



Unraveling the Incurable

A Heart-Mind View of Difficult Issues

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More often than we would like, we find ourselves facing symptoms, conditions, obstacles or stumbling blocks that do not go away no matter how clear, focused, motivated or skillful we are. Once we exhaust the search for “what am I doing or thinking that is creating this” we realize that what we are dealing with does not have a single cause. Rather, it is a side effect of how we are handling the complexities of life.

These difficult issues can be called, *Incurable Non-Existent Disorders* (IND). Imagine a large tree with lots of green leaves but it doesn't have any roots. Even though you can imagine it, it is a tree that cannot exist. In the same way, when you have real symptoms but no cause can be found that can be treated, you may well have an IND.

Our global research reveals a simple and powerful method for unraveling these conditions. Since practice without theory has limited flexibility and creativity, I will weave an introduction that integrates modern scientific systems thinking with some of the most valuable and useful models of the ancient East.

I would like to begin with a classical alternative view of the human experience. This is because immersed in the Western mindset, as we tend to be, it is extremely difficult to believe that our treasured conception of mind and body is a cultural construct.

One day, almost thirty-five years ago, Joe Miller, a true homegrown American spiritual master, whispered in my ear something that changed everything. “Did you know that the word mind which runs through the Zen Buddhist texts is actually a translation of the Chinese character heart?”

With this simple bit of cross-cultural knowledge, the structures of my thinking began to reconfigure. It was clear that my head-mind could and did have difficulties with “the body,” but the heart-mind could not. In other words, *your heart is in touch with life – always – even if your head tries to tell you otherwise.*

So then, how do we get into these impossible difficulties? One theory says that an IND is “created” by the intersection of impossible desires, inadequate interpretation and undigested karma. In other words, what and how we think multiplied by what and how we feel multiplied by how we handle tension and effort either supports or sabotages our desires and dreams.

Because we are so much more familiar with the verbal dimension of our lives and have already gathered a multitude of methods, I will emphasize the lesser-known factors.

Another important view is that Incurable Non-Existent Disorders tend to be “created” when we are asleep at the wheel. According to classical Yoga psychology, there are four forces or temptations that can lead us astray (the Kleshas). They are: holding on to what we have (past its time); moving away from what we dislike; moving toward what we do like; and identifying with our beliefs and stories. Keeping us asleep is our ignorance of these forces and of the natural cycle of waking up and going to sleep in order to waken again.

In the Chinese tradition, the heart-mind is a thinking-feeling organ best understood and worked with from the perspective of the movements and configurations of Qi – the energy aspect of matter. When the flow of Qi is blocked, unwanted phenomena can grow. From this view, the combination of influences that sustain an IND can be worked with as patterns of movement-energy.

I have one last story to tell that opens the way to using our IND unraveling method well. It is a systems view of our biological senses that categorizes them from the point of view of distance.

We have senses that operate at a distance. These include: smell, hearing and sight. We have senses that operate closer in, at the surface. These include: touch, temperature and taste. We have senses that operate internally. These include: the sense of balance, the muscle sense and our visceral (or organ) senses. For each of these senses, there is a corresponding state of “mind.”

THE METHOD: NOTICE, TOUCH, ACCEPT, RELEASE

Step 1: Notice.

Instead of trying to “solve” the difficult dilemma in which you find yourself caught, turn your attention to the dynamic field of thought, feeling and energy you call your “body”. As if from a distance, let your attention be drawn to a spot that intuition suggests is connected to the IND you wish to unravel.

And, gently and easily – so as not to trigger a defensive reaction, let this spot grow clearer and stronger in your awareness.

Step 2: Touch.

Now, recalibrate your awareness to emphasize your tactile senses. (If this is unfamiliar, then first, extend your awareness to your arms and hands. I have shoulders, elbows, wrists, palm and fingers. And breathe.)

As if you were literally reaching toward it, use your mind's hand to touch the spot. Feel its shape. Feel its texture. Feel its temperature. Let sensations that might be called pain be translated as intensity. And let the energies of this encounter grow in strength and size as your thoughts and feelings enter this space to reconnect with it.

Step 3: Accept.

Now, as if a door has just opened, let the energies of this spot flow inward to spread all throughout you. Maintaining your focus on this spot, let what has been awakened and activated flow to your legs and feet – to your arms and hands – to your spine and head – to your torso.

Maintaining your focus on this spot, let your integral intelligence listen to the stories told by this spot. Let this deeper and fuller awareness speak to the mass of confusion that has sustained the difficult condition we want to change.

Maintaining your focus on this spot, let your spiritual heart open to embrace the pain and suffering of this limited viewpoint. And let the Qi of your heart sooth and heal the knot that locks you into this unwanted condition.

Step 4: Release.

Now, let your awareness release its hold on this spot and this experience. Let the Qi flow without your attention. Let your muscles shift and change without undue self-consciousness. Let your feelings remember the touch of the spiritual heart. Let your thoughts begin to reconfigure with a better story and with new hope and possibilities.

And let go of this practice. Open your senses to the outside world. Relax and re-engage what you were doing. And trust that even if you do not remember what happened or felt it was not powerful enough, you were touched by your whole self.

And if you get too serious about all this, remember that laughter opens the heart. And with your heart open, everything is truly easier. Now, all you need do is to do what you've always known you have to do.

So just as your heart and lungs pump continuously and like a gentle stream can wear down rocks, give yourself permission to repeat and repeat this simple practice.

And remember, that which took a lifetime to develop takes time to unravel.