

EDGAR CAYCE'S VIEW OF HEALTH AND HEALING

by Sidney D. Kirkpatrick and Nancy
Thurlbeck

When Edgar Cayce, fully awake, considered human anatomy, it was with the eye of a professional portrait photographer. In trance, however, when "the Source" spoke through the sleeping Cayce, he was the "psychic diagnostician," reporting on temperature, blood pressure, and other physical and anatomical details of a patient's body. Cayce could describe a patient's condition in such a cool, calm, and detached manner that observers were left with the impression that he was a physician describing to fellow colleagues an examination he was in the process of conducting, except for the fact that Cayce's patients didn't have to be in the same room or even in the same country as Cayce. He appeared to be able to see right into his patient's body, to examine each organ, blood vessel, and artery with microscopic precision, and then recommend treatments to restore or enhance a patient's health. Many of Cayce's recommended treatments, once dismissed as the fanciful products of an overactive imagination, are now considered state-of-the-art medical treatment and have earned Cayce the distinction of being called the father of holistic medicine.

In the chaotic early years of Edgar Cayce's career as a psychic diagnostician (1911-1927) – before his trance readings were properly recorded and indexed, and when the patient's detailed medical records were not shared with Edgar – it was nearly impossible to view his contribution to medicine in a broader context.

Unless a patient experienced immediate recovery Edgar and those around him had limited knowledge of the outcome of the treatments he recommended while in trance. Little or no effort was made to trace a patient's progress or to determine the effectiveness of the treatments recommended. Only files containing letters of thanks offered insights.

This changed in 1928 when the Edgar Cayce hospital was founded in Virginia Beach, and Cayce would go on to give approximately 7,000 more medical readings before his death in 1945. With a dedicated conductor to put Cayce into trance, a stenographer to supervise and record trance sessions, and a team of board-certified physicians to study, chart, and interpret a patient's progress over a long period of time, it was possible to begin seeing the scope of Cayce's contributions and to gain a better understanding of the general principles of health he communicated in the readings. As medical scholars would point out a generation later, together, Cayce's trance readings provided a primer on the emerging field of holistic medicine.

Although the information Cayce imparted was often in keeping with the practice of both homeopathic and allopathic medicine at the time, it became clear by the late 1920's that Cayce also drew information from the medical knowledge of ancient cultures, especially those in Egypt and Greece. And a fair percentage of Cayce's ideas were entirely new at the time the readings were given—sometimes given on the very same day the treatment or product was becoming available to the public. Some of Cayce's medical insights have since been confirmed by modern medical science, while others are yet to be validated.

The fact that many of the treatments Cayce recommended were in keeping with the standard medical approach to illness made it easier for doctors to follow his advice. As a general rule, these treatments varied only in the combination of medicine and therapies, but often involved more hard work on the part of both the doctor and patient than has become the norm in modern medicine. Invariably, however, the hard work paid off. In many instances, Cayce was clearly ahead of his time. For instance, he once recommended that an infant with digestive problems be kept on a strict diet of bananas which in the 1920's was generally considered to be poisonous to infants. Now, the all-banana diet is standard medical treatment for celiac children.

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The Causes of Illness According to Cayce

The greatest surprise of Cayce's health readings were the apparent causes given for various illnesses. The Source, speaking through the sleeping Cayce, cited reasons for illness that ranged from what now might be considered old-fashioned, like getting one's feet wet or exposure to the elements, to more unusual reasons, like washing one's food down with a drink without chewing it properly. The Source veered furthest from accepted medical philosophy when he offered more cosmic-related reasons—such as the karmic repercussions of choices made in a previous life. Perhaps just as unusual in his time, Cayce frequently connected illness to the mental and emotional states of the patients. In one reading he was quoted as saying, "Thus you can ...(suffer) a bad cold from getting mad... (or) from...(cursing out) someone."

For some physical disturbances Cayce also

described primary causes which then, as now, remain unrecognized by the medical profession. These included conditions such as psoriasis which Cayce said was caused by the thinning of intestinal walls and the resulting leakage of toxins back into the system. The body then attempts to throw off those toxins through another system of elimination—the skin; migraine headaches, which he said were frequently the result of congestion in the colon; and morning sickness in pregnant women, which he attributed to the lack of certain minerals which were being taken from the mother to build the baby's body. He said that the causes and symptoms were similar to those of a teething infant. And the treatment was the same for both. He also said that spinal injuries could cause problems as diverse as asthma, stuttering and even violent behavior.

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Cayce's Four Basic Elements of Good Health

When studying the readings, doctors working with Cayce were forced to expand their understanding of the role that four basic processes played in governing the health of the body. These four processes, which Cayce said affected our cells' ability to reproduce and function properly were:

Assimilation
Elimination
Circulation and
Relaxation.

ASSIMILATION

Assimilation, which appeared in almost one quarter of the medical readings, referred not only to the body's intake of nutrients, but also to process of digestion. Cayce frequently warned against eating when upset, angry or distressed,

saying that due to the resulting physiological changes in the body, food would remain undigested and become toxic to the system. Cayce also spoke of avoiding certain food combinations, specifically those foods requiring different acids to be digested. If such foods were eaten together, Cayce said, one type would be digested while the other would sit and ferment in the stomach thus becoming toxic to the body.

Just as mass-produced foods were beginning to appear, and decades before the whole-food movement became popular, Cayce was issuing warnings. He repeatedly stated that refined foods, sugars, red meat, and fried food were generally harmful to the body. "What we think and what we eat—combined together," Cayce said, "make what we are, physically and mentally."

Cayce did not just warn patients away from certain foods, he encouraged the consumption of others. For instance, in keeping with what is now known about the importance of ingesting active food enzymes, he recommended eating one meal per day of primarily raw vegetables. He also consistently instructed patients to eat whole rather than refined grains, saying that refined products not only lacked nutrients the body needs, but that such foods, with all enzymes and other elements removed, are actually toxic to the human body. And although he didn't use the contemporary term phytochemicals—the nutritional element related to the color of foods—he often recommended foods of a certain color for particular ailments.

Cayce also spoke of the acid-alkaline balance in the body, which he said was affected by the foods we eat—an area of nutrition that was virtually unheard of in the 1920's, and has only recently become popular. Cayce's general diet guidelines recommended the consumption of twenty percent acid producing foods, such as meats, starches and sugars, and eighty percent

alkaline producing foods, such as vegetables, fruits and dairy products. To a forty-eight-year-old woman, Cayce said: "The less physical exercise...the greater should be the alkaline reacting food taken. Energies or activities may burn acids, but those who lead the sedentary life can't go on sweets or too much starches."

He also recommended that vegetables from below the ground, such as carrots, beets, and potatoes, should constitute only twenty-five percent of one's diet of vegetables, while above the ground vegetables, such as lettuce, squash, and tomatoes, should account for the other seventy-five percent. He recommended that only ten percent of our diet be fats, another ten percent proteins, five percent refined starches and sugars and the other seventy-five percent complex carbohydrates such as vegetables, fruits and grains.

Long after Cayce's death, many of the seemingly radical guidelines he offered in the 1930's would be seen as having merit. But some of Cayce's recommendations still seem strange to this day. For instance, he stated in several readings that while tomatoes contain more nutrients than any other single food, when not vine-ripened, they are toxic to the human body. He also stated that carbonated drinks were to be almost always avoided, not just because of the sugar or artificial sweetener in them, but because they interfered with the interaction between the liver and the kidney. Other gems offered by Cayce included such statements as: apples should never be eaten raw, only baked or cooked, unless used for fasting purposes; only the peel of the white potato was of any real nutritional value; and coffee and tea become toxic when combined with milk or cream.

ELIMINATION

Poor elimination was cited as being at the root of a great number of illnesses, and references to it appeared in over half of Cayce's medical readings. Apart from taking in nourishment, human cells must also eliminate waste products and toxins to remain healthy, and according to the Cayce readings, "(if) the assimilations and eliminations...(were) kept nearer normal in the human family, the days might be extended to whatever period as was so desired, for the system is...able to bring resuscitation so long as the eliminations do not hinder."

Cayce suggested many different aids to elimination. One of the simplest was to drink a cup of hot water with a squeeze of lemon juice each morning upon rising and before eating, which apparently helped the body eliminate the toxins thrown off during sleep. Similarly, he recommended doing deep breathing exercises each morning to eliminate toxins pooled in the lungs from the shallow breathing characteristic of sleep. Dietary measures were also recommended to improve bowel activity, which included eating leafy vegetables and stewed fruit such as figs and raisins. He also suggested drinking as much as six to eight glasses of water a day.

In extreme cases of toxemia, Cayce recommended enemas and colonics, adding that these could also be used by healthy people. "For everyone—everybody—should take an internal bath occasionally as well as an external one." Cayce also frequently recommended three-day apple fasts, and occasionally four-day grape fasts or five-day orange fasts for more extreme cases of toxemia. While the apple fast in particular was intended to have a cleansing

affect on the intestines, it would also, according to Cayce, "cleanse the activities of the liver, the kidneys and the whole system."

CIRCULATION

The third aspect of sustaining good health, according to Cayce, was circulation. "The circulation...is the main attribute to the physical body, or that which keeps life in the whole system," he often said in trance, and references to circulation turned up in approximately sixty-percent of the readings. Highlighting the role that circulation plays in assimilation and elimination, he pointed out that "there is no condition existent in a body that the reflection of same may not be traced to the blood supply, for not only does the blood stream carry the rebuilding forces to the body, it also takes the used forces and eliminates same through their proper channels." In the same reading, Cayce made a startling prophetic remark: "The day may yet arrive when one may take a drop of blood and diagnose the condition of any physical body."

Cayce made reference not only to arterial circulation, but lymphatic circulation, which he considered to be just as important. The Source referred to the fluid in the lymphatic system as "white blood" or "lymph blood," and pointed out that unlike the arterial system which has both the heart and the muscle-lined wall of the arteries to move the blood along, the lymph system has no pump of its own, and it relies on other methods to move waste matter out of the body. One method Cayce recommended was massage. Although it was considered by many to be nothing more than idle pampering, Cayce saw massage as curative, particularly for the inactive.

The most natural way to sustain good overall

circulation, both of the lymph and the blood, Cayce said, was exercise. As he pointed out in a reading for a forty-six-year-old woman, "Exercise is wonderful, and necessary—and little or few take as much as is needed, in a systematic manner." To another patient he said exercise "is not something merely to be gotten through or gotten rid of." Daily stretches, head and neck rolls and walks, preferably of twenty minutes, were all recommendations Cayce gave.

RELAXATION

The fourth process Cayce considered vital to good health was what he referred to as relaxation. In trance, Cayce stated that "the activity of the mental or soul force of the body may control entirely the whole physical [body] through the action of the balance in the sympathetic [nervous] system, *for the sympathetic nerve system is to the soul and spirit forces as the cerebrospinal is to the physical forces of an entity.*" The nervous system was the vehicle through which Cayce's "mind as the builder" could most directly influence the body.

Cayce's physical readings divided the nervous system into three parts: the cerebrospinal system, made up of the brain and the spinal cord; the sensory nervous system, which included the sense organs; and the sympathetic nervous system, or the autonomic nervous system, over which a person has no conscious control. According to the readings, the sympathetic nervous system could be considered "the brain manifestation of soul forces in the body." Cayce also suggested that within this system, habits—both good and bad—are formed and retained. These habits govern the links between our mind and our body. And apparently anyone could "correct habits by

forming others! That [goes for] everybody!"

Although modern-day medical practitioners often look upon the power of "suggestion" as pseudo science, Cayce often recommended that positive suggestion be a part of a patient's daily treatment. Cayce said that emotions, both positive and negative, moved as electric energies through the nervous system, affecting the entire organism. His message here was that the nervous system acts as a conduit and carries impulses and instructions to every cell in the body. Positive and negative thoughts could therefore physically alter each cell's functioning. Again, Cayce was far ahead of his time in pinpointing the role that stress played in one's overall health. In one reading Cayce—in trance—stated that "worry and fear (are) the greatest foes to (a) normal healthy physical body." For another patient he said, "For thoughts are things! And they have their effect upon individuals...just as physical as sticking a pin in the hand!"

This same theme was expanded upon in a reading Cayce did for a forty-four-year-old physician. "While (it is) true (that) medicines, compounds, mechanical appliances, radiation, all have their place and are of the creative forces, yet the...(ability of) of arousing hope, of creating confidence, of bringing the awareness of faith into the consciousness of an individual is very necessary," the Source said. "Only when any portion of the anatomical structure of a human being is put in accord with the divine influences...may real healing come."

Cayce also said that a preoccupation with a particular illness could result in the manifestation of that illness in one's own life. To maintain health, Cayce suggested that "quiet, meditation, for a half to a minute, will bring strength...(if the body will) see physically this flowing out to quiet

self, whether walking, standing still, or resting." And Cayce urged patients to find balance in their lives: "Budget the time so that there may be a regular period for sustaining the physical being and also for sustaining the mental and spiritual being. As it is necessary...for recreation and rest for the physical, so it is necessary that there be recreation and rest for the mental."

ALL CURATIVE FORCES MUST BE FROM WITHIN

In contrast to the predominant view that doctors healed exclusively through medicine or surgery, Cayce's trance view was that "unless it be for a removal of conditions that have become acute by neglect or other causes of the same nature, all curative forces must be from within self and are of the whole of a physical being: for the human anatomical body is as the working of a perfect whole." In this sense, Cayce viewed the human body as a miracle of creation in its ability to heal itself. His view became more apparent in a statement he made to a group of entrepreneurial doctors seeking information on health products they wanted to produce. In this reading requested on their behalf by Cayce's son Hugh Lynn and nephew, Tommy House, Cayce said, "There is no greater factory in the universe than that in a human body in its natural, normal reacting state. For there are those machines or glands within the body capable of producing, from the very air or water and the food values taken into the body...any element at all that is known in the material world!" Cayce would also say, more than once, that "every cell of the body is a universe in itself."

In other readings, Cayce took the generative properties of the body one step further, to suggest that if a person were to maintain the proper attitude and to keep their organs properly

coordinated with one another, they could live as long as they wanted: "For, as may be told by any pathologist, there is no known reason why any individual entity should not live as long as it desires. And there is no death, save in thy consciousness. Because all others have died, ye expect to, and you do!"

The ability of a human being to prolong their life, according to Cayce, depends on the proper functioning of the endocrine system. The glands, Cayce said, were "that which enables the body, physically throughout to reproduce itself." The glandular system also, according to Cayce, serves as the physical point of contact between a person's nervous system and his or her "spiritual bodies." The readings identified seven glands which are also referred to as seven centers, or "chakras," which act as both growth centers for the physical body and major spiritual centers. These seven include the gonads—also referred to as the cells of Leydig or Leyden—the adrenals, the thymus, the thyroid, the pineal, and the pituitary. In the 1930's, when Cayce did readings on these glands, their purposes were being hotly contested, and to a certain degree, none would be completely understood by the medical profession until a half-century or more later.

As with the nervous system, Cayce described how a person's emotions affect the glands' activities: "For as has been indicated in some manners, some activities, there is an activity within the system produced by anger, fear, mirth, joy, or any of those active forces, that produces through the glandular secretion those activities that flow into the whole of the system." These emotion-caused secretions could wreak havoc with one's health. "Anger causes poisons to be secreted from the glands," he said. "Joy

has the opposite affect." On another occasion he noted: "No one can hate his neighbor and not have stomach or liver trouble. No one can be jealous and allow the anger of same and not have upset digestion or heart disorder." Perhaps the most radical assertion he made along these lines was to say that all disease was caused by sin, most notably the sin of fear, for that represented a lack of faith. "Fear is the root of most of the ills of mankind," he said in a reading given in June of 1928.

Cayce would also state, while in trance, that while the spiritual body is not actually contained in the physical body, "there is the pattern in the material or physical plane of every condition, as exists in the cosmic or spiritual plane." It was for this reason, perhaps, that Cayce did not view illness as strictly caused by physical problems, or did he see its cure only in the physical realm. Belief and anticipation played an important part in the healing process, too. He reminded patients that "..what ye ask in His name, believing, and thyself living, (mind will build)."

He also said that "a good laugh, an arousing even to... hilariousness, is good for the body, physically, mentally, and gives the opportunity for greater mental and spiritual awakening." In another reading he said: "one is ever just as young as the heart and the purpose. Keep sweet. Keep friendly. Keep loving, if ye would keep young."

According to Cayce, the attitude that truly heals is the "Christ Consciousness...the only source of healing for a physical or mental body." As the source once put it: "There are in truth, no incurable conditions...that which exists is and was produced from a first cause, and may be met or counteracted, or changed." In another reading Cayce said that "all strength, all healing

of every nature is the changing of the vibrations from within, 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...(anything else), it is the attuning of the atomic structure of the living force to its spiritual heritage."

As much as Cayce advised his patients not to ignore spiritual matters when dealing with health challenges, he also warned them not to ignore their physical lives either. In one physical diagnosis, the Source said: "The body is made up of the physical, the mental, the spiritual," and that "each have their laws, which work one with another, and the whole is physical man, yet do not treat physical conditions wholly through spiritual or mental laws and expect same to respond as one." This is a concept that can be applied to all aspects of life—even non-medical. We must pray and think positive thoughts, but we must address concerns and issues in the physical realm.

Of all the physical treatments, Cayce regarded osteopathic therapy as the closest to the healing process of the human body. "There is no form of physical mechano-therapy so near in accord with nature's measures as correctly given osteopathic adjustments," he said. Osteopaths, designated as "D.O.'s," whose degrees are generally considered equivalent to those of medical doctors, emphasize the body's natural ability to heal, and work through manipulation of the muscular-skeletal system. As Cayce said, "The science of osteopathy is not merely the punching in a certain segment or the cracking of the bones, but it is the keeping of a balance—by the touch—between the sympathetic and cerebrospinal system. That is real osteopathy!"

In a particularly moving reading on May 24,

1934, in which he summarized much of his philosophy, Cayce discussed the beauty of being "one with God," in a spiritual as well as a physical sense. "When the earth was brought into existence or into time and space, all the elements that are without man may be found in the living human body," Cayce said. "Hence these in coordination, as we see in nature, as we see in the air, as we see in the fire or in the earth, makes the soul, body and mind one coordinating factor with the universal creative energy we call God."

Just as Cayce talked about being one with God, he suggested that a body's cells must act in concert to sustain good health. In thousands of medical readings, Cayce offered physical treatments directed toward improving "coordination." Likewise, the theme of "vibration" was quite evident in his commentary. As Cayce had said in the physics readings for the Stansell motor: "Life in its manifestations is vibration, electricity is vibration." In this sense, Cayce suggested that the same principals of "harmonics" governing the release of energy were at play in the human body. All of Cayce's remedies had the intention of correcting the vibrations of the various cells of the body, whether through medicine, osteopathic manipulation of the spine, hydrotherapy, the application of heat and cold, electrical magnetic therapy, or the simple laying on of hands.

One of the most interesting concepts regarding good health and longevity put forth by Cayce was that "(there is no need) for a better body (unless it is) to serve thy fellow man the better." Similarly, when asked by a woman how many more years of life she should expect, Cayce responded: "How many do you wish (or need)? Let the prayer be ever: 'Father, so long as I may

be useful as a manifestation of Thy love in the earth, and as I may be gentle and kind and true and pure to my fellow man, keep Thou, O Lord, me."

When asked "Who will aid me most in my work and daily life?" Cayce simply replied, "God." In another reading, the Source said: "The church is in thyself. For, thy body is the temple of the living God." And indeed, in addition to all of the advice he would give about diet, habits, physical treatments, mental states, attitudinal adjustments and exercise in keeping the body healthy, there was always one underlying theme—a willingness to call on God's help through prayer, and have faith that help will come. On this topic, Cayce would give perhaps his most inspiring and easily understood advice:

"Never worry as long as you can pray. When you can't pray, you'd better begin to worry! For then you (really) have something to worry about!"