

An abstract graphic on the right side of the page, consisting of a thick, curved arc that resembles a rainbow. The arc is composed of several overlapping, brushstroke-like bands of color: purple, blue, green, and white. The colors transition from purple at the top to blue, then green, and finally white at the bottom. The overall effect is dynamic and artistic.

# **HEALING JOURNEY PROGRAM**

## **LEVEL 6: SPIRITUALITY**

**Created by:  
Alastair J. Cunningham, OC, PhD, CPsych**

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## Healing through mind and spirit. Part I: Healing the Body

### General Introduction.

A diagnosis of cancer, particularly if we are told our very lives are threatened, brings a turmoil of emotions – fear, of course, predominant among them, sometimes anger (it can seem so unfair, even though we know it happens to a lot of us), deep sadness if we see our lives ending much too soon. My own diagnosis was nearly 40 years ago, but I still vividly remember waking each morning after it, feeling “normal”, only to have, within seconds, a kind of dark cloud of foreboding fill my mind, as I remembered that my life was at risk.

Under such circumstances, we may ask if there is anything we can do to help ourselves, in addition to receiving medical treatment. My reaction was to intensify my own psychological and spiritual work, including spending time at a yoga ashram. This all made such a difference to my health and state of mind that I felt a strong obligation and desire to try to help others through the same methods (which led to my leaving a career in cell biology, retraining in clinical psychology, and intensive study of various spiritual texts). This has continued through what is now 20 years of retirement.

In this culture, it is usual to believe that there is nothing we can do, except rely almost entirely on medical treatment, which sometimes cures, but often cannot. Then people feel like “victims” – that word is even used in public notices about cancer. In the Healing Journey (HJ) program we think it is possible to do more: if we learn to use the mind skillfully, and to contact the spiritual “dimension”, we may be able to tip the balance in favour of healing. In an earlier book (“Can the Mind Heal Cancer?”), I pointed to some evidence and clinical experience for much better-than-expected medical results when people with cancer become very involved in self help or self healing, usually with an emphasis on spiritual investigation. This is an idea not yet accepted by our medical system; it is also not an outcome that can be guaranteed by methods such as those taught in the HJ program. However, my published research, personal experience, and clinical practice with thousands of people who have tried to help themselves (in addition to standard medical treatment) has shown me that some relief of suffering is always possible, and effects on disease progression do seem to occur in many cases. Occasionally, people heal from advanced cancers that are medically described as incurable.

Much can be done using the techniques of modern psychology, as you may have learned in earlier stages of the HJ program, or in other similar settings. We can make changes to our “internal monologue”, which lift our mood. Psychology does not generally claim to promote physical healing, however. The great spiritual traditions of mankind, stretching back through thousands of years, also have ideas that can alleviate suffering and bring peace in the midst of what may seem like disastrous events. There are some claims of physical healing through prayer, although the emphasis is usually on attaining peace of mind. The novel feature of the present stage of HJ is that we are going to put together both of these powerful tools for healing ourselves: the psychological and the spiritual.

You will see how our sense of who we are is greatly expanded by spiritual ideas and experiences, and how our spiritual journey can be assisted by using our most developed human faculty – the power to reason with our minds. “Healing through the mind” becomes the process of learning how to communicate with the spiritual dimension, higher consciousness, so that it responds by promoting

healing changes in the body. Nobody is denying that physical events, like mutations in DNA or actions of hormones on cells, take place in the body: all events in the physical realm have physical causes. The claim is simply that there is an extra – and very powerful – element acting between mind and body: higher consciousness.

This course begins with 2 “preliminary” sessions; the first is a review of the basic psychological techniques we need to be familiar with, and the second is about spirituality – what it is, and how it differs from religion. The main body of the course follows, in 2 parts:

Part I: “Healing the Body”, The central approach is to replace the inevitable pessimistic monologue with healing affirmations. It is largely psychological in orientation, but draws on spiritual principles to explain why the techniques used have the power to affect physical health. We also investigate ideas that may block our motivation to act, and attempt to clarify our sense of purpose or direction in life. This part is highly practical, very much concerned with promoting physical healing; it could be useful to people who do not wish to consider spiritual ideas.

Part II: “Healing the Self”: this part, while still aiming at healing of both body and mind, goes far beyond that: it is a survey of a variety of mostly modern sources which teach us who we are, in the larger, spiritual sense. The healing journey becomes a spiritual journey as we realise that we are not simply body-minds, but an integral part of the greater consciousness. “Healing”, the relief of suffering, can be guaranteed as we learn this; a return to health in the body, while now more probable, is of less concern. Most of all, the fear of death recedes as we realize that it is not the end of who we are.

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## **Preliminary session #1: Understanding our own minds.**

Healing, in the broadest sense, is the relief of suffering. We are accustomed to thinking of suffering as something imposed from outside, and so we focus mainly on attempting to get rid of the threats to our comfort and security. For a cancer diagnosis, this means removing the offending tissue, as quickly as possible. This is our first “line of defense”, and for many in our culture, the only course pursued. However, if we reflect a bit further on the suffering cancer causes, it is usually not the cancer itself that is the immediate problem but what it seems to entail: physical pain, disruption of life, possible premature death. More generally, suffering is the state of not liking what we perceive as happening!

This realization suggests a psychological approach to healing: changing the way we view what is happening! It may sound trivial at first, compared with, say, the serious business of excising a cancer with modern surgical methods! Nevertheless, diminishing our distress and achieving peace of mind is what ultimately matters to us (you may need to ponder this for a while!). We have seen, in the earlier stages of the Healing Journey program, how this may be accomplished: by examining the stream of thoughts, dropping those that lead us into a state of chronic anxiety and arousal, and gently nudging the internal monologue in a more helpful direction.

Both to diminish suffering and to provide a platform for using our thoughts in a therapeutic way, we first of all need to be aware of them; perhaps surprisingly, most people have very little such awareness, and are thus “pushed around” by their thoughts, and the emotions that almost automatically follow. Below is a brief review of some fundamental ideas and practices.

### **1.. The habitual activity of mind**

*Sit and watch your mind for a time? What do you find? Is it naturally quiet unless you have a specific issue to think about, or is it restless?*

A “no-brainer” isn’t it? For most of us, the mind is constantly throwing up ideas and comments, most of them unhelpful. As Eckhart Tolle puts it: “thinking has become a disease!” (when it is simply a tool).

### **2.. What kind of thoughts commonly come up?**

*Be honest here: aren’t most of your thoughts directly or indirectly about yourself? How much of this thinking is “negative”, i.e., critical, of oneself, or of others or events?*

*Another useful phrase from Tolle (and other teachers) is: “the Story of Me”! Ask yourself, how much of my thinking is the Story of Me? Even better, substitute your own name for “Me” – it makes it more unavoidably personal. If you find that much of your thinking is “the Story of Mary, or Bill”, ask yourself: is this helpful, or necessary? What does it do to me to be constantly caught up in this story, constantly thinking “I want this, I don’t want that”?*

### **3.. To what extent do I believe my mind is what I am?**

*We may casually think of ourselves as a body, with a mind popping out of it. Ask yourself: if I had a choice of wanting to lose (a) one or more, or even all of my limbs, or (b), my mind, which would I choose?*

Another no-brainer. Explore it: find out for yourself how much you are identified with your mind (this will become central in the spiritual work later).

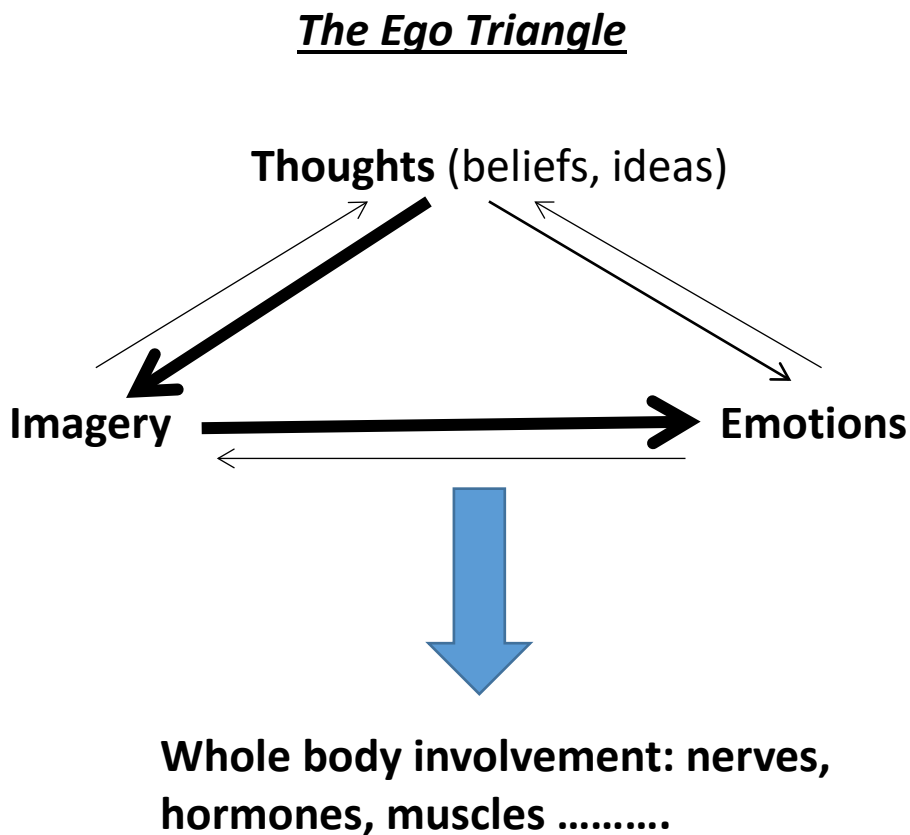
**4.. What is my mind anyway?**

*Is it a “thing”, like a container? If you think so, what does it look like? If you want to claim that it is the result of nerve cells firing, does that make it a thing? (Consider: your voice is a result of physical processes, but is it a thing, an object?). If the mind is not a thing, what is it – a process, a program, an “App” perhaps?*

Our minds seem to be a collection of thoughts, emotions, memories and sensations, rather than a bucket into which events may be put. You may not agree: take into account the extent to which ideas from Freud and others have caused us to think of the mind as a kind of physical thing with compartments (ego, superego, id).

**5.. How are thoughts, images and emotions related, and do they affect the body?**

*Here you can think back to the “ego triangle”, which displays these 3 major mental events as intimately related. Looking at the diagram below, where do sensations fit in?*



**6a.. Am I at the mercy of my thoughts?**

*Even if you find the mind hard to control (and we all do, despite years of trying), perhaps by now you have seen that we can change our thinking if we are willing to make the effort. What’s the first thing we have to do to bring some peace to our minds?*

Yes, that’s right; we must identify the unwanted, usually negative thoughts, and try to drop them. Remember: “diagnosis first, then therapy”.

**6b.. How do I replace unwanted thoughts with healthy ones?**

*Recall the IDEA acronym, which is a useful way to remember how to replace negative thoughts with positive affirmations:*

<b>I</b>	<b>Intensely desire the change:</b> this is the “fuel”, as it were, that propels changes in the brain and body.
<b>D</b>	<b>Be diligent/dedicated in our practice:</b> affirmations should be repeated regularly and as often and as intensively as possible
<b>E</b>	<b>Expect that a change will happen:</b> while accepting that it may not happen within any specific time frame.
<b>A</b>	<b>Avoid focussing on the negatives,</b> i.e. what we see as unwanted (very important!). <i>Notice how the mind goes there automatically.</i>

**7.. I am constantly critical of myself – never good enough.**

This is a big one for most of us. It can help to realize that it is seldom justified, it is not “our fault”, and in any case, is at work in most people (even if they don’t show it on the outside!). Our self esteem tends to become set early in life, and depends largely on how we were treated by the powerful adults around us (and to some extent by peers), at an age when we accepted the apparent verdict of these other people. If we are constantly criticized or put down as children, our mind and “spirit” tend to “contract”, in a sense, and it’s hard to expand out of this posture. So, diagnose the self-put-downs, and try to replace them with positive affirmation about the self. We come back to this in topic 3. You will also find that the spiritual work we do in part II of the course can help.

**8.. How long will it take me to master my thoughts?**

Let’s face it, most of us will never gain complete control, but that’s not necessary. The main thing is to know what’s going on in our minds, preferably at all times, which is not hard to achieve. We need only adopt the habit of vigilance, much as we learn to be vigilant about our surroundings while driving a car. Then whenever something comes up that stimulates a strong emotional reaction, we can figure out what thoughts led to it (it’s almost always a thought, or perhaps an image). Regular journaling speeds up the learning process. After a while you will find that many reactions follow a familiar pattern, and don’t need much extra analysis. A couple of common situations to look at:

- Something doesn’t turn out the way you want – what are your thoughts?
- You hear of critical remarks that someone made about you (or you experience them directly): again, what are your thoughts?

Understanding our patterns of thought can, and perhaps needs, to be a lifetime pursuit. You will find that your understanding increases in a very satisfying way over the years. As it does, compassion for yourself and others will grow. It has been called “becoming a human being”!

**9.. Would therapy (one on one) with a professional help me?**

If you develop severe anxiety or depression, medication may be helpful (from a psychiatrist). Individual psychotherapy is often useful also; it can help you access areas that are difficult to uncover alone. But most cancer patients are psychologically healthy, apart from anxiety about their medical condition. For such people, I believe that after gaining a basic familiarity with the mind's activity, it is more useful to move on, to seeking a broader spiritual awareness of themselves.

**10.. What other specific tools are there to achieve peace of mind?**

In addition to regular monitoring and changing our habits of thought, there is a lot we can do:

- Establish a practice of meditation, at a regular time each day
- Consider learning one of the traditional “mind-body” approaches to calming the mind, such as tai chi, yoga or chi gong.
- Read lots of self-help and spiritual books (but be discriminating in your choices).
- Watch and listen to helpful You-tube videos.
- Adopt the habit of periodically stopping and asking yourself: “What was I thinking?” In particular, try to diminish focus on “the story of ..... (me)”
- Simplify your life – drop activities that don't support your healing.
- Regular journaling: this is essential. Record any insights that come, without delay.
- Consider Eknath Easwaran's “8-point program” for healthy living (see topic 6).

**11. Finding purpose in life.**

This is so important it needs a separate section (see topics 4 and 5).

In our rigorous, published research on people who went on to live for many years with cancers that a panel of oncologists predicted would be fatal within about one year, we found 3 qualities which were seldom evident among the general cancer patient population (and see “Can the Mind Heal Cancer?”, downloadable free from the Wellspring website, for a fuller description):

- Authenticity – knowing what was important in their lives
- Autonomy – feeling they had the right to pursue that
- Acceptance – more compassion for themselves and others, and for the situation they found themselves in.

Of course, these attributes don't guarantee cure of disease – we are simply aiming to improve the odds in our favour here - but they create, in mind and body, a climate more conducive to healing.

Here's what Seth (see topic 1) has to say about finding purpose in life:

*“Physically speaking, man's purpose is to help enrich the quality of life in all its dimensions. Spiritually speaking, his purpose is to understand the qualities of love and creativity, to intellectually and psychically understand the sources of his being, and to lovingly create other dimensions of reality of which he is presently unaware.....he is experimenting with a unique and new kind of reality. You were given a body so that you could learn from it.”*

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## Preliminary session #2. What is “Spirituality”?

- The spiritual view, expressed in many religions and cultures, is that there is much more to us than body and mind; rather, our true essence is consciousness, part of the greater, overarching consciousness, from which our physical life here derives.
- We can find out about this for ourselves, and do not need to rely on imposed religious beliefs.
- The teachings of mystics through the ages, and information from reliable channelled sources provide guidance, if we are open to them.

The great spiritual traditions of mankind, stretching back through thousands of years, also have ideas that can alleviate suffering and even bring peace in the midst of what may seem like disastrous events. Their message is, in essence, that we are each part of something that, while intangible, is much greater than the physical body we inhabit, and that death of the body is not the end of our “selves”. They also hold out the hope that help is available from these higher “dimensions”. The result of spiritual exploration might thus be not only peace of mind, but also physical healing.

*What are your current views on these basic questions: “Is there something more, over and above this physical world?” “How could I find out?” “What’s the difference between spirituality and religion?”*

As we begin our journey, we need to be clear what spirituality is, and what it is not. Our approach to spirituality, and to healing through mind generally, will be to examine the evidence. This needs to be said, because to many people, evidence comes only from science, and anything to do with spirituality is unprovable. Science is one, and only one, avenue for acquiring knowledge about reality: it aims to be objective, that is, it describes events that are apparently (although not, in fact) unaffected by our observation, and that can be observed and confirmed by others. There are other kinds of evidence, however, notably the more subjective kind that is used, for example, in historical research, where a picture of events may be pieced together from the accounts of different witnesses. We gain confidence in these accounts if they agree; the teachings of spiritual masters are of this kind. The logical reasoning of philosophers is also a kind of evidence: we look for consistency and rationality in their writings, and we will see that clear reasoning can help us in our spiritual exploration. The arts can evoke evidence of a kind, about who we are and what our lives mean. The great myths and legends of mankind embody the distilled wisdom of peoples in metaphorical forms. But perhaps the most convincing kind of evidence is personal – a genuine spiritual experience can leave us with a knowledge of underlying truth that no amount of intellectual criticism can undermine. Our hope in this course is to direct interested people towards ways of finding this kind of truth for themselves.

## KEY IDEAS

### 1. The central idea of spirituality: is it true?

We usually think we are bodies, dropped on to this Earth at birth, and that we have a mind which is purely a by-product of nerve cells working in the brain. This view is called materialism or physicalism – the idea that everything is derived from physical matter. It is an excessively gloomy view, asserting that our existence will be short, and will come to a sharp end when this body dies! There is really no room for “spirit” or “God” in this picture, if we are honest about it, and our lives have no meaning beyond what we can fashion in this brief lifetime.

Materialism has worked well to support a human culture based on technology – the manipulation of physical objects. While we can choose to live with this doctrine as a guide it is very limiting, with nothing to say on the “big” questions about ultimate purpose and meaning in our lives. Many experts think it is also completely wrong, as we will see!

By contrast, the spiritual view says that there is more to us than physical matter, that there is a power or dimension beyond matter. It is something intangible, without form, which has been given various names: a higher power, spirit, consciousness, soul, God, Source – something more like “mind-stuff” than “body-stuff”. How do we know whether or not this is true? The first thing we need to do is pose a meaningful question. To ask: “does God exist?” is not very helpful unless we can define what we mean by God (see videos under “Continuing Study” at the end of this preliminary session). We need to view this higher power more broadly. Perhaps we could ask: is there some “energy”, or power, or intelligence that is not physical in nature, but which can interact with and influence our physical world under certain conditions? A power or source which transcends our physical reality, and is not bound by physical laws such as time, space and causality? Putting it this way, although it is still admittedly rather vague, does allow us to look for actual evidence as to whether or not it might exist. And indeed, there is plenty of evidence; for example:

**(a). First** there are a lot of phenomena that simply can’t be explained by materialism (the “only matter exists” idea): telepathy, precognition (knowing the future), “seeing” very distant events, psychokinesis (moving objects with the mind and no physical connection), out of body and near-death experiences, phenomena in quantum physics, and distant healing through prayer. These have all been documented by researchers, although they tend to be disregarded by many scientists; any one of them, if true, dismantles materialism. For example, it has been found that experiences of arriving in what seems to be another dimension, very detailed and enjoyable, occur quite frequently when people are clinically “dead” with no detectable brain activity for short periods of time, then recover (see the video describing research on near death experiences: “Consciousness beyond life”, in the list of resources for continuing study).

**(b). Second**, there is the testimony of the great mystics, (reinforced by the experiences of millions of ordinary humans). The mystics are simply people who have devoted their lives to finding out who and what they are, in their essential being – by quietening the mind, and intensely concentrating “within”, to see what can be found. Their conclusions tend to be similar, across cultures and across the centuries: there is indeed something more, in the realm of consciousness, and we are all part of that one overarching Consciousness, sometimes called “God”.

**(c). Third** is the phenomenon of “channelling”, where information (from non-living sources) is passed on through the mind of a passive individual (a “channel”), and recorded, usually by others. The information characteristically includes things that the channel could not have known. This process, when it is authentic (and phony channels exist!) is analogous to the inner “knowing”: of mystics. The Seth books, which we will discuss at length, and A Course in Miracles (topic 7) are outstanding and well-known examples of this process. The Koran is another example: it was channelled through a non-literate prophet, Mohammed.

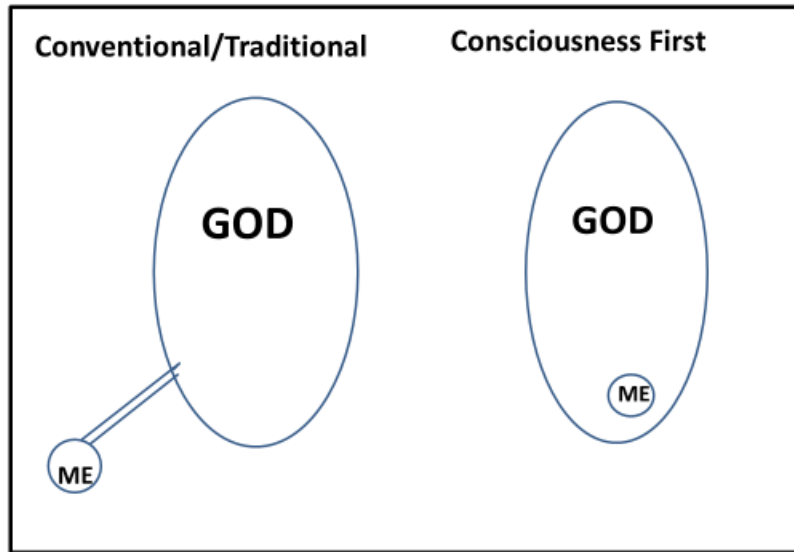
Skeptics are unlikely to be convinced by the evidence outlined here. Others may be more interested in the arguments of some modern philosophers, like Bernardo Kastrup (see his excellent book “Why materialism is baloney”, and others!). However, I am going to assume that we are open-minded about spirituality in the following pages: what matters to each of us is our own experience, and our task here is to look for ways to acquire it.

## **2. Two different ways of viewing spirituality:**

We certainly appear to be physical beings, and the world around us seems concrete enough. To a die-hard materialist – believing that only matter exists – there is no room for a “god”. Everything about ourselves is simply the movement of molecules, and in fact many scientists expect ultimately to explain everything in these physical terms. Consciousness (simple definition: our awareness of being) poses a big problem, but the hope is that it can be understood as a by-product of the functions of the brain. Someone with this point of view ought logically to be an atheist, and many are. How, then are we to account for the experience of millions of people that there is something more, something intangible that affects us, in other words, a spiritual dimension? And if that is true, how might the physical world and this spiritual dimension relate to one another?

Most of us, scientists or not, like to think of ourselves as physical bodies, and yet many profess a religious faith or spiritual belief: that there is more, another intangible dimension to us. How can we reconcile these 2 apparently conflicting ideas? The traditional way has been to say that, although we are bodies, there is something inside us, often called “spirit” or “soul”, that is made of this intangible, non-physical “stuff”, and that this soul survives the death of the body. Ideas vary widely as to what happens after death, but within the theistic religions there is the idea of a “return” to the presence of an all-embracing “God”. This divine being has often been thought of as a kind of super-human figure; this is clearly a projection of ideas about authority figures (such as parents) in our earthly lives. Another way to say it: the idea of a personal god is a metaphor for the intangible spiritual background. (Many modern religious people probably hold a more sophisticated view of God as some kind of overarching energy or power). This traditional or conventional kind of spirituality, then, seems to allow us to straddle two worlds: to retain our idea of ourselves as physical beings, but harbouring within a non-material, indeed eternal, spirit.

There is a second, and in the opinion of many spiritual writers, both ancient and modern, a more coherent and evolved view of spirituality, which we might call “consciousness first”: that our primary essence is not physical matter, not flesh and blood, but consciousness itself. They go on to say that body, mind, and all physical objects are expressions of consciousness, and that God, or the Divine Source, can be understood as the overarching Consciousness encompassing us all. This is the reverse of what materialists assume - that consciousness arises from brain activity. How could consciousness give rise to matter? Scientists don’t know: but then they don’t have any idea how matter (brain activity) produces consciousness either! The diagram below illustrates these 2 points of view.



If the “consciousness first” idea seems hard to accept, note that we do have an example of consciousness producing form that is familiar to all of us, although often disregarded – our dreams! Every night, we all dream (many people don’t realize it), and from our mind/consciousness alone, generate a world that is completely convincing and apparently solid and real. Many spiritual teachers say that our world is in fact a dream that the greater Consciousness or God is having!

These ideas may take a while to absorb if they are new to you: here’s the essentials:

- We’ve contrasted the materialist view of the world with the spiritual view.
  - The materialist) view: our reality is composed only of matter, and its interactions.
  - The spiritual view: there is more to our reality, and to me, than just physical matter; there is a power or dimension beyond the physical, with which I can interact.
- Then we described 2 versions of the spiritual point of view:
  - The conventional: God, or the Divine Source, is outside of me (of my body), but I do have within me a soul or spirit which is the same kind of non-material “stuff”.
  - The “consciousness first” or consciousness only view: that our essential being is consciousness, and that matter arises from this.

(Note that the existence of this world, or its physical laws, are not in any way denied: it is simply claimed that this is not the ultimate reality – more in part II).

### 3. What might be the practical advantages, to me, of a spiritual view?

- If you are in essence consciousness, rather than flesh (and the mind is just consciousness at work), it seems much more likely that some healing of the body may occur through your mind.
- Moreover, as we come to know ourselves as part of a greater Consciousness, we may learn to contact this higher dimension, and receive help from it.
- The death of my body will not be the death of “me”! My essential self continues.
- We will gain a greatly expanded view of who we are, and how we fit in to a larger scheme (in other words, a sense of the meaning of our lives).

#### 4. Spirituality and Religion; how are they related?

Religions begin with the quest for meaning and value beyond the physical self. They are usually based on the revelations or insights arrived at by a talented and dedicated individual mystic. He or she conveys what has been learned to interested followers. After the death of the founder, these insights typically are organised into a system of ideas that may, over time, become quite rigid and dogmatic, often veering away from the original teachings (think of the absurdity of war in the name of religion!).

Religions can act as a support for an individual's spiritual seeking, although often its members are content to accept ideas and strictures laid down by others, rather than doing the work of their own searching. In earlier times, when few people had much education, the spiritual insights behind a religion were often simplified, to make them more readily understandable (and also, sometimes, to allow the religious professionals to control their members through instilling guilt or fear!). Thus "God" can become a kind of human figure, although with superhuman powers, a projection of ideas with which people are familiar.

Religions have been a vital force in the evolution of human culture, although they have often done harm as well as good. Some of the most influential individuals on the planet have been mystics and spiritual teachers; they include, according to Arnold Toynbee: Confucius and Laotze, the Buddha, the Prophets of Israel and Judah, Zoroaster, Jesus, Mohammed and Socrates.

Being a student of spirituality, or on a "spiritual path" implies that the person is engaged in an active quest, beyond simply accepting what the professionals within the religion have to say, and aimed at acquiring experience for oneself. Most of the major religions have a kind of mystical arm, a set of learning and practices for those (few) adherents who wish to probe more deeply: for example, Sufism in Islam, the Kabbalah in Judaism, Yoga in Hinduism, Christian mysticism within that religion.

People often don't distinguish religion and the spiritual search, yet they have become rather different in the modern West (although much less so in the "East", and in earlier centuries). Here's a brief comparison of religious and spiritual approaches to ultimate truth (perhaps you can think of other elements):

Religion	The spiritual search
Social: generally pursued in groups	Personal: the investigation is individual
Embedded in a culture, which it influences	Relatively culture-independent
Provides answers for its followers	Raises questions for investigation
Focussed on one set of answers; often disparages other religions (exclusivist)	Eclectic: draws on multiple sources of information
Usually large, hierarchical organisations	Little formal organisation
Scheduled meetings with considerable ritual	Little ritual, no set times for study
Often an authority figure (God) is thought to be "watching" (theistic religions)	No sense of any judgment by higher authority.

Questions to ask yourself:

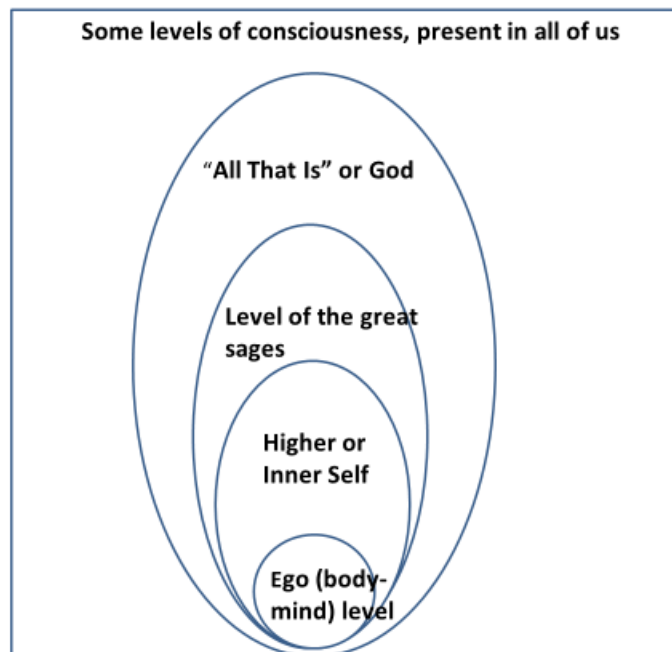
- How does my ego-self react to the idea that some higher level has much more wisdom to offer, and will guide much of my thinking life if I allow it? What am I afraid I might lose? What might I have to give up? What would be the advantages? Could this guide my healing?
- What is my main aim in trying to contact the spiritual “dimension” or aspect of myself? How will I go about it – what will be my principal methods? If I already belong to a religion or similar organisation, how can I use this as a platform for spiritual growth?

## FURTHER IDEAS

### 1. What is my place in relation to a greater power or consciousness?

#### (a). Consciousness as a series of “shells” or “levels”.

Let’s accept the “consciousness first” idea as our working model of reality (it’s not essential to do so for part I of this course, however; the practical suggestions still apply without it). How can we visualise “consciousness”? Is it organised in some way? In many traditions, a series of “shells” or “levels” of consciousness is proposed. To anticipate topic 1, look at the description of consciousness that comes from Seth, a channelled source whom we will meet shortly. He implies it is a series of levels, nested within one another:



Remember: we are not dealing with material things in space. The dimensions shown on the map are not physical entities, with boundaries, but rather an aid to thought. It might help to consider them as “fields”, by analogy with fields of force, rather than as structures in the physical sense, although they are not composed of energy as the term is understood in our physics.

Somewhat similar maps are described in many spiritual and metaphysical texts. We can see where various religious symbols could be located in it: the usual self is the ego, while the consciousness of the great avatars (e.g., Jesus, the Buddha, Christian and Hindu saints) belong in the higher levels. “God” becomes the overarching consciousness, embracing everything else; Seth refers to this level as “All That Is”.

- *If you have a religious background, how might you reconcile this more secular explanation of the nature of our consciousness with what you have been taught?*
- *What does the word “God” mean to you?*
- *While conventional (theistic) religions often represent a divine being as something outside of ourselves, the map of consciousness sees us as part of and connected with all other beings – there is no separation. If you like: “I am part of God”. Your reactions to this?*

**(b). What is the relevance of the idea of levels of consciousness to my spiritual search?**

- It is simply a “map” (again, a metaphor) useful in organising our thinking. In many spiritual traditions, there is no talk of levels: there is only our ego (sense of a separate self) and the greater consciousness in which it is embedded.
- A person following a theistic religion (e.g., Christianity) would usually consider just 2 “levels”: one, herself, and a separate higher consciousness, given the name of God.
- People in many religions pray to an avatar, like Jesus, Krishna, or Divine Mother. Such symbolic figures might be considered to fit into the map at a lower level than an ultimate Deity. They may act as a conduit to the “highest” level.
- Recall the Inner Healer exercise of level 2 of the Healing Journey program, which we will revive in this course. It is a simple way of visualising or putting a face to a level of consciousness beyond our normal awareness.
- Whatever tradition we follow, to receive “messages” from any higher levels we obviously need to “listen” internally, meaning to stop the chatter of the thinking mind. Meditation practice is an aid to better listening in this way.

**2. The spiritual journey as expanding the sense of self**

“Spirituality” entails a path or journey: it is the search for a dimension beyond the physical and mental aspects of our lives. By locating ourselves within this dimension, we hope to find meaning beyond the basic biological and social levels. The search for this level of meaning is an individual pursuit, which can be explained using a simple metaphor: expansion. Expansion of what? Of our consciousness or underlying awareness (same thing). Consider how our awareness expands as we develop from infancy to maturity, as shown in the table below:

Birth, and first few months of life	Aware only of comfort and immediate surroundings
Early years	See ourselves as separate individuals. Then, gradual socialisation occurs: we learn to consider others
Immature adult	Learn to restrain impulses but remain focussed on gratifying the self (some “adults” stop at this point!)

Mature adult	After experience, reflection, perhaps travel, we realize and accept that the self is a part of a larger order, biological and social. We may come to realize that we create our own experience.
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There's room for a lot of variation at all of these stages, of course: for example, some adults pursue greater self-understanding through psychological therapies. This may provide a good basis for subsequent spiritual development. However, the process above is largely concerned with the mind, that is, with the individual's ways of thinking about self and world.

Spirituality starts where this psychological process leaves off. It is concerned with the further expansion of our awareness beyond the physical and the psychological, into dimensions whose existence has been proposed in many traditions (such as the great religions), although we don't know how to measure them with instruments. The evidence for them comes from "inner" or intuitive experience, not physical measurement. They are sometimes described as shells or levels of energies, or perhaps of information, surrounding and embracing the body-mind, as in the diagram above. For those engaged in a spiritual journey, the expansion of awareness continues:

Early spiritual development	Awareness grows that there is something non-physical that transcends the body-mind, often conceived of as "higher", or as "God". The body-mind remains one's primary identity, but is seen in relationship to this higher order.
Further spiritual development	The individual begins to see herself as, in essence, consciousness, a part of a greater or higher consciousness. If the idea of God is retained, she may see herself as eventually merging with the divine.
Advanced spiritual awareness	The individual sees his body-mind as one of many expressions of the divine or higher consciousness in physical form. There is only the one Consciousness. He may at first identify self as an "observer", but eventually sees everything as the Self. We come to know "what I am".

The table above shows the spiritual development process as a continuing expansion beyond an exclusive focus on a physical body-mind, and into increasingly extended non-physical dimensions. The person's relationship to these higher dimensions is usually "dualistic", at first, a separate self with a spirit inside that reaches out to the divine. If development continues, the individual may reach a point where she no longer sees herself as at all separate from the overall consciousness. In much the same way as growth from a child to an adult provides a much greater range of options for action, so this spiritual expansion allows us to see illness and healing in a much broader context, and to invoke potentials that may promote healing.

### 3. Tolle's "portals".

A source of great wisdom, untainted by dogma, is the writing of Eckhart Tolle. His second book, "A New Earth" is the easiest place to start. Tolle has, in a sense, boiled down the spiritual quest to one simple operation: remaining alert and aware in the present moment, without internal comment. This is a kind of meditation, and his writings are close in tone to Buddhist practice. Tolle, in his first book, "The Power of Now", describes 7 "portals into the un-manifested", which simply means ways of contacting higher levels of the Self. You will find them described in chapter 7 of the book – I highly recommend it.

- Portal 1: The “Now”, i.e., resting in the present moment.
- Portal 2: Cessation of thinking
- Portal 3: “Surrender”, meaning letting go of emotional resistance to what is.
- Portal 4: “Getting in touch with the energy field of the inner body”.
- Portal 5: Silence
- Portal 6: Space/nothingness (i.e., being aware of this).
- Portal 7: the portal that opens at the time of death (involuntary)

*In the earlier stages of the Healing Journey program, we explored a number of ways to change our patterns of thought, in order to experience more peace, and less suffering. Which of Tolle’s “portals” remind you of this earlier psychological work?*

.....

**Summary:**

- We contrasted the usual materialist/physicalist view of reality with the spiritual view.
  - Spirituality is the search for who we are as beings in consciousness.
  - The most mature spiritual view is that our essence is consciousness: the physical world, including our bodies, arises from that underlying consciousness
  - We compared the religious approach (offering answers) to the spiritual (asking questions).
  - We began the discussion of how to acquire our own experience (to be continued).
- 

**FOR CONTINUING STUDY**

**Reading:** Books in all the main spiritual traditions are readily available, and are of course an excellent way to get an overview of the task ahead in a relatively short time. A list of (older) books appears in my text “Bringing Spirituality into your Healing Journey” (available free on the Wellspring website; go to “Well on the Web”, “resources”, then Healing Journey level 3). For a survey of the great religions of mankind I warmly recommend Huston Smith’s book “The World’s Religions”. It is available as a shorter illustrated version, easy to read and with many wonderful and evocative pictures. Smith, a renown authority on his subject, describes these religions, once shorn of their institutional trappings, as mankind’s “wisdom traditions”, “data banks that house the winnowed wisdom of the human race”.

**Some video links:**

[What is Materialism?](#) 1 min  
*Very clear*

.....

[Spirituality vs Religion ~ Eckhart Tolle](#) 2.50 **Audio only**  
 Many religious people are stuck at the level of thoughts, beliefs  
 The new spirituality is arising.... Outside of religious structures.  
*Excellent brief account*

.....

[Religion Vs Spirituality](#) 3.00 Sean Meshorer  
 Attractive young speaker; very clear and simple

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Good pictures in background

.....  
[Street Survey 1: If you believe God exists, why do you think he created the world?](#); 3.00

OK – clearer optics than 4.28 (seems to be a glitch near the beginning)

.....  
[Jetsunma Tenzin Palmo – The Importance of Awareness](#) 1.54

Must observe the mind constantly; control monkey mind

Become a master of mind rather than slave

*A very useful basic short lesson.*

.....  
[What is God? – Sadhguru](#) 5.59

Our idea of God is a projection of ourselves and what we know – an exaggerated version

Jokes about it – good

Can't define it – can only dissolve into it. Can experience it

Ideas about God are all cultural nonsense.

*V good light short account.*

.....  
[Consciousness Beyond Life: The Science of the Near-Death Experience by Pim van Lommel](#) 8.35

*A wonderful short account, Van Lommel very appealing and convincing.*

.....  
[The Journey Of Awakening 4.09 Tolle](#)

Mysteries of the Universe – explored: but omit one word – consciousness.

That the universe is conscious is the most amazing miracle.

How do I know it is? I am conscious! You are. The Universe is conscious in us. It is experiencing itself for brief moments as a human, a plant, an animal

Scientists miss this by only looking outwards

*Great short statement!*

.....  
[Brian Greene asks Richard Dawkins ... Does God Exist?](#) 4.32

The 2 scientists start with the premise that science is the arbiter of knowledge and truth

Begs the question: how to know

Green condescends about religion

Dawkins is very anti (in a gentlemanly Brit fashion)

*Useful to show scientific imperialism at work*

.....  
[ZALMAN SCHACHTER SHALOMI • Faith is different than beliefs](#) 4.04

Faith/faithing is a verb – open oneself up to the intelligence of the universe

- Let go of how you want the world to be

- Holy words should not be slogans

*Good but v brief.*

.....  
 My stroke of insight 18.33 Jill Bolte Taylor **TED** (one of 25 best) 18.33

<https://youtu.be/UyyjU8fzEYU>

Left hemisphere thinks linearly (p and f); the part that says “I am (separate)”; she lost this rational part with her stroke; now silent, energy all around; beautiful (brain chatter turned off). All stress gone, peace

Felt surrender: “I’m no longer the choreographer of my life”.

Felt enormous; nirvana

She went to a world of peaceful beings (?)  
 Took 8 yrs to recover  
 We have the power to choose how we want to be in the world  
*Powerful; a bridge between science and spirituality*

.....  
[Unconditional Love - Wayne Dyer meets Anita Moorjani](#) 8.30

Important thing is not to be “positive” but to be oneself.  
*About her OBE/NDE experience*

.....  
[consciousness & quantum physics ~ Reality is an illusion](#) 9.59

A romp through some of the ideas: basic quantum field with vast energy and potential underlies all; our observation modifies reality- Stuart Hameroff, Dean Radin, Amit Goswami, others  
*Useful as a demo that there are scientific people seriously endorsing the idea that our world is potential*

.....  
[The Primacy of Consciousness, Peter Russell](#) 25.16

Good basic explanation that we are awareness, consciousness  
 Combined with the acknowledgement that modern science paradigm can't explain it  
*Very personable and clear;*

.....  
[How do you explain consciousness? | David Chalmers](#) 18.37

Excellent presenter – a materialist  
 Describes the “easy” problem of consciousness – correlative studies  
 Need crazy ideas to explain the hard problem  
 First crazy idea: that consciousness is fundamental! A fundamental law like electromagnetism (since can't explain consc in terms of existing fundamental laws)  
 Second crazy idea: that consc is universal – everything has it! = panpsychism  
 Link consc to info processing (but me: implies matter is necessary for consc)  
 Can computers be consc? He thinks yes.  
*Good account of physicist struggling with problem – no ref to spiritual teachings!*

.....  
[David Maginley in The Soul Booth](#) 24.01

Story of his own life and cancer  
 12.20 mins: #1 concern – “the unfinished love story”  
 17.10 “All healthy religious traditions say the realm of the divine is within you” not external.  
 17.40. “Consciousness is the only real estate you share with God”  
 19. self acceptance  
 20 V brief story of his NDE for last few mins.  
*Wonderful; excellent sympathetic interviewer; inspiring*

.....  
[On the Relationship Between Science and Liberation: Michael Singer](#) 15.10

*Wonderful, appealing merging of science with non-dual thought!*

.....

## Topic 1. Can I really make a difference?

- We are not just bodies with a mind, but part of one vast consciousness; the physical world emerges from this higher level of consciousness.
- Ideas in our minds, acting through this higher level, may bring about healing changes in the body that we would have conventionally thought unlikely or impossible.
- To promote such changes, we need:
  - Clear messages from mind to higher consciousness (next topic)
  - A sense of connection to this greater consciousness (or divinity).

## KEY IDEAS

### 1. Healing Through the Mind:

People diagnosed with a serious disease like cancer may ask themselves: “In addition to seeking medical treatment, is there something I can do with my mind to assist my body to heal?” The conventional answer of doctors in our materialistic culture would be “No, nothing beyond adopting healthy behaviours (although that is important)”. A psychologist might say: “cognitive behaviour therapy, which is skillful management of thoughts, will make you feel better, but not directly change the body.” A religious practitioner might respond: “Pray to God, with due humility, and healing may happen”. There are reports of prayer healing, although this is a process that is likely to carry conviction only to people who have practised it for many years.

What about less conventional paths to healing? There are channelled sources which offer more promise. Two that are widely known currently are A Course in Miracles, ACIM (channeling the historical Jesus), and the Seth material, a source speaking through Jane Roberts, over a period of some 20 years in the 1960’s to 1980’s. ACIM is similar to traditional religion in its emphasis on forgiving others and becoming closer to the Divine Source, through surrender to guidance. The Seth books (20 main ones!) are not aligned with any religion or spiritual tradition, and offer an approach to healing that combines elements of modern cognitive behavioural therapy with an account of how consciousness (spirit), working through the mind, may assist the body to heal. It is the account most useful to people with cancer that I have found, and is therefore the major source for this course on healing, although we will draw comparisons with other traditions: ACIM, some traditional religious teachings, and modern authors explaining “non-duality”. (More about the origins of Seth under “Further Ideas” below)

### 2. The Seth approach to healing.

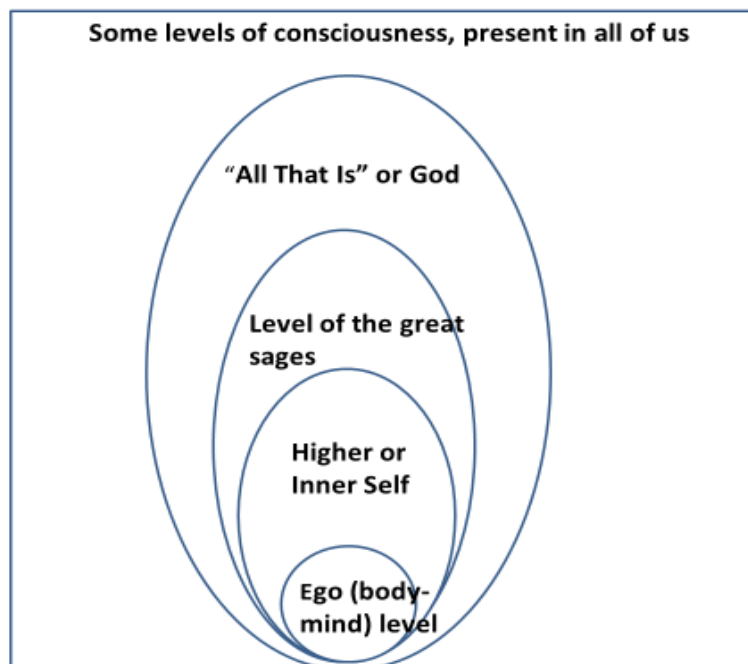
Seth’s teachings range widely over the nature of reality generally. In common with all major spiritual traditions, he describes our ultimate reality as consciousness, with physical form (the world, and our bodies) arising from consciousness, as a kind of projection. (This is, of course, opposite to our culture’s belief, that matter is the fundamental reality). While neither he, nor other spiritual teachers, deny the “reality” of ourselves and our physical world, the ultimate, or base reality, in the spiritual view, is non-material; we need metaphors to even think about it, and for this purpose may liken it to a kind of “energy field”, electromagnetic perhaps, or even gravity. It is all-embracing, unchanging, always present.

From Seth’s accounts we can describe consciousness as having a number of “levels”, arranged in a “hierarchy” (although he doesn’t favour these terms, probably because they suggest a physical

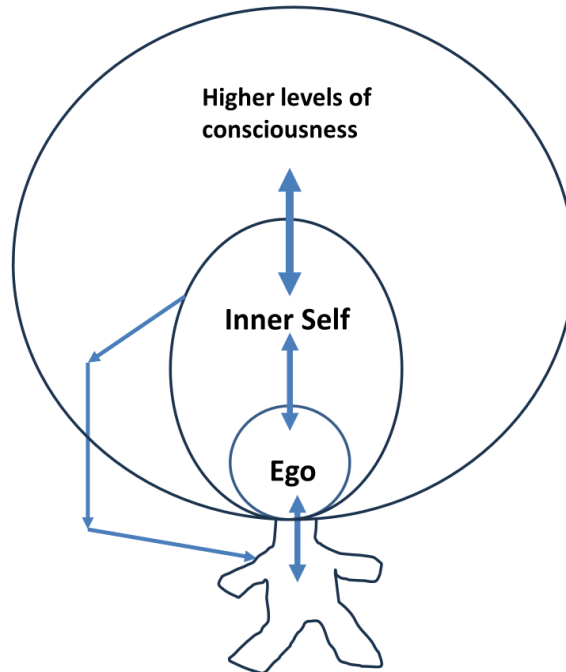
structure, when in fact there are no boundaries between levels). Look again at the diagram which we first met in the “preliminary” sessions (and see below). “We” – you and I – are tiny elements within the hierarchy; there are many larger (more expansive) levels “above” us, and encompassing all, the highest level, is the one consciousness, which Seth calls “All That Is” and some might term “God”. We humans are, in fact, not separate but part of the whole, intimately connected with all of it, although we have come to imagine ourselves as separate, distinct entities, physical in nature, rather than primarily spiritual. The tiny part that we consider “self” is “the ego” (meaning “I” in Latin). It often is seen, in popular psychology, as rather disreputable (think “egocentric”), but in fact is simply the aspect of us, of consciousness, that is focussed mainly on the external, physical world. It is the part that depends on the brain for our functioning.

Seth’s tells us that, closely associated with the ego (in each of us) is a “larger” element of consciousness which he calls the “inner self” or “inner ego”. This inner self is, in turn, closely connected to still “higher” levels of consciousness, and ultimately to the whole (we can think of our “selves” as comprising 3 elements: ego, inner self, and higher consciousness - and see topic 5). The inner self is the aspect of our self that survives death of the body; while we are in the body, it looks out for us, so to speak: we might, poetically, think of it as a “guardian angel”!

So where does the body fit in this picture? According to Seth (and consistent with other spiritual accounts) the body, and indeed the physical world, are being constantly “projected” by higher consciousness. We might say that our individual bodies are a kind of project of our inner self! Again, nobody is saying they aren’t “real”, just that they are derived from a more fundamental, and non-physical, reality.



This brings us to the part of Seth’s account which is particularly relevant to healing through the mind. We need a second diagram (below).



### 3. How our mind influences the body.

Since there are no boundaries between the different levels of consciousness, communication can occur freely between them. However, at the ego level, we tend to block most of it through constant preoccupation with our thinking and perception. We receive some strong “messages” from the body in the ego-mind, such as those signalling hunger or pain, but we miss more subtle signals. Furthermore, the body is seen as separate from the mind, and unaffected by events in the spiritual realm. When it comes to using our minds to change our bodies, apart from telling the muscles to move, we seem very restricted in what we can do, and appear to have almost no ability to use our minds to heal tissues.

Here’s where Seth’s model comes to our aid: in essence, Seth provides us with an expanded theory of how the mind may influence the body. There is another, vital element “in the loop” between ego-mind and body: the inner self! Seth tells us that many mind-to-body messages are not direct, but travel via the inner self (diagram). This allows a vast range of possible effects. Why? Because the inner self is itself open to information from all levels of consciousness, and can bring to the body new combinations of events within consciousness, changes that might heal the body, but that would seem impossible in the physical sphere (more on this in topic 9). We lack awareness of the possibilities, and have not investigated them, because we are fixated on the materialistic model of reality, which tells us that only material means can control structures formed of matter. As a result, instead of trying to assist healing with ideas from the higher levels of consciousness, our ego minds limit and interfere with healing, through negative patterns of thinking (next topic) and by ignoring the existence of higher consciousness. As Seth says:

*“You constantly give yourself suggestions about your body, your health or ill health. You think about your body often, then. You send a barrage of beliefs and instructions to the inner self that affect your physical image” (“The Nature of Personal Reality”, p83).*

Unfortunately, this “barrage of beliefs and instructions” is very often harmful. The inner self is “neutral”: it simply tries to carry out the directions of the ego, which are commonly pessimistic!

#### 4. Practical implications for healing.

To reiterate: the pathway from ego mind to body is typically not a direct one; instead, what happens is:

EGO MIND—signals—INNER SELF—signals—BODY

Understanding this suggests that changing the “messages” (i.e., thoughts, beliefs, expectations) in our ego-minds may direct the inner self to find a way to bring the desired healing about. This may sound like Pollyanna – wishful thinking. It is an approach we have not explored seriously in conventional western culture. There must be limits, but let’s see what is possible.

*“If you realize that your beliefs form your experience, then you do indeed have an excellent chance of changing your beliefs, and hence your experience. You can discover what your own reasons are for choosing (an) illness by being very honest with yourself.” (“The Way Toward Health”, p231).*

We need to consider 2 related strategies when healing through the mind:

1. We must send clear, unambiguous “messages” to the inner self, as words, images, or perhaps as a “felt-sense”, so that it knows what we truly expect and want, and will try to materialise it in the body (of course there are limits to what is possible – we will discuss those in topic 2). This may seem rather obvious: in fact, most of our messages are unclear, ambiguous, often pessimistic and harmful, as we will discover!
2. We need to develop a sense of connection with our inner self, and through it, with the higher consciousness. This will “open a channel” to receiving guidance from a source much more informed and powerful than our ego minds. A better understanding that we are really immersed in a framework of higher consciousness will also help us send our messages more skillfully; ultimately, we may come to think of “aligning” ourselves with the higher (divine) will.

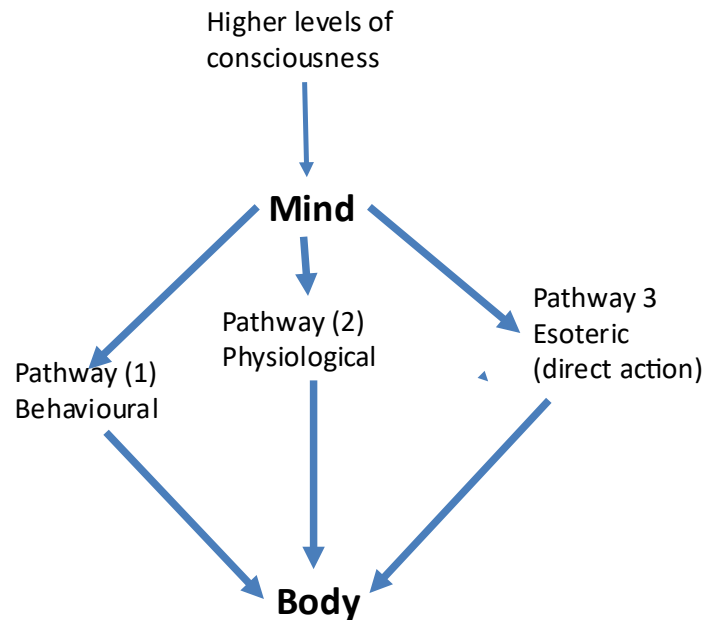
The second aim is central to most spiritual or religious traditions of course, and we can draw on them for practical suggestions. Seth emphasises the importance of communicating with the inner self, although he doesn’t say much about how to do so. He is, however, very concerned to help us expand our sense of ourselves far beyond our usual identification with the body and mind, and many exercises for this purpose are sprinkled throughout his books.

Note that combining both of the healing strategies above is likely to be much more effective than relying either alone. To repeat, modern cognitive behavioural therapy details what we can do with our minds to alleviate suffering, but doesn’t extend to attempting to affect the body. Spiritual and religious prescriptions for healing the body focus on invoking the aid of higher consciousness, or a deity, but leave little room for our active participation through deliberate management of our minds. By careful reading of Seth, we can begin to see how to craft the messages, words and images, that we send out, while bearing in mind his description of some of the properties of the ultimate reality – consciousness – which may ultimately mediate changes in our bodies.

## FURTHER IDEAS

### Pathways through which mind may affect the body.

The diagram below shows 3 broad “pathways” through which the mind might cause illness in, or influence healing of, the body. These are applicable to most diseases, although we are concerned here with cancer.



We are all familiar with the “behavioural” pathways – for example, the harm done by unhealthy behaviours like poor nutrition, or exposing oneself to harmful external agents like cigarette smoke or ionizing radiation. The “physiological” path, by contrast, refers to ways in which the mind may have an internal influence on development of cancer, as opposed to acting through some agent from outside. This includes stress (mental conflict) acting through nervous and hormonal systems in the body. There has been relatively little research on this as a possible cancer promoter, or on helpful effects of reducing stress, which is surprising, since we know that chronic stress is responsible for a lot of ill-health. In the earlier levels of the Healing Journey, we learned methods of calming the mind to re-establish more normal function in the body, expecting that this will improve our chances of healing physically. The well-known placebo effect is another example of mind assisting the body to heal, probably through known physiological pathways.

In this level of HJ we are considering also a third mind-body pathway, which I’ve labelled, in the diagram above, “esoteric” (literally: “understood by the few”!); it is the claim that the mind may affect the body (or other physical objects), in some way other than pathways 1 and 2. This would appear to us to be a “direct” action; Seth’s explanation would fall under this category, since the idea of a higher level of consciousness as an intermediary between mind and body is not yet known to science. It is, of course, directly contrary to materialism, the idea that only matter and energy can have such effects. Perhaps surprisingly, however, there is already quite a lot of scientific evidence that such apparently direct action is possible. Some examples are:

- Distant healing through prayer: in controlled experiments, healers given only the names of people suffering from various diseases have brought about significant changes in their health. This does not always “work”, but the fact that it does so at all is notable!
- “Channelling”: the dictation of books to living humans from non-material sources.
- Tumours in mice, otherwise lethal, have been removed by “hands-on” healing and (poorly defined) mental techniques used by their human healers.
- There is quite a body of believable experiments on the effects of “human intention” (that is, focussing on a desired outcome) on microbial growth, germination of seeds, growth in plants and various biochemical reactions. Warts (virus-induced tumours) have been removed by hypnotic suggestion, under controlled conditions.
- Spontaneous remission of advanced cancers has often been described. There may be many reasons for this, of course, but mental factors are one likely contributor; this deserves much more study.
- Perhaps most spectacular is the 20-year series of experiments at Princeton University on the ability of human intention to alter random number production by computers (computers were programmed to produce equal numbers of 0’s or 1’s in a random fashion: the predicted output could be influenced in one direction or another by observers). This has been repeated by other laboratories, and with mechanical devices rather than computers. Effects were always small, but statistically significant when a large number of trials was run.
- There are reputable experiments within the field of Psi or para-psychology, on phenomena like telepathy, precognition and distant viewing (knowing what a distant person is seeing).
- Within quantum physics, it has been known for a century that the act of observation decisively affects what physical particles appear to do.

In general, all of this evidence has not been absorbed by most scientists (except for quantum effects). The main stumbling block is that these phenomena contradict the very basis of our usual ideas on how the world works. In sum, though, the various lines of evidence suggest that the idea of our minds influencing our bodies directly, i.e., by some as yet unknown, non-physical means, as well as through internal/physiological pathways, is not at all ridiculous.

*Question: what do you make of this? Does it inspire you to be more open to possible healing effects of mind on body? There are many books for the lay reader describing some of these fascinating phenomena. A good author to start with is Lynne McTaggart, a journalist, e.g. “The Intention Experiment”. You might also try “Entangled Minds” by Dr. Dean Radin, who has himself carried out many important experiments in parapsychology.*

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#### **Practical guidance on how to use the mind to heal the body. Seth’s explanations.**

By far the most useful kind of source I have found is one which may pose a challenge to our open-mindedness: it is “channelled” information, from entities not currently living, who speak to us through passive recipients. Skeptics scoff at this, of course, since it assumes a different view of reality than the materialism we have all been raised with. My own training as a scientist, however, emphasised that one should be guided by evidence, not prejudice, and I have no doubt, after intensively studying the two sources of channelled information that we use in this course, the Seth material and A Course in Miracles (ACIM), and the “backstory” of their production, that these works are what they claim to be: products of non-physical intelligences, communicating with us in our material world. (A

third source, very compelling, but of less use to us here is the work of Edgar Cayce (“Kay-see”), living in the last century. While in a trance, Cayce would be given information about puzzling illness symptoms of patients often thousands of miles away. A vast body of records provides evidence that, although having little medical knowledge, he was usually able to diagnose often obscure health problems and suggest remedies).

Seth describes himself as an “energy personality essence”, whose teachings were channelled through Jane Roberts, between 1963 and 1984. His statements clearly come from an understanding far more evolved than our own: they are internally consistent, and the psychology he elaborates is deeply insightful. Seth’s explanations are in accord with the writings of many other spiritual and channelled sources: he does however, provide much more detail about how things work than any other writer I’ve encountered; I think of him as a “spiritual engineer”! His teachings are ultimately transpersonal or spiritual, in that they aim to help us see ourselves as not isolated physical beings, but part of a much larger organisation of consciousness.

While Seth ranges over many issues of concern to people, he devotes a lot of attention to healing through mind and spirit, and it is this aspect of his writings that we are focussing on here. Moreover, his advice is very down to Earth (so to speak!), and practical. Unlike a lot of traditional spiritual teachers (topic 6 of this course) he is not telling us to seek healing primarily through the intervention of some higher power, nor is he saying (topic 8) that we should cease to be so concerned with the body because it is not who we are; instead, he tells us in great detail what to do to influence our physical health through our own minds.

*Seth “dictated” 10 books via Jane Roberts, the channel; these form the main body of his work. There are also 9 published “Early” books, of conversations over a wide range of topics between Seth and Jane’s husband Rob, via Jane. For those wanting to start their own exploration of Seth’s ideas, I’d suggest the following (Jane Roberts is listed as the “author” of all of them):*

- *“The Seth Material”; documents the 510 “Early” sessions, and includes an account of the first contacts between Seth, Jane and Rob. It contains many quotes from Seth, but is mainly Jane’s writing.*
- *“The Nature of Personal Reality”, probably the most popular of the dictated books – the first few chapters are especially relevant to mind-body healing. In later chapters, some more esoteric healing ideas are introduced that we will touch on in topic 9.*
- *“The Way Toward Health”; the last dictated book. It provides a simplified, practical account of healing through the mind, and is easier to read than the others.*

Accepting that we are venturing here into territory that is not yet part of most current medical thinking, we will try to blend the teachings of Seth with some common-sense reasoning and clinical observation to describe a practical approach to healing through the mind for those willing to try it.

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### **Relationship of the Seth approach to more conventional ideas of “praying for help”.**

Perhaps the simplest way to think about “higher consciousness” is to imagine a powerful, human-like deity to whom we can apply for assistance. This is roughly the way theistic (God-centred) religions have explained things, at least in past eras. It was a way of making abstract ideas available to ordinary people who were more comfortable with concrete pictures. Often, an avatar, or human figure

representing God was (and still may be) used as a kind of intermediary, to whom appeals may be addressed: this makes the relationship more understandable, more like our everyday human ones.

Seeking support and help from a higher power remains an important resource for hundreds of millions of people throughout the world. It can bring peace and reassurance; wholeheartedly and humbly pursued, it may well attract intervention from higher levels of consciousness. Ultimately, as the lives of the great saints show, it can lead to total surrender of self will, and absorption of the individual personality into an overarching consciousness or Godhead. However, at a more mundane level, people with cancer wondering how they might help themselves, this traditional approach has an apparent limitation: there seems to be little for the individual to actually do, beyond asking for help, and accepting the outcome.

This is where Seth is so relevant to us. While operating within the understanding that he, and all of us, are ultimately figures emerging from an underlying consciousness, he speaks to us as individuals, wanting to live well on Earth; he devotes his teaching to specific advice on how to do this. He also helps us to understand how our apparently separate selves are not ultimately physical but are a small “part” of a vast hierarchy of higher consciousness. This realization is the ultimate healing, and in itself makes healing of the body more likely.

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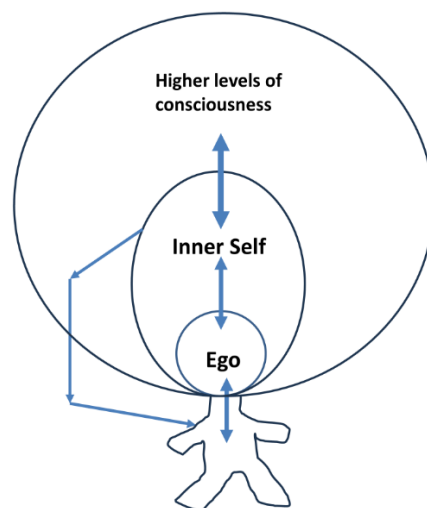
## Topic 2. Skills for healing

- There are 2 main activities for the mind in this approach to healing:
  - First (and often neglected): identify and try to drop the many “negative” (pessimistic) beliefs about our present and likely future health.
  - Second: Using words and images, substitute “positive” (optimistic) statements about healing that are brief, clear, believable, and “fuelled” by strong emotion.
- Limits to what can be achieved arise from the physical laws governing our bodies, and from our past history of ideas about who we are and what is possible (next topic).
- We need to practise mind-quietening techniques to foster a relationship of connection to, and trust in, the higher consciousness.

## KEY IDEAS

The idea that words or images could heal the body makes little sense when our thinking is guided by our society’s belief in materialism – that matter, physical form, is the primary reality, and that to change it, you need to use physical agents. However, the spiritual view of reality (going back more than 3000 years in human history) holds the opposite point of view: that “spirit” or consciousness is the essential reality underlying the world and all physical forms, including ourselves, and that from consciousness, forms arise - we don’t yet know how, because our science has focussed almost entirely on the behaviour of objects in the physical sphere. Seth provides us with description of how mind influences matter (he also has some explanations of mechanisms, which we can’t confirm because we don’t yet know how to measure them): he claims that consciousness is constantly modifying form, and that our individual thinking and imagining plays a part in this.

The main pathway by which our minds may influence our physical bodies is via what he calls the “inner self”, a label for what is, in essence, a conduit to the greater consciousness in which we are all embedded, and from which our bodies arise, or are projected. The diagram from topic 1 is shown again below.



To repeat the explanation from topic 1: there are 2 major tasks ahead of us, in invoking this healing pathway. First, how to use our mental talk (and imagery) skillfully, and second, how to develop an effective connection with the higher consciousness. This topic deals mainly with the first; the second, how to connect with higher consciousness, is the principal subject of part II of this course, although a simple exercise to start the process is included below (under “Further Ideas”).

### **1.. Using words and images to invoke healing of the body.**

We sometimes read about the “power of positive suggestion”, usually presented in a naïve way, as simply stating what we want and hoping it will happen. Effective use of the mind for healing is, of course, far more subtle than this. We have begun to acknowledge this by describing the role of the inner self/higher consciousness in the process. Now, as we turn to “our” part of the task, using our minds skillfully, we need first to recognise that there are 2 phases, which we may call, by analogy with conventional medicine, “diagnostic” and “therapeutic”.

As we examine our thought stream intently, possibly for the first time, we may uncover a veritable tsunami of beliefs, expectations, hopes and fears about our bodies and our lives generally. When we are ill, we usually discover that these thoughts tend to be negative or pessimistic, and realize that we have been repeating them often to ourselves. We seldom hold in our minds brief, clear, unambiguous positive ideas, about our health (or perhaps anything else!). Clearly, most of us have a lot of room to make changes to our inner monologue, if we choose to do so. This is the “diagnostic” phase, emphasised repeatedly here because many people ignore it, or under-rate its importance – it is so much easier just to plaster some pleasing positive suggestion over the top, so to speak, of all the underlying doubt and scepticism!

#### Phase 1. Becoming aware of harmful habits of thinking and imagining, (and trying to drop them); the “diagnostic” phase.

The first, and perhaps most important phase of attempts to change either behaviours or physical symptoms is to diminish the constant stream of negative self-suggestions. For example, if you have been examining your inner monologue closely, you may have found that you are saying over and over to yourself things like: “This cancer is bound to progress”, or “I’m afraid this will get worse, that I’ll suffer and die”, or “this shouldn’t be happening to me”, and so on. Such ruminations, often going on out of our awareness, can act like directions to the inner self, which then may try to bring about what we are expecting. We hypnotise ourselves with our negative expectations. As Seth emphasises on many occasions: “You get what you concentrate on”.

*“You constantly give yourself suggestions about your body, your health or ill health. You think about your body often, then. You send a barrage of beliefs and instructions to the inner self that affect your physical image”* (Nature of Personal Reality, p83).

The first task, then, is diagnostic: to ferret out these messages, and drop them. Here are some specific questions to focus on, in addition to continuing to monitor your thoughts for unwanted, pessimistic ideas. Further questions will no doubt also occur to you (write about it all):

- If there is a sudden pain in the body, note at the time, what your first thoughts (and images, if you can catch them) are.
- What are your first ideas about what is needed to “fix” this problem?
- When you hear the word cancer, or hear about other people with the disease, what is your immediate reaction (thoughts +/- images)?

- When you wake in the morning, how soon does the thought of having cancer (or a risk of recurrence of it) come to mind? What immediately follows that?
- In contemplating or discussing future plans, how quickly do ideas arise suggesting that you won't be able to do these things ("I have cancer, so I can't.....", or "I'm likely to get more ill")?
- If you haven't done so already, consider tapping into your thought stream at intervals (you could use a watch with an alarm to provide these interruptions). How frequently are thoughts of cancer uppermost in your mind? What are those thoughts?

Seth emphasises the power of "expectations" to bring about changes in the body (via the inner self).

So, to the list above you could add:

- What, "deep down" do I really expect will happen to me with this disease?
- What, "deep down" do I really expect my self-healing efforts can do to oppose its progression?

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### Phase 2. Managing the flow of messages: healing ideas and images (the "therapeutic" phase).

Having, to the best of our ability, identified and dropped our negative suggestions, we begin replacing them with "positive" or optimistic projections. Note that we do not deny the possibility of disease progression and decline in health (and see below); we simply choose to focus on more positive outcomes, while at the same time accepting that factors beyond our control may prevent us achieving what we want. We resolve to "give it our best shot", in other words.

- Words (phrases) may be brought to mind as we go about our day; images (and see below) usually need to be pondered while sitting. "Positive affirmations" can take either form.
- Phrases should be brief, clear, unambiguous and positive, e.g., "I will use my healing power to the fullest extent possible"; "my body has great power to heal"; (devise your own).
- Watch your mind closely for opposing negative thoughts that may accompany and undermine your positives!
- Allow a strong emotional charge to accompany the (positive) phrases – this is the "fuel" that drives the change; we must really desire to heal (and see topic 3).
- We need to believe that the healing changes can happen. At the same time, we must acknowledge that they may not. One way to reconcile these alternatives is to think of ourselves as having, say, 50% control over the outcome with our minds – the rest of it not being susceptible to mental influence. Our affirmation to ourselves is to use all of this 50%, in the hope of tipping the balance in our favour.
- We must allow time to change the momentum of the disease process.
- The desire to recover needs to be underpinned by a clear sense of what we want to enjoy and accomplish in life (see also topic 3). A strong will and reason to live may shift the body's whole physiology in a favourable direction.
- Note that all of these strategies depend on a willingness to engage with the disease, and with our lives, to take some responsibility for what happens (while recognizing that our potential control is only partial).

Important note: "We", that is, our regular, our day-to-day minds (in fact, our egos), are not ultimately responsible in this process for making changes happen in the body: according to Seth, that work is done by the inner self, acting through the body's mechanisms, and in any case, we would have none of the detailed knowledge necessary to plan it. We simply initiate the process: our task is to clarify our messaging – so that it is not undermined by negative expectations, or any other irrelevant

accompanying thoughts (e.g., “this is unlikely to work”; “I have other things to do”). Here’s what Seth has to say about the role of the mind:

*The shutting out of superfluous data (i.e., negative suggestions) and the narrowing of focus are the two most important ingredients. Relaxation can help simply because the body messages are also quieted, and the mind not concerned with them.* (Nature of Personal Reality, p305).

It is of interest that these are exactly the conditions needed for effective self-hypnosis, or for receiving hypnotic induction from another person.

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## **2. Mental imagery for healing.**

Mental images may exert an even more powerful effect on the body than words, since a visual image contains much more information than a verbal label. (Verbal affirmations often invoke a mental image, of course: here we’re discussing the process of deliberately crafting one). You’ll recall we did various exercises using imagery in earlier levels of the Healing Journey. You may wish to review those: there are some tapes talking the listener through them on the Wellspring website, under “Self-Paced resources”.

Imagery, like verbal statements, can be used both “diagnostically” and “therapeutically”. In either case, it is valuable to draw what you “see” internally (lack of skill at drawing is not important). Diagnostically, a drawing of how you see your cancer (or other problems), yourself and your life and prospects is an equivalent, in this visual mode, of identifying verbal statements you have been making to yourself. It may show you aspects of your imagining that had not been clear to you – the main point of doing the exercise is to get surprising new insights. Sometimes the meaning of one’s drawn images is obvious, but at other times it may be obscure, and it may need the help of a therapist. It’s a bit like interpreting dreams (see “Appendix to part I” for dreams).

An individual working alone is more likely to find therapeutic imagery useful. After relaxing deeply, try to imagine a clear, simple pictures of the state you would like to attain. An example could be a picture of yourself, or your face, framed in light. You can draw images of how your cancer (or other problems) seem to you, and how you imagine your body’s defenses. Much the same conditions apply to therapeutic images as to verbal affirmations. They should be simple, clear, unambiguous, and positive. Do multiple drawings on different occasions. Images of your desired future life will often have other people in them (family, loved ones), or other aspects of how you want your future to look. Joining an art therapy group can help with this.

When this kind of approach was first described as an adjunctive treatment for cancer (at least in modern North America, by Carl and Stephanie Simonton), patients were advised to think of their disease in symbolic terms, and the body’s healing mechanisms as matching agents that could destroy them; examples were dogs (healing agents) eating piles of meat (cancer), or seagulls swooping down on stranded jellyfish. Even knights in armour spearing the dragon cancer cells! Published results were anecdotal in nature. In the absence of good research data, it is hard to say what’s best in this work: if you choose to use imagery of the body’s controlling mechanisms removing cancer, I would recommend biological imagery over mechanical agents (trucks and rubble). While angry, cancer-destructive imagery may appeal at first, try to let your images evolve to more peace-inducing, harmonious, and symbolic

patterns, like a waterfall, which as you stand under it, washes away waste; or weeding a garden, or light melting or correcting imperfections in the body.....

Another possibility is to imagine your awareness contracting to a point, and entering and moving around in the body until it reaches areas of cancer in the tissues. You can then “have a dialogue” with the cancer, asking what it “wants”, and whether any such wishes could be satisfied in some healthier way! Similarly, the cancer can be imagined as a sub-personality (see topic 4), a part that has gone astray, and asked what it “needs” for the tissues to return to normal.

These methods may seem rather fanciful – yet we use imagery constantly in our daily lives, visualising (usually very briefly and sketchily) what we plan to do, before acting on an idea. In applying them to healing we need to explore for ourselves, until we find one or more set of images that appeal to us as having healing possibilities. Words may seem more business-like, and images more like play, but after all, the higher consciousness presumably does not operate with words, or rely on what we think of as reason: it probably responds (and Seth points to this) to some much more basic “cry of the heart”, and to a feeling of confidence in the possibilities, and sincere longing for results. Here’s what Seth has to say:

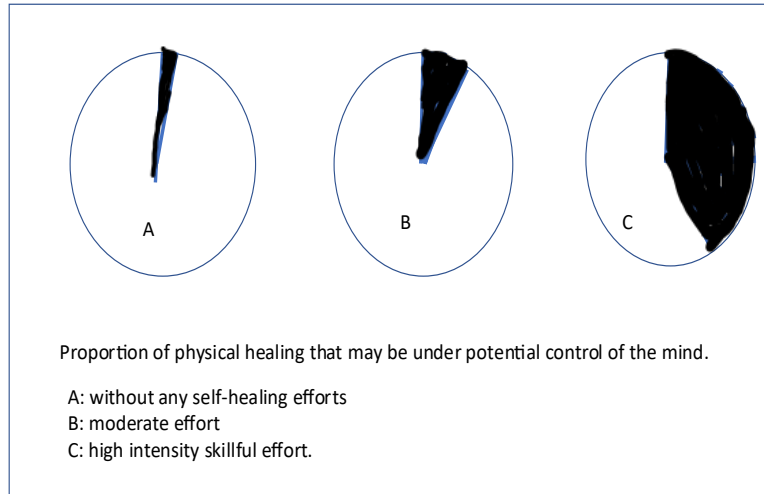
*To act in an independent manner, you must begin to initiate action that you want to occur physically (emphatically) by creating it in your own being. This is done by combining belief, emotion and imagination, and forming them into a mental picture of the desired physical result. (Nature of Personal Reality p104).*

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## **FURTHER IDEAS and PRACTICES**

### **Limits to what we can expect from managing the mind.**

In the early years of the Healing Journey program, we would sometimes encounter objections from health professionals along the lines of: “you shouldn’t tell people they can make a difference with their minds, because if they try and fail (as they will, it is assumed), it will make things even worse”! The advice is well-intentioned, but itself has a very negative consequence: it is profoundly “dis-empowering” to individuals. However, it is also true that we need to avoid the trap one sees in a lot of New Age publications or internet postings: “Just do (my recommended procedure) and you will be healed”! We have a difficult balancing act to perform here: maintaining optimism, hopefulness, yet acknowledging there are no guarantees that what we do will bring the result we want. This is not unlike many situations in life, except that, with life-threatening disease, the stakes are higher than usual. Over the years, we have found that most people are comfortable with the following way of thinking about it: that a certain percentage of the outcome is under potential control by the mind, but that much of it is not. The mind-accessible portion may increase – commonsense suggests it will – with dedicated practice, but is never more than part of the whole. It may, however, tip the balance toward healing. The diagram below illustrates this idea:



Here's some of what Seth has to say about communication with the higher consciousness, and its potential impact on the body:

*When you are aware of the existence of the entity (see topic 5) and of the soul, you can consciously draw upon their greater energy, understanding and strength. It is inherently available, but your conscious intent brings about certain changes in you that automatically trigger such benefits. The results will be felt down to the smallest cells within your body, and will affect even the most seemingly mundane events of your daily life. You are growing in consciousness; therefore, using it expands its capabilities.*

*It is not a thing, but an attribute and characteristic. That is why your understanding and desire are so important. The processes initiated are beyond your normal awareness. They occur automatically with your intent if you do not block them through fear, doubt or opposing beliefs (Nature of Personal Reality, p159).*

Limits to the mind's effects.

We can classify limits to what the mind may achieve under 2 headings:

1..Biological limits: many properties of the body seem to be "built in", or hard-wired; nobody lives forever, wounds take time to heal, a lost limb can't be regrown, and so on. Seth makes this point. So, even if we accept the idea that consciousness determines form (rather than the reverse), we acknowledge that there are limits, in this physical reality.

2..Self-imposed limits: these are a product of our constant exposure to the materialist view - that the mind can't do much to the body, apart from stimulating hormone production or moving muscles. As a result of this view, most of us have little effective experience or skill in trying to manage the constant flow of messages from mind to Inner Self to body. Practice of mind-body healing methods will bring trust in them, as can study of texts offering an expanded view of the nature of reality.

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### Developing a connection with higher consciousness

Most people coming to this course will already have a regular practice of meditation, prayer, or some other way of quietening the mind and opening to connection with the higher levels of consciousness. We will see, in part II, what various traditions have to say about this, but I include here a few remarks about the preconditions for such connecting, and a simple, introspective, non-sectarian exercise (the “Inner Healer”) that we use in the Healing Journey program.

- The first requirement is doing enough regular study and reflection, to be open the idea that there is more to us than a physical body-mind; we come to see that consciousness is our underlying essence, or being.
- We must soften the barriers we have erected that prevent communication between our limited ego-consciousness and any higher levels. The kind of rigorous examination of our own thought processes advocated in the Healing Journey program can assist with that (and is probably essential).
- Having removed some of the obstructive thinking, we need to begin to consider ourselves as something different from what we have been taught. Rather than striving to be fiercely independent, as our culture encourages us to do, we need, as sincere seekers, to see ourselves as part of the greater consciousness. We become observer-participants, rather than movers and shakers. This is a stumbling block for many, because it feels like a diminishment, rather than the massive expansion of the self that it really is.
- We need to be silent internally, at least some of the time, to allow any “messages” or intimations from our higher selves to percolate into the ego mind. Prayer and meditation are classical methods that assist this clearing of the mind.
- Guided visualisations (like the “Inner Healer” - below) can help us make contact with higher consciousness.
- Ideally, we need to structure our lives to allow opportunities for this regular communication. This usually means giving up some patterns of time use that don’t contribute to healing.
- It helps to create a feeling of devotion for the higher levels, or, if we prefer the more traditional point of view, for God or an avatar. This love “spills over” on to all other people (and living things). It is probably the “resonant bond” that investigators have described as a precondition, in their experiments, for the ability of mental intention to affect physical processes.
- We need to keep going, with our study and practice; any gains in understanding and experience are liable to erode otherwise (unless we have reached some rare, final state of absolute knowing). Participating in this work with a community of like-minded people is necessary for most of us.

### “Going within”; the Inner Healer exercise.

Throughout the various levels of the HJ program, we have used a simple, non-sectarian way of attempting to contact what we have called the “Higher Self” or “higher levels of consciousness”, or an “Inner Healer”. You can modify this basic technique in various ways, as we have seen, and I advocate making it “your own” by experimenting with variations. The process of relaxing and proceeding to a “healing room” is an effective preliminary to any visualisation of healing changes.

- Get comfortable in a quiet room. Close your eyes.
- Scan slowly through the body (as in yoga), allowing the various muscle groups to relax.
- Now imagine taking a trip “downwards”, safely and securely, on one or more escalators, or in an elevator. It may help to count down from 10 to 1 as you do this.

- Upon stepping off the stairs or out of the elevator, proceed to your “healing room”.
- As you enter the room, notice its welcoming nature: subdued lighting, pleasing colour scheme, carpets on floor perhaps, furniture of the kind you like, ornaments on the wall, bookshelves, flowers.....
- Go to the big recliner chair in front of a fire(place), and sink into it, letting any remaining tension ebb away.
- Notice that the clock, on the wall above the fireplace, has stopped, and reflect on how you are no “outside of time”, so that nothing can harm you!
- From here, you can “take trips” outside by proceeding through a doorway, down steps, along a trail, into a woods....
- You may meet a guide in the woods (animal, person, presence....)
- Follow the guide to a clearing with a dwelling place of the Inner Healer/Spiritual Guide. Sit on a bench in front of the dwelling, and respectfully ask the Healer to emerge.
- Notice what the Healer-Guide is like: might be a person, a religious figure, a loved elder relative, an animal.....
- The Healer/Guide sits near you on a bench. Now you can ask questions, such as “what do I need to do?”, or: “what is most important in my life right now?” You may find that it is time to leave this life. Or you may get a strong sense that you need, or are meant, to carry on. If so, “what is my life about from this point on?”
- You may receive reassurances of your worthiness, that you are loved, from the Healer.
- After a period of interaction like this, the Healer returns to his/her dwelling, with your thanks.
- Then reverse the process, slowly returning through the forest, path etc., to the healing room, and eventually either back up stairs or simply count slowly as you come back to your regular room.

A somewhat more traditional form of this exercise: after proceeding to a deeper, “healing room”, imagine a figure that to you symbolises a higher or divine level of consciousness. If you have a religious background, this may be one of the traditional avatars, like Jesus, or Krishna. If you are “not religious”, the Buddha may appeal. Personally, I like an image of “Divine Mother”, for whom there are many avatars in Hinduism (as well as in the Catholic faith, of course). It seems to me that if we must humanise the Divine, she is more of a feminine energy than a masculine one. Now imagine this figure embracing or holding you, and allow yourself to feel secure and loved. Draw a picture of this.

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### **Managing the emotions.**

*(While this is a topic dealt with in the “psychological” stream of Healing Journey level 6 it is, of course, very important, and I include here some relevant ideas, and an exercise to try).*

The usual advice is not to deny the (fearful or other) emotions, but to have at least some times in which you just let them “flow”, endure the discomfort, without engaging in a lot of inner commentary. You will notice that in time (minutes rather than hours), the emotions will subside. You can find videos (e.g., on You-tube) with this kind of guidance from teachers like Tolle, Adyashanti, Rupert Spira, and Tara Brach. This is a valuable practice, but we can take it one step further. The essential point is to separate the thoughts from the emotions: it is when the two get together that a storm of unpleasant feeling can fill our minds. The physical aspects of emotions are, after all, simply the result of nerves and hormones acting on tissues of the body. The same arousal might register as intense

fear, while thinking of cancer, but as an exciting “high” while negotiating a difficult ski slope – most of the difference comes from the associated ideas.

Ex. Separating thoughts from emotions.

*(Practise this with events or ideas of relatively minor significance first, and work up to using it with fears about cancer, dying prematurely, or other serious crises).*

When an emotion comes up, identify the thoughts behind it. Then, stop paying any attention to the thoughts, and simply allow the emotions to “flow”; they will likely subside within minutes, provided the thoughts are not allowed to emerge (you may need to be sitting quietly to do this work).

Then, or at a different time, place attention resolutely on the thoughts alone. The emotions will tend to arise: try not to allow this to happen – it’s difficult, of course; the old habits of just allowing emotions to run riot, are hard to overcome. You could use imagery to help – for example, imagine the emotions like creepers or bushes trying to climb up a wall along the top of which the thought is proceeding; you may find you can “beat them down”. Continue, until you feel quiet inside.

It also helps in the managing our thoughts if we analyse them closely. They will likely prove to be a tangled mass of associated ideas: “This is terrible; should not have happened”; “I’ll probably die far too early”; “I will lose contact with my loved ones”; “I will probably suffer....”. Try separating them into single strands, and writing them down, then look at each one individually, asking yourself if that is necessarily true, or saying, as Seth recommends: “this is an idea about reality, not reality itself”.

“Emotional maturity” (and indeed psychological maturity) is being aware of, and having a fair degree of control over, our thoughts and emotions. It can sound robotic, but this is not the case. We have choices about what kind of emotional expression we allow, just as we can learn to choose what thoughts to allow. Remember, our emotions, like our thoughts, are created by ourselves, usually in response to what we perceive around us. Healing, which is ultimately the relief of suffering, involves the skillful managing of our responses. In time, even physical pain and the degeneration or imminent death of the body may come to be seen as “just the body doing its thing”; our consciousness, which is our essential Self, need not be affected.

## CONTINUING STUDY

### Appendix to Part I

In an appendix, at the end of this Part I of the course, I have included a summary of Seth’s main teachings about the relationship between mind, illness and healing. It is in point form, but extensive, and intended for the “keen student”!

Also included is a brief account of dreams, how to record and analyse them.

### Mind creating reality?

We all know about stress, and that constant mental upset can affect our bodies somewhat, but Seth is taking the mind-body connection much further: his claim is that thoughts actually cause consciousness to project matter:

*All exterior events, including your own bodies with their insides, all objects, all physical materializations, are the outside structures of inside ones that are composed of interior sound and invisible light, interwoven in electromagnetic patterns. ("The Unknown Reality", vol II, p669).*

*Thoughts and emotions are formed into physical matter by very definite methods and through laws quite valid, though they may be presently unknown.... these emanations in varying degrees rise from all consciousness, not simply your own. ("Seth Speaks", p68).*

These remarks suggest a view of reality that is oriented 180 degrees away from the familiar. Apart from what the mystics have told us, is there anything in the history of western philosophy to support this? Of course, the nature of reality has been a major topic within western thought since at least the time of the ancient Greeks. There are two major groups of ideas on this: "realism", essentially the idea that the world and everything in it is independent of our thoughts and observations (i.e., of mind), and "idealism", the opposing view that our apparent external world is somehow a product of our thinking and imagining (there are many variants of both views). Realism rules in western society today; the usual form is "materialism", which is the doctrine that only matter and energy can affect physical processes, with no possibility of a direct effect of mind. Idealism, by contrast, is obviously foundational to the teachings of the great spiritual masters (mystics). Which should we believe?

It is a principle in science that a theory must be able to account for all relevant observations. If it cannot, another must be found. By this standard, materialism is untenable: it cannot account for many well-researched phenomena, as I've mentioned above, such as channelling itself (Seth, ACIM and many others), near death experiences, many observations in quantum physics, psychokinesis (moving objects, such as computer outputs, with the mind, which has been particularly carefully studied), and others. It is not so much that materialism is "wrong" – it works very well for many of the more mechanical/technological aspects of our lives – but it is too limited, that is, it cannot explain, or even address, many of the questions that are of fundamental importance to us, like: "How does consciousness emerge from the mechanics of the brain?"; "Is there an overarching consciousness of which I am part?"; or "Does something survive the death of the body?"; or "Can the mind directly affect the body in a healing way?"

Part of the reason for the differences in views is that western philosophers rely entirely on intellectual reasoning, whereas the philosophers and mystics of the East tend to approach questions of ultimate meaning through deep inner contemplation – a different method which yields answers that are more like "knowings" than concepts (we are trying to blend the two in this course!) However, some western philosophers have (both in the past, and currently) put forward views of reality based on idealist principles. For example, the modern philosopher Bernardo Kastrup makes a compelling case for our status as part of the one consciousness. (For an opposing view, Daniel Dennett is widely respected).

To Seth, of course, it is obvious that reality is consciousness itself – and indeed, it is hard to see how to explain his apparent existence under materialism! Some quotes from him:

*Consciousness everywhere pervades the universe, and is aware of all conditions. The balance of nature on your planet is no chance occurrence but the result of constant instant computations on the part of each most minute consciousness.....each invisibly 'holds space together', whatever its station. This is a cooperative venture. ("The Nature of the Psyche", p202).*

*You create the world that you know. You have been given perhaps the most awesome gift of all: the ability to project your thoughts outward into physical form. ("Seth Speaks", p6).*

*What exists physically exists first in thought and feeling. There is no other rule. (Nature of Personal Reality, Preface, p xvii).*

What is the practical takeaway from all this, of immediate relevance to my healing?

- Seth's account, like that of the mystics, is based on the view that consciousness comes before matter ("consciousness first")
  - From this it is natural to suppose that our minds, which are "the part of consciousness entwined with the brain" could and do affect our bodies directly.
  - Direct healing via mind is possible, although there are obvious limits or constraints (see above).
  - What I need to learn and do is:
    - Find out what these constraints are (i.e., those which are constructed by my own thinking), and minimize them.
    - Use my mind deliberately along the lines Seth suggests, for healing.
-

### Topic 3: How motivated am I?

#### Main points in this topic:

##### Theory:

-What we choose to do to help ourselves, using our minds, depends on our beliefs. Principal among them are:

- Appraisal of the possibility that I can make a difference
- My will to live; reasons, and sense of purpose, for living
- My sense that I am worth the effort (self-esteem)
- The extent to which I buy into the “victim” role.

##### Practice:

- Investigating all of the above with practical exercises, and making changes as needed.

As in most areas of our lives, what we achieve with our self-healing work depends a lot on what priority it has for us, and therefore how much time, effort and intensity we bring to it. Seth often emphasises “intensity”: it’s no use being lukewarm about healing!

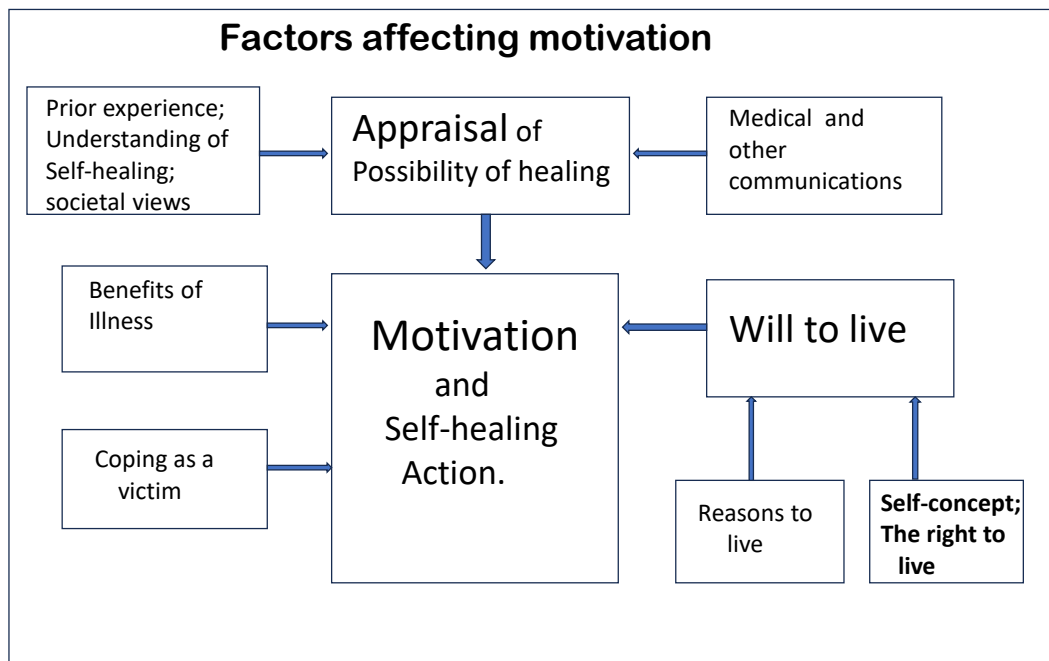
If we find we are somehow not giving our own healing work the attention we believe it deserves, investigating why this is so can help us see how to improve our motivation. A number of factors are in play here, and I’ve tried to show them on the diagram below. The key boxes are “Motivation”, which leads directly to action, our “Appraisal” of the likely value of the work, and, more subtly, our “Will to live”, which is itself affected by a number of other ideas we may hold, the most important being our concept of our own “worth”, and hence “right to live”. We will define these various elements, then use some practical exercises or reflections to find out what your own personal blocks may be.

- “Appraisal” has 2 sides: we assess our health situation, the risk to our well-being and lives, to decide whether effort is warranted. If it is, we then consider the healing techniques available to us, and whether they seem likely to be effective if we do them.
- Many other factors will influence this appraisal; I’ve shown 2 important ones in boxes: the extent to which we believe the mind can affect a physical disease, and the kinds of communication we have had (often very pessimistic) from doctors and others.
- “Will to live” is more complex. When questioned, people usually say, perhaps indignantly: “of course I want to live!”, but on examination, this often turns out to be more of a fear of dying than any intense interest in the process of living. There is an exercise below that can reveal the strength or otherwise of your own will to live. Having good reasons to carry on living will obviously affect our will to do so.
- Less obvious, perhaps, is the view we hold of our intrinsic worth as a human individual. We often get the sense, as small children, that we are not “good enough”, although we learn, as adults to conceal this. Nevertheless, under crisis, this belief may subtly undermine the motivation to fight for our lives; if we are basically unworthy, perhaps we don’t have a “right” to live (seldom recognised at the conscious level)!
- Another element that may undermine our motivation to help ourselves heal is the undeniable fact that being ill may bring “benefits”: relief from responsibilities, and more attention from others, are examples. Exposing such factors allows us the choice to downplay them.

- Finally, we may see ourselves as a “victim” of unfortunate events, and just try to endure our symptoms, while accepting the dominant societal view that there’s nothing we can do except hope for the best from medical treatment. Denial and distraction become the main coping strategies. Sadly, this is the path most cancer patients take at present.

You may be able to come up with other habits of thinking that sap your good intentions. We all have them; it’s a lot easier to watch Netflix than to meditate! This topic consists essentially of a number of exercises that a dedicated individual can do by herself (or with the aid of a group, or a therapist). They are “psychological” rather than “spiritual” in nature, but I include them in a spiritually-focused course because, without addressing them, and removing the main obstacles, we are unlikely to make much progress spiritually. We are aiming to clarify the thoughts that undermine our motivation, which will give us the option of not allowing them to rule our behaviour (an option we don’t have when they are unrecognised!). I’ve classified them under 4 main headings: “Appraisal”, “Will to Live”, Right to Live”, and Victim-hood”.

**KEY IDEAS**



**1. Appraisal.**

Ex.1.1. Ask yourself: What confidence do I have that the techniques of self-healing I am learning have the potential to slow or stop the progress, or prevent recurrence, of my cancer? (Absolute honesty is required!). Record your answer on a scale of 1-10, as below:

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 (where 1 means no confidence, 10 complete confidence)

Ex.1.2. What confidence do I have that I, personally, can and will actually do them, and persist in that endeavour (1-10)?

1 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 (where 1 means no confidence, 10 complete confidence)

The first question asks about the self-healing techniques for people generally. Is this whole approach believable?

The second asks whether I think I personally have the ability and will to apply the methods.

People often feel: I'd like to believe this stuff works, and would help me, but it's hard to accept. This is understandable, because what we're being asked to believe involves a shift from the materialist view that we've all been taught, to a more spiritual view of reality. If you feel this way, but remain willing to change (hoping it will help you heal), then I'd advocate reading – Seth, and other spiritual works – and meeting with others with more experience. A change in world-view takes time, but if you are open, and persevere, it happens.

If your response to the first category is high, but low in the second, one possibility is that your doctors have thoroughly depressed you with the idea that your disease is particularly dangerous and perhaps incurable, which may or may not be the case. Remember that it is their responsibility to tell you what the usual outcome is from what they observe: you are setting out to be "unusual". Even with the most serious illnesses there is usually a small proportion of people who survive much longer than expected. A low response in the second category (given a belief in the value of the methods) likely indicates a lack of confidence in your own abilities (acquiring experience can change that!), and ultimately, perhaps, in the "worth" of yourself or your life (see below).

**2. Will to live (and reasons for doing so).**

Almost nobody wants to suffer or die prematurely. But it is a different question to ask yourself: how much do I truly want to live, as opposed to not wanting to die? If you respond firmly: "yes, I really want to live", the next question is: "why: for what reasons?" Your interest in living implies that there are things you want to experience or accomplish, which you can clarify to yourself (a woolly sense of clinging to the familiar does not inspire us to work towards living!). Perhaps an even more cogent question is: "why do I need to live?" A strong "reason to live" is helpful, and perhaps life-sparing.

The first set of questions below invite you to examine how strong our feelings, as opposed to ideas, are about living. The second set investigates reasons: specifically, what makes my life worthwhile. If the desire to live is not urgent in you, think about what activities you can introduce to (or remove from) your daily round to promote a greater interest in living. If time seems very limited, lay out your priorities, and be sure to accomplish what is most important – probably interactions with loved ones.

Ex.2.1. Will to live: (The emotional urge to continue living).

This is a "thought experiment" that requires absolute honesty; the answers can be distressing, in that they may contradict what you normally tell yourself at a more superficial level. Investigating them may allow you to choose a different set of aspirations if you want (you may have done this one before, but it bears repeating).

PART A:

You are offered an immediate and painless exit from this life and world, at a time of your choosing. The following conditions apply:

- (1) Your loved ones will not suffer.
- (2) Your various responsibilities, financial and so on, are all taken care of.
- (3) You are certain that the death of your body is not the end of you – that you will be going to some other realm more interesting and pleasant than this one.

The question is: would you accept this offer?

- If you answer “No”, it implies you have some strong interest, passion, vocation or purpose that makes you want to stay on this Earth. Spell that out.
- If you answer “Yes”, then clarify what, if any developments in your life might change your mind.

You can also ponder this question without caveat # 3. This may help you see if your “desire to live” is simply a fear that there is nothing more after death of the body.

PART B:

The reverse of the question - would I accept a painless exit? - is to ask yourself how you would feel if you were suddenly granted complete healing.

- “If a fairy godmother suddenly granted me complete and guaranteed healing, what would be my immediate emotional reaction?”
- You likely imagined a kind of overwhelming relief: it may have caused an intense reaction, like weeping. Then watch as your mind adjusts to this new, if imagined, situation. How do the emotions change? Is there any sense of “loss” (e.g., of a condition that freed you from certain obligations)? Would any regrets emerge – matters I now “had to” cope with?
- Then what ideas might come up about what you want to do in your continuing life? Have these changed since before your original diagnosis? Is there confusion, uncertainty, about what comes next in your life?
- Now imagine that the fairy godmother makes it clear that you will be granted a wish to do, and to experience, whatever you want. What would you do if this were the case?

Ex.2.2. Reasons to live.

The categories below are simply a number of aspects of life that most of us value. Your own preferences may differ, and you may think of others that are important to you. Take charge of the exercise (and all of these exercises)! Make the investigations your own.

(a). Pleasures of life:

- Loving relationships with others. (This is probably what comes to mind immediately for most people).
- List other activities that are pleasurable, stimulating, and/or make you feel content with yourself and your life. Even “small” things, like listening to music, reading the paper, morning coffee, chatting with friends...
- Write a similar list of activities that drag you down, or are depressing or boring.
- Examine what proportion of your time is spent in activities in the 2 broad categories.
- Find beliefs that stop you from spending more of your time doing what you think is satisfying.

(b). Creative activities:

- What do I want to create or accomplish in my life from now on? This category might include arts, crafts, sciences, business ventures, home improvement, sports, or many other activities and enterprises, different for everyone. The more intensely you feel it, the more important it is. Ultimately, try to find or revive reasons that make you “need” rather than just “want” to live! Such reasons can create a sense of excitement that reverberates throughout the whole body.

(c). Learning.

- What do I want to learn more about, and why?
- Personal growth or evolution – how important is this to me?

Consider Tolle’s “inner and outer purpose” (“A New Earth” ch 9). Write about the importance of each to you.

(d). Helping others.

- Help for those related to me, or close friends.
- Help for others in the community; You may even be able to see yourself as “a channel for the creative energy of the Universe” as Seth recommends, i.e., as someone who is here to learn, and to help others

(e). Other reasons.

- Specify any others that are important to you.

(f) Integrating all the reasons.

- Look back over your stated reasons for living. Does this add up to a desire to “carry on”? How strong is this desire? How much do you want to fight for your life? (Again, there is no room in this work for “politically correct” answers. We need to acknowledge and write down what we really feel, consider whether this is simply the result of old traumas or disappointments, and decide whether we want to change).

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**3. The right to live (our self concept).**

The series of exercises below may help you clarify first, what your emotional conception of your self is, and secondly, suggest some ways to work towards changing it, if change is needed. *(There is more on the idea of impaired self concept in the “Further Ideas” section at the end of this topic).*

Ex. 3.1. Self esteem, and its relation to illness.

The ideas in this list are not what we commonly acknowledge to ourselves, so some of them may annoy or offend you. Approach it with an open mind, ready to consider previously unrecognised views within your (deeper) mind. If you discover some such ideas, how can you use the knowledge to assist your healing?

- I’m not really all that interested in living (although I don’t want to suffer, of course!)
- I haven’t really lived up to my potential.
- I am not sure that I have a right to do what I want to do in life.

- My cancer feels like the result of an accumulation of small conflicts in my life (specify), including my frustration with events around me.
- It is my way of saying I don't really deserve to live.
- It is a way of "punishing" myself for personal inadequacies or failures of behaviour.
- It symbolises my lack of trust – in the Divine, in others, in myself ...

Ex 3.2. According to Seth, many people who contract cancer have "martyr-like characteristics":

- Looking back over your life, do you see a tendency to put up with "undesirable situations or conditions"? (Consider your family and intimate relationships, employment conditions, social interactions).
- Have you taken refuge in conditions that appeared to limit you, on the grounds that you "couldn't be expected" to do what you might otherwise have done?
- Can you find any tendency in yourself to avoid expressions of what you really think and feel for fear of harming or antagonising other people (and think right back into childhood for this one)? What are you afraid might happen if you really did "let it all out"?

Ex 3.3. How I thought of myself at different stages of life, and how I imagined others thought of me.

Get deeply relaxed, by taking the usual trip down to an inner healing room or sanctuary. Now imagine what (a) you liked best and least of yourself, and (b) what you imagined others thought of you, at each of the following times:

- See yourself as a small child perhaps 3-5 years old. Imagine playing in a room or yard in your home at that time. (What others thought of you may be difficult to access for this age category).
- Now fast forward to the teenage years, and follow the same process – imagine common activities and locations, "watch" yourself going about characteristic activities, and ask what you like best and least about yourself (there will be plenty of self-judgment at this time!). Also, as a teenager, recall what you believed others (your peers, teachers and family members) thought of you.
- Repeat for other stages of life that seem relevant, e.g., in your twenties or thirties.
- Repeat for your present-day self. Write about it all.

Ex. 3.4. Finding an image of yourself.

- In a deeply relaxed state, in your healing room or sanctuary, ask yourself: "what would be an image that represents me?" Or you could ask: "What animal would represent who I am?" Draw whatever comes up: the first thing to pop into the mind is likely to be most authentic, even if you don't "like it"!

Ex. 3.5. Accepting yourself.

- Do a deep relaxation, and then go within to meet your Inner Healer, in whatever way you have found most effective. As you sit on a bench near Him/Her/It, imagine that this divine Being has total love and acceptance for you – so much so that you can feel it coming towards you. Allow this love to enter and fill you (visualise light if you like). Now take this a step further: see this Being and yourself as merging – you become that!

Ex. 3.6. The mirror:

- Look at yourself in a mirror, continuously, for an extended period (several minutes).

What are your immediate impressions: thoughts and emotions? (They may be subtle or fleeting; watch closely, and record – write about – them honestly. This may seem simple, but it is an important exercise).

As always, write in your journal about your experiences.

Ex. 3.7. Countering your ideas of unworthiness.

Go through your work in the “diagnostic” categories above, item by item, and see if it makes any sense to hold on to those appraisals. Replace them with more positive assessments; if a self-criticism still seems to apply, you can say “that arose because of .....; I recognise it and will not let it run my life any more”. An excellent counter is Seth’s statement: “these are ideas about reality, not reality itself”.

When you find self-denigrating ideas, it can help to reject them angrily, and assert something along these lines: “That’s absurd! I am a valuable, worthwhile person and I really want to live and ..... (some sense of purpose or strong reason to live)”.

A “generic” way to escape self-denigration comes from the non-duality teachers (topic 8); you can practise it if it makes sense to you (and see part II of this course). They tell us that we are NOT this mind, but more like an observer watching, perhaps with affection and amusement, our little minds at play!

Four points on countering self-denigrating ideas.

The first thing to know, and this is important, is that if you do find you are dissatisfied with yourself (or you may be critical, or feel inadequate, or even contemptuous or despairing of yourself), is that IT’S NOT YOUR FAULT! These habits are laid down early in life, before you have enough understanding to stop the process. They are a result of how powerful others treated you at that time. So, be clear about this, tell yourself often something like “that’s just an old, false pattern: it’s not true of me now – it never was, in fact”.

The second thing to know, also important, is that you are not your habits. And that’s all these negative thoughts are: old patterns of thinking that have become “stuck” in your mind. We become addicted to them. You are something quite different (the inner being, imagining these habits).

The third thing: these patterns are, if not universal, extremely common. Some people suppress them vigorously, or act out in various ways (e.g., by being aggressive). That doesn’t mean that the underlying insecurity about personal worth goes away.

A possible fourth: if you have reached a stage in your spiritual work where you feel loved and supported by a god or by higher consciousness, the problem of self-worth largely disappears.

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**4. The victim role.**

When an illness is chronic, lasting months or years, as cancer often does, it can significantly change how we view ourselves and our possible future, while undermining our determination to act to help ourselves. We may remain passive, clinging to the hope that medicine alone will cure us. Clearly, this is not ideal, and is something that we can analyse rationally.

4.1. Illness as a way of life. Reflect on, and write about, the following (then add more questions of your own, if you like). Absolute honesty is required for this to be useful.

- When you were first diagnosed, what did you think that implied? What was the future likely to hold?
- Has that changed since then? If you have had cancer for some time, has your “image” of yourself changed at all – e.g., do you feel more/less able to act decisively in your daily life, or to try new things?
- How do you think other people see you (and how do you react to what you think is going on in their minds)?
- Any change in how you see your worth as a member of society?

4.2. “Benefits” of illness: this can at first be an offensive suggestion, but by now you have probably encountered the view that having cancer may indeed confer benefits, amongst all the heartache.

- Has having cancer brought you any “benefits”, such as: opportunity to stop work? The chance to avoid any problems that you were expected to confront when well? Disability insurance? Has it meant that you could do less in the way of routine chores? Have you enjoyed being cared for by others (family, professionals)? An excuse to stop projects that you were engaged in previously? Do you now have more time to spend on relaxing activities? (Add any other benefits you can think of).

4.3. Learning from illness:

- Has having a serious illness caused you to reflect more on the meaning of your life? Do you feel now that there are things you are “meant” to learn from it – and are you doing so? This approach – asking what I can learn from my problems – is a way of countering passive “victimhood” (we can, and should, learn from all significant events in our lives. Illness is only one of many). It may be instructive to do a deep relaxation, “visit” the cancer (possibly in the company of an Inner Healer), and ask it “what do you want?” and “what do I need to do?”

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As you will see, most of the questions in categories 1-4 above belong to the “diagnostic” phase - clarifying the mental elements that block our efforts at self healing. Following this, we turn, naturally, to the “therapeutic” phase, where, as with our previous work on affirmations, the work is to try to drop any patterns of thinking that are undermining us, and to replace them with opposing “positive” ideas. It’s not easy, and takes time and dedication, but seeing the irrationality of views that we have held, sometimes for most of our lives, is a good first step in being able to change them.

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## FURTHER IDEAS

Our self concept; often impaired.

Damaged self-esteem, usually originating in childhood, is a major cause of suffering in many people. It is common in cancer patients, and it seems likely that such a sense of oneself as basically not adequate or not worth much, can promote ill health, including cancer. The researcher Lydia Temoshok showed that cancer patients, compared with others, tend to be “unassertive, patient, appeasing, often unaware of any ‘negative’ emotions, particularly anger, not likely to experience or express anxiety, fear or sadness, and tending to be overly concerned with meeting the needs of others, to the neglect of their

own” (the quoted remarks are taken from a longer description of personality and cancer in my book “Can the Mind Heal Cancer?”, which can be downloaded free from the Wellspring.ca website). She called this “the type C personality”. However, if you find some similar qualities in yourself, you need not leap to the conclusion: “My God; that’s me; I did it to myself!” Such personality aspects are common in the population, and certainly not all people who have them get cancer, and not all with cancer share them. I don’t think we can say for sure that low self-esteem makes cancer more likely, but it certainly affects our ability to help ourselves.

Raising self esteem is undeniably a difficult task. The first step is to recognise that you are criticizing yourself in your internal monologue: that gives you the option of dropping that pattern, although the old habits keep creeping back! If it is very deep seated, individual psychotherapy can help you see more clearly what you are “telling yourself”, and may show you how your views arose in childhood. I would say, though, that many of us will be saddled with an underlying (and unwarranted) sense of inadequacy for the rest of our lives, and must compensate by recognising and disallowing the harmful ideas. The important point is to recognise them, and not allow those damaging impulses from childhood to control our actions; that is part of psychological maturity. It is possible to escape such self-criticism completely, but that requires a shift away from identifying with the separate self – a spiritual evolution that we will touch on in part II of this course.

In A Course in Miracles, chapter 12, part II, para 1 , sentence 2, the author (Jesus) says:

*“If to love oneself is to heal oneself, those who are sick do not love themselves. Therefore, they are asking for the love that would heal them, but which they are denying to themselves. If they knew the truth about themselves, they could not be sick.”*

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## Topic 4: Purpose and direction in life: my place in the world.

### Main points in this topic:

#### Theory:

- According to Seth, illness is often caused by “mis-direction of creative energy”. To assist our healing, we may seek what he calls “value fulfillment” – developing our potential in physical, mental-emotional and spiritual spheres.

#### Practice:

- Through introspective exercises we examine what we value most in ourselves and our relationship to the world.  
- Three additional exercises are: making a graph of the major events in our lives, contacting “sub-personalities”, and writing a life story.

## KEY IDEAS

Most of us, when faced with a diagnosis of serious cancer, are understandably fearful and pessimistic. It is something we have been taught to dread, in this society, and this view, coupled with the prevailing materialism, leads us to feel there’s nothing we can do except hope that medical treatment will cure us. The result is a “victim” mentality, as we discussed in the last topic.

To counteract this, we are exploring here a number of things we can do with our remarkable minds to tip the balance towards health. An important part of this is defining, for ourselves, reasons to live, things that interest and excite us about our lives, and give us a sense that we matter. We made some lists in topic 3; in this topic, let’s take this a bit further. Some of our immediate “reasons” may have been about the pleasures of living, i.e., sensory satisfactions. Also among them were probably motivation to help others, to play a role in our larger world. These start to feel more like a “purpose” for living, somewhat “higher” in the scale, so to speak, than sensory pleasures! If we take a still larger view, we might see our lives as having a “direction”, an overriding reason for being here, something to be accomplished – for example, learning what our full potential may be, even who we are, ultimately.

For most of us, a keen desire to live depends, in turn, on reasons, or a sense of purpose and meaning that makes living worthwhile. Lawrence LeShan, a psychologist and pioneer in the field of using the mind in cancer healing, claimed (but without much documentation), that patients who discovered a stimulating purpose in their lives often survived the disease (see his book “Cancer as a Turning Point”). We found evidence for this in our own study of people who were using self-healing techniques, and in interviews of “remarkable survivors”. A major point of difference between the survivors and others who did not survive advanced cancer was that they were clear about what mattered to them in life, “authenticity”, and felt entitled to pursue such goals, “autonomy” (you can read about these published studies in my book: “Can the Mind Heal Cancer?”, and in an Appendix to the level 4 HJ manual, both available free on Wellspring’s site: “Well on the Web”; go to “Online resources” then “HJ program”).

How might a sense of purpose in one’s life affect health of the body? As a former cell biologist, I was particularly interested in the following statement by Seth, since I had imagined that something of the sort might be going on:

*In almost all such cases involving cancer, spiritual and psychic growth is being denied, or the individual feels that he or she can no longer grow properly in personal, psychic terms. This attempt to grow then **activates body mechanisms that result in the overgrowth of certain cells**. The individual insists upon growing or upon death, and forces an artificial situation in which growth itself becomes physically disastrous. This is because a blockage occurs. The individual wants to grow in terms of personhood, but is afraid of doing so. (Nature of the Psyche, p67; emphasis mine).*

To put it simply, the cancer may be (at times) an unfortunate side effect of a blocked attempt to “grow” mentally (and spiritually)! There is, as far as I know, no hard evidence for this yet; a materialist would find it absurd. However, there is no doubt that feeling “blocked”, perhaps somewhat depressed, and seeing little reason to carry on, will influence how the hormonal and nervous systems behave. A feeling that “life isn’t worthwhile” is a message from ego to body, via the Inner Self, that one’s problems can not be overcome, an overriding attitude with potentially damaging effects.

We have emphasised the importance of defining a purpose in life at several points during the Healing Journey program. It could be helpful to review your earlier notes. Also valuable: to repeat the “will to live” exercise in the last topic. Imagining, in detail, an “ideal day in the future”, as we did in HJ level 1, is also helpful to clarify what is important to you (this is repeated below, and is also available on the Wellspring website, “online resources” for HJ). We’ll look at a few more quotes from Seth, followed by a note on two other sources, before moving into some practical exercises:

#### **More on Seth’s views: “Value fulfillment”.**

A term that crops up constantly in Seth’s writings, particularly in relation to ill-health, is “value fulfillment”. It appears in the title of two of his books, and means the maximising of our potential, in all aspects of life. We are, it seems, “meant” to explore and enjoy our potentials, and not to huddle in self-protective inertia.

*Physically speaking, man's "purpose" is to help enrich the quality of existence in all of its dimensions. Spiritually speaking, his "purpose" is to understand the qualities of love and creativity, to intellectually and psychically understand the sources of his being, and to lovingly create other dimensions of reality of which he is presently unaware. (Dreams, Evolution and Value Fulfillment, p238).*

Another brief quote about purpose:

*The excitement of living must come from each of you.... You come here to know yourselves, and that should always be your purpose (The Unknown Reality, vol II, Appendix # 18).*

I like that phrase: “excitement of living”! How many of us have lost it, in mid-life! The practical question is: “how can I recover at least some of that feeling?” We need to look for projects, creative interests, or pursuits that will truly engage us, and use our abilities to the full. Examples? Learning a language or to play an instrument. Making/creating something useful or aesthetically pleasing, with manual and/or mental skills. Becoming a volunteer, helping others. Perhaps acquiring a pet. The possibilities are almost endless, and will vary with the person, but we all know the kind of feeling that we had, perhaps earlier in life, when we were fully involved with something important to us.

The impact on health? Here’s a quote echoing the longer one above; I include it because I think this is so important:

*Poor health, or simply unhappy situations, arise only when the individual meets too many detours, or encounters too many blocks to the expression of value fulfillment. (Way Toward Health, p175).*

A further, related concept from Seth: we often “misdirect our creative energy”, he says. I think we can all acknowledge that we do this, at least in small ways; important activities get shoved aside by too many frivolous pursuits, or by our many “responsibilities”, things that “must be done”! Most of the time, these activities are the results of choices we have made, although we usually do not want to acknowledge this, preferring to blame circumstances.

*Illness and suffering are the results of the misdirection of creative energy. They are a part of the creative force, however. They do not come from a different source than, say, health and vitality.*

*(They) are not thrust upon you by God, or by All That Is (God!), or by an outside agency. They are by-products of the learning process, created by you, in themselves quite neutral. On the other hand, your existence itself, the reality and nature of your planet, the whole existence in which you have these experiences are also created by you, using the abilities of which I have spoken. (Seth Speaks, p. 301).*

### **A Course in Miracles (ACIM).**

We will be looking at ACIM in more depth in topic 7, but meanwhile, the text has a lot to say about purpose – mostly along traditional Christian lines. We are to practise forgiving all those around us, and ourselves. This will help us to see that we are, in fact, all part of the One consciousness, or God.

*In any situation in which you are uncertain, the first thing to consider, very simply, is: "What do I want to come of this? What is it for?" The clarification of the goal belongs at the beginning, for it is this which will determine the outcome. (Chapter 17, section VI, paragraph 2).*

Healing comes from adjusting our “orientation” in life – towards recognizing we are part of God (more on this in later topics):

*A sick person perceives himself as separate from God. (Manual for Teachers, chapter 22, para 6).*

*Healing is a sign that you want to make whole. And this willingness opens your ears to the Voice of the Holy Spirit, Whose message is wholeness.... And yet the invitation must come from you...(chapter 11, section II, para 4).*

Another memorable, brief quote (think about how it applies to yourself):

*Nothing is difficult that is wholly desired. (Chapter 6, part VB, para 8, sentence 7).*

### **Eckhart Tolle.**

Eckhart Tolle is well-known to students of the Healing Journey program. His teaching centres around a simple but profound idea: rest in the present moment. Chapter 9 of “A New Earth” discusses purpose, with a particularly valuable distinction: between “inner” and “outer” purpose. We are discussing mainly outer purpose in this topic, and will move to “inner” for the next (topic 5). Here’ a precis of what he says:

*Your life has an inner purpose and an outer purpose. Inner purpose concerns Being, and is primary. Outer purpose concerns doing, and is secondary.... (they are), however so intertwined that it is almost*

*impossible to speak of one without referring to the other. Your inner purpose is to awaken. It is as simple as that.....Your outer purpose can change over time....Finding and living in alignment with the inner purpose is the foundation for fulfilling your outer purpose. It is the basis for true success. (E. Tolle: "A New Earth" p 258).*

## KEY IDEAS: PRACTICAL

A little reflection shows us that what is fundamental here is the activity in our minds, our mental state. Our physical actions flow from that.

We need to think about both, and how they interact. We can seek advice from many sources – books, You-tube videos, teachers, spiritual masters, courses like this - then, once we're clear, we need to integrate these states of mind and actions into our lives. The Seth books have a lot of relevant ideas, and "The Way Toward Health" is a relatively simple starting point. Below are some exercises to help with the clarification.

### Ex.1. Basic self care:

If our lives are at risk, and we are serious about self-healing, we need to organise the basic activities of our lives around this intention. Some activities that previously took a lot of time (social media and TV?) may have to be minimised, in order to make time for the healing work.

- We need a regular daily schedule for our study and practices (reading, meditating, journalling and comparable methods);
- Included in this should be daily physical exercise, such as a 30 min brisk walk, or equivalent, which has been clearly shown to greatly decrease the rate of recurrence of some cancers.
- Diet: there's no evidence that I know of that it affects an existing cancer (although there's evidence that diet can make the initiation of cancer more or less likely), so we can feel free to eat normally, taking into account standard advice on nutrition. It is important to enjoy our food.
- Rest: obviously regular, nightly sleep is important, possibly supplemented by other shorter periods, as needed.
- Enjoyable, social activities, hobbies, creative efforts – all add to a sense that life is worth living.
- By contrast, we may drop activities and responsibilities that are not essential, and that "drag us down". This may mean saying "No" to others, at times!

### Ex.2. Finding what you value most:

In a relaxed state (for example, in your "healing room") imagine you have just learned that you have exactly one week to live. What would you do with the time?

*(This is obviously a very emotionally fraught exercise, if you do it conscientiously. If you find yourself becoming upset, you can state clearly that it is "just an exercise – for finding out what you value".*

The exercise can be adapted for different time periods of future life, e.g., a year, an hour! Creating imaginary scenarios like this helps us move away from vague ruminations and towards confronting what we really think, value and believe.

Ex.3. Re-directing your creative energy:

Affirm to yourself something like the following (craft your own version): ‘From this point on, however long I have, my life is going to be centred around “creative” purpose. I will define “creative” broadly, along the lines of Seth’s “value fulfillment”, and will define just what activities that means for me. While recognising that there are mundane chores to be done, and that some distraction from the central goal is needed at times, I will no longer let circumstances dictate my state of mind, but will instead assume the control that is my potential and my right. This is “step 1”, effective immediately’.

Step 2. ‘As I progress in understanding that I am part of the greater consciousness, I may find that I can relax this control, become more of a spectator, and simply appreciate the wonderful play of human experience, and life on this planet’.

.....

Ex.4. How I see myself and my world:

In a deeply relaxed or light trance state, allow a picture to develop of how you see yourself and your world. If you have a current illness, this may well appear in your image. Then draw this picture of yourself, noting that whatever you put down, and the way you do it (timidly vs boldly, calmly vs angrily, and so on) tells you something about your self-concept. It does not need to be in any way artistic or “correct”. The drawings are symbols for how you conceive of yourself in your “deeper” mind.

Note how you represent yourself, and any family, friends or colleagues. Try to let a symbol for yourself come up spontaneously, i.e. without controlling it. Some possible examples: a lighthouse (guiding others), an old but beautiful tree (providing a home for others), a rock (resistant to the waves), a wild horse (free, bold...). These are all rather fine things to be – you may at first arrive at something less inspiring (when I first did this, I drew a beaver!), but if so, work with it, see if it can be upgraded!

.....

Ex.5. An ideal day in the future:

You may remember this one from earlier in HJ, but it bears repeating (and you’ll recall that there are audio versions available on the Wellspring website or on You-tube).

.....

Ex.6. Conducting a dialogue with your Higher Self:

There are many ways to use the idea that we can access a higher or inner self, seeking guidance and support from this entity. The central point is that we are personifying or objectifying a source of power and information that would usually seem out of reach, if just an abstract idea. The process described in topic 2 – going “down” to a “healing room”- is a simple way to do this. Practitioners of shamanism may use a similar approach, but sometimes with a range of “levels” to which one can descend, and a variety of helpful entities. Followers of theistic religions, like Christianity and Hinduism, often use a concrete symbol of a god or avatar and offer prayers to that symbol, understanding that it is simply a “stand in” for the overarching power of the god. As a reminder, here are 3 versions:

1. Visiting the Inner Healer. Review the exercise we did in topic 2; it is one way of “visiting” your Inner Healer/Higher Self, and beginning a dialogue with it (audiotapes available on the Wellspring website, or You-tube). Alternatively, once you have become familiar with the process, you may find that you can dispense with the “journey” through a forest, and so on, and simply relax deeply and ask directly that the Inner Healer appear. A good question to ask is: “what am I meant to do in my life?”

2. Having moved to your healing room, imagine a figure that to you symbolises a higher or divine level of consciousness. If you have a religious background, this may be one of the traditional avatars, like Jesus. If you are “not religious”, the Buddha may appeal. Personally, I like an image of “Divine Mother”, for whom there are many avatars in Hinduism and other religions. Now imagine this figure embracing or holding you, and allow yourself to feel secure and loved. Draw a picture of this.
  3. Imagine yourself a number of years in the future, peaceful and well, having succeeded in healing from cancer. Have a dialogue with this older version of yourself, asking its advice for you now.
- 

## CONTINUING STUDY

### **Exercise 1. Making a list, and “graphing” the unfolding of your life:**

*This is a longer process, which you may have done before – if so, you could review and update it:*

**Step 1:** In a relaxed state, slowly go through your memories of your life (it can be very helpful to look at photos and other aids to memory). List any events that seem important, e.g. starting school, learning to play a sport, getting a good result in some endeavour, graduating from school, marriage or lasting relationships, choosing a career path, significant health changes ....and so on. Aim to list around 20 – 40 of these key events.

**Step 2:** Go through your material, and recall how you felt at the various points: not just immediate emotions, but the kind of mood or quality of your life at each event or stage. Make some notes about your feelings at these different times.

**Step 3:** Now construct a graph, designed to show how your usual mood or emotional quality of life was affected by the main events going on at different times. Along the bottom axis, mark out your lifespan in years (use a large sheet of paper, perhaps 2 feet in width, or join 2 standard sheets together). Note where some of these main events occurred – i.e., at what age. Then on the vertical (Y) axis, that is, up the left side of the graph, draw a line at right angles to the first, from “0%” at the bottom, representing the worst you have ever felt, to 100%, at the top, the best. Now draw, across the page, a line that will move up or down depending on how you felt at the different stages. For example, if you had a happy childhood, your line might have remained near 100 during that period, but it is likely to have taken a severe dip at the time of a diagnosis of cancer!

**Step 4:** Our main concern here is to identify times at which we felt able to pursue whatever was important to us, and compare them with other times when our creativity seemed blocked, that is, when our lives did not feel fulfilling to us. The former times may seem like successes, and the latter like “failures”; or we might describe some periods as “flowing smoothly” and others as “difficult” or times of stagnation. Examine what was happening in life at those times – our tendency will be to claim that the surrounding events were responsible for feelings of moving ahead or of being blocked, but try to recall your thinking in those periods, since it is ultimately our appraisal of events that determine what we feel able to do. Mark these different periods on your graph. Pay special attention to the years immediately before any diagnosis of cancer or other illness.

**Step 5:** You may think of other qualities in yourself that could be recorded on the same graph (as further lines) – for example, ideas of self-worth: how do they correspond with mood, feeling blocked or otherwise, and current events?

**Step 6:** If you feel enterprising, you could continue this graph for a number of years into the future, noting what you want and expect to happen, and what you want your mental state to be! How will you “unblock” yourself?

If you plan to present your findings to a group, use bold, large drawings, visible from a distance.

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## **Exercise 2. Subpersonalities:**

We all have patterns of thinking that cause us to display characteristic behaviour or traits. For example, a person may be readily affected by the suffering of others, eager to help them, perhaps feeling guilty about selfish inclinations, having a need to prove his or her own worth, maybe with lofty ideals about all of us being brothers and sisters – and this cluster might constitute a “helper” or “healer” personality trait. As another example, someone might believe (because of early life experiences), that others will try to harm her, and that it is necessary to be tough and vigilant at all times – a cluster that might represent a “fighter” of a certain kind. Most of us have within a “scared child” that was more obvious when we were small, but is less on display in adulthood. We can call these aspects of ourselves “sub-personalities”, and recognize that they can take over control of our behaviour at times. Different circumstances bring different sub-personalities to the fore; for example, a fright may temporarily cause the scared child to control us completely. Such a narrow focus usually does not lead to the most mature and beneficial way of acting – we are better served when all aspects of ourselves contribute, in an integrated way, towards a best response to situations.

The sub-personality work – somewhat unconventional in modern psychology, but well-tested over many decades – has as its aim the identifying of these clusters of characteristics, these semi-autonomous parts of the whole person, and allowing them to assume a visible form. We might, for example, be able to picture ourselves as a small child, at the mercy of domineering adults. Or a more fanciful symbol might emerge from our unconscious, like a knight on horseback, representing that part of ourselves that rides to the defence of others. Such symbols are intensely individual, and quite fascinating when we allow them to form. We can then interact with them, for example in a dialogue between the whole or core self and the sub-personalities, encouraging them to express what they want and need, helping them find a constructive way to achieve that, prompting them to grow or mature, and promoting harmony and integration between the various sub-personalities to serve the interests of the whole self. Healing of mind and body may follow. (A fascinating account of healing from cancer while using this approach can be found in “Mind, Fantasy and Healing”, by Alice Hopper Epstein, Delacorte Press, NY, 1989).

### Ex 2.1. Giving shape to some of our personality aspects or traits

Having identified (through thinking about it) some of our personality traits like “manager”, “helper”, “fighter”, “wounded child”, and so on, we can now seek to develop visual symbols or representations of such patterns. We can do this by getting ourselves into a very relaxed state, then recalling an incident in which we felt strong emotion. An image may appear (or you may try the second exercise, below, first, as a way of creating/identifying these figures). For example, if the pattern (sub-personality) we were considering was “frightened child”, we might see a small figure, cowering as if under threat; for a “creative artist” the symbol might be a kind of stereotyped French figure in a beret,

brandishing a palette. These visual pictures might represent yourself, or they might show a generic figure, or some symbol that is not a human person at all – for example, a lover of food might appear as a hungry animal! The image could be an archetypal one from the media; it could be someone encountered in life; or it could be a personality that has appeared in dreams.

The following is an account of 2 sub-personalities spontaneously appearing to a former member of the Healing Journey group (reproduced with her permission):

*It was a minor incident, a phone conversation where the person crushed something I had been enthusiastic about. I felt tears welling up inside me and quickly ended the conversation. It was not a big deal, so I was alarmed at my strong reaction. I decided rather than bury the emotion and tears I would stay with the emotional pain I was feeling. An image of an old lady appeared, pointing her finger at me she said “See that is what happens when you get too excited, someone comes along and crushes you, it is better not to become too excited or happy, someone will always come along and be critical of you, crush your enthusiasm, your happiness.”*

*At first.....my vulnerable little girl appeared hurt and upset, then the old woman pointing her finger. She was protecting the little girl, but also doing a lot of damage.*

.....

Exercise 2.2: Contacting our sub-personalities through a magical door:

*(adapted from notes by the Psychosynthesis Institute, San Francisco)*

(Note the similarities between this exercise and the “Inner Healer” one).

Our aim is to increase our awareness of some of our sub-personalities so that we can interact with them. We want to know their needs, their wants, their special qualities, their behavior patterns. Of course these are our own wants, needs, qualities and behavior which may be locked into the inner psychological patterns we call sub-personalities. The goal of the work is to “release the energy” which is caught in them and to integrate it into the whole personality, so that the overall life energy can flow more smoothly and harmoniously. The true observer within us, our “center,” does not criticize. It is objective and wise, and understands that the needs of our sub-personalities (although not necessarily their wants) are valid and legitimate.

(For a first attempt, if you manage to do the first 5 of the operations below, you will have made good progress. On subsequent occasions you could try the remaining exercises).

- 1.) Sit comfortably and relax. After closing your eyes, take a few deep breaths. Imagine a big wooden door in front of you. Make it as real as you can – note the texture and the color, and any details such as the hinges, handle or knob. On the door there is a sign that says SUBPERSONALITIES. Imagine that they all live behind the door.
- 2.) Now open the door and let one or more of your sub-ps come out. Just observe them. Don’t get involved. Be aware of them.
- 3.) Gradually focus on one which seems most central, or which interests you most.
- 4.) Approach the sub-p, and begin to relate to it. Talk to it and listen to what it says to you. See what you have to say to each other.

5.) Ask it what it wants. Then ask it why. These are different questions and they are very important. Make a mental note of the answers.

6.) Now let yourself become the sub-p. Identify with it and experience what it's like to be it. As this sub-p, how do you feel? What is the world like to you? Ask yourself: "What do I want? What would I like to do? What do I need?"

7.) After summoning one or more sub-ps, see it/them in front of you. Ask yourself: "What would my life be like if that sub-p fully had its own way, if I were the sub-p all the time?"

8.) Take another look at the sub-p; examine carefully what you like and what you dislike about it.

9.) See yourself outside in the sunshine with the sub-p. Imagine that it is a beautiful, sparkling day and that the sun is shining brightly. Now imagine that a special warm beam of sunlight slowly radiates from the sun towards you, and envelops you and the sub-p in light and warmth. The energy of the sun will make something happen.

10.) Is the sub-p different in any way now? If it is still there, turn toward it, and again begin to relate to it. See if you can improve things, if you can arrive at some better relationship with it. Take all the time you need to do this.

11.) Now write about what happened. What did you like and dislike about the sub-p? What does it need? Were you able to reach an understanding with it? You may find it helpful to make a drawing of the sub-p.

These exercises can be repeated as needed, focusing on the same sub-p or on different ones. Be sure to spend plenty of time in the write-up afterwards.

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#### Ex2.3. Writing a life story:

This can be very valuable indeed, particularly if you are able to share and discuss with group members who are also doing it. You will find a detailed guide in Appendix III of the "Workbook for Level 4" of the HJ program. [[https://wellspring.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/HJ\\_L4\\_workbook.pdf](https://wellspring.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/HJ_L4_workbook.pdf)]

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#### List of Exercises in topic 4.

- Basic self care:
  - Finding what you value most
  - Re-directing your creative energy
  - How I see myself and my world.
  - An ideal day in the future
  - Conducting a dialogue with your Higher Self
  - Making a list, and "graphing" the unfolding of your life.
  - Sub-personalities
  - Writing a life story
-

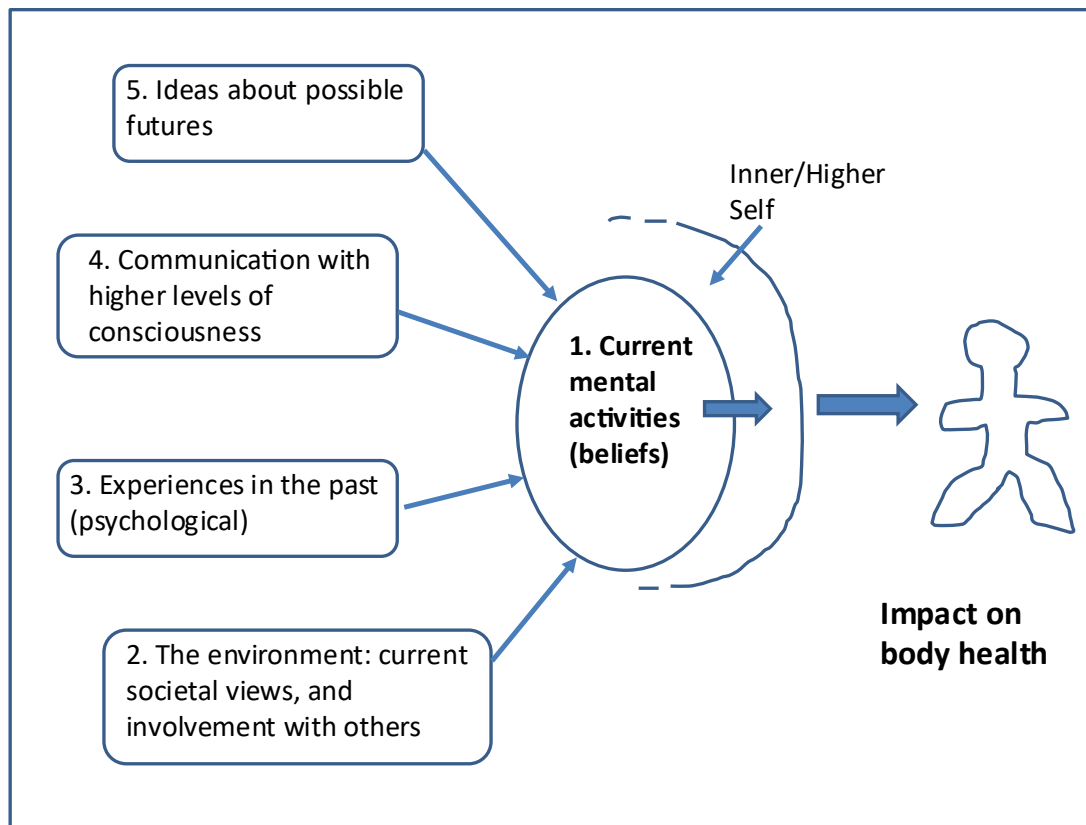
## Appendix to part I

### A list of psychic factors affecting the body, and their influence on healing

The main aim in this appendix is to provide, in point form, an extended summary of Seth's basic teachings on healing through the mind (this is followed by a short account of how to record and analyse your dreams). We can use the diagram below as a simple visual "model" or scheme, showing how these ideas can be grouped into categories that might help to organise our healing work. You will see that the category "Current mental activities" is given prominence. Our thoughts and beliefs are passed to another level of consciousness, the Inner/Higher Self, which attempts to bring about the changes desired by the egoic self (see topics 1 and 2).

The diagram is followed by extended tables of harmful and healing mental factors.

*"All practical healing deals with the insertion of positive suggestions and the removal of negative ones"* (Seth, in "The Way Toward Health", p171).



As you can see, "Current mental activities" represents a kind of final common pathway or "clearing house" through which more distant events and ideas exert their influence. To the left of that oval (labelled "1" in the diagram) there are 4 more boxes, representing the 4 main categories of mental events that, according to Seth, have a major impact on what is currently going on in our minds, and thence on physical (and of course mental) health, via the inner self (these indirect influences (the 4 boxes) are organised in a slightly different way than in the earlier sections of this course).

- By “the environment” (2) we mean, first, the climate of disbelief that surrounds ideas of the use of minds to influence healing of bodies. This is the viewpoint of our culture – basically a kind of naïve realism.
- Under “Experiences in the past”, meaning the individual’s recollection of her past history (3) we mean our “role” as an “ill person”, any benefits that ensue from being unwell, and any learning we see as potentially coming from it. Such attitudes, along with longstanding psychological problems, particularly poor self esteem, may impact our will to heal (topic 3).
- Box 4 refers to Seth’s model of the place of our ego self within a much larger hierarchy of consciousness from which we may access help (topic 5). Seth emphasises the importance of relating to this greater order of consciousness.
- Box 5 refers to the more esoteric (unconventional) set of ideas from Seth that are addressed in topic 9. To recap: Seth says that every event in our lives is surrounded by a series of “probable” alternatives that are not actualised: our life path becomes one thread along a vast tapestry of potential but unmanifested possibilities. We can choose among these, to some extent, and since time does not really exist, we are able, he says, to make at least some changes in the past from the present! Further, the future may act back on the present, from which follows the idea that a clear sense of purpose and direction may influence our present health status; a positive picture of our intended future may help us through our current difficulties! This is something we have emphasised at many points throughout the Healing Journey program. It is understandable in common-sense terms, but Seth provides a mechanism: by “choosing” a meaningful future we may be choosing a whole new life path.

Below are 2 tables:

Table 1: “Constraints (blocks) on the healing of the body through the mind”. There are 5 main categories, corresponding to the 5 boxes of the diagram.

- subcategories have been listed (A, B, C....) under the headings for each of the 5 boxes of the diagram.

This table describes the main factors in mind-body healing in broad terms.

Table 2: “Collected summaries on illness and healing: arranged according to the first table”

- This second table is a detailed elaboration of the subcategories (A, B, C...), resulting in about 60 principal ideas from Seth’s writings on healing the body through the mind.

The second (longer) table can be read through as a collection of Seth’s healing ideas, in summary/point form. I have used Seth’s words and phrases throughout these summaries. There is obviously a lot of information here, and it can seem overwhelming at first. Perhaps the best way to make use of it all is to read through table 1 carefully first, noting how much of it applies to yourself. Then go through the second, longer table, extracting the specific elements that seem most relevant to you, and what practical responses they point to.

**(See table next page)**

Table 1: Constraints (“blocks”) on the healing of the body through the mind

Constraints hampering mental efforts	“Antidotes” – paths to healing
<p><u>Current habits of mind: the individual and her beliefs.</u></p> <p>A. Lack of motivation and action                      B. Harmful habits of thinking and imagining.                      C. Management of constant flow of messages, from mind to body                      D. Emotional repression.                      E. Unawareness of dreams.</p>	<p>- Act                      - Become aware and change.                      - Become aware and change                      - Listen to spontaneous “impulses”.                      Allow emotional flow.                      - Learn to interpret them</p>
<p><u>Environment: other people and societal views</u></p> <p>A. The prevailing materialistic worldview: that what happens to us is determined only by physical factors.                      B. The belief that the past is fixed, unalterable, and that the current physical state entirely determines what happens                      C. Prior involvement of others in the diagnosis and treatment of the disease.</p>	<p>- Study alternative views of reality.                      Ignore disbelief of others.                      - Study other views                      - Regard their predictions as provisional only</p>
<p><u>The individual’s recollection of her “past history”</u></p> <p>A. Becoming immersed in the “illness” role; finding benefits in it.                      B. Possibility that illness is self-imposed, for purposes of learning                      C. Unresolved psychological problems, especially low self esteem</p>	<p>- Awareness and will to change                      - Investigate; learn any “lessons”.                      - Awareness and change</p>
<p><u>Communication with higher levels of the Self/consciousness</u></p> <p>A. Unawareness that our nature is consciousness, and that higher levels exist and can help.                      B. Individual fails to communicate her wishes and expectations clearly and unambiguously, to the higher Self.                      C. Lack of openness to receive guidance.</p>	<p>- Study the mystics; meditative practice. Attend spiritual gatherings.                      - Do so                      - Practise “listening” within; prayer.</p>
<p><u>The future self</u></p> <p>A. Unawareness that both past and future can be changed from the “present moment – the point of power” (no time).                      B. Lack of sense of purpose and meaning in life (“misdirection of creative energy”)</p>	<p>- Openness to this possibility                      - Clarify purpose; act accordingly.</p>

**Table 2: Collected summaries on illness and healing: rearranged according to the “constraints” table**

**1. Current habits of mind: the individual and her beliefs .**

A. Lack of motivation and action

1. You only need to allow and direct the freedom of your conscious mind.

B. Harmful habits of thinking and imagining.

1. Illness and suffering are self-imposed learning processes (like our whole lives). This “choosing” is usually done in small, cumulative steps.
2. Any inclination to jump from a local condition to “I am a mess”, is very poor; e.g., with a sore joint, tendency is to focus on the difficulties it causes.
3. Concentration on a symptom reinforces it. Don’t pretend it doesn’t exist, but give yourself constructive suggestions, then turn attention to other things.
4. Avoid undue condemnation of others and of the world (doom-saying)
5. Don’t be too “serious” – live “playfully”.

C. Management of constant flow of messages, from mind to body

1. Your effective power of action follows the lines of your beliefs.
2. In any situation, health or otherwise, when you find yourself with a negative suggestion, immediately wipe it out and replace it with a constructive image. Tell yourself: “I will only react to constructive suggestions.”
3. Desire attracts, but fear also attracts! So don’t concentrate on the feared; instead on what is loved.
4. Become too busy and joyful to accept symptoms. Take your concentration away from them. Distractions – new ventures, interests – draw energy away from negative areas and symptoms.
5. It is extremely important, if difficult, to probe and to discover exactly what your present expectations are. Not your desires, but your expectations. Expectation is actually the main trigger that switches inner data into the realm of physical construction. Without it, no physical construction results. Expectations .... also determine what inner data of all available, will be received by the individual.
6. Rely upon your immediate sense data, not secondary experience
7. To act in an independent manner, you must begin to initiate action that you want to occur physically (*emphatically*) by creating it in your own being. This is done by combining belief, emotion and imagination, and forming them into a mental picture of the desired physical result.
8. When you try to change your convictions (*beliefs*) in order to change your experience, you also have to first stop the momentum that you have already built up
9. If you are aware of a particular problem (challenge), you can be assured that its solution is as much there and with you as the problem is.
10. Faith and belief in an idea implies some commitment. Commitment is dependent on expectation. Without expectation you will not commit yourself.

D. Emotional repression.

1. Root cause (of illness) is fear, lack of trust in one's worth and one's own spontaneous impulses.
2. To "let go" is to trust the spontaneity of your own being, to trust your own energy and power and strength, and to abandon yourself to the energy of your own life.
3. Affirmation means saying "yes" to yourself and to the life you lead, and to accepting your own unique personhood. That affirmation means that you declare your individuality. Affirmation means that you embrace the life that is yours and flows through you. Your affirmation of yourself is one of your greatest strengths..... Biologically, affirmation means health.
4. *Must acknowledge all emotions, "positive" and "negative"*. Trusted, your feelings will lead you to psychological and spiritual states of mystic understanding, calm, and peacefulness. Followed, your emotions will lead you to deep understandings.
5. If you have a physical symptom, do not run away from it. Feel its reality in your body. Let the emotions follow freely. These will lead you, if you allow them to flow, to the beliefs that cause the difficulty.

E. Unawareness of dreams.

1. Dreams are one of your greatest natural therapies, and one of your most effective assets as connectors between the interior and exterior universes.
  2. Physical cures can happen in the dream state
- .....

**2. Environment: other people and societal views.**

A. The prevailing materialistic worldview: that what happens to us is determined only by physical factors.

1. your exterior life springs from the invisible world of your reality through your conscious thoughts and beliefs
2. So-called incurable diseases can be healed as long as this does not involve regenerations not possible within the context of creaturehood.
3. Your consciousness and your universe spring constantly into actualization.
4. You are given the gift of the gods; you create your reality according to your beliefs; yours is the creative energy that makes your world; there are no limitations to the self except those you believe in.
5. Each individual creates subconsciously the physical matter of his own image. Long-standing distorted concepts must be faced and struck out (otherwise energy flows into the distorted pattern).
6. Cure of any illness depends on the belief that one can be cured; also, on strong desire to be cured, and on the strength of the purpose that the illness serves. Ultimately it depends on the individual's ability to mobilize his own energies.

B. The belief that the past is fixed, unalterable, and that the current physical state entirely determines what happens.

1. The present is the point of power.
2. No physical condition is irreversible, except loss of limbs and definite organs. The personality is always free to choose its future – but the choice is with the inner self, which is the real identity.
3. Dwelling on possibility (*or persistence*) of illness sets up negative webs of probabilities that need not occur. You can theoretically alter your own past as you have known it. When you alter your beliefs today you also reprogram your past. As far as you are concerned the present is

your point of action, focus, and power, and from that point of volition you form both your future and past.

C. Prior involvement of others in the diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

*(Their predictions affect your beliefs; their involvement complicates changing the “past”)*

.....

**3. The individual’s recollection of her “past history”**

A. Becoming immersed in the “illness” role; finding benefits in it.

1. The personality immerses itself in the role of sick person. A symptom (e.g., an ulcer, may be considered a secondary personality, life becoming organised around it).
2. Illness is not thrust upon you – you have done this to your body and can undo it; be alert to your self-suggestions; don’t overestimate the negative aspects; if a part hurts, tell it you can free it. Think lovingly of the part.
3. Look for reasons, beliefs, which may have originated in childhood, but are expressed now. We must take responsibility for the problem.
4. The sufferer has adopted an illness into his own self-image, through self-suggestion. He then focuses on it – energy is spent maintaining it. “Health” programs may reinforce this focus.
5. *(Instead)* Live each day as fully and joyfully as possible. Imagine the best possible results of any plans or projects. Above all, do not concentrate upon past unfavorable events, or imagined future ones.

B. Possibility that illness is self-imposed, for purposes of learning

1. If an illness is adopted by a personality for a particular reason in this life, then it has been adopted so that the personality involved will understand it as a materialised symbol for a challenge or problem that the personality has set. Solving the problem will conquer the illness.
2. Sometimes the purpose of the illness is to bring about certain needed spiritual characteristics.

C. Unresolved psychological problems, especially low self esteem

1. Forget the cringing selves that you sometimes are!
  2. A feeling of self-approval is absolutely necessary for any true sense of well-being
  3. State of bodily health reflects inner (psychological) state. Illness usually indicates un-faced problems. Must discover them to heal.
  4. Many cancer patients have martyr-like characteristics, often putting up with undesirable situations or conditions for years. They feel powerless, unable to change, yet unwilling to stay in the same position. The most important point is to arouse such a person's beliefs in his or her strength and power.
  5. Behind the entire problem, however, is the fear of using one's full power or energy. Cancer patients most usually feel an inner impatience as they sense their own need for future expansion and development, only to feel it thwarted. The fear that blocks that energy can indeed be dissipated if new beliefs are inserted for old ones....
- .....

#### **4. Higher levels of the Self/consciousness (infinite potential).**

##### A. Unawareness that our nature is consciousness, and that higher levels exist and can help.

1. You are indeed supported by a greater body of knowledge than you consciously realize
2. When you are aware of the existence of the entity and of the soul, you can consciously draw upon their greater energy, understanding and strength. It is inherently available, but your conscious intent brings about certain changes in you that automatically trigger such benefits.
3. You are in physical existence to learn and understand that your energy, translated into feelings, thoughts and emotions, causes all experience ..... Your emotions follow your beliefs. It is not the other way around, (*and*) .....your conscious beliefs direct the functioning of your body

##### B. Individual fails to communicate her wishes and expectations clearly and unambiguously, to the higher Self.

1. Prayer has been extremely successful in enabling individuals to manipulate matter through use of their psychic abilities.

##### C. Lack of openness to receiving guidance.

1. A belief in a 'god who provides', by whatever name, is indeed a psychological requirement for the good health of the body and mind.
- .....

#### **5. The future self; alternate life pathways.**

##### A. Unawareness that future affects the "past" (no time)

*(This is Seth's claim that we can change both past and future, from the present).*

1. Suppose that you are unhealthy and desire health. If you understand the nature of probabilities, you will not need to pretend to ignore your present situation. You will recognize it instead as a probable reality that you have physically materialized... you will then begin the process necessary to bring a different probability into physical experience...by concentrating upon what you want.

##### B. Lack of sense of purpose and meaning in life

1. Illness and suffering are a result of misdirection of creative energy
  2. Poor health only results when individuals experience blocks to expression of value fulfillment – attempts to grow that are blocked by beliefs.
  3. In almost all such cases involving cancer, spiritual and psychic growth is being denied, or the individual feels that he or she can no longer grow properly in personal, psychic terms.
  4. Cancer, for example, has become the symbol for the body's vulnerability, in current years — the proof of man's susceptibility to the body. It is a disease that people have when they want to die.
  5. Whatever your situation is, it is a good idea to ask yourself what you would do if you were free of it.
  6. In thinking of the future, don't project symptoms there, but imagine a healthy future.
  7. Clarify your purpose ("value fulfillment").
  8. The excitement of living must come from each of you.
- .....

See "Dreams" next page.

## Dreams; a gateway to the deeper mind.

Dreams are important in our work on expanding the sense of self, in particular because they show us undeniably how we create a reality with our minds. A dream may be full of convincing action – during which we do not leave our beds! Furthermore, while few of us are aware of having “out-of-body” experiences, perhaps the most dramatic evidence that consciousness does not depend on a physical body, we all dream, and are capable of remembering dreams if we wish to do so.

Dreams are an avenue into another reality, or level of consciousness; our dreaming mind has simply turned in another direction, so to speak, a process somewhat analogous to changing the channel on a TV set. The dream reality is more fundamental than the waking one, however: esoteric teachers tell us that it harbours great creativity: that our physical world emerges from it (something certain “primitive” cultures understood!). It is a state in which communication can occur more easily between levels of consciousness, that is, between all parts of the greater Self.

As you will find when you study your dreams, different laws seem to operate there. Time and space are much less in evidence: we can sometimes fly, or move instantly from one place to another! Ideas are expressed immediately, e.g. as visual symbols, without the time delay experienced in waking reality. Some people learn to become aware that they are dreaming and direct their actions (such as flying) deliberately. Healing is said to be possible in dreams, and spiritual experiences often occur within them. Insights may be acquired, for example by posing a question to ourselves before going to sleep, and finding a symbolic answer in a dream. Clearly, it is a dimension of ourselves well worth cultivating.

We can divide our dream study into 2 phases: first the “capturing” and recording of dreams, and second, analysing them. At the end of the notes for this topic there is a summary of the main points about both strategies. The most important prerequisite for remembering dreams is the desire to do so: if you are not recalling any, examine your thinking for any ambivalence – does it seem like too much trouble, or are you afraid of what you might find? Then in the analytic phase, the main point is to be intuitive rather than rational/intellectual; you are asking the deeper levels of mind to show you something new, which they will do, but in their own “language” – and the symbols used in that language tend to be visual and other imagery, rather than words. We need to find out what those symbols are able to convey to us. Various methods may be used for this purpose, the most common being to generate lists of ideas associated with each symbol. One or more of these ideas often “resonates” – i.e., there can be an “Ah-ha” feeling: “so that’s what it means!” We each have to do our own work on this – lists of standard meanings for symbols have little value.

There are very many books on dream analysis, which you can find in any New Age bookstore. “The meaning of your dreams” by D.F. Melbourne and K. Hearne seems to be a good one by 2 dream scientists. “Realities of the Dreaming Mind: the Practice of Dream Yoga” by Swami Sivananda Radha is an outstanding and accessible account, particularly for those interested in ultimately understanding the spiritual meanings of their dreams.

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### Exercise 1. How our senses create our world.

- Make sure you understand the difference between these 2 operations of the body: (1) “sensory perception”, meaning the taking in, and acknowledging, of “raw, sense data”, i.e. visual data,

hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling touch. (2) “Conception”, or thinking about things, forming concepts in the mind. Often this immediately follows a sensory experience – we see something, then we label it and think about it. Please do explore this by looking around and noticing how quickly thought follows perception, and how difficult it is to look at things and not think about them! Perhaps you have already tried walking along the street just noticing (i.e. perceiving) everything without any thought (labelling, judging, remembering, fantasising....).

- Sit with eyes closed and focus on individual sounds around you. Notice other sensations in the body: aches and pains, smells, taste (in the mouth), touch (e.g. of clothing, the chair). Feel where the muscles of your body are tense. Try to capture feelings within the body organs, e.g. in your gastro-intestinal tract.
- Now open your eyes and note how rich and diverse the visual stimuli are. Try to bring the inner world and the outer world together, i.e. continue to note how the (apparent) outer world registers on your senses. Think of it as an extension of your senses. Feel yourself as part of this process of creating and experiencing the world about you.
- Repeat the eyes closed/open cycle a few times.

As always, write about your findings. Try the whole practice a number of times.

### Exercise 2. Associations to a recent event.

Pick any recent event and “relive” it in your imagination. Let your associations flow. Other events or memories will spring to mind. Try to recall the emotions connected with them. Write it all down. You could then construct a “map” or flow chart showing how the different streams of memories led from one to another.

### Exercise 3. Constructing a waking (day) dream.

Create a dream for yourself, starting with whatever event or image you like. Let it simply unfold, naturally, playfully; let the images flow (it will help to be in a relaxed state). You can imagine that you are the Higher Self, watching it all unfold. Let it end in whatever way it does without trying to force a pattern or conclusion on it.

Now write this daydream down, and analyse it as you would a sleeping dream (see below), i.e. underline the symbols (words) that seem important, and generate a number of associations to each.

Exercise 4. Recording and analysing your dreams: see the directions below. Ideally, watching and analysing your dreams can become a regular part of daily life.

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## **Recording and analysing dreams**

### **“Capturing” and recording**

- The key requirement is **intention**; we need honestly and intensely to desire to remember and record our dreams. Affirm this to yourself before going to bed.
- Have a pen and paper ready by the bed. Explain to any sleeping partner what you are up to.
- When you wake in the night (and this can be made more probable by consuming lots of liquids before retiring!) keep still, and see if you have been dreaming (we all have many dreams each night). If you remember something, move as little as possible as you write down what you can recall – you’ll need a small light, obviously. Don’t get up and walk around first – dreams seem to dissolve with major body activity.
- Be honest, even if you don’t like what you recall.

- If you feel you know what it's about, note that down too.
- Return to sleep: you may wish to try and continue with the same dream (works sometimes).

**Analysing.**

- Next day, read through what you wrote (or scribbled!)
- Record also what you were doing in the day before the dream; in particular, any activities or thoughts that were emotionally charged.
- Now go through the text (if you are very conscientious you may wish to type it out, but that's not essential), and underline or highlight every word or phrase that seems to have possible significance – err on the side of underlining more, not less.
- Make a list of these words/phrases. Each one is a symbol, i.e. it stands for something which may be quite different from what it appears to be. Each one is also (obviously) part of yourself – you have created this inner world.
- Now painstakingly go through the list, one by one, making associations to each. For example, you see a dog, and you might write: companion/pet, diversion, loving acceptance, my old dog Fido (childhood), warm fuzzies.....; or you might write: danger, noise, too much energy, responsibilities, vet bills, mess..... and so on: it is different for everyone. You can't rely on lists of the "meaning" of dream symbols.

When you have finished this, you may well find that reading through all your associations points to a meaning for the dream that was quite unexpected. Reinsert the symbolic meanings into the text of the dream, and see how it reads now. The hope is to learn something about yourself that you did not already "know" at the consciously-aware level.

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