In the search for a healthy mind, body and spirit there are many avenues to explore, and in searching, it can be misleading to think that one day everything will be in balance and that your life will be totally sorted out from that point on. I often hear people saying that they want to deal with this and that for good – to rid their life of all the negative stuff that happens and gravitate towards some form of ideal existence. This is a compelling and warming ideal, and the focus on removing certain emotional attachments is often much stronger than the vision of the kind of life desired. In simple terms there can be much more ‘inner stick’ than ‘inner carrot’ which creates stress and tension in the mind and body.

Because the mind and body are connected, what you do with one affects the other; a healthy body requires a healthy mind and vice versa. When you understand the way the mind behaves you become aware that your ideal life is not something to be striven for, nor is it a chest full of bad experiences to be discarded, but a state of mind-body-spirit in the here and now. I am reminded of the popular Zen story where the keen student approaches his master and asks:

“How can I advance more speedily in my learning?”

The master’s reply is profoundly simplistic:

“Have you finished eating your soup?”

“Yes” replied the student.

“Then go and wash your bowl” was the master’s final response.

If only the pathway to happiness and success were as simple as washing your bowl! Yet just recall when you last washed a bowl in the kitchen sink. Was your mind fully engaged in the act of washing the bowl, or was it somewhere else, replaying a past experience or constructing some possible future situation? When your mind is in a different place from your body, your energy becomes fragmented across the past, present and future; your ability to focus on the present in other contexts will be impaired; your emotional states will become erratic; others may perceive you as someone who doesn’t listen or care; you become both mentally and physically clumsy and poor health is suddenly upon you. All this happens when your mind develops the pattern of flitting uncontrollably across the time continuum. The key to using past memories and future conjecture for positive effect is to do both with a purity of intent and a clear purpose, in a proactive way. Too often the mind seems to wander of its own accord and dwell on the negative.

So by focusing your mind on washing your bowl you are training your mind to focus on the here and now and to work with pure intent and clear purpose, bringing a calmness and balance to your overall persona. In this state you are able to avoid stress related diseases.

If you overuse your mind you become top-heavy. The energy centre is in the lower abdomen and this is also your centre of gravity. When your mind is over-active and continually distracted by past and future thoughts your centre of gravity shifts up to your head and causes headaches, dizziness, insomnia and physical and emotional imbalance. It also creates a blockage in the major energy channels between the heart, the energy centre and the third eye, which is located in the middle of your forehead.

Whilst working within a predominantly Hindu community of Mauritius, a colleague and I developed a guided meditation technique called ‘Return to the Source’. It came about from an awareness that grew from observing people in Mauritius who had the symptoms of fragmented thinking and were being untrue to their inner feelings. Mauritius may seem like a stress free paradise to westerners, but the reality for many of the indigenous people living on this tiny island is very different indeed. Emotional pain and general dissatisfaction with life is on an epidemic scale. During this time a burning question developed in my mind. What is the change that takes place in a person when that person decides to take responsibility for ‘dealing with their demons’ and listen to their inner truth? I was so curious to know the answer, that my thinking led to the design of a meditation inspired by Hindu wisdom, and it has since become a powerful technique for change in the work that we do with our clients. ‘Return to the Source’ uses metaphorical characters to encourage a person to take responsibility for personal change and to enable the process of change to happen quickly. It creates an awareness of how we block the main energy channels, particularly those connecting the heart with the mind and physical energy and works to open the channels so that change can take place. It has been a powerful way of helping people to access their unique inner signal of incongruity and recognize when they are being less than true with themselves. It also calms the mind and returns their centre of gravity to its proper place. We have had terrific results using this meditation with people from Asia and Europe and from all walks of life. The four characters involved are the Sage, Maya, the Freedom Fighter and the Gate Keeper.
The Sage

In our metaphor, the Sage is the one with infinite knowledge of the universe and in the Hindu faith this is Lord Vishnu, the preserver. Vishnu is the core, the centre and the cohesive point through which everything exists. As we are all part of the same universe that nourishes us, we have all the intelligence of the universe in every cell of our being. The cohesive point for this intelligence is the heart, the place where you feel both joy and pain and the energy centre for relating and sharing. The heart's focus is to bring harmony and it is the heart that acts as the Sage, holder of universal knowledge about what is good for us and what will make us happy and what will make us unhappy. At a fundamental level the heart needs to relate and share with your mind and your physical energy. The heart is directly joined by an energy channel to the central reservoir of physical energy in the lower abdomen and to our seat of intelligence or the third eye at the forehead. When these channels are fully open, knowledge in the form of energy flows freely. In this way you are tuned-in to the signals radiating from your heart and are able to direct your physical energy intelligently into activities that energize you. When these major channels become blocked through emotional imbalance the signals are unable to reach your energy reservoir and third eye. The consequence is that energy and intelligence become deployed in areas that may not be good for your spiritual well being and are likely to deplete your energy. As a result you may pursue activities that are superficial, bringing only short-term satisfaction. I shall return to the Sage later.

Maya

In the Hindu faith, Maya is the concept of eternal temptation coupled with the divine power of illusion. Maya can appear in any shape or form and represents all that is impermanent in the world. In everyday terms Maya conjures up all the distractions that cause you to lose focus on what is important to you and all the ways in which you create false realities about the world. If you are to keep your energy channels open, you must learn to be effective at dealing with Maya in whatever form Maya takes. Whether as adverts for luxury goods and holidays, fancy foods, sweets, chocolates, or sexual desires, Maya works to attach your mind to all things external. Each time you make a false assumption or form a judgment, it is Maya at work. When your mind is pulled to and fro from the present to the past and future you can be sure Maya is playing with you. No matter how well you know Maya there will be many times when Maya will surprise you. Every day Maya is waiting with something new to tempt you with and to catch you out. You can, however, learn to overcome the temptation and this is what makes you strong inside. To do this your energy channels must be fully open so that the Sage can guide you.

The Freedom Fighter

Now we come to the hero in our metaphor. The Freedom Fighter is the only defence against Maya, but he is an enigmatic character and not everyone seems to know how to engage him. The Freedom Fighter can be a recluse, lying dormant in his own world and oblivious to what is happening in the energy channels. He is personally unaffected by the closing of energy gates and can spend his time sleeping and practicing martial arts combat techniques, for he knows that at any time he may be called into active service by the Sage. He has no will of his own and a healthy respect for Maya, a worthy opponent, but, because he has a good heart, he will only serve the Sage.

The Freedom Fighter can live the life of a recluse, but he can also be very engaged in combat with Maya, blocking attempts to win over the Gate Keeper and freeing him from Maya's power so that the energy gates can remain open. The Freedom Fighter is omnipotent, although some battles can last for a lifetime and he is often caught unawares by Maya's unending creativity for controlling the Gate Keeper. Maya cannot be destroyed, captured, reasoned with, or disabled in any way, so the fight is a lifelong fight to keep the energy gates open. The Freedom Fighter is learning each day about the many ways Maya exerts influence over the Gate Keeper. There is never a moment's rest for the Freedom Fighter, but then he is never so happy and fulfilled than when he is pursuing his purpose in life and guarding.
you against the constant trickery and illusions of Maya.

The Sage has all the knowledge in the universe but is unable to act. The Sage knows when you are feeling sad, angry or fearful, or torn between two or more life choices. The Sage can feel when you are unhappy or feeling alone, or when you are in a troubled relationship. He can feel when you are lacking love and appreciation from others and when you are pulled in many directions at once. The Sage feels these things through a visceral tug. As the tug gets stronger so the Sage responds in two possible ways – and this is where the most significant and powerful choice is made. The Sage will either grow in courage and size and become heart-strong, or he will retreat and yield to the overwhelming force of Maya and grow weaker and get smaller. The more courageous the Sage becomes, the stronger the message that will eventually reach the Freedom Fighter and call him to the battle against Maya. If the Sage loses heart and gets smaller his signals get weaker and may never reach the Freedom Fighter. All it takes to arouse him is a pinch of courage to go beyond the emotional pain and decide that Maya has had it easy for too long – it’s time to act!

**Returning to the Source**

As soon as the courage is strong enough, the Freedom Fighter can be called to battle. His immediate focus is to open the main gates and let the energy flow once more. When this happens, it brings immediate changes to your neurophysiology. You become lighter, more relaxed, focused, decisive and determined to succeed in whatever endeavours you so choose. The condition of your skin may improve with more shine and fewer blemishes. Your eyes will sparkle more than ever before and you will begin to feel more grounded and balanced – this is what is meant by the title of the meditation ‘Returning to the Source’, a fundamental shift back to a state of natural health and well being. You are living from the source of your spiritual awareness and you are being true to yourself. No more lies and excuses for avoiding your issues, rather an outward extension of your natural energy showing others a confident and congruent aura that is warm and inviting. Your heart can now indulge in relating, sharing and creating harmony.

**About the Author**

David Molden is a director and coach with Quadrant 1 International and author of self-help books published by Pearson Education worldwide. He is a NLP trainer, and with his business partner, Pat Hutchinson, uses meditation, qigong and ancient wisdom with NLP to help individuals make life changes on the Personal Success Programme. He can be contacted on energise@quadrant1.com, www.quadrant1.com

**Further Information**

For a CD of the Return to the Source meditation send a cheque for £13 (includes p&p) to Quadrant 1 International, 46 Market Square, Witney, Oxon, OX28 6AL.

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Positive Health March 2004