefit and not in relation to the whole is the precursor for dis-ease, injury and illness.

A physical example of this is cancer. We are constantly producing new cells, some of which mutate to become undifferentiated cells that no longer perform their intended function. They are therefore useless to the entire organism. This is a natural occurrence that is kept in check by the body. When the body is not in balance (and sometimes even in bodies that are in balance) these cells can proliferate - growing solely for their own benefit - depleting the body rather than existing in a symbiotic relationship to the whole. They are cells "that have forgotten who they are," says the author Sam Keen. In losing their identity and their relationship to the whole they become life-threatening, eventually destroying their host and themselves in the process.

We can see this occurring on a global scale economically and socially. Economies that are based on constant and unchecked expansion must draw their resources from somewhere. If these economic, social and environmental resources are not replenished, the entire system is in danger. No expansion exists without contraction. To be healthy all life must ebb and flow, expand and contract, become active and be restful, take in and give out, receive nourishment and provide nourishment. An economy based on these principles and practices will go a long way in establishing the balance necessary to truly address the world's deepening problems.

The symbiotic or interdependent view of health and life is what has sustained our planet, our species and the myriad life forms that thrive along with us. It is a model that supports life and health for ourselves and all that coexists along with us.

Hmmm... all that... and I thought I was making a routine visit to my dentist.

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