

Symmetry Therapy -- A Non-Medical Awareness-Based Practice of Being Conscious of Symmetries in the Body.

By R.S. Pearson

Please consult your physician before beginning this or any other exercise program. Even though there are very few movements during these relaxation techniques, misunderstanding the exercises might cause beginners to move in a way not intended.

This practice makes no claim on being a medical help to heal any condition. It does not claim to replace any health practice but instead help educate the public.

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1) Muscle Tension: One of The Biggest Health Problems?

Everyone can admit that tension that is held in the muscle when not for any purpose of movement is of no use, but is it one of our biggest health problems? For it to be understood as one of the biggest health problems, it must not be seen as a problem in its final stage. That is, muscle tension is not fatal, and does not directly cause people to lose years of their lives. But if we look at how if an unreleased and even a faint but constant muscular tension stresses the body, we can see that it sets a stage for other problems later on.

Muscle tension is a bigger problem in physical problems than what is currently understood or being taught. We say it is just “stress” and we may think stress is just an emotional or mental state, but it has a physical component.

There is a tendency for the bones to not seem “pulled” to one side or another once muscles are relaxed. Most people are not aware of something that a small percentage of educated people fight every day with vigilance. They are a myriad of chiropractors, osteopaths, acupuncturists, massage practitioners, and many other new forms of body therapy that have been developed in the last one-hundred years that address the problem of muscle tension.

It is said by some of these body therapy practitioners that people get smaller as they age because of muscle tension that is unnoticed and held for dozens of years in the body. This muscle tension is actually distributed over the whole of the body. One area of the body may feel extreme discomfort at times, but it is literally impossible for only one area of the body to be abnormally tensed while not having above average areas of tension in other areas of the body. Major groups of muscles tense up in large groups and affect a large majority of the body when there is abnormal tension. Likewise, relaxing every area of the body has an affect on any one given area of the body that has extreme tension or contraction in it.

2 What Is Symmetry Therapy?

Symmetry Therapy is a non-medical, awareness-based practice based on being conscious of the symmetries in the body. The main concern of Symmetry Therapy is to educate people about the need for muscle relaxation and body alignment as they go throughout life. A basic awareness of the symmetries of the body at various times throughout the day and during a gentle relaxation exercise session is the awareness people need which, over a long period of time, may help give them release of muscle tensions and a better sense of balance. The concepts surrounding the symmetries of the body helps create the force of attention required to release body tension. The exercise practice is done lying flat on the ground, with the hands at one’s side, and fingertips gently touching the ground. The force of gravity helps the body to adjust itself so that small tensions are released.

Symmetry Therapy states that the body has obvious symmetries between the right and left side, but also important ones in the top and bottom halves that we have never noticed, or just take for granted. Such top and bottom symmetries have similar joint functionality, such as the hands and feet, the elbows and knees, the wrists and ankles, the shoulders and hips, and other areas besides joints, such as the long bones of the arms and legs, the concentration of nerves in the head and genitals, and others areas. Awareness of these parts of the body helps us to naturally align the body. Prolonged intelligent focus on the body and consciously relaxing muscles takes effort, and a long dedicated practice. Noticing the symmetry of the body is one way in which one can prolong this awareness. We recognize that not everyone may have a symmetrical body like they may have had at birth. Problems can happen along the journey that got us where we are today. Being more symmetrical than others in no way makes one a better person, and even if one has asymmetrical aspects of their body, getting a sense of one’s body with these concepts may still be helpful in many ways.

Most of the Symmetry Therapy work takes place when we lay on the ground, and have our arms at our side, with the fingertips gently touching the ground. As we lay on the ground, the gravity combines with the sensing of the four parts of our body at once, and gives us little adjustments. The four parts are the top and bottom symmetry, and the left and right symmetry. Our commands of relaxation to the muscles are what we use to start making these changes. Chiropractors and Osteopaths use manipulations.

Why would something like Symmetry Therapy help with health? When doing Symmetry Therapy one focuses on breathing full, deep breathes and also focuses on relaxing the muscles. Simple muscle relaxation and deep breathing will help with health and these are two benefits of doing Symmetry Therapy. It is impossible for an adult to breathe deeply or completely relax all their muscles without conscious effort created by prolonged attention. These are the “soft exercises” which people often do not do, but if they did them, they may gain the strength to do the harder exercises, like walking, weights, aerobics, and so on. Doing soft exercises, such as deep breathing and stretching, can help people who are very out of practice to begin doing “hard” exercises or sports. Also, when laying on the ground on a completely flat surface, and doing the various practices describe, there are adjustments that are made that simply something like a relaxation recording can not produce. One is not doing yoga, only instead the light stretching that occurs when the body is not seated but instead elongated on the floor. The awareness of the four points of symmetry, on the left and right, and top and bottom, create a buttressing, or a good foundation for the muscles to relax, because of the awareness of the skeleton creates a type of rectangular grid. It can also greatly help with a sense of balance.

When we are asleep, our bodies do much restoration and healing. When we are awake, there may be unneeded tension and fidgeting. When sleeping, we have absolutely no conscious control over our bodies and so they can completely relax. But when we are awake, we can be more relaxed if it becomes an aim. One aspect of the graceful traits that we often see in royalty or in celebrities is that they are relaxed and their gait seems in balance. “Finishing” and modeling schools, as well as musical instruction, and other advanced training, actually teaches muscle relaxation and body balance but these are not available to most people.

Symmetry Therapy focuses on relaxation and the kind of alignment that one can do without a chiropractor or osteopath. It does not do anything directly for muscular strength, cardio-vascular health, or stretching. Indirectly, it may help some areas, such as giving minor strength improvements because of clarifying “muscle direction.” Muscle direction is simply the functional arc or direction that the muscles are prone to travel. A body that knows its own symmetry will have a better defined muscle direction that one spent in sedentary activities, or an active life without much attention to the functional patterns of the body. Muscle “directionality” is a fairly new idea that hasn’t been studied much.

By being a relaxation technique, Symmetry Therapy may in some small way help with some people’s heart health. But one must be careful in doing these exercises not to

get “too soft” by all the relaxation commands one gives oneself. For many, it’s good to lift weights, stretch, walk long distances, and so on. No exercises can do everything for health, and these do not claim to be a cure-all either.

Symmetry Therapy helps create a state of mind-body relationship that is very coordinated. After a session, one’s attention is divided on the body and on whatever else in life that one has to pay attention. Having an awareness of the body helps one have a connection to the mental and emotional state, as the three are interconnected. This fact is being touted by hundreds of thousands of body-mind therapists all over the globe. As valuable as their services are, many cannot afford them. Symmetry Therapy is a technique that anyone can understand and practice. It may take a little more effort to get certain results than having someone help you, but, with effort, good results can be obtained. It is not meant to replace any professional services, when they are available.

As a person ages, balance is said to be one of the things that can become a problem and cause accidents and falls. We must look at those who exercise or play sports as being aware of their body’s symmetry. If you think of a gymnast, or high diver, or the blocking and general moving around of basketball and football players, such athletes are very aware of their symmetry. Those who do not exercise or are not involved in sports are usually seldom aware of their body’s symmetry. How much time a person is concentrating on the body's symmetry verses how much time is that person's awareness in extension away from ever noticing it and the balance it helps give?

The answer is probably one part of attention to the body’s symmetries to hundreds of parts or moments away from it, towards the average things of every day life. That is, there is probably almost no attention to the feeling of the body’s symmetry in most adults. However, in those that practice Yoga, go to chiropractors, or are involved in some athletics such as tennis and skiing, there is some recognition of symmetry. One's skeletal-muscular health can be somewhat affected by altering this ratio. Concentrating on the symmetry of the body can help us notice stress and strain in the muscles and relax it. The fully symmetry of the body when finally discovered is like a map that helps us control the tension and balance of the body.

Work on focusing on body symmetry can break down the relationship of coarse psychological impressions of ourselves that get lodged in the body. We can work these out of the body when we relax the body. We must take the mass of ourselves and expose it to the effect of the main part of the work on body symmetry, which is a divided attention throughout the day when one remembers it, to be able to sense muscle relaxation and body symmetries as one goes throughout the day and not forget completely about them.

A better blood chemistry, such as the immune system, are now scientifically proven to be generated in people who have less stress and more positive emotions. This can be improved by practicing Symmetry Therapy. Where this is helpful for creating positive emotions can be arrived at by looking at the emotions as relieved when the mind is focused on the body and not identified with the concerns of every day life. This blood chemistry is a longer positive effect of this work. Instead of the work on the body

symmetry effort going away in a few days, the fact that the blood chemistry is improved makes a more lasting change.

There is an equation that shows the overall level of physical “regeneration” that a person keeps going as they age. The equation is: the amount of impulse that is sent to the muscles by the will to relax the muscles, has a special relation to how much life impels us to stress ourselves. This stress is the result of the psychological distress formed and kept in check in the body, by the interpretation of life’s natural stresses, and how the impulse sent to the muscles to relax them counteracts the natural psychological distress.

The equation is, again:

the amount of impulse that is sent to the muscles by the will to relax them

has a special relation to

how much life impels us to stress ourselves and tighten our muscles

which becomes the result of the psychological distress formed and kept in the body.

The symmetry of our body is in almost every section: hands and feet, arms and legs, shoulders and hips, buttocks and chest, and even sections of the abdomen. The eyes, nostrils, ears and cheekbones, all have this symmetry also.

It is the loss of consciousness of the body's symmetry that possibly worsens some physical problems. Holding the "symmetry pairs" in the mind for a period of 30 seconds or more can be seen as a type of Symmetry Therapy (ST) exercise. When the muscles are relaxed and in an equal placement, the body may be stressed less and the whole structure may be aligned better. This may ultimately have an important role in keeping the parts of the body in their proper places and with less tension and stress (such as the organs). When you look at medical photos of people with various diseases, including the elderly, you see bodies that are very out of alignment with the natural symmetry they are born with.

For most of us, understanding a simple principle regarding why our body is out of alignment is very important. The principle is: we have abused its symmetry and state of "relaxation" throughout the day, and we have to make an effort to get back to that symmetry by some type of relaxation. Some do yoga, some do massage, some do chiropractic. Some do nothing.

The solution is in monitoring how much time the body is held in concentration on its symmetry verses how much time is it in extension away from its symmetry. How much time can we arrange it into its symmetry?

All athletes and body practitioners such as the Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, Rolfing, even massage practitioners, osteopaths and chiropractors work on this symmetry. Massage practitioners do it when they work on tensions in one part of the body, releasing them. Focusing on symmetry while laying flat on the ground and letting the weight of gravity press the body against the floor helps the individual to do that by themselves

Lengths from left shoulder to left elbow are symmetrical with those lengths from left hip to left knee. That doesn't mean they are equal, but the long bones of the arms are similar to the long bones of the legs. There are other lengths in the entire body like this. The full length and tonus of the arm can be compared to the full length and tonus of the leg from these points. If one senses the muscles and bones from the shoulders to the elbows, one can compare it to the muscles from the hips to the knees. Likewise, one senses the muscles and bones from the elbows to the wrists and between the knees to the ankles, to see if they feel even in size and relaxed in tension.

Shoulders and hips are a strong symmetry to hold in the consciousness.

The two sides of the teeth provide an interesting symmetry to observe. If you sense your teeth in your consciousness for some time, you may begin to notice your face relaxing in a new way. The eyes, ears, nose and the face pretty much all over shows a symmetry. One can focus on the symmetry of the nostrils and notice if by doing that one can relax unconscious tensions in the body.

One of the big perceptual shifts is sensing the big toes as different than the other toes in the same the way that the thumbs are different in structure compared to the other fingers. The big toes are not completely "opposable," as the thumbs are, but together with the ball of the foot, they do allow more directionality to the foot. One shifts one's weight and can change directions when turning on balls of the feet and also the big toes. More of a shifting of the body's stiffness can come from tracing the wrists of the hand and comparing them with the ankles of the feet. The same can also happen when one holds in attention the thumbs and big toes.

The ankles of the hands are the wrists, that is, they provide the same kind of function. The small bones on the end of the forearm can be seen as a type of ankle bone. What parts of the foot are also on the hands that we don't realize? Is there a type of ball of the foot on the hand?

The Balance of Poise

The chest and buttocks are a particularly interesting symmetry that must be worked on in order to achieve perfect poise. There is a possibility for tension in the hips, buttocks, groin, lower abdomen and upper thigh areas that will only be noticed once it is focused on the area for at least a few minutes. We focus on these areas by giving commands to each area to relax. We must state each area we focus on, such as, 'I relax my upper thighs. I relax my mid thighs. I relax my lower thighs' and so on, taking some time with each part. Tension in the chest and buttock areas form a type of "pulley system" -- for lack of a better expression -- which bends the body out of the upright balance. One states by affirming relaxation commands to these areas to get them to relax.

One can include in the chest region the actual chest muscles, shoulders, the sternum area, latismus dorsi and upper abdomen. To focus on this area, we tell each one

to relax in a statement, which doesn't need to be said out loud, it can be simply stated quietly in one's mind. Since distant parts of the body affect areas not directly related to a part in question, one should also look at the relationships to the arms, especially the biceps and elbows, to the position of the chest area, and the tension in the knee area to the buttocks. Also, deep breathing has a very direct effect on the general chest area. One may even notice that one cannot take deep breaths at all because of tension. The best way to start taking habitually deeper breaths is to force all the air out of the chest. There is a yoga breath where one keeps huffing by contracting the abdomen in and doesn't focus on inhaling at all but, just pushes in the lower stomach, and "huffs" outside. Somehow, the body gets the air it needs to keep exhaling in this way. This has a way of clearing out the body posture that is habituated to shallow breathing. Many suggest the pattern of "1, 4, 2" that is, one inhale for every four that we hold the breath, and two exhales. One can keep changing this, that is, it may be easy to start out with two seconds of inhales, eight counts of holding the breath, and four counts of exhales.

Sensing the chest and buttocks is an odd thing to prescribe for a person but once it becomes more frequent one can see how it can create a possible postural change. There are the "sitting bones" which are well-known to people familiar with bodywork but probably completely unknown to most people. They are the two bones at the bottom of the body that touch the chair when we are sitting uprightly. It is said that it is proper sitting when we notice these when we sit.

Fidgeting in the muscles can work against the relaxation that helps align the body. Relaxing the muscles creates a certain seriousness in the demeanor that works against fidgeting and may give one more of an appearance of grace and poise.

The Envelope of the Gait

Think of how one walks. Some people have a very pronounced problem in walking.

As far as the front and back balance, there is what can be conceived of as "the gait cube" which is a square area around a person as they walk a full double step which shows the legs and arms in both positions as they walk a distance of at least ten feet. Some people look down, some people lean back, some people walk relatively upright as if they were picking up their knees as they walked.

The symmetries between the front and the back, how far one is leaning forward or leaning backward is also a vital point of balance. This is done while standing by pelvis tilts and thrusts, pelvic floor locks. These can also be done while sitting.

Some Major Axioms of Body Mind Work

1) Some muscle tension pains in one area often are partially caused by muscle tensions in areas that are not even close to the area that has pain. This is why it is necessary to relax the entire body. One usually doesn't get this insight until one has done significant body

relaxation work. We can say the words “caused by muscle tension” in other areas, but we could just as easily say, “held in check.”

2) Deep breathing and pulling in the stomach area to expel the breath is a major help to the skeletal/musculature system, and even the digestive system. It obviously also helps the blood and the rest of the body by bringing in more oxygen and it gives a stimulus to the lymph system.

3) You can do an exercise while sitting or doing other things. You may not get as much from doing it while sitting or doing other tasks. You will not be able to put your whole focus on the body. One wouldn't have that degree of concentration on it and still be able to do another task. You should never listen to a Symmetry Therapy exercise while operating heavy machinery.

Athletes in their movement are constantly thinking of the balance and symmetry of their bodies, but it's something people who are no longer athletic rarely do consciously. I also developed some interesting ideas about the divided attention put throughout the day on the top and bottom symmetries of the body, as explained below, that I would like to popularize in some way. It does seem to help the body and mind coordinate into proper alignment in gentle ways.

Symmetry Therapy does work like most things that work -- because one is doing something. One is making an effort. It is impossible to get results from Symmetry Therapy by not doing anything but laying on the ground for a few minutes. There are in fact thousands of “exercise statements” that are easy to make for oneself in this work, and I have personally done many on audio. One simply uses the ideas of body symmetry together with muscle relaxation commands. One can then add a simple idea of there being meridian lines from the toes to the fingers, and combined with a few other concepts, there are literally thousands of statements one can make while laying flat on the ground. One can even make them while sitting but one doesn't get as relaxed. One however does orient the bodymind (the part of the brain that is related to movement) in a good sense of muscle direction.

3) Some Basic Symmetry Therapy Exercises

Disclaimer: if you have a medical condition you should seek qualified medical help. The quality of your life is at stake. This document is in no way a way to change that and is only meant to be educational.

If you can keep yourself on the ground for 30 minutes you can do these exercises in the way they were really intended. If you cannot do that, you will never know what these exercises will bring you. Of course, one doesn't have to do it for 30 minutes, one can do it for a longer or shorter amount of time. But one should try to do it for 30 minutes when one can. The promise of the fifteen minute exercise session that solves all problems seems to be the result of marketers trying to have their system outdo others by being shorter and easier.

The basic Symmetry Therapy exercise technique is very simple:

- 1) Lay flat on the ground, arms at the side, feet and ankles somewhat close together, and fingertips gently touching the ground, and staying touching the ground through most of the session.
- 2) Observe the top and bottom, left and right, symmetries of the body, in the pairs given. Just quietly observe what the body feels like.
- 3) Give relaxation commands to every part of the body, usually focusing on the two pairs of two symmetrical areas, such as the right and left knees at the same time as the right and left elbows. Knees and elbows are considered top and bottom symmetries, as are wrists and ankles, shoulders and hips, and so on.
- 4) Stay on the ground for at least fifteen minutes, preferably longer. Doing exercise variations during this time is OK, but come back to the relaxation posture. That is, it is fine to lift the legs or arms slowly, or bring the knees up so that the feet are flat on the ground and pulled closer to the hips, but always lay flat on the ground again with the fingertips touching the ground.

You can use these principles to make up your own lessons. You can use a cell phone that has a voice recorder, or any computer with a microphone and basic software (that most likely came with the computer when you bought it) to record your own exercise sessions while you do them. Speaking the exercise while you do it has a calming and clarifying effect, and helps you stay on the ground for longer than fifteen minutes, which is the minimum amount of time you should spend practicing these exercises.

A basic way I like to start is to lay on my back and raise my hands over my head and interlock my fingers with each other, so that the fingers are laced together and the palms are together. I can then stretch my body out which helps me relax. Another thing I will do is to simply let the arms lay flat over the head and notice the complete length on each side from the fingertips to the toes. Slight wiggling of the body can be made to adjust any small “kinks” out of the body so that one feels the muscles are more relaxed and rested completely against the ground. If there is any area that feels tense or painful, one focuses on that area to see if it will relax over time. Of course, if there is serious pain, one should see a doctor.

Some Symmetry Therapy techniques are practiced while laying on the floor and take very basic postures such as raising the arms straight up with the hands clasped in a prayer position, or stretching the arms out at the side which forms a “cross” with the body and arms. The other basic floor position is having the legs side by side, with knees up and the feet flat on the ground. The feet are closer to the body than usual, closer to the buttock area. But basically, most exercises are just done with the arms flat on the ground and the fingertips gently touching the ground. Others can be practiced as one goes throughout the day. Guided relaxation affirmations such as “I relax the tension in the back of my hands and feet” are also an integral part of this discipline as is deep breathing.

Gaining Some Awareness

Compare the right arm and hand with the left arm and hand. What are the sensations the brain registers of the two sides?

Compare the right elbow and with the right knee. How are they similar in function and structure?

Compare the right hand and with the right foot, and so on.

How Can we do a ST Session while Seated?

Here is a practice while sitting on the ground:

- 1) If possible, hold the toes with the fingers -- lining up each finger on each toe. Don't strain if this is difficult
- 2) Holding the knees and elbows in attention --- Keep the inner or "hollow" space in each in mind, the point of relaxation. This hollow or inner area can be seen as the hamstring area and the same inner area in the arm. This is really only noticed for the knees and elbows. Ignore the idea in the following.
- 3) Holding the ankles and wrists in attention.
- 4) Holding the hip joints and shoulder joints in attention.
- 5) Same with head and genitals
- 6) Trace a type of meridian that goes from the tips of the toes to the tips of the fingers, going throughout the whole body. Take about thirty seconds to trace it from each toe tip to the corresponding finger tip. That is, go from the right and left little toes, up the feet, up the shins and thighs, up the body, down the arms until one gets to the pinkies. The start with the ring toes, then middle toes, index goes and then big toes. Notice how the muscles all over the bodies relax from putting the attention in these imaginary meridians. How does having that in consciousness make your body feel? It should give one a better sense of balance.

While laying on the ground, or on a bed, or even sitting, try this meridian exercise.

Say to yourself the following:

I trace a line from left big toe to left thumb

I trace a line from left index toe to left index finger
(deep breath)

I trace a line from left middle toe to left middle finger

I trace a line from left ring toe to left ring finger
(deep breath)

I trace a line from left small toe to left small finger

or

I relax left big toe to left thumb

I relax left index toe to left index finger
 (deep breath)
 I relax left middle toe to left middle finger
 I relax left ring toe to left ring finger
 (deep breath)
 I relax left small toe to left small finger

or

I trace a line from big toes to thumbs
 I trace a line from index toes to index fingers
 (deep breath)
 I trace a line from middle toes to middle fingers
 I trace a line from ring toes to ring fingers
 (deep breath)
 I trace a line from left small toe to left small finger

Can you lay down on the ground, for five minutes only gain an awareness of the differences between your two sides? Look at a clock, put a timer on, such as a cell phone's, and try it.

When I say “feel your knees and elbows” I don’t mean literally with your hand, I mean put your attention in them. When I say to “relax the area” I simply mean to make sure there is no tension there as much as possible.

Putting your attention in that area is “putting your consciousness” in that area. By making sure it is not tensed, that there is no holding it up in any position, it becomes as relaxed as you are able to make it. By doing this over your entire body over a concentrated period of time, you are able to become more relaxed.

The main movement in most of these exercises is simply to change the position from laying flat on the ground to that of laying flat on the ground with your knees bent and raised, with the feet flat on the ground. And this is a major change, that is, one leaves oneself in either position usually for two or three minutes or more. One only needs to change the position as they feel comfortable doing it, perhaps only once or twice during the lessons. There are no fast movements in these exercises. When the body holds different postures, one is able to sense parts of it in different ways. Another main movement is changing the position of the arms, to laying flat on the ground at the sides of the body, to raising the arms in the air with the palms touching, holding them up in a type or perpendicular prayer condition.

What really happens when we focus on relaxing the muscles for fifteen minutes along with this idea of body symmetry and posture?

For even on a bed, or standing in a line, or at a desk, you can follow the most important principles in healing serious muscle tension: by relaxing all muscles, we relax the ones that are the tightest in most effective manner. Your right arm tightens will only manifest most strongly in the hand release when you can also relax your arms and legs. ST can definitely do that by helping you focus on key parts of your arms and legs – the segments of the elbows and knees, wrists and ankles and thumbs and big toe. Then you can also focus on the meridian systems that extend from each toe to each finger.

Pelvic Floor Exercises

sense your ribs
do they feel like two cages, or like they are not really there?
get a sense of where your spine is by feeling your ribs
get a sense of where your neck is

One can use the “prime time” during the day or evening for body work. If you have afternoons free, there is no reason to not exercise then, even the “soft exercises.” Likewise, you can do it if 7-9 PM is free time. There is no reason not to work on various exercises for two hours, like a serious athletic conditions themselves. Some may be “trained” or conditioned by get in shape quick advertisements that we should only need to spend 15 minutes a day, or even three times a week on exercise and that is all we will ever need. I think a good way to break oneself of this is to try to focus on exercise for two hours a day and get out of the habit of barely exercising.

Exercises

I relax right big toe to right thumb
I relax right index toe to right index finger
deep breath
I relax right middle toe to right middle finger
I relax right ring toe to right ring finger
deep breath
I relax right small toe to right small finger

I trace line from right big toe to right thumb
I trace line from right index toe to right index finger
deep breath
I trace line from right middle toe to right middle finger
I trace line from right ring toe to right ring finger
deep breath
I trace line from right small toe to right small finger

I relax left big toe to left thumb
I relax left index toe to left index finger
deep breath

I relax left middle toe to left middle finger
 I relax left ring toe to left ring finger
 deep breath
 I relax left small toe to left small finger

I trace line from left big toe to left thumb
 I trace line from left index toe to left index finger
 deep breath
 I trace line from left middle toe to left middle finger
 I trace line from left ring toe to left ring finger
 deep breath
 I trace line from left small toe to left small finger

I trace line from big toes to thumbs
 I trace line from index toes to index fingers
 deep breath
 I trace line from middle toes to middle fingers
 I trace line from ring toes to ring fingers
 deep breath
 I trace line from left small toe to left small finger

Doing a concentrated time tracking of an effort

Here is an example of doing sixty-second time trackings with journaling.
 We started at 1:40 and this will show what we focused on until 1:50.

140 witness breathing and how one is sitting. Is one sitting on the sitting bones?
 Slumping? Sitting upright? If you have a problem breathing out
 of your nose, breath out of your mouth so that you do not hit that block.

141 breath focus with arm/hand relaxation

142 breath focus trying for fullest inhalation with
 arm/hand relaxation, and now face relaxation

143 breath focus trying for fullest inhalation with
 arm/hand, face relaxation, and now leg/foot relaxation.

144 breath focus trying for fullest exhalation and inhalation with
 arm/hand, face relaxation, leg/foot relaxation, and now chest/shoulder
 relaxation.

145 breath focus trying for fullest exhalation and inhalation with
 arm/hand, face relaxation, leg/foot relaxation, chest/shoulder
 relaxation, and now elbow/knee symmetry focus. Sense the
 elbows and knees at the same time.

147 breath focus trying for fullest exhalation and inhalation with
 arm/hand, face relaxation, leg/foot relaxation, chest/shoulder
 relaxation, elbow/knee symmetry focus, and now hand/feet symmetry focus.
 Sense and relax the hands and feet at the same time. Notice how the big toes

and thumbs are a type of symmetry. Look for the balls in the wrists and balls in the feet. Notice the wrists and the ankles
 148 breath focus trying for fullest exhalation and inhalation with arm/hand, face relaxation, leg/foot relaxation, chest/shoulder relaxation, elbow/knee symmetry focus, hands/feet symmetry focus. and now hips and shoulders.

Sense and relax the hips and shoulders at the same time. Notice how the legs are attached to the hips and the arms are attached to the shoulders.

149 Completion. breath focus trying for fullest exhalation and inhalation with arm/hand, face relaxation, leg/foot relaxation, chest/shoulder relaxation, elbow/knee symmetry focus, hands/feet symmetry focus. hips and shoulders and head/groin.

150 Keep body relaxed and keep focus on the breath

The most important areas to keep focus perhaps are the fingers and the area of the mouth. Perhaps in different people it's different areas.

There is a sound that people make more and more when they age. It sounds like a "cracking" and it's actually the release of tiny air bubbles in the joints. When practicing the ST exercises, one hears this quite a bit.

Divided Attention

The main way to begin to manage and optimize the bodymind more consciously is by simply tracking it. Follow the muscles with the mind, let the attention just rest on what the body is doing in space. It is as if the mind was watching the body dance, or in a way, it is the same kind of expression that one could call talking or singing

Saying one powerful word while doing these exercises can be important. Certain words have deep meaning in the brain and hence, according to this theory, in the body. Good words to chose are "love," "peace," "trust," or "joy." One can use whatever word one wants.

What most did not see is that they could take a pen and a piece of paper and use it to help track what they were doing in their progressive relaxation exercises. They could use it to track how many deep breaths they truly were taking, or to relax each part of their body and not skipping any areas. With some skill and a clock, they could track how long they kept attention on their thoughts, or how they were feeling.

The observing of body tension and releasing it as a way to increase energy by saving energy that would normally be used up.

4) The Concept of the One-Thousand Changes

Good health practices can be seen to take a person through many changes. The little changes that we need to make can be looked at as even smaller changes that make up those changes. Is it one-thousand or one-hundred changes that a person needs to make to get to a more healthy condition? It is a bit irrelevant whatever phrase one chooses. One-thousand sounds a bit more poetic, as the number “one-thousand” sounds as numerous “as the sands of the sea.” To our common way of counting and figuring numbers without a calculator or computer, one hundred seems like something we can handle better.

Calling this One-Thousand Changes the may be more accurate than the One-Hundred Changes. If we think of all the changes that happen after one exercises, and what happens when one is generally more relaxed as they go through life, and not feeling the effects of stress as much, we can see there are many changes that happen. Also, a good diet produces many changes in a person.

Starting out thinking this way, one could start by looking at the 10 changes:

- 1) our controlling presence at the level of thought, that is, the ability to stop a thought, not only being “in thought.”
- 2) attention to the breath and fresh air deep breathing in for prolonged periods (even deep breathing in normal indoor air is better than shallow breathing).
- 3) witnessing instinctive processes for prolonged periods without comment
- 4) our controlling presence at the level of movement
- 5) giving all the parts of the body commands to relax
- 6) observation of all the symmetries in the top and bottom, and right and left sides of the body
- 7) Drinking enough water
- 8) Eating healthy food, taking whatever supplements are needed to keep the body at an optimal level, and avoiding things in the common diet which age people.
- 9) Maintaining positive emotions that comes from overcoming negative fears. Perhaps it is impossible to say “overcome all fears” some “fears,” like locking the car, may be constructive. The unconscious does not want to overcome “all fears” because “fear” is a vague word, which can include “caution.”
- 10) Strength building and cardiovascular exercise. These are often so similar for most people that I group them together.

One can now look at one of these items, number five, to see what more of these changes will be:

- 1) having the face relaxed
- 2) having the hands relaxed
- 3) having the feet relaxed
- 4) having the arms relaxed
- 5) having the legs relaxed
- 6) having the upper torso relaxed

These can be broken down more and more

- 1) having the fingers relaxed
- 2) having the fingertips relaxed
- 3) having the palms relaxed
- 4) having the webs between fingers relaxed
- 5) having the back of the hands relaxed
- 6) having the forehead relaxed
- 7) having the eyes relaxed
- 8) having the nose area relaxed
- 9) having the ear area relaxed
- 10) having the mouth area relaxed
- 11) having the lips relaxed
- 12) having the cheeks relaxed
- 13) having the jaws relaxed
- 14) having the ribs relaxed (this seems to expand the breathing)
- 15) having the shoulder blades relaxed
- 16) having the deltoids relaxed
- 17) having the collarbone relaxed
- 18) having the chest relaxed
- 19) having the latimus dorsi relaxed

Having the fingers relaxed can be broken into:

- 1) having the muscles around the pinkie relaxed
- 2) having the muscles around the ring finger relaxed
- 3) having the muscles around the middle finger relaxed
- 4) having the muscles around the index finger relaxed
- 5) having the muscles around the thumb relaxed

This can be further broken down:

Having the muscles around the ring finger relaxed

- 1) having the muscles below the lower knuckle on the ring finger relaxed
- 2) having the lower knuckle on the ring finger relaxed
- 3) having the muscles between knuckles on the ring finger relaxed
- 4) having the upper knuckle on the ring finger relaxed
- 5) having the muscles above the top knuckles on the ring finger relaxed
- 6) having the upper knuckle on the ring finger relaxed

One gets the idea. In fact, there are three knuckles, one that is on the hand, and two that are on the fingers. This is the way one breaks down exactly what part of the body we tell to relax in Symmetry Therapy. We can start with something and as we progress, we find there are other subparts that we can get to relax, and sometimes these can even be broken down more. And what is important, is that often,

breaking down the relaxation commands further is actually beneficial when there are extreme tensions that come from overuse, like repetitive use injury.

The kinds of changes that happen to the brain and body due to laying on the ground and doing ST are hard to map out, but it can be a little bit like what practicing a sport does when it works with coordination exercises, and less so what happens when one practices yoga. Stretching and flexibility is part of the one-hundred changes. Some of the other major changes that one needs are cardio exercises, and muscle building.

The one-hundred changes can be seen to take place over a one year period. A calendar can be made with what ones to focus on during which time, and which can be engaged at any point. One works one's way around to the next point in the year and it has an equally good effect. They are physical, psychological, and emotional. One can say that there could be one-hundred small changes that are physical.

One point of the one-hundred changes is that there is no sense of thinking that one can do nothing for one's health if one finds one is overeating and not exercising enough. There are still many things that one can do. One can even start by giving oneself a massage on the areas where one can reach, and that can improve the circulation of the lymph and relax the muscles. Getting a better amount of sensing the body is important and will help produce a change in making one more and more comfortable being in one's body and doing positive things for it.

I picked the number one-thousand instead of the number one-hundred. The changes we go through are much more than one-hundred or one-thousand changes. They are apparent in the unseen areas of blood chemistry, hormones, brain waves, relaxed muscles, postural alignment, positive emotions, optimism, deeper breathing, and so on. The mastery of these skills produces many small improvements. The goal, aim and method is to do enough of the major changes to get toward the one-hundred changes. Soft exercise is the beginning for most people who recognize their need to focus much more on their health than previously.

One thing that is interesting is how to use the energy or moods that one gets into from doing the work on body symmetry and having high aesthetic emotions from music for other things in one's life. Essentially, those are high constructive states that come from surrounding oneself from certain stimuli, and if one need to do business deals, to essentially find business partners that one doesn't have, one has to move in those constructive states in areas that have new and different and formally frustrating stimuli.

We can understand better the kind of emotional states that happen in the body by using the body symmetry in the way described in this book. That seems to be one of it's chief benefits, which is the ability to be more familiar with such states, and provide a map to get back to them. We become more familiar because we are more aware of relaxing muscle tension than before. It is a way to become familiar with way the emotions affect the body, and the way that the body and emotions are connected. These two are connected in that when we are very aware of the body-mind, when we can sense it at will

and with prolonged attention, then we can also experience how our emotions can have a type of instinctual bliss that comes from being more calm.

Regarding the one-thousand changes and the regeneration spa events, some are psychological, motivational, volitional, that allow the self to exercise and relax for prolonged periods of time. We can see the concept now also in the one-thousand changes that happen when we put our skill set together, to put all our insights together.

Relaxing the face and head releases a whole network of muscular tensions, and perhaps even psychological ones, especially negative ones. Relax around the teeth, lips, roof of mouth, chin, corners of mouth, tongue, nose, cheeks, cheekbones, neck, eyes, forehead, ears, temples, top of head, back of head.

Even though there are one-thousand good changes that take place from a body and mind that is out of shape to a body and mind that is in good shape, look at it as only three.

- 1) Which comes after you say you have spent 10 hours on the ground in one week. The 15 minute a day exercise idea is going to help anyone very much. Every gym goer will commute, wait for equipment, shower, and so on.
- 2) After you have put in an average of 30 hours a month for six months.
- 3) After diet, water drinking, and cardio has gone on for six months

Go through a week of gentle ST exercises with the mp3s on very low so I can experience the 1000 changes and I know what's on the mp3s.

The 1000 changes are called 1000 changes and not 100 changes because in fact there are more like 1000 changes, but they are so subtle and internal so we do not see them or have any way to count them. There would be more like 100 acts of effort which we do make diet, muscle relaxation, exercise in fresh open air, and sunlight, and positive emotions are these that make up the 100 efforts.

Regeneration Spa Events

If one puts three hours into health practices a day, one could label it as a "Regeneration Spa" or some other name that means something to you. The idea of going through a regeneration spa event seems excellent, and seeing it as a consistent plan which one is encouraged to not stop.

Some thoughts on this three hour block of time

1 One must feel the need for it, understand the reason for it, sense the reality of the changes one needs to make. The best way for this to happen is probably to be shocked by one's looks.

2 One can make a goal of what one is willing to do, and a way to do it that is doable by the person. If one determines to spend two hours a day on the regenerative spa events, one could plan out an enjoyable way to do this. One could lay on the back while watching the first half of a movie, and lay on one's stomach while watching the second half. However, multitasking is probably impossible and will probably not be done.

3 Attention to breath and observing the body mind can be a part of it. One can try to put together ten minutes of circular breathing over a two hour period, and ten minutes of observing the movement of the body over a ten minute period.

4 When attending to breathing, repeating a word like "love," "peace," or "relax" can be helpful

5 Use the Power of Visualization and "forward gratitude" or faith for what you want to accomplish.

6 One must unlatch, unattach what one is constricted by one can use the "I do not identify with ____" "I am not attached to thinking about." "I am not ____" a Bible verse, or something else.

7 One uses the "I relax my ____" or "I relax the muscles of my ____" or "I release the tension in my _____"

5 Helpful Thoughts About the Hands, Feet, Arms and Legs

The Ball of the Hand

The finger's "ball of the foot" which we can call the "index ball" is a fulcrum of action in the thumb area, which obviously is so important because of the nature of the opposable thumb and what it means to human functioning. I relax my left ball of foot and left finger index ball. It is under the index finger.

Once when feeling right arm and shoulder tension, I imagined lightening and lifting the index ball up in my right hand and it freed some of the tension.

Sense the:

left leg then left foot then left toes

left arm then left hand then left fingers

The thumb area is the opposable area which is similar to where the ball of the foot is, underneath the big toe.

A stiff heel area should be healed by focussing on areas around it which increase its mobility. Heel and ankles are two different areas – observe the top and bottom of the area, heel and hipbone, fingertip and shoulder, on both sides at once, buttressing,

Index Toe and Index Finger

Keep these two in mind for sixty seconds

Tracing a meridian from the pinkie to the little toe on both sides, and from the thumb to the big toe – also to center on the central pillar of the groin, belly button, and sternun.

Laying flat on the back with the fingertips gently touching the ground is being on symmetry-and-relaxation's operating table. Let the ankles touch each other even though this may hold the knees and hamstrings up in the air. See if you can get the knees and rest of legs to relax by giving commands and tracking symmetries.

Relaxing the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet very much help relax the rest of the body. One can especially feel this relaxation in the arms and legs of the releasing all the tension of the hands and feet. And when the arms and legs are fully relaxed that releases the hold and grip on other parts of the body.

Some things to focus on to get a sense of how the body natural feels instinctively:

five right fingers equal five right toes
 elbows to wrists equals knees to ankles
 five left toes equal five right toes
 five left fingers equal five right fingers
 relax right forearm and relax left forearm
 relax right palm and right sole of foot
 relax left chest and relax left shoulder blade
 relax right chest and relax right shoulder blade
 deep breathing always straightens out the spine
 and then go back to the top of the list and start again
 one right bicep and one right elbow
 one left bicep and one left elbow
 one right bicep and one right back thigh muscle
 one left bicep and one left back thigh muscle
 one spinal column and one tongue
 one head, one genital
 one set of teeth and one rib cage
 relax lips and relax belly

relax shoulders
 relax hands
 relax lips and mouth
 relax whole face and head
 relax lower back
 relax buttocks and groin area
 relax biceps and hands

Sometimes the hands can be used in special ways when doing floor routines. A good stretch is when hands are overhead and stretching out hands above. One can stretch also the legs and any area inbetween that seems to make one taller. It seems to be an exercise to prevent us from shrinking. If one has a serious medical condition, it would be not be advised except with a doctor's permission.

The commands of relaxation to the various muscles helps give us a deeper perception of our body and its symmetry. It can be that sometimes the mind is too scattered or preoccupied to give long clear commands to each muscle. In this case one can try to bring one command at a time in a long type of mantra. “I relax the muscles of my mouth.” or “I relax my wrists,” could be said for a minute at a time. Another technique in such circumstances can be to flood the mind with as many parts of the body as possible in a certain period of time. For instance, if one is going to be gardening for ten minutes, one can count each part of the body one can remember to relax, until one cannot state or remember any new parts.

I relax the tension in my biceps and knuckles
I sense the symmetry of every inch of my left arm and right arm

6 Other Kinds of Symmetries that are Helpful

The symmetry idea as a perfect way to describe the perfect balance between mental stillness and physical activity. Too much physical activity can lead to a chaos of the symmetrical shape, or what could be said to be the symmetrical balance that one can witness when one is relaxed.

The fact of the matter is that we can look at our day in a mathematical equation. We can use as many units as we are comfortable with. For example, 1440 minutes are in one day. How many units do we use for conscious relaxation, stillness and meditation? Or, is it more or less a type of physical chaos, where we do little of each?

The ratio of higher awareness of things like muscle relaxation and the health needs of positive emotion over the time we are working must be present in our thoughts. We need muscle relaxation and positive emotion in large amounts in one’s life to grow. “How can I/may I work on myself and achieve more connection with what is optimal health for me?”

There are other types of symmetries or uses of the idea. I once had an unusual dream in which a famous health expert showed me how to look at the hand as a map of the entire human body, in order to get more control over aspects of it that are often unconscious and therefor not optimized.

He told me the thumb was seen as the head, and the middle and ring fingers were the legs. This allowed, in this “map,” the outside of the legs, to be the arms, just as in real life, in the normal body, where the legs form a central column with the head, and the pinkies and index fingers are arms. This is a type of parallel of the entire body, as the palms can be seen as the torso. Also, visualize it with the foot, the big toes are head, middle and ring toes are legs, and little toes and index toes are arms. It’s interesting to sense the body on this type of map, which itself is a part of the body. This may seem

like an idea that has no sense at all, but some more familiar with body work, and dividing the attention throughout the day might see it as a helpful thing.

There is also a parallel between how the body pivots and how the hands and feet pivot. There are three main central pivots in the body, the knees, the waist, and the head. One can see this as being the same as the three main knuckle areas, the knuckles on the back of the hand and the two on each finger.

7 Types of Symmetry Therapy Work Done without Lying Down:

You do not have to be flat on the ground to do ST – you can do it propped up in a bed, or seated. One simply must then do one of the exercise modes, feel the fingers and toe symmetry, tell your legs and arms to relax your fingers and toes to relax and then feel the difference, keep it going. Make is a 15 minute effort, very gently, give it attention from task to task. Remember to also focus on breath, taking deep breathes and occasionally hold.

For even on a bed, or standing in a line, or at a desk, you can follow the most important principles in healing serious muscle tension: by relaxing all muscles, we relax the ones that are the tightest in most effective manner. Your right arm tightens will only manifest most strongly in the hand release when you can also relax your arms and legs. ST can definitely do that by helping you focus on key parts of your arms and legs – the segments of the elbows and knees, wrists and ankles and thumbs and big toe. Then you can also focus on the meridian systems that extend from each toe to each finger. Finally, sense the opposable aspect of the thumb with the slightly similar aspect of the big toe.

3 Symmetry Therapy Miscellaneous Observations

1

I believe there is often tension in the mouth. This exercise may help one to relax these tensions.

Even though the gums do not have any muscles, they may be an area that in some way holds unnatural tension. Just in case, try this gum relaxation exercise and see if there is any result:

I relax my bottom gums in front
 I relax my bottom gums in back
 I relax my bottom gums in middle
 I relax my top gums in front
 I relax my top gums in back
 I relax my top gums in middle

2

Sitting cross-legged on the ground, or in a lotus position if one can do one, is a good aim to try to achieve, one can see the symmetry it forces one to observe.

3

One Thing At A Time

It is important at times to do one thing at a time, especially when one has decided to do some types of physical exercise or relaxation.

4

Is there a fear of symmetry in some people? Yes, because of the contraction they hold from traumatic physical or emotional experience is a form of comfort. It is a type of shield, as if holding the hands in front of one's face, or a similar type of defensive movement.

5

The Puddle

This idea came to me by having more insight into how my body worked. I found a way of "adapting" to a time when I had some back soreness. Knowing your body symmetries may help you find similar tricks if you should tight in any areas.

There are times when people "through out their backs," and become unable to move.

When you are lying on a bed, and cannot move easily, but don't have anything so seriously wrong with you, that a doctor would say not to move, the best way to move is to imagine and feel oneself as a puddle of water just sliding where you need to do. That is, see how low you can be if you need to be mobile, and try to not get up on one's feet. Not being erect minimizes tightness because less of our body is involved in holding itself upright and off the ground. Hopefully, less use means less tension. This should apply in any of the areas, such as the extremities, which may be over-tensed and causing some of the pain.

6

The chest and buttock ledges are a symmetry in the body that holds much tension and cause of skeletal changes. The large muscles of the chest in some way parallel the large muscles of the buttocks. Both are attached to limbs, and have a similar but not exact function.

7

Symmetry Therapy is based on building up a long sense of observation of the feeling and sensation and movement of the body by the “mind” or “self”.

8

Feeling the skeleton in one’s imagination, and sensing it in the body as much as one can.

The bones do not do anything as far as movement. All the motioning the body, all the placement of the posture, all the holding of the bones in place is first caused by the muscles through the connective tissues. As we change the muscles, we might be able to change the connective tissue (“joints”) and the bones. At least we can prevent some problems if we work hard enough at it.

9

There is a time when one should say, “I release the tension in my _____” instead of “I relax my _____.” A good example of this might be in the tension that may occurring in the teeth.

10

Focusing on our health means also that there is nothing on the floor that interrupts our walking pattern. Meandering around clutter is probably one reason why some people need to get new legs and hips. Vacuuming the dust out of the house is actually a type of health exercise, and will burn some calories.

11

Relaxing on the ground is the same as any other task. That is, why do we ascribe these mystical notions to whether or not we can lay quietly for 15 or 30 minutes. Why don’t we just look at it as similar to other important chores or self-discipline activities that we do for 15 or 30 minutes? It doesn’t get done by itself, and in some senses it is relatively easy, compared to many other types of tasks human beings have to endure, which we hope we have the power to also endure if called upon to.

12

Doing bodymind work by oneself requires or could even develop a type of skill, like the skill of someone who can bring their mental activity to peace and quiet. One may need a “spiritual” reason to eliminate some of the strain of life in order to preserve the body as much as one can. One does this to be of service to others. For instance, who is more valuable if someone is in physical trouble, an out of shape person, or someone who maintains their health and strength?

13

Muscle attention helps us to prolong other types of attention. By doing it throughout the body, taking time to say something like, “I relax the biceps, I relax the forearms, I relax the hands, I relax the teeth, I relax my temples” and so on, lets us prolong the attention. The time not on consciousness itself but on something very close to consciousness which is another aspect of the self, that is, the body.

14

Look at your muscles for five minutes

Example

right arm tightness and pain

What is right index finger doing?

What is right thumb doing?

What is right wrist doing?

This analysis and relaxation and proper discretion correction helps right arm pain.

15

We have to work more on front and back balance since so many people as they age start bending forward. It is a problem in both men and women, so it does not only have to do with the psychological impact or the symbolic thrust of the penis area psychodynamically, but is somehow involved with the way people approach what they are interested in. There is also a woman’s experience of her sexuality and this zone I believe over time is partially effected by the thought life regarding one’s sexual experiences.

16

One can see the belly button as a point of orbit for the rest of the body, or the belly button as a central point for symmetries.

17

Relaxing the Whole Head and Face

To “relax the whole head” is a good wake up call to eliminate the kinds of facial tensions and expressions that being in the modern world can cause, with it’s throwing off of stressful experiences. Facial expressions that show stress can be unattractive, but they are not mandatory from the stress of life. Stress is often our personal reaction to events and activities rather than what is objectively mandatory in dealing with such.

In Symmetry Therapy, we learn to relax all over the body. When we relax all over the body, the parts of us that are unnaturally tense become even more relaxed than if we just focused on relaxing them alone.

18

The state of the ability to observe the self without any notion of self-esteem or the lack of it is what is accumulated. This gives an objectivity to one's work that helps it achieve an objective instead of being derailed by a lack of attention to work on relaxation.

19

4 Philosophical and Theoretical Considerations

1

Some authors have used the word "soul" in a non-religious sense because they know that we are more than just our "mind" – at least we are our heart.

The body is not the soul, nor is the mind the soul. The emotions are not necessarily the soul either, since the emotions are not necessarily the thought.

We are a soul coated in muscles. The muscles when tight have some effect on the organs. Therefore, loosening the muscles after use must be a learned and enforced self-discipline.

The interesting thing is how the relaxed muscles affect the soul and how the soul affects the body's ability to relax the muscles. The two can have an affect each other. There almost seems to be some injustice regarding why some know about this great effect that comes from muscle relaxation secret and most do not. But all should know about it because almost everyone has had a good massage. There must be some unknown law of life that if you should know something because you experienced at least once, then you are responsible for knowing it.

We can have:

awareness of thought

awareness of emotion

awareness of body movement in space

awareness of the instinctive processes of the body, such as how one feels one's body

in the mind (not physically feeling it with one's fingers), one's experience of one's breath, and pulse.

2

Unfortunately the phrase "higher consciousness" was swept up by various groups, such as those into mysticism, Eastern philosophy, and the New Age movement, and became "religionized" by them so that most Christians, Jews, Muslims, and secular people feel uncomfortable that it means anything valid at all. But "higher consciousness" could just as easily be a secular expression that could mean something. If one subtracts anything that requires any kind of faith, one could have their own theology, Christology, and see some of these ideas in "higher consciousness" that are in no way religious as more about psychology and health. Such "safe things" are color therapy, breathing exercises, and eating natural food, which are often lumped together with mystical things.

One definition of higher consciousness can be the ability to choose to know the difference between good thoughts and bad thoughts. It is as if one is in a state of peace and good feeling and then one has a thought of someone not respecting one, and in higher consciousness one is able to recognize and reject that thought, reject even the concern about the person not respecting one. Why should it matter? In the good social version of understanding, one knows it doesn't matter. What we have consciousness over what we have awareness over. So, instead of an idea of higher consciousness or higher awareness meaning anything religious, we can give it a secular definition that people in any religious belief (or none) could use.

The ability to know the difference between good and bad thoughts is one level of higher consciousness, and the power to be under the power of good thoughts.

This is the same skill that develops after much practice of muscle relaxation and Symmetry Therapy. One gradually begins to know how to relax muscle tensions when they come up.

Many philosophers and "psychologists" from ancient times have taught to try to observe the heart, mind, and body as separate parts of ourselves. Athletes may be the only ones that are so in tune with their bodies that they can differentiate the body's movements from the more deeper, instinctive parts of oneself. For instance, a weight lifter and a runner has to know how to breath for maximum results. There are of course skilled professions such as pearl divers, that must retain a breath for several minutes at a time. They probably have more of an awareness of their instincts that most do not have, since they are controlling the breath, which in most people is never really under our control, but just goes on automatically. High divers and gymnasts may also know much more about muscle tension and body symmetry than the average person.

Unfortunately, when some get into observing the self in these different "compartments" they mix their own worldviews, form cults, and often create abusive leaderships. But we must remember it is God who created our bodies the way it is. Just because many cult

leaders decide to focus on these aspects of human life doesn't mean that there isn't truth in it. The cults probably like to find something that has some truth in it that is overlooked by the mainstream, amplify it, and thus by creating some one thing of value attract people to them. The old Catholic theologies had a saying, "if it is true, it is of the Holy Spirit." This helps us solve many of the problems today with cults focusing on health. Some Christians unwisely taught that some things, like herbal medicine and deep breathing, are of the devil while most of the Church believes they can be OK. If a person has a historic Biblical framework usually they have discernment when people say things that have a different spiritual doctrine than theirs.

3

Awareness of thought as something that is not one's whole being, when one notices one's emotion, instincts, and movement.

Awareness of emotion as something that is not one's whole being, when one notices one's thought, instincts, and movement.

Awareness of movement as something that is not one's whole being, when one notices one's thought, emotion, and movement.

Awareness of instincts as something that is not one's whole being, when one notices one's emotion, thought, and movement. We can only have a limited observation of our instincts at a conscious level.

4

It's easy to postulate two levels of mind, a lower and a higher mind. The lower mind breeds the senseless entertainment that is merely meant to keep people fascinated in order to sell them products. The higher mind are all those good directions that help regenerate a person physically, mentally, and spiritually.

It is hard to appreciate ideas that come from a higher mind when we are in a lower mind. The two types of minds can be understood in a non-metaphysical academic way. How can academic medical science understand the idea of soft exercises leading to harder exercises, and that we could spend two hours a day on both types of exercises.

5

Even agape love has motions of the body, as can be seen in old Byzantine Christian paintings, certain impulses of the face, a "givingness" and generosity in the shoulders.

10) The Solution Should Not Be Sectarian

This is a very touchy subject that is not discussed very often. I am sure many people are aware of it because they have talked to me about it. I don't mean to be controversial but I think it's vitally important and it puts Symmetry Therapy in a good place to help people. In fact I've toned down the argument quite a bit by only stating a few points to make this a short chapter.

The reason why more people are not aware of the need for muscle relaxation is that many people promote their work under the guise of particular worldviews and religious ideas that have nothing inherently to do with the techniques themselves. By doing so, they obscure the dire need for muscle relaxation and the physical methods of releasing tension. Two of the most obvious examples are Yoga and Chinese medicine. Yoga teachers often follow not only the physical side of yoga but the spiritual beliefs. This may be called, "Indocentric," which looks at all religions stemming from India's ancient religious writings. Chinese medicine which informs acupuncture focuses much on Taoism, which is a religious system popular in China. And it's not only the ancient practices that have religious trappings. There are of course many other examples that could be cited that focus on the health of a person and have New Age or various other ideas that must be accepted on some type of faith.

Christians, Jews and Muslims quite often in the modern world are taught to be wary of such practices for obvious reasons: anything that is going to come against the tenants of one's faith comes against what many see as the most important aspect of their life, even more important than physical health. In fact, having a large background in both Christianity and befriending those of other religions and studying their ideas, I can state that many people who might be called Indocentric have said things like "Christianity is a dirty religion," or "The Old Testament is completely barbaric" and so on. Of course, the other side has countered the argument by defending their faith and hurling their own insults.

I will now go more into why I am not pushing Yoga because of its Eastern philosophical background, and how I'm a Christian and how today many Christians are taught not to do yoga. I think they would have an easier time with Yoga, if it wasn't for the fact that "evangelizing" goes on back and forth between yoga teachers and Christians, one trying to say that they have the better path to God. Of course, Yoga teachers say theirs is the better path to God because it can include the Christian, but their version of Jesus is of course a Yogi, who believed in reincarnation, and so on.

Having spent so much time in the Yoga circles as well as the Christian ones, I feel I have a good handle on this question. It all depends on the teacher whether or not yoga is "spiritually safe" for a Christian (or devout Jew or Muslim). God made the body, and putting the body in various postures cannot harm one spiritually. However, to someone who has straightened out their life with the Judeo-Christian religion, or someone that has found comfort in it throughout their life, trying to convince them that

India is the ancestral center of all religions and so on, could be seen as morally wrong. One is trampling on that person's pearls. It's not different if an Eastern philosophy adherent was taught, upon coming to America that because we Americans had all these technological advances at the earliest time that we were of God and his country was of the devil. One gets a similar jolt or shock when hearing such things. Christians and Jews don't like to be told that revealed religion started somewhere other than the Middle East, and it's their right to believe it, and a class on health exercises shouldn't put them in a situation where they have to defend themselves.

The part of yoga that is directed at exercising the physical body is called Hatha Yoga. It's true that Hatha Yoga can advance one's health and keep one supple until old age. For that reason, I think Christians should come out of the dark on this subject, because Christianity is growing at a rate just as fast as any other religion.

When I started studying Yoga, in the late 70's, it was mostly all floor routines, that are much safer than the standing routines that are so common today. It's sad that this change has occurred in Yoga, but with so many modern experts, and so many who "show off" their flexibility, it is not likely to change. There are however about fifteen floor yoga postures that are relatively safe, even something like the lion, which is the facial stretching exercise, is a good exercise that probably isn't practiced very often except by those who know it by their yoga studies.

What is important is that the actual exercises that can help a person be practiced without fear. If we believe that God made our bodies, then anything that helps our bodies is good for us, as long as that is isolated from whatever other trappings of beliefs that may seek to challenge our own. Symmetry Therapy is simpler than most other systems of body-mind work, does not require a practitioner, and it doesn't come with any specific religious trappings.

Some may believe there is possibly something spiritual about having the symmetry of the body present in the mind, or traced in the unconscious. People talk about how yoga or other types of exercises strengthen the body to allow spiritual energies pass through us. Jesus talked about giving us "the water that would flow out of our belly like living water," which sounds like an overwhelming spiritual experience of bliss. Even one who chooses a path that denies an external spirituality, and relies only on brain sciences, higher emotions and higher modes of thinking, would be buttressed by a body that is grounded and centered, and which doesn't get in the way of prolonged thought. There are chances that one may be able to feel more emotional when one can breath deeper, and Symmetry Therapy works with enlarging the breathing channel so one is not breathing shallow. But Symmetry Therapy makes no claim to be able to make one more spiritual. This would be an affront to Christians, who believe in salvation by grace, or other religious people who see it as God's role alone to give humanity religious salvation.

There is probably the idea in some that taking extra care of ourselves physically implies vanity. In fact, I believe you cannot state this is the case ethically, or even spiritually. For even if we are ethically more than the average, do we not want to take

care of ourselves more so we can continue to live here on earth healthy and strong and be helpful to others? People who think others who take care of themselves physically are vain are probably using this as a convenient excuse to not exercise, There certainly is no spiritual justification for it.

Many religious people see a sharp separation between the soul and the body, whereas others see the two as being related. Symmetry Therapy has no connection to Eastern Philosophy, like Yoga, Tai Chi, Chi Kung or many other healing modalities. This is important because many want to keep their Judeo-Christian or even secular worldview. Some are taught not to do Yoga or other practices because of these connections. The problem is that some Yoga teachers or others bring in irrelevant ideas to their health practices about the supremacy of the Yoga tradition when such opinions are actually best kept to themselves.

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