

Many of Your Health Problems Could Stem From This Mind Issue

The amazing fact is that God designed our bodies to be able to handle the temporary fears, stresses, disappointments and challenges of life in a dynamic way. It is when this system is abused, overused and compromised that breakdown occurs.

Most of the biological problems that occur in our health deal with the issue of peace within—or lack thereof.

Hypothalamus Reveals Internal Peace Levels

To understand this further, we need to know about a tiny, yet significant organ under our brain called the hypothalamus, which plays an important role in both our endocrine and limbic systems. As a part of the endocrine system, the hypothalamus is responsible for secreting hormones throughout the bloodstream to organs in order to control metabolism, growth, development and reproduction.

As a member of the limbic system, this same gland contributes to the regulation of blood pressure, heart rate, hunger, thirst, sexual arousal and function, and sleeping patterns. These functions are just a few that are affected when the hypothalamus senses there is a lack of peace within the person.

Homeostasis: Peace Within

The hypothalamus also links the body's endocrine system to the nervous system by way of the pituitary gland, which is instrumental in creating a general sense of calmness and stability in the body—a state called *homeostasis*. Homeostasis is basically a medical definition of someone who is at peace

with themselves and life.

This is the kind of peace within the body that Jesus offers for us, to take and walk with a peace that has nothing to do with outside circumstances, but instead an ongoing awareness of God within. This gives us the privilege to take our peace, no matter what is going on.

The hypothalamus responds to whether or not we are truly at peace within ourselves. We can say in denial that we are at peace and rest, but if we are really not, the hypothalamus knows and responds. No matter what we portray outwardly, our body knows what we really think and believe. It responds accordingly either in peace and ease or breakdown, which leads to dis-ease.

The Fight or Flight Response

The hypothalamus is a critical member because it acts as a thermostat or control center for the body. It contributes, along with other glands in the body, to the regulation of a process known as the “fight or flight response.” The fight or flight response is the process by which your body becomes trained to react to stressors or challenging situations. It is a system that was designed by God to deal with rare crisis issues, but never to be used continually.

As a more extreme example, if a bear was to suddenly jump out the woods and attack, our body would instantly enter into this process automatically. Fight or flight is an involuntary system that does not need our direction or attention. The crisis presents itself, and the body reacts. We don't have to tell our body, “There's a bear coming so it's time to panic and react!” Our response system is already pre-programmed and designed to kick in the necessary mechanisms.

If I walked up from behind someone and screamed suddenly, the person would most likely become startled. The more unexpected the scream, the more dramatic the reaction. The body would

automatically kick in and enter into a momentary state of shock. As soon as the person realizes it is just me screaming and they are not in any harm, the brain knows there's nothing to be afraid of and homeostasis can kick back in. The body's recovery systems would engage to help bring the body back to calmness again.

Responding to "Stressors"

Humans can achieve extraordinary victories in crisis because of the process that the fight or flight response brings to the situation. This explains why a parent has been able to pick up the back end of a car to save a child who is trapped under it. It confirms why a doctor working in an emergency room can react quickly to help a patient whose life is at stake. Human strength and resourcefulness compounds rapidly during stressful situations as energy and focus rises to the occasion. This can be a good thing for occasional moments in life, since fight or flight helps a person focus and harness great strength for a temporary situation. It can also become deadly when it operates continually—even at low levels.

Fight or flight is the response that we have to any kind of "stressor." A stressor is anything in thought that triggers unease. It can be different for every person. This unease could involve fear, anxiousness, worry, anger, guilt, resentment or a number of other thought systems that keep the body from peace.

When the hypothalamus senses this unease it begins to initiate a complex process throughout the body before a conscious thought is even made. Signals are sent to create action and all kinds of mechanisms are sent into motion without our conscious permission, and most often without our knowledge.

The Deadly Drip of Cortisol

Cortisol is a chemical hormone that is secreted throughout the body during "fight or flight" by way of the adrenal glands. It

has a major role in supplying the energy needed to face intense situations or stressors at hand. Cortisol is sent into the blood stream to help give the energy needed to escape or survive a crisis. It also aids in bringing greater focus to the mind and it lowers our vulnerability to pain for that temporary situation.

Despite the benefits of temporary cortisol release, one thing is very clear: increased levels of cortisol over a long period of time will result in draining resources from critical body systems in order for the person to have the necessary energy to survive. Remember, God did not design us to just survive, He designed us so that we would have a flourishing life.

During fight or flight, at any level of intensity, cortisol is secreted and spreads to key areas of the body to extract more resources for energy. It travels to the reproductive system and acquires resources from it. There is certainly no need for sexual activity in this situation because the highest priority is running from a bear.

Cortisol also takes energy from the digestive system and begins to shut down parts of it so that more energy can be used for the crisis. It is not time to eat; it is time to run from the bear. Ever notice that when an anxious situation is presented, there can be a loss of appetite or pain in the stomach?

Compromised Immune System

It is imperative to know that there is another system that gets depleted and compromised because of the unease within and the corresponding cortisol drip. This is the body's immune system—the major force designed to ward off disease from the body. The reason that cortisol draws from the immune system is that the body thinks that this crisis is only for a brief stint. It expects you to come to peace very soon, so as not to be caught vulnerable to disease.

In the moment of crisis, one does not need to fight off a cold or disease. The body's primary focus is to deal with the stressor and move on. When fight or flight is occurring chronically, however, the immune system becomes tapped out for too long. This is where so many of our disease battles emerge: a compromised immune system.

Chronic Lack of Peace

When a person remains in a lack of peace within themselves and with their life, fight or flight is often at work. When chronic patterns of stress, anxiety, inward conflict, pressure, condemnation and unforgiveness occur, fight or flight stays intact. This pulls resources from the immune system, making the person vulnerable to infirmity. The immune system loses its ability to efficiently and effectively fight off invaders of the body.

Because we understand how thoughts affect the body, we know what is occurring physically often has a link to what a person is thinking. These thoughts systems become toxic to the body. Quite often they get shoved down in denial, become justified in pride or remain undetected.

Increased cortisol levels also block the operation of two important soldiers in the body. They are called interleukins and macrophages, and they serve the body in powerful ways. Macrophages attack pathogens and infectious agents to preserve health in the body. Interleukins were designed to contribute to immunity and health by performing a litany of tasks, from creating a fever which is used to fight off sickness, to attacking cancer cells and destroying them. When working properly, our immune system will fight off common colds, flus, cancer and more. In fact, a properly working immune system even keeps the battle of allergies away.

When cortisol levels are heightened, however, these agents designed to help cannot fight off invaders and maintain proper

immunity. When the immune system is not at proper operating levels, it is now compromised—leaving the body susceptible to sickness and disease. In dealing with the healing of physical bodies, we have to address why the immune system has been compromised. So much of the answer lies in how the person thinks about themselves, underlying brokenness and their relationship with God and others. More on that later. {eoa}

Mark DeJesus has been equipping people in a full-time capacity since 1995, serving in various roles, including teaching people of all ages, communicating through music, authoring books, leading and mentoring. Mark's deepest love is his family: his wife, Melissa; son, Maximus; and daughter, Abigail. Mark is a teacher, author and mentor who uses many communication mediums, including the written word, a weekly radio podcast show and videos. His deepest call involves equipping people to live as overcomers. Through understanding inside out transformation, Mark's message involves getting to the root of issues that contribute to the breakdown of our relationships, our health and our day-to-day peace. He is passionately reaching his world with a transforming message of love, healing and freedom. Out of their own personal renewal, Mark and Melissa founded Turning Hearts Ministries, a ministry dedicated to inside out transformation. Mark also founded Transformed You, a communication platform for Mark's teachings, writing and broadcasts that are designed to encourage people in their journey of transformation.

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