

## DEFENCE OR DEVELOPMENT, Your body's big dilemma!

By Roger Smith

As an alternative health care practitioner, over the last few years I have discovered some basic truths regarding health and the human experience, a bit like universal laws which when denied, bring us humbly back to the drawing board. Although some of these truths challenge current cultural belief systems, we must realise that nature has been creating life longer than human cultures have been destroying it.

Nature's grand plan for evolution requires one thing and that is survival. A species must survive in order to grow and evolve, and survival really means; 'capacity to adapt to the challenges of our environment.' I would like to tell you that your body was not designed by nature to be healthy, nor was it designed to be sick, it was designed to survive. Both health and disease are both attempts to adapt and survive.

In order for nature's grand evolutionary plan to manifest, a living creature or animal (yes we are one) must be able to protect itself against threats to its survival and nurture and develop itself when it is not under threat. A cat will happily sit grooming itself in front of a fire whilst digesting a nice meal before having a nap, however, if a growling dog comes in the room, the cat's behaviour may change dramatically, suddenly and automatically from development to defence.

A famous biologist Bruce Lipton, once described how when developing cells in a dish in his laboratory, he noticed that if a toxic substance was introduced into the dish, the cells would sense its presence and shrink into a tight cluster at the opposite end of the dish. If nutrients were put into the dish, the cells would expand and move towards the nutrients. This is a most basic example of defence and development behaviour in life but the key point is the cells cannot move both towards and away from something at the same time. We cannot defend while we are developing and we cannot develop when we are in defence. Our bodies are families of a few trillion cells and the world is our laboratory dish.

Whilst defence behaviour in our bodies is a vital strategy to have in times of need (run or fight), our bodies were never designed to be in defence for more than about 20 minutes. When the cat has run away from the growling dog or the dog has escaped the hissing cat, the cat can go back to digesting its meal and having a nap.

If we understand what happens in the body during defence behaviour and what happens during development and we understand that they cannot occur at the same time, we uncover the foundations of health and disease.

When our being perceives the need for defence, the blood supply to the higher parts of our brain that separates us as humans from other animals is greatly reduced. As humans, we have an extra 'brain department' called the frontal cortex which allows a greatly advanced level of consciousness, awareness and adaptive choices compared to other mammals. Higher human brain capacity involves the ability to observe our self and our own behaviour and make modifications, to see the greater or hidden meaning in situations and events, to foresee situations and make appropriate adaptive choices ahead of time, to have an intuition or a 'knowing' about things without knowing exactly how we know. When humans perceive psychological stress, blood is redistributed to the older mammalian parts of our brain for reaction. Our capacity for higher human thought is diminished and our capacity to react in a more animalistic way is maximised

This shift in the brain brings about a cascade of changes in the body including, increased heart rate and blood pressure, decreased breathing and blood oxygenation, greatly increased muscle tension especially in the spine, elongation of the spinal chord and a change in posture, decreased digestion and immune system activity. If your body can relax and shift back into development mode, we get our human brain capacity back, our muscles relax, heart and breathing activity restored, spinal posture retreats, the pressures inside the joints of our spine normalise, we digest our food properly, extract the nutrients from our food, and our bodies self heal, self regulate using a fully functional immune system. This is development.

We can see that if development functions are compromised for large periods of time (in many cases years) we develop multi-system exhaustion in the body which leads to symptoms and disease. I personally believe that what we call disease is just a response to a loss of the bodies ability to co-ordinate itself due to multi-system exhaustion, stemming from chronic defence physiology.

With our advanced human brain capacities we also have the ability to create defence in our bodies with our beliefs, thoughts, feelings and memories. The more defensive we are, the more we perceive the need for more defence, it's a viscous circle. Defence physiology therefore becomes accumulative in the body. I often feel it in the musculature of the spine like layers. Each year we recruit more layers of defence and the wall gets thicker. This occurs especially when we carry unresolved stressful life events in the memories of our body.

As I evolved as a practitioner I realised that this central issue of defence and development must be addressed if people are to truly get well. Many treatments both in classic and alternative medicine successfully treat symptoms only to have the person return back to living life the same way, doing the same things, thinking the same thoughts, making the same decisions, reacting the same way to the same situations, past and present. A symptom is not an error in the body, it is a cry for attention and request for a change in our behaviours. A symptom is a messenger from our desire to survive. If we shoot the messenger without getting the message we will eventually get a more obnoxious messenger and we need a bigger gun to shoot him! Much of classical medicine is the practice of messenger shooting, and they have some pretty powerful guns!

Network spinal analysis and somato- respiratory integration are two wonderful chiropractic technique systems which are gentle, holistic and highly effective at shifting the body from defence to development and allowing true re-organisation of the body to a more self-regulatory state. Recipients of this work consistently make positive physical, mental and emotional shifts in their life and health. Their bodies learn new evolving strategies for autonomy that were previously unavailable. I could go on and on but I must stop. It changed my life anyway!