

The Body's Wisdom

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The mind-body connection does not exist. Both the mind and body are outward expressions of a common source — the reality of your own existence that lies deeper than both the mind and the body. For there to be a “connection,” there would have to be two different things. But the mind and body are not significantly different from one another. This similarity is why you can listen to your body's wisdom to get messages that your mind did not perceive. This is also why you must be suspicious of the messages you get from your body, just as you must be suspicious of the value of the stuff in your mind.

Yoga says that your mind pervades your body. Your mind is a tangible manifestation of your own individuality, an energy field that pervades your whole body. When you think, the thinking happens in various places in your body— not just in your brain. Your brain is a major center of your mind, but your mind extends through your whole body. Modern researchers now agree, which makes it easier for modern yogis to describe these ancient teachings. But it was always true, even when scientists didn't describe it this way.

The problem arises because you identify with your thoughts. You have been trained to emphasize certain kinds of thoughts: the “good” thoughts, the analytical thoughts of how things should be, thoughts about what you want, what you do not want, etc. These thoughts occur in different areas of the brain. Emotions are the mental activities that occur in the other areas of your body. When you think with your body, you do not call it thoughts. You call it emotions or feelings. If you do not like these feelings (the mind's activity in the body), you shut them down by shutting down your body. Therefore, turning to your body to find its “wisdom” is actually a way of discovering a part of your mind that you were ignoring!

However, there is a trap in looking for your body's wisdom. When you focus too much on the body, you end up identifying with it. You already have a tendency to do this. It shows up even in yoga classes, “How do I look in this yoga pose?” Yoga does make an improvement in how your body looks and feels, but that is not its purpose. Yoga attunes you to inner wisdom — which is significantly more profound than the wisdom that comes from your body.

Your body does not actually have any wisdom. It has instincts, like animals. If we all lived at the animal level, there would be many more violent crimes than there are now. If you follow your body, you end up like the animals: eating, drinking, sleeping, procreating and excreting all your life long. As a human being, you have the potential for much more.

You must recognize the reality of both your body and mind, and then look beyond that superficial level to find the source from which they both arise. There is a deeper and more significant level of reality to your being. When you find this inside, you will still need your body and mind. They become avenues through which that deeper reality is expressed into the world and into your life. Look within. Cultivate this deeper knowing of your own being. You are not your body. You are not your mind. You are not your body and your mind put together. You are so much more!

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