



Are you Emotionally Congested? What is weighing you down?



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If you were to dive deep into your body, like an episode of CSI, you would find what appears to be an entire nation of systems and cells working tirelessly in industry and productivity. Billions of interconnections make up this well-oiled machine. You would see chemical production plants, refineries, power plants and the most incredibly sophisticated waste management system. As a student of anatomy, I have always been fascinated by the intricacies of the lymphatic system.

Here is a system that labours continuously to clear away cellular waste, pathogen and toxicity; a system that drains upward, against gravity and, unlike the circulatory system lacks the influence of a dynamic pump such as the heart to assist it. It is an engineering marvel that this vast network of vessels and nodes works with such elegant complexity against the obstacles that it must face. This is not only a system of transport but one that protects and recycles.

As you go about your day, driving to work, answering your emails, preparing dinner, your lymph nodes are filtering the lymph fluid to identify and attack any foreign invaders in your body, breaking them down, recycling any matter that may be useful while producing and releasing specific antibodies which are released into circulation to address any further invasion. Amazing!

Did you know that if the lymphatic system stopped working you would die within 24 hours? If there is one system that directly impacts your immunity it is your lymphatic system. If there was one system that most strongly influences the purity of your internal environment it is the lymphatic system. Like the flow of water through your pipes, when things slow down and become stagnant toxicity breeds. The nature of the toxicity is a fascinating subject. We are all made painfully aware of the toxicities in our external environment. We live in a time and culture of consumption and are surrounded by electromagnetics, synthetics and genetically modified foods. Our lymphatic system is forever toiling away to clear these substances from the body.

But, have you ever thought of your emotions as toxic? Did you realize that the chemical toxicity in your body, clogging up your joints and your sinuses, adding weight to your abdomen, could be emotional? In the book "Molecules of Emotion", Dr. Candace Pert explains how our body responds to emotion. Dr. Pert describes the physiological response to emotion as one of chemical production.

When you experience an emotion your body produces a chemical, not unlike a hormone, that acts as a chemical messenger to your cells.

In the practice of BodyTalk we honor the influence of emotion on physiology by understanding its influence on everything from pain to behavior patterns. When we look at emotion as a chemical we can understand how holding on to repressed anger or not letting go of sadness is very much like accumulating chemical toxins in the body. The word emotion gives us a clue as to the how our body should use these chemicals. Emotion essentially means 'energy in motion'.

Anger, for example, is a great mover and shaker when it is used in a healthy manner. Grief is like a powerful leaf blower that clears cobwebs and dust bunnies when it is honored and allowed to go to work. Unfortunately, many of us are taught at an early age not to express our emotion. Anger is something to be hidden or avoided. In the face of grief we are taught to throw ourselves into our work, get on with it. The flow of tears is often frowned upon, the expression of fear makes us appear weak. Instead of energy in motion, emotion becomes stagnant, hidden away in dark corners of the body only to reappear as symptoms in the not too distant future.

A healthy body is a body in motion. The lymphatic system is strongly influenced and assisted by daily physical and energetic motion. Ironically, the system that clears away that stagnant anger and excess worry relies on the very movement that the healthy expression of these emotions inspires. Now it is easier to understand how an excess of the contractive energy of fear in the body can detrimentally affect the immune system by slowing down and clogging up the lymphatics, how the stillness created by repressed anger can fill the sinuses and lead to infection. The healthy expression of emotion actually stimulates flow in the body and encourages a natural detoxification.

Little did you know that actually admitting that the incorrect phone bill that you received this morning makes you angry, but getting up from your desk and making a phone call to investigate is actually supporting your immune system. The next time that you initiate a conversation with your best friend to tell them that their behavior is causing you to worry about their safety, know that the healthy expression of this emotion could help to reduce the pain of achy joints and drain your sinuses. Honouring a loss by grieving, whether through tears or reminiscing, helps to eliminate inflammation. Talking or writing about a fear that you may be experiencing may actually help you to lose that last five pounds.

Western medicine tends to overlook the lymphatic system until it is symptomatic, and even then there is no recognized way of treating a dysfunctional lymphatic system other than excising problematic lymph nodes or if the physician is aware of such, may order lymphatic drainage therapy. Supporting its function is quite simple yet highly important to your health and wellness. Physical movement, adequate hydration, a healthy diet and rest go a long way to support healthy function. Keeping 'energy in motion' is invaluable to lightening your load and encouraging movement through the system.

The next time you feel sluggish or experience congestion and inflammation take a closer look at what might be weighing you down.

Is there emotional toxicity in that achy joint? The next time that you bite your tongue and swallow your anger remember what effect you are having on your body's ability to keep you healthy. Granted, learning how to honor your emotions by allowing yourself to fully feel them as they arise, express them constructively and share them with significant people when the timing is right, are not the easiest of tasks. But, they are important steps on the road to wellness and will help to lighten your physical load, build up your immune system, and add an undeniable bounce to your step.

IBA Newsletter July 05, 2013