

YOGA RESEARCH

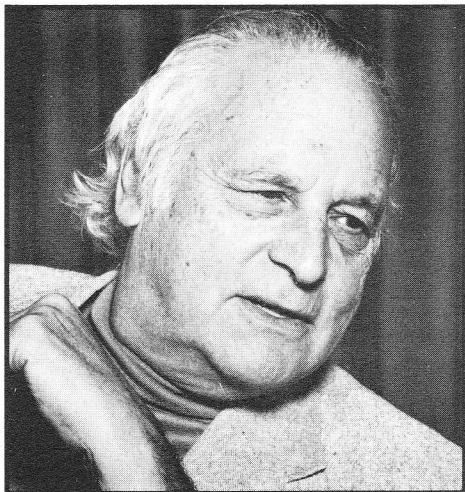
The Yoga Research Society Newsletter

Number 14

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Future Psychotherapy Mobilizing the Life Force, Treating the Individual

Around 1950, in this country and Europe, about 40 people, completely independently, not even knowing of each other's existence, started asking the same questions: Is there anything a cancer patient can do to mobilize their own self-healing



DR. LARRY LESHAN

ability? Is there a relationship between psychological factors and cancer? And yes, there's clearly a relationship.

Over the years, we (researchers) have come to much the same conclusion. What patients can do is set an example for the immune system by treating themselves as if they are really worth caring for, as if they are special, as if their life is worth fighting for.

In the beginning of my career, we didn't have the term "immune system." For self-healing abilities we had the term, "pituitary adrenocortical axis." It made us feel very learned. But it's the same thing. If I cut myself when I'm shaving, I heal. I bruise my heel, my foot gets better. These are self-healing abilities and

they can operate at higher or lower levels.

We're operating on the theory that everybody gets cancer hundreds, maybe thousands of times a day. Individual cells, as they multiply and divide, lose their inner and outer coherence. They become cancer cells. But the body has a mechanism - we don't know what it is; T cells may be part of it, killer cells may be part of it - that reaches out and takes care of it.

The strength of this mechanism is apparently set genetically, but it can be weakened by radiation, by certain pollutants, by aging. The important question is: Can we strengthen it? This is what this work has been all about, finding a way to strengthen it.

If we really want to get results, what we must do is look at the patient and ask: What does this particular person need, different from anybody else? What special therapeutic environment, what metaphor for growth will help this person thrive? That's probably the main thing we need in terms of research.

Dom Baker, the Benedictine mystic, said that the spiritual director is an usher who ushers the person along their own special path, not the usher's path.

Rabbi Machman said, "God calls one person with a song, one with a shout, and one with a whisper."

To me, there's no one "right" way. What's right for one person is wrong for another. There's no one right diet for cancer, for example. I've seen people do beautifully on the macro-

biotic diet and I've seen people damn near die of it - not of the disease, but of the diet. There's no one right way. Mindfulness is fine for some people. The empty mind is fine for some people. Meditation itself is wrong and right for different people at different times.

One of the great spiritual documents of the West is the "Cloud of Unknowing," a medieval manuscript. It says over and over again, the path should be "listy," which is the opposite of "listless." Active, eager, involved. It's not a quiet, passive thing. You're trying in your own way to get more out of life.

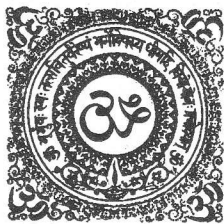
*What patients can do
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immune system by
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The heart of the Western spiritual tradition is that at birth you're given a seed of an unknown and unique flower. That's your soul. Your job is to garden it to the fullest so that it blossoms most fully, and worthy of the one who calls it back.

excerpted from an interview
by Bonnie Horrigan, photograph
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In the province of the mind,
what one believes to be true
either is true or becomes true.

John Lilly

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YOGA

FINDING YOUR WAY

The 21st Annual Yoga Research Society Conference, November 4 & 5, 1995, Philadelphia

T'AI CHI CH'UAN
Dr. Joseph Cheu

ACUPUNCTURE
Dr. Ching-yao Shi

FUTURE PSYCHOTHERAPY
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QIGONG
Master FaXiang Hou

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Conference Notes

The Yoga Research Society held its first Conference in Philadelphia on October 18 & 19, 1975.

Inspiring presentations by Swami Rama, Yogi Amrit Desai and Dr. Pratap along with research presentations on biofeedback, autogenic training and psychosynthesis made it an auspicious beginning for us all.

YOGA: FINDING YOUR WAY, our twenty-first annual Conference will be held November 4 & 5, 1995 at Friends Select School, 17th & Ben Franklin Parkway.

It will be a weekend of workshops featuring Dr. Larry LeShan, a psychotherapist, author and healer; Master FaXiang Hou, a fifth generation QiGong Master; Dr. Joseph Cheu, a physician and Tai Chi Master;

Ed Zadlo, an ayurvedic practitioner and author; Dr. Ching-yao Shi, a physician, researcher and acupuncturist; Shafaatullah Khan, a renowned Indian Classical musician in Concert; and Dr. Vijayendra Pratap, who will open the weekend with his traditional Yoga workshop.

We hope you will join us for the whole program, but you can register for a single day or even a single workshop.

Best wishes. See you in November!

Linda Gross

Secretary
Yoga Research Society