

Healing Into Immortality

Healing Into Immortality

A New Spiritual Medicine of
Healing Stories and Imagery

Gerald Epstein, M.D.



ACMI Press : New York

This book is about health and spirituality. It is not intended as a substitute for medical advice. The reader may consult a physician in matters relating to his or her health and particularly in respect to any symptoms that may require diagnosis or medical attention.

HEALING INTO IMMORTALITY

ACMI Press: 1997, 2010

First Published: Bantam: December 1994

Grateful acknowledgement is made to reprint illustrations on pages 198-99, 201, 203-4, and 206 from The Anatomy Coloring Book by Wynn Kapit and Lawrence M. Elson. Copyright © 1977 by Wynn Kapit and Lawrence M. Elson. Reprinted by permission of Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.

All rights reserved.

Copyright © 1994 by Gerald Epstein

Line drawing of tree on cover © 1994 by Ron Zinn

No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, microfilm recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. For information address:

ACMI Press

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Epstein, Gerald, 1935–

Healing into immortality: a new spiritual medicine of healing stories and imagery / Gerald Epstein.

p. cm.

Includes index.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2009926701

10 ISBN 1–883148–04–9

13 ISBN 978–1–883148–04–1

1. Mental Healing. 2. Mind and body. I. Title.

RZ400.E67 2009

615.8'52—dc20

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

ACMI PRESS, 351 East 84th Street, 10D, New York,

New York 10028

www.acmipress.org

*For Colette—my luminous guide and teacher,
without whom this book could not have been written*

Contents

Acknowledgments	xi
Preface	xv
Introduction	xix
1 Mind Medicine: Making the Invisible Visible	1
<i>Chance and Divine Providence</i>	4
<i>Logic and Truth</i>	14
<i>Truth and Reality in Healing</i>	18
<i>The Will to Power and the Will to Love</i>	21
2 The Mirrored Universe	27
<i>Mirroring</i>	27
<i>Belief Creates Experience</i>	36
<i>Belief Systems and Children</i>	50
3 The Moral Shield	55
<i>The Commandments and Daily Life</i>	64
<i>The Three Vows</i>	87

viii Contents

4	The Seven Keys to Healing	89
	<i>Cleansing</i>	90
	<i>Faith</i>	93
	<i>Forgiveness</i>	94
	<i>Pain</i>	95
	<i>Quieting</i>	96
	<i>Reversing</i>	97
	<i>Sacrifice</i>	99
5	The Healing Relationship	103
6	Why We Become ILL	121
	<i>Doubt</i>	122
	<i>Expectation</i>	130
	<i>Denial</i>	135
	<i>Becoming a Watcher</i>	146
7	How We Become Well	153
	<i>Voluntary Will</i>	154
	<i>Imagination</i>	158
	<i>Memory</i>	167
8	Becoming Your Own Healer: Exercises	177
	<i>Imagery Exercises</i>	178
	<i>Mirror Exercises</i>	214
	<i>Spiral Exercises</i>	220
	<i>Life Plan Exercise</i>	222
	<i>Stopping Exercises</i>	224
	<i>Decreation Exercises</i>	227
	<i>Chanting</i>	228

	Contents	ix
	<i>Prayer</i>	231
	<i>Exercises for Resurrection</i>	236
9	Resurrection: Healing Into Immortality	239
	Appendix	255
	Notes	259
	Index	263

Acknowledgments

I must acknowledge at the outset all of those teachers whom I've had the good fortune to meet in this lifetime who have contributed to my evolution. I am doing so not because I consider this book to be my last one but because I consider it to be my magnum opus, the culmination to date of my lifetime of study and experience as a medical doctor and as a seeker after spirit.

With this book I believe I am fulfilling this life's mission, which has been to share with as many people as possible, both near and far, through personal contact and these writings, ways to make a healing turn in their lives and put themselves on a path toward spirit and in making union with God. I have written all of my previous books and articles as a medically trained man who has provided medical (that is, healing) ways for people to become well and self-reliant. I have not previously sought to put a spiritual stamp on my output because the context did not necessarily call for it.

In this book, I am again writing from the perspective of a doctor, but now I am providing ways of healing that have cosmic implications. Because of the importance I attach to the subject matter of this book, I

xii Acknowledgments

must give credit to those who have helped me along the way. I shall list them in the order they entered my life.

Max and Celia Epstein, my parents, who gave me the opportunity to enter this earth and discover what I have come to know. This book is a tribute to their blessed memory.

Allen Koenigsberg, who entered my life when I was twelve years old and directed my attention to the presence and truth of extrasensory perception, parapsychology, and the notion of following the beat of your own drummer.

Perle Besserman, who, as my first wife, directed my perception to the presence and truth of the life of spirit and its supreme importance in our lives. She is the most serious and sincere seeker I have ever known.

Sybil Ferguson, perhaps the greatest psychic of this age and considered by some to be the most important spiritual being alive while on this earth. She always encouraged me and was a great support. Her memory is revered.

Colette Aboulker-Muscat, who has been the most significant influence in my life. It is her teaching, screened through my filter, that inspired all the books I have written. It is through her that I found my true spiritual path. She has been the example of the love that one human being can have not only for this one fortunate soul, but for all humanity. It is to her that this book is dedicated.

Philo of Alexandria, the enlightened Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who helped me, through his writings, plumb the depths of the spiritual Judaism that is at the heart of the Old Testament. I never tire of reading him and being filled.

Acknowledgments xiii

Medard Boss, the recently deceased Swiss psychiatrist, who provided a meaningful context for understanding human beings through both his person and his writings. I treasure my all too brief relationship with him.

Valentin Tomberg, who as the “Unknown Friend” wrote the book *Meditations on the Tarot*, a beacon of eternal light that has come to us as a gift of love. This book was made known to me by a man in a bookshop who told me to buy it. I am convinced this man was an angel who bestowed grace on me. This “living” dead teacher guided me through the most stormy and life-threatening period of my existence.

Bob Gibson, a former physician who has provided one of the simplest, clearest, and most powerful spiritual practice guides imaginable. It is said that he received his transmission from an angel. His work is truly heaven sent.

To my wife, Rachel, who besides organizing the content and flow of this book, has shown me what it means to receive love, to allow nourishment. She has brought a great gift to me in this lifetime.

I would like to give a nod to some people who have been there to help and share over the years, particularly when I needed it: Sheikh Musaffer, Jim Tumelty, Barry Flint, Mark Seem, Ingo Swann, Jerome Rainville, Harry Palmer, Tobi Sanders, Harris Dientsfrey, the writings of Ceanne DeRohan, Mary Montgomery, Mary Elizabeth Avicenna, and Anita Eshay. For all of these personages I have felt, and for some I still feel, deep love and gratitude. I can only hope that whatever I produce does justice to their efforts on my behalf.

I must also acknowledge Caroline Shookhoff for yet another masterful job of helping to prepare the

xiv Acknowledgments

manuscript, for her ability to read my handwriting and make coherent sense out of it.

Acknowledgment is due here to Manuela Soares, whose editorial skills were instrumental in organizing the mass of information in this book.

A debt of thanks goes to Janet Thormann-Mackintosh, who helped me in the final editing of the book in a masterful way.

Finally, my appreciation goes to Leslie Meredith, my editor at Bantam Books, who has persevered in keeping up with my ideas about the spiritual dimension of healing and has contributed significantly to my own understanding.

And, lastly, a tip of the hat to Janet Biehl, an extraordinary copyeditor who did a masterful job of helping to polish the manuscript.

Preface

In 1974, I was sitting in the garden of my teacher Colette Aboulker-Muscat on a beautiful June day in Jerusalem, at the beginning of what was to be a nine-year apprenticeship in Western spiritual medicine. I had just finished some mental imagery that had taken me to levels of reality where I had met my inner guide. I was now sharing a cup of spearmint tea and honey cake and enjoying the wonderful aroma of jasmine from the tree in her garden. A thin bespectacled man whom neither of us knew came strolling by. He peered into the garden and, seeing us in that idyllic setting, boomed out in a deep stentorian voice: *"It reminds me of the days of the prophecies,"* whereupon he strolled away. I did not see this man again until January 1986, when I was in the Paraclete Bookshop in New York City.

The Paraclete is a bookstore with a full assortment of religious and spiritual books of all persuasions. In January 1986, I was there looking for books on mental imagery. A number of them were written from religious perspectives, including manuals of therapeutic imagery written during the Middle Ages and the

Renaissance by Saint Ignatius and Saint Hildegard of Bingen. I collected about six books and lined them up on a table in preparation for paying for them. There were one or two other people in line ahead of me waiting to pay. Suddenly, a thin bespectacled man in a trench coat with an upturned collar and a five o'clock shadow brushed by me, picked up and riffled through each one of the books, then slammed each down on the table with obvious disgust. He then walked off, and as he did so, he turned toward me, pointed to a book on a table near him, and said that I should buy this book. I looked down to see the book he was pointing to. It was *Meditations on the Tarot*. I felt at once puzzled and skeptical. Although I hesitated, haltingly I lifted it. As I flipped through its pages, I came across diagrams (I'm a sucker for diagrams) that leaped out at me from the pages, diagrams in the form of the Star of David and the Tree of Life as well as the Greek Cross and other such religio-spiritual drawings. I felt excited, so I decided to buy this book and forgo the others. I went to the front door where the man had just exited to thank him. When I got outside, he was nowhere to be seen.

On reflection, I realized that I had been visited on these two occasions, in Jerusalem and in New York, by an angel, as Abraham had been nearly 3,900 years ago. The two encounters were pivotal events for me, pointing me in a new direction and forever changing my life. At least I like to think of this man as an angel, for that is really how I experienced him. *Meditations on the Tarot* has since become instrumental in my thinking and in my understanding of health and disease. The writer—who calls himself “Unknown Friend”—seems to be speaking to me directly with endless wisdom and inspiration.

My life has been truly blessed in terms of the unusual people of a psychic and spiritual nature who have, entered my life and influenced my thinking and personal development.

I have met swamis, lamas, Zen masters, Sufi masters, Kabbalistic rabbis, renowned psychics, and healers of many persuasions, culminating in my relationship and work with Colette. It surely has been an eventful and fruitful journey to this point, one that has shaped my life's direction and led to this book.

Introduction

Healing Into Immortality represents a homecoming, a coming home to the Western perspective on spirit and healing. In the latter half of this twentieth century, many seekers have turned to the East for spiritual sustenance and healing guidance. Many of us had yearned, for an understanding of the deeper, esoteric realities and spiritual wisdom that we could not seem to find in the institutional religions of the West—in Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. For a time, the East had helped us fill this void. I was fortunate, however, to discover the Western esoteric tradition through the good graces of my teacher, Colette Aboulker-Muscat. I believe that, as Westerners, we are born into this Western tradition not by chance but for the purpose of using it to find our own way to spiritual wholeness and health. I am a practicing physician, so I channeled my discoveries into my practice of medicine, hoping to reestablish the links to ancient attitudes and ancient traditions of wisdom.

In this book, I provide a basic guide to uniting the spirit and the bodymind to heal ourselves of various illnesses and of attitudes detrimental to health, and to

maintain wellness. I discuss stories from our Western religious tradition that tell us what we must do and that show the ways we should act to promote health, well-being, and harmony in ourselves and in the people around us. I supply a number of effective techniques for healing, including seven keys to healing and numerous imagery exercises that are salubrious bridges between the spirit and the bodymind.

You need not be a Westerner to benefit from these methods and teachings, just as you need not be an Easterner to benefit from Eastern traditions of wisdom. But if you are a Westerner, you may find your whole being resonating to this new—or rather, reclaimed—vision of the full meaning of health and healthy spirituality.

This book presents the results of my nearly thirty years of clinical practice and clinical investigation of the mind and its functions, and my lifelong search for ways each of us can find our true self. This book is not only about a medicine of body, mind, and spirit; it is also about my personal odyssey from the ranks of conventional medicine to the domain of this “new” medicine, one that has been around for five thousand years, really.

My story begins at age nineteen, when a college chum gave me the book *Man Against Himself*, by Karl Menninger. After reading that book, I decided to become a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst because I wanted to learn more about the power of the mind and its effect on our lives. So I began reading Freud in college and finally realized my goals after medical school training.

Even earlier than college days, my interests had been in the mind. In childhood, together with a friend, Allen Koenigsberg, I looked into extrasensory

perception and hypnosis. At that time, at thirteen, I coined a term for the experience of extrasensory phenomena: I called it "looking up." I envisioned a "great book" in the sky where all events are already recorded. At the same time, I had an intimation of a vertical axis or vertical reality, the direction of mental ascent and descent that has been known to cultures throughout the world as the direction of movement toward freedom and away from the constraints of disease, suffering, and enslavement. Thirty five years later, I was to learn the truth of that intuition when I discovered the world of imagination through Madame Muscat. She showed me that the vertical axis is the path to liberation and that imagination and mental imagery form the ladder by which to ascend and descend that axis.

Always looking to expand my understanding, in college I ventured into Eastern thought, with its emphasis on turning inward, and I began meditating. I also looked into the roots of my own Western religion and finally in 1974 immersed myself in the limitless realm of imagination. I then began my nine-year apprenticeship with Madame Muscat in the Western tradition of mind techniques and consciousness expansion.

All of this development led me to experience, personally and professionally, just how powerful the mind is in both the genesis and the repair of all illness. This understanding has been amply detailed in my previous books, *Healing Visualizations* (Bantam, 1989), *Waking Dream Therapy* (Human Sciences Press, 1981; ACMI Press, 1992), and *Studies in Non-Deterministic Psychology* (Human Sciences Press, 1980; ACMI Press, 1993). In *Waking Dream Therapy*, I present an innovative therapeutic approach to exploring our deepest

selves through the power of imagination and to using sensory images that we discover during that inner journey. Through this method of using imagination, self-knowledge and self-understanding are quickly and profoundly realized, as is healing. In *Healing Visualizations*, I focus on the physical and emotional difficulties and illnesses we commonly face and offer many healing mental imagery exercises for them. *Healing Visualizations* is a primer that introduces the reader to the wondrous world of mental imagery and offers instruction on how to create your own personalized imagery.

In all my books, I use the term “mental imagery” rather than “visual imagery” or “visualization.” Mental imagery implies the use of all our senses in the imagination process, not just the visual. In truth, however, visual imagery accounts for about ninety percent of all imagination events.

In this present book, I will explain which of the mind’s tendencies dominate in the development of physical and emotional disturbances and which of the mind’s functions prevail in the remedying of illness. In other words, I’ll explain why we get ill and how we can become well. I believe that in doing so I will help the general public discover neglected avenues for genuine healing. I will introduce a new medical model, a new way of looking at illness and well-being that accepts and understands in a meaningful way the function of mind. I refer to it interchangeably as “mind medicine” or “spiritual medicine.” I also hope to reintroduce the mind into psychiatry, where it has virtually disappeared from the healing process in favor of biochemical and pharmaceutical “solutions”. Until now, conventional Western medicine has not

been able adequately to incorporate the functions and tendencies of the mind into its model for understanding health and illness. It acknowledges a mind-body separation in our culture and believes that the mind in this equation has little or no importance in the onset or cure of disease.

This mind-body split in the Western tradition took place about 350 years ago during what was ironically called the “Age of Enlightenment,” when Rene Descartes, the French philosopher, said that what can’t be figured out by reason can’t be real, and Francis Bacon, the English philosopher, said that what can’t be grasped by the five senses in the external world can’t be real. They and later philosophers, especially during the Industrial Revolution, relegated all nonlogical modes of thinking and nonempirical modes of perception to a purgatory of insignificance. This philosophical bomb splintered us in two—a mind-body split—and it is a trauma from which we are only now slowly recovering. In this book, I attempt to help restore and reestablish the continuity of mind and body that had been largely maintained for several thousand years before then.

Before the rupture in Western thinking took place in the seventeenth century, our forefathers perceived the world with quite a different consciousness from ours. They did not experience a separation between their consciousness and the world around them, or between each other. The worldview of the ancient, medieval, and renaissance world was of a unity. After the “Enlightenment,” we began to detach ourselves from the world and each other. We split our universe in two: into the physical (all that could be directly perceived by our five senses) and the nonphysical (that which is not directly apprehensible by our senses).

Physical became synonymous with *objective*, and *non-physical* with *subjective*. *Physical* also became equated with body and reality, *subjective* with mind and unreality. These prejudices have colored our thinking until recently. Through personal experience and experimentation, I have discovered the truth of subjective reality, or more precisely, subjective realities. Imagination, mental imagery, dreams, reveries, hallucinations—these are all subjective realities. They cannot be physically measured. They can't be quantified physically. They have qualities that can't be calculated.

This book is designed to help you train your mind in a new way, to reeducate your bodymind as a whole so that you can live in a new, healthful way that is in harmony with your true nature and the world around you. It encourages you to bring healing to yourself, to participate in your own healing, by experimenting in the realm of the imagination in a way that leads to greater self-understanding.

Finally, what is new about this book and what goes beyond most of what is written and published in the mind-body field is that I am not simply presenting a set of techniques that can bring about significant change. I also provide a larger context of understanding into which these techniques fit—a social, moral, and spiritual framework that includes God, the all infinite Being from which everything we know emanates. It is said in the literature of Western wisdom that God actually made Himself smaller, drew Himself together and drew within Himself; to permit the created world to come into existence. This act of contraction was one of great mercy and love. It serves as a model by which we can understand how we may bring healing to ourselves. I shall describe this further when I discuss the

healing relationship, but just knowing about this vital context of life and of how we came to be will allow the healing techniques I explain to take hold; it will help them to become imprinted indelibly in our bodyminds so that they are not just another “quick fix” but remain with us in a lasting way.

The bodymind medicine I offer here presupposes that there are nonmaterial, invisible causes and cures for all of our ills, causes that cannot be directly and objectively observed, measured, and calculated by our five senses. This is in opposition to the current Western medical model, which describes illness as being caused by “agents” of disease—specifically, microorganisms such as bacteria and viruses. No one has been able adequately to explain why some people succumb readily to these agents of disease while others do not or, if they do, why they heal more quickly. The answer lies in the invisible realm of the mind, in the imagination.

The invisible reality is synonymous with what some call the spiritual reality. It lies behind our everyday sensory reality, the visible, objective, physical reality. You discover and experience invisible reality by turning your senses inward, when you use your imagination and its functional process of mental imagery.

The invisible reality is composed of many levels or worlds, all of which are concretely real. Although they have no substantive volume or mass that we can perceive with our five senses, these worlds play a major role in informing and influencing our visible reality. These worlds are not simply metaphors for the outer, physical world, but are as real as this waking, physical world. This point is a major thesis of this book. I also call this invisible spiritual reality the vertical

reality. This non-substantial, non-locatable vertical reality passes its influence down into our visible reality to inform—indeed, to create—the visible, everyday world. In religio-spiritual terms, the influence of the vertical reality is seen in the creation story in the first book of Genesis. Creation came from an invisible source that prompted the appearance of our visible world. Healing is just such a creative act, requiring a movement up the vertical axis of the imagination and into the invisible spiritual reality.

People have asked me, “Do I have to believe in God or in the invisible reality in order to bring on healing?” My answer is that it is not necessary to have this belief to do the exercises and techniques I present in this book. You only need to do them and see what happens. As you do them, however, please suspend your skepticism and participate faithfully in the work. Many wonderful things have happened to those who have tried the mind medicine way.

The centrality given to the social and moral contexts of illness and well-being in mind or spiritual medicine is a significantly Western contribution to healing. None of the Eastern medical approaches have integrated social and mental elements into their medical practices, in spite of the Eastern acknowledgment of the extreme importance of mind in the genesis of illness. The Eastern approach is passive in effecting healing, however, whereas the Western approach is active.

In mind medicine, the mind is a full partner with the body; mind and body form a unity. When we look at our illnesses and our troubles, we assign meaning to our symptoms. We acknowledge that our symptoms have value, that they alert us not only to a bodily problem but to broader social and moral issues

confronting us in our life situations. Each organ of the body has meaning on an emotional and social level when we accept the mind and body as integrated, as the ancients did.

For example, I have treated a number of patients suffering from heart disease. They came to understand and value their life experiences and see that a failure or loss of a love relationship had preceded the awareness of their heart disease. While the heart has been recognized as the seat of love since ancient days, if we view the mind and body as split, then a symptom can *never* have a meaning other than that it is a physical manifestation of a purely mechanical nature, without relevance to the emotional, mental, or social aspects of our lives. This is how conventional Western medicine views hypochondriasis, for instance, where the sufferer has multiple symptoms at one time or has persistent symptoms for which no organic disturbance can be found. Such a person is often labeled a “crock,” that is, someone whose problems are “all in his mind” and therefore are not worthy of much attention. Yet the person is announcing his life suffering in the language of bodily symptoms. The body speaks in its own language about our life circumstances, expressing itself in a bodily way. All of life’s experiences speak to us, whether the language be that of dreams, emotions, or bodily responses. Doctors and patients both need to learn these languages.

A patient produces symptoms until someone hears him and listens to what he is speaking about, or until he figures out his body’s messages for himself. For example, suffering a shoulder problem may “speak” about shouldering problems or about carrying too much weight of responsibility on your shoulders. Similarly a heart problem “speaks” about heartache

xxviii Introduction

or eating one's heart out, or being heartbroken—some problem about love reflected in the physical heart.

Essentially, then, the scientific name of an illness is not relevant in a mindbody medicine. The symptoms are important because they alert us to the fact that life factors are at work and that we have to get to the business at hand—that of searching out and correcting unhealthy tendencies. The nature of the symptom provides clues to the kind of mind processes we can use to correct the trouble. (I discuss these in Chapter 7.) In mindbody healing, however, we can study the symptoms within the intimate context of our entire life situation, because we connect the symptoms to the rest of our life. A medicine that does not incorporate the mind as meaningful will tend to isolate and separate the symptom from the person, by studying it in a detached, objective way that has no relation to the rest of our life.

* * *

The first chapter, “Mind Medicine,” introduces you to the role of the invisible reality in health and how it functions in your life through its main invisible function, the mind. This chapter contrasts the traditional Western spiritual worldview with the current Western scientific view of reality.

Chapter 2 describes the relationship between subjective and objective reality—how they mirror each other. I apply the ancient Western idea of “as above, so below” to providing a new and workable medical model.

“The Moral Shield,” Chapter 3, brings us to an awareness of the medical and healing applications of the Ten Commandments as a prescription for living a sane, sober, happy, and disease-free life.

Chapter 4 identifies and explains those mental faculties that each of us can develop to bring about our own healing. I call them the “seven keys to healing.”

Chapter 5, “The Healing Relationship,” gives a fresh, nourishing point of view on the significance of the relationship between healer and patient, as well as on the patient as self-healer, and how this relationship works to promote healing.

“Why We Become Ill,” Chapter 6, defines the three tendencies of mind that function in each of us to create all our physical and emotional problems.

Chapter 7, “How We Become Well,” provides the three remedies inherent in the functioning of our minds and hearts that act to heal our physical and emotional problems.

Chapter 8 provides a number of healing exercises using mental imagery and will.

The final chapter details my vision of what this new model of mind medicine can bring us—namely, immortality through an overcoming of disease and death, as envisioned by our ancient sages and forebears. Our movement toward this immortality or resurrective possibility comes through our inner effort and expanding consciousness rather than through dependence on medical authorities or institutions.

Throughout the book I discuss biblical stories and their relevance for our health, wellness, and realization of spirit. I must state at the outset that the Bible is a moral history of the world. It relates not so much what happened in history but the way history was lived and ways that produced the wonders and disasters that characterize life on earth. The Bible states at its beginning that an invisible, nontangible, not-apparent-to-our-five-senses reality called God created

the physical world. This creation was true, perfect, beautiful, good, moral (all synonymous terms), all in the absolute sense.

To understand these biblical stories fully in their spiritual sense, I believe you must keep in mind that the stories are not to be considered *metaphors*. Metaphor, as the term has come to be understood, points to something that is real behind something that isn't real. For example, Freudian psychologists, in describing a dream event where a rifle appears, might say that the rifle really isn't a rifle, that it really is a penis. So something—a rifle—makes its appearance to our perception in a dream but is not regarded as a reality in its own right, having its own characteristics and inherent meanings. Rather, it attains significance only by what it points to—a penis—which has the "real" significance. The rifle's value merely lies in its dependence on something else, to which it relates. Its very existence depends on this relationship. The term *metaphor* denotes this dependent relationship. I would view the rifle, however, as concretely real, having value in and of itself and needing no reference point to justify its existence. It stands on its own and makes its appearance to convey some message to us via the true language of the mind—that is, through image.

The contrast between these two ways of reading image language summarizes the entire difference between a cause-and-effect dependence-based psychology like psychoanalysis and all of its derivatives, and a spiritually based self-authority-centered healing process of spiritual medicine. We need not be dependent in this life to heal. In fact, our health depends on our becoming our own authorities. Consequently, we don't use dependence-based language rooted in

metaphor. Therefore, when you read about Adam and Eve challenged to decide between good and evil, you must see and feel the real people and the real choice. Bearing in mind that we accept all experience as concretely real, the Bible stories are read literally—but not only literally. The spiritual wisdom of Judaism holds that the Bible is to be read on four levels:

- 1) as concrete and literal truth
- 2) as analogy
- 3) as moral allegory
- 4) as an archetypal story

Abraham's migration from his home in Ur to Chaldea, for example, is recognized as a literal event. It is also, however, an analogy to an inner migration (the outer and inner reflecting each other). It is an allegory about the necessity for leaving home and the habitual environment to find our freedom; and it is an archetypal story of how we are to live our daily lives, as Abraham, who wants to find God, must do by being willing to break from the prevailing culture.

And so in this book I ask you to read the biblical references in this way. There is an invisible reality that was inhabited by Adam and Eve. Yes, they did live, as did Cain, Abel, and all the rest. When the Bible talks about people like Enoch and Elijah, who did not die, this is meant literally. These are not metaphorical stories, any more so than is Jesus' resurrection—they are all literal events. For spiritual life, *everything is at first concretely real*.

At various points along the way, I purposely reiterate certain biblical stories. I do so to remind you of their importance and to impress their meaning in your psyche. In each instance, the story serves as a means of amplifying and deepening your understanding. The

repetition acts like a chant or a mantra, giving additional power to the main point of the discussion.

In connection with the biblical stories, I make reference to Eve eating the apple first and then giving it to Adam. Since, in the spiritual universe nothing happens by chance, so it was not by chance that Eve tasted the fruit first. Her doing so makes a significant point in the Western spiritual tradition: *The woman is the teacher of the man*. Woman leads man into life or restores man to life. Eve leads Adam into this life on earth, which is now our university where we are to learn the laws of spiritual understanding that will one day allow us to turn this violence-ridden planet into one of love, justice, and mercy. This shift is currently taking place as the patriarchal dominance of the past gives way to the matriarchal impulse of love, wisdom, and cooperation.

A last piece of advice: Work with yourself and experiment with the techniques and methods I present to find out if they are true for you. Don't simply take my word for it. Healing is an inner journey of self-discovery that we all may undertake. Become your own authority on the subject of your health.

1

Mind Medicine: Making the Invisible Visible

Before you this day there is set good and evil, life and death. Choose life, that both you and your descendants might live.

—Deuteronomy 30:19

Mind medicine, or spiritual medicine, is medicine that moves us in the direction of spirit, of the invisible reality. It is a medicine of truth and love. The original text that inspires this book is the Bible, itself a living text of medical healing. The essential teaching of spiritual medicine is that we possess the means for healing ourselves through the use of our inner mental processes. We make of ourselves our own authority and take the responsibility for our health and well-being into our own hands. The ultimate aim of this effort is not only to attain a state of healing but eventually to

2 HEALING INTO IMMORTALITY

bring ourselves to a state of longevity that presently may seem incredible. Eventually, as I hope to explicate in these pages, we might reach the point of defeating death. The possibility of resurrection is espoused by all three great Western religions, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. This book heralds our entry into the age of resurrection spoken of in our Western spiritual tradition over many thousands of years, from ancient Egypt to Israel, Greece, Iran, Turkey, and Europe.

The twentieth century has been characterized by human death on an unprecedented scale. Mass death and the potential for even greater destruction are prompting us to try to rein in our destructive impulses. This death has been created by our own hand and can be corrected only by our own hand, but we are held in bondage when we put our trust in the authorities and leaders of this world and incorrectly believe that other human beings, or human creations, hold the key to our happiness and self-fulfillment. In misplacing our trust, we have made our universe a thoroughly dangerous place.

We can also characterize this century as the one in which we have forgotten God. Where God is, where there is truth and love, there cannot be death. God is truth and love and is stronger than death. To begin to reverse the trend of death, danger, and destruction and make of our universe a welcoming place, we have to bring God back into our lives. The coming of love and truth in this world, if we permit it, will conquer death and allow the resurrective age to reach its fulfillment.

That spirituality and religious feeling and practice play a salutary role in overcoming illness has been highlighted by Jeffrey S. Levin, associate professor of

family and community medicine at Eastern Virginia Medical School, who writes as follows:

Since the nineteenth century, over 250 published empirical studies have appeared in the epidemiologic and medical literature in which one or more indicators of spirituality or religiousness, variously defined, have been statistically associated in some way with particular health outcomes. Across this literature, studies have appeared which suggest that religion is salutary for cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke, nearly every cancer site, colitis and enteritis, numerous health status indicators, and in terms of both morbidity and mortality. Further, this finding seems to hold regardless of how spirituality is defined and measured (beliefs, behaviors, attitudes, experiences, etc.). An especially large subliterature of over two dozen studies demonstrates the health-motive effects of simply attending church or synagogue on a regular basis. Finally, while no one study has conclusively “proven” that a spiritual perspective or involvement in religion is a universal preventive or curative factor, significant positive health effects of spirituality have appeared in studies of whites, blacks, and Hispanics; in studies of older adults and adolescents; in studies of U.S., European, African, and Asian subjects; in prospective, retrospective, cohort, and case-control studies; in studies of Protestants, Catholics, Jews, Parsis, Buddhists, and Zulus; in studies published in the 1930s and in the 1980s; in studies measuring spirituality

4 HEALING INTO IMMORTALITY

as belief in God, religious attendance, Bible reading, frequency of prayer, father's years of Yeshiva, numinous feelings, and history of bewitchment, among many other constructs; and in studies of self-limiting acute conditions, of fatal chronic diseases, and of illnesses with lengthy, brief, or absent latency periods between exposure and diagnosis and mortality. In short, something worthy of serious investigation seems to be consistently manifesting in these studies, and understanding the "what," "how," and "why" of this apparent spiritual factor in health... may be critical for reducing suffering and curing the sick.¹

The "spiritual factor in health" that Dr. Levin mentions is *the* critical factor in all healing. This is an apt place to define the components that make up the spiritual factor and to contrast them with some of the premises underlying medicine, psychology, and science.

Chance and Divine Providence

The difference between mind medicine and conventional medicine actually lies in the perspective with which each view approaches reality. The overwhelming majority of the people in the Western world hold to the belief that chance is the fundamental reality, that the universe, although perhaps ultimately determined, is in its moment-to-moment workings an inchoate, disordered mass, random and unpredictable, and that it can perpetrate on us, at any random moment, some awful consequence. Chance is the cause of all events in a world where God does not and cannot exist.

Along with this belief comes the notion that there cannot be an invisible reality and that we are fundamentally enslaved, mechanical beings who operate in a determined manner, according to fixed cause-and-effect laws. Our job as human beings is to try to put this physical and social universe under our control, to prevent its randomness and wild unpredictability from affecting us. This belief holds that with enough knowledge at our command, we can put the universe under our dominion and that we can control, even own, the forces of nature.

Science, medicine, and psychology, three of the great institutions that rule our lives—unfortunately to excess in this era—operate in accordance with this belief in chance. In their three worldviews, it is held that human will and any nonphysical forces are subordinate to chance, which operates without the intervention of an invisible reality. Medicine says that a human being is a mere mechanism, nothing more than a mechanical organism that can be repaired whenever one of its parts breaks down. That mysterious, intangible, nonphysical element called mind is not really real and is certainly not connected with body.

Although doctors will accept that the physical can affect the mental (steroids are a case in point), fundamentally they will not accept the converse. No medicine that believes that the only reality is physical can admit or allow the nonphysical, the invisible, the mind, to be significant. Physicians in general have not the faintest idea of what role the mind plays in the genesis of disease, nor do they care. When a physician cannot find some physical pathology that “causes” a patient’s complaint, he or she will usually say, “I don’t find anything wrong. Your complaints are *all in your mind*. I shall send you for a psychiatric consultation.”

6 HEALING INTO IMMORTALITY

Whatever way you slice it, from whatever angle you view it, conventional medicine operates on the assumption that chance is the guiding principle. Even the language of medicine reveals this assumption of chance in its reliance upon statistical explanations of spontaneous remission, five-year survival rates, and genetic illness. “Spontaneous remission” means that the disappearance of an illness happened by chance, a one-in-a-million occurrence. “Five-year survival” refers to the odds that you’ll be alive five years after the appearance of an illness. “Genetic illness” means that we don’t understand how a disease is distributed among the members of a family except by the chance of genetic transmission. Of course, the table of chance called statistics is only an abstract reality; it doesn’t say what will happen to you (unless you believe it does), and it has nothing to do with you right here at this moment.

To conventional medical science, we humans are but a chance event in the universe and just happen to have appeared here on earth. In a random world, luck explains our experience of chance—we either have “good luck” or “bad luck.” Luck is a convenient explanation that takes us off the hook of responsibility for what happens to us. We see ourselves as victims of experience and take as many precautions as we can to bring security and certainty into our lives, to ensure that we don’t become a “victim of circumstance.” We walk around covering our heads and looking over our shoulders, worrying about the next catastrophe around the corner in this doom-and-gloom-oriented world in which the media can’t wait to pounce on the next “disaster” or “tragedy” to report.

When we drop the belief in chance from our consciousness, however, we step onto the path toward

spirit. The world of invisible reality, or divine providence, looks at life in the opposite way. For those of us who believe in this worldview, the universe is ordered, operating according to a divine plan. Human beings are born with free will and have the choice to create their own reality for themselves. God's world is a paradoxical one: We are free within a determined universal or cosmic whole. *Nothing* in this world happens by chance. *Everything* comes from the invisible reality and is made manifest through the actions of our will. Even the machine world comes under the aegis of the invisible reality. If your car didn't start this morning, that didn't happen by chance. There is a reason; something had to be played out at that instant that held some significance for your life. Sometimes the significance is blatantly clear, as for people who miss a flight because of say, a mechanical failure of their car on the way to the airport, and the plane that they miss has a fatal crash.

In the perspective of spiritual reality, we read events in terms of their correspondences rather than in a cause-effect manner. Psychology, for example, would say that anxiety is causing my heart palpitations. In spiritual medicine, however, anxiety and heart palpitations correspond to each other—one is a physical manifestation, the other an emotional one, each *mirroring or reflecting* the other. They are happening simultaneously, although in our ordinary waking world of perception and experience, they seem to occur consecutively in time and thus *give the appearance* that one is causing the other.

In the scientific worldview, mind and body are split and are inherently different. (Actually, proponents of science and medicine consider the mind to be unreal.) In spiritual science and medicine, mind and

8 HEALING INTO IMMORTALITY

body are considered to be *analogous functions* of each other. They don't cause each other; rather, they are *mirror reflections* of one another, genuine expressions of human beings. The fact that physical and emotional realities reflect each other explains why we can say, for instance, that the heart is the seat of love or the liver the seat of anger. Love reflects itself as heart. Heart reflects love. The heart and love are inherently connected.

So, too, is there an inherent connection between what is tangible and what is intangible. Night dreams, mental imagery, and meditation experiences are all events that are as real as our waking life events. They mirror waking-life events, as body symptoms correspond to mental and spiritual events. This is an essential point to grasp in order to understand why we become ill and how we become well.

We can understand the world in a way directly at odds with our everyday indoctrination. To be more specific: Accepting the truth of divine providence, of the mindbody unity, of the invisible reality, holds the key to attaining health.

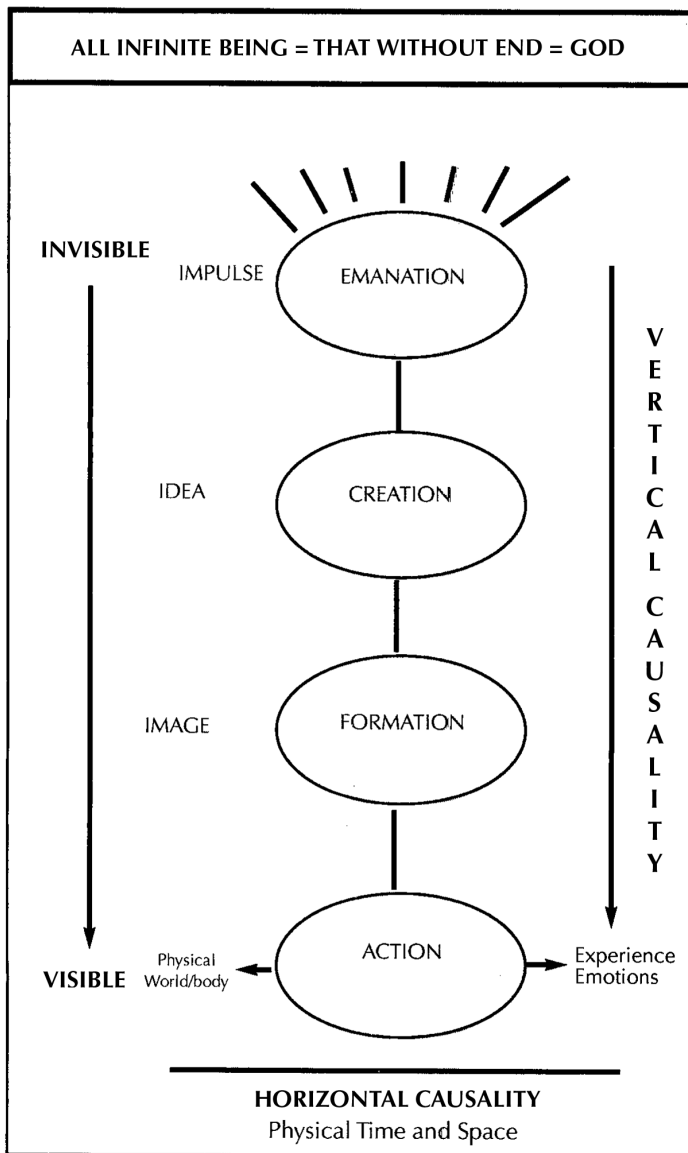
The conventional model of reality cannot account for your or my subjective experiences, our intuitions, our spiritual desires and experiences. In dreams as well as in reveries and imaginal activity, I can find myself at the ends of the universe. My physical body is here, but I am also elsewhere at the same instant. I dreamed recently that I was at my teacher's house in Jerusalem. If you ask me: At that moment in the dream, when you were with Madame Muscat, were you closer and more vividly there and aware of being there, or were you closer to lying physically in your bed at home? If you ask such a question in reference to your own dreams, you will probably answer the question as I do: I am much more aware of and am humanly closer to my

dream reality than to my bed at that time. How could it be otherwise? Who was in Jerusalem? I was. This “I” is much more than the physical body lying in the bed.

Conventional medicine and psychology cannot be the arbiters of what is true, real, normal, and abnormal; we can’t know the invisible world by means of the outer world’s estimation. My dream is not open to objective scientific assessment. Science may tell me that I was in REM sleep (rapid eye movements associated with dreaming), but that tells me nothing about the truth of the dream, only about a peripheral element associated with the dream. Science cannot measure the mind, only the brain. The mind is limitless, while the brain is limited, as it is a physical object with boundaries. How can the limited house the limitless? How can the mind be in the brain, as we are led to believe it is? The limitless can give birth to the limited, can contain the limited, but it can’t be the other way around. The limitless has no borders, no end.

Again, the creation story in Genesis exemplifies this theme. In the beginning there was chaos—formlessness. Out of this formlessness came the created world. In Western spiritual life, this movement from the formless and invisible to the visible is how the world actually works. This movement takes place along the axis of vertical causality. The movement of vertical causality is central to the understanding of mind medicine. Vertical causality defines the relationship of the invisible world to the visible world. In the invisible reality there are levels of creation, as illustrated by the diagram on page 10.

In consciousness, these levels of creation are all mirroring each other simultaneously. That’s how we experience vertical reality. Take, for example, a possibility called walking. The knowledge for fulfilling this possibility comes as an *impulse* that is registered as an



idea, which is seen as an *image*, and is experienced as an *action*. Each of these functions mirrors the others. In our everyday life, we are usually aware of the reality of the action but not of the other three.

The causality that underlies the understanding of natural science and our conventional medicine is “horizontal causality,” whose central focus is visibility. According to conventional medicine, physical causes have physical effects. For instance, a microorganism causes disease, while changes in the biochemistry of the brain cause mental illness. Thus, physical causes can give rise to both physical and nonphysical responses.

From the vertical causality perspective, diseases arise from the formless realm of mind mediated by images, ideas, and beliefs, which then materialize in the physical world. For instance, an infection at the physical level mirrors the breakdown of the moral and social fabric of our existence. Healing then must involve the other levels of vertical causality: Our own healing of our physical symptoms will involve the healing of the context in which we live our lives.

Vertical causality lies at the foundation of Judaism and Christianity. In the spiritual life of the West, the intersection of the vertical and horizontal is represented by the following sign: †. The cross of Christianity speaks to the vertical and horizontal interplay. For Christian spirituality, Jesus is at the intersection of the vertical and horizontal: †^{Jesus}

Also for Western spirituality, the interplay and interrelation of above and below is designated by the Star of David: ✨. “As above, so below” is the spiritual shorthand for the law of analogy, for the inherent relationship of two things that don’t seem to be connected at first glance. Thus, “as above, so below” alludes to the

12 HEALING INTO IMMORTALITY

influence of the vertical worlds on the human world and vice versa. For spiritual understanding, matter and spirit are analogies of each other. The upward triangle in the Star of David (\triangle) not only represents above but also is the symbol for fire. The downward triangle (∇), not only represents below but also is the symbol for water. Additionally, the symbol \triangleleft symbolizes air, while the symbol ∇ symbolizes earth. The four elements represent the constituent elements in their melding and blending with each other, out of which all living matter in our universe is composed.

The vertical reality is a timeless realm, the experience of the eternal moment or instant. It is what physicists call “no time,” in which we may be witness to the presence of the present. This eternal moment is then played out along the horizontal axis of past, present, and future as the narrative of our lives and as what we perceive as cause-and-effect experience, ending eventually in death. The focus in mind medicine is to establish our connection with the presence of the present and come back to the vertical reality as the sustainer of our life, the place where true healing happens. The techniques of mind medicine allow us the possibility of living in “no time” and thereby aligning and attuning ourselves with the vertical reality. This vertical reality is the realm of freedom, the realm of love, the realm of morality, the realm of God. What happens there has its impact in time and is lived out in the world of time. Miracles can be defined in exactly this way, as happenings without precedent or antecedent (that is, out of time) and having effects in the world of historical time. The Red Sea parting and Jesus being resurrected are two miraculous instances that have had effects lasting thousands of years.

In the following chart I have summarized the twelve paths of providence and the twelve paths of chance. Each is part of a road that we can choose to follow, leading either to life or to death respectively.

12 Paths to Life <i>Providence</i> Vertical Causality	12 Paths to Death <i>Chance</i> Horizontal Causality
Mind-body unity	Mind-body split
Grace	Luck
Being (present)	Expectation (future)
Creator	Victim
Belief creates experience	Experience creates belief
Objective and subjective reality both exist	Only objective reality exists
Analogic-intuitive thought supplemented by logic	Logic the only valuable thought process, equated with truth
Reality and truth not the same	Reality and truth the same
Maintain self-authority	Surrender authority to someone else
Faith	Skepticism
Form follows function	Function follows form
Resurrection	Death

The road of providence is linked directly to processes that acknowledge the primacy of vertical causality, while the road of chance is linked directly to

14 HEALING INTO IMMORTALITY

processes that acknowledge the primacy of horizontal causality.

Most of the paths listed in the chart will be discussed in this chapter, the rest in the following chapters. Let's look now at some comparisons between vertical and horizontal thinking.

Logic and Truth

In the world of chance—that is, horizontal causality—the glue that is used to tie things together is logic, an intellective function that deals only with the seen, the tangible, the quantitative. It excludes any phenomenon that cannot be experienced directly in the physical world or that operates outside scientific laws—like miracles.

This dependence on logic is misleading and false. Something can be true and yet not have a basis in formal logic, while something based on formal logic can be quite false. For this reason, spiritual medicine deals not with logic but with truth. In 1989, I appeared on the Gerardo Rivera TV show with two other healers. We each brought on five patients who had undergone healing for serious physical illnesses, including cancer. In the audience were dozens of other people who had also undergone healing. A conventional physician appeared on the show to explain to the audience that what they were witnessing was not true because it didn't conform to the laws of logic. The way she stated it was that all the healing that was directly experienced was "only anecdotal," meaning that it was not valid, genuine, or real, since it was "only" subjective and had not been confirmed by "true" objective, scientific scrutiny via a double-blind

controlled study. What she was saying made some sense in the abstract—for instance, with regard to testing medicines in a laboratory. But it certainly did not speak to the truth of those who had been healed. For the physician, proof had to be based not on what the patients' senses directly confirmed for them but on a preconceived idea of what makes something true. She was so taken by her preconceived idea that she could not accept the truth staring her in the face. It is characteristic of human nature in general that many preconceived ideas are formed early in life and are cultivated on the ground of logical deduction. Subsequently, whatever we encounter that doesn't fit our logical framework is discarded as worthless. The truth of the healings that all those people experienced defies current logical or medical explanation and so cannot be accepted. Thus, truth loses out to preconceived skepticism.

For instance, I know about the case of a youngish man who developed carcinoma of the head of the pancreas. He underwent surgery, and the head of the pancreas was removed. His doctors noted some spread of the cancer to superficial layers of the adjacent portal vein and one adjacent lymph node, but everything else in the area was clean and normal, including ten lymph nodes farther up in the chain and farther away from the head of the pancreas. His cancer marker blood test was also normal. He was then offered a combination of chemotherapy and radiation as a "preventive" medical program. The course of this program was described to him as going through a "second surgery." The doctors considered it necessary because there *could* be one cancer cell floating around his system that was not detectable by any known means. The rationale for this devastating intervention, which ended up destroying one kidney,

16 HEALING INTO IMMORTALITY

was that there was a “chance” a cancer cell was hanging out somewhere. Here is nineteenth-century germ theory applied to a chronic disease situation: An isolated cell, like a bacterium, can land and grow somewhere and “cause” illness. This doubt on the doctor’s part that the cancer was gone was conveyed to the patient, who was then filled with terror that the cancer would return. The patient then lived out of that implanted belief. He lived out his days feeling powerless to make any potentially beneficial changes, such as social or moral changes, changes in diet, prayer, and so on.

Another distinction between logic and truth involves the difference between what is and what may be. Logic bases its propositions on what is called “if-then” thinking. If so-and-so is the cause, then such-and-such is the likely outcome. Truth, however, always concerns itself with what is, with what presents itself to us and our perceptions in the immediacy of the present moment. Logical thinking projects into the future: making predictions, drawing conclusions, gauging outcomes. The trouble is that the future doesn’t exist—it is simply potential. It hasn’t happened yet. To treat it otherwise is to participate in an illusion. Every notion we have that the future can be predicted, manipulated, shaped, or otherwise controlled is untrue. We waste the bulk of our lives buying into this illusory realm that can never belong to us. Struggling with what is fundamentally false takes a heavy toll on our physical and emotional lives. We play a continuous game, like the story of the emperor’s new clothes, giving a special role to the institutions of science, medicine, and psychology and to their keepers, who themselves believe their own mirages and are enjoying the power this falsehood gives them.

In mind medicine, the future belongs only to God. The First Commandment says: "You shall have no other gods before me." The Sufis (Islamic mystics) say the same thing rather beautifully: "Don't put any other god before God." Scientists and physicians who presume to predict the future or who are concerned with the outcomes of their experiments want to put themselves in the place of God, usurp His knowledge and power, and create idol worship. If you want to heal, get out of the future and get back to the present.

The essence of spiritual medicine is encapsulated in one act, and all healing is based in one act: Come into the present. Leave the personal past. What happened, happened already. It is dead, gone, buried. It is in the realm of finished experience. Hanging on to it is to perpetuate your enslavement. If-then thinking trades on the idea that your past experience dictates your future experience. If this was the pattern in the past, then this is the way the future has to be. This way of thinking leaves you no options and perpetuates your enslavement. We cling to this way of thinking to help us fix the future, to gain control of it, because we believe that the future is real and that we can know it. Abandon the future, abandon the past. Put your trust in the moment, in the instant, in the presence of the present, and watch your life become freer than you have ever known it.

Some of you who are new to spiritual thinking may be murmuring that I am "deep-sixing" logical thought, but that is not at all the case. Rather, I am assigning an appropriate place to deductive logic, as a support for intuition, to that inductive, inner analogic that speaks to us as our first voice, always in the present tense and that comes from our heart or our gut—as in "gut feeling." Once our intuition has informed us, then we can

use our logic to implement the action that our intuition impels us toward. At present in this man-made world, our logical processes have run wild in a technological ecstasy that is devastating our environment. Unrestrained logic that believes it can triumph over God and that leads us to believe we are God is analogous to cancer. Cancer is the body running wild. Logic is the intellect running wild. We cannot bring cancer under control unless we can bring our intellect under control; nor can we remedy environmental disaster spawned by technology in the name of progress and the “American dream” unless we acknowledge the truth of our own dreams, our inner and greater spiritual realities.

Truth and Reality in Healing

In mind medicine we accept the existence of all experience as real, both in the inner forum of consciousness—in dreams, fantasies, hallucinations, imagination, thoughts, feelings, and sensations—and in the outer forum of consciousness known as the external world, including the world of nature and the man-made. Anxiety is real, anger is real, dreams are real, hallucinations are real, fear is real. For us everything is real, but mind medicine looks beyond what is real to what is true. The focus in conventional medicine, however, is on the real but not on the true. This is one of the most crucial differences between our mind medicine and conventional medicine—namely, the former says that reality and truth are not the same.

Reality means the existence of any phenomena that we perceive or create in either the outer or inner world. Truth means what is, what is fact, and what is

valid within a given context. For instance, anxiety is real and is even true for you at the moment that you feel it. But its context is not true: All anxiety is about the future. If you feel anxious, ask yourself, "What am I anxious about?" Similarly, if you feel fearful, nervous, tense, worried, or angry, ask yourself the corresponding question. Or do the same for someone you are with who is experiencing these distressing feelings. The answer that comes back will always be about something that is related to the future. But the future does not exist! It is only potential and has not happened. It is by its nature false, and any discussion of or emotion connected with the future is not true. So though the anxiety is real, its context is untrue. The same may be said about disquieting feelings related to the past, such as guilt, shame, regret, and vengeance. They are all real and true at the moment, but what they refer to, the context in which they are operating, is not true. The past is illusory, gone, finished, dead, out of existence. Like the future, it is not true. It was and is not now. Holding on to the past simply generates thoughts about the future: "Since it was like that in the past, it has to be like that again in the future." That is how we are trained to think, and this thinking is the basis for the notion that experience (past) creates belief (future). (This false notion will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.)

A psychiatrist, psychologist, or other clinician who judges that some form of expression in another person is unreal denies the reality of that other person's experience, making the person feel misunderstood and unwelcome, at some level of being, in his or her relationship with the clinician. That misunderstanding is unresolvable because the clinician has a preconceived idea of what is real. In fact, all psychiatric diagnostic

labels are based on the clinician's assessment of the patient's relationship to "reality." For example, the experience of a schizophrenic who claims that he is Jesus Christ is quite real, but it isn't true. Hence the psychiatric term *delusion*, meaning "unreal," is misleading. The schizophrenic's experience is real but not true. By missing this point psychiatry has severely curtailed its effectiveness, so much so that the profession has essentially been reduced to pill-pushing, making it just another subdivision of biochemistry.

Psychiatrists generally regard people who don't conform to their preconceived standards of normal and abnormal as emotionally disturbed. Thus, they essentially regard hallucinations as not real or "crazy," when in truth they are quite real and the hallucinator is certainly experiencing them as such. To tell him or her otherwise further demeans and devalues the person and contributes toward driving him or her deeper into his illness. Unfortunately, psychiatry has not been able substantially to get past this barrier and so cannot even begin to grapple with the distinction between truth and reality. Understanding this distinction can be the initial step toward reclaiming the arena of mind for psychiatry, which is the promise that psychiatry held out for itself and those sufferers called patients before it relinquished its legitimacy as a field of inquiry and therapy in order to accommodate itself to and be accepted by our materially based conventional medicine.

In mind medicine, we never question the reality of a person's experience. What we question is its truth. A person approached in this way will soon begin to want to make changes and will set about doing so through one or more techniques that put the person on the road to healing. It seems that we humans have a built-in

desire to be in truth, and we will work to serve that truth. But if you try to tell me what's real, I may put up a great fight or, conversely, become compliant and bow down before your authority. Neither possibility would bode well for my welfare. Yes, we may also fight about what's true, but we can experiment and reach some accord through experimentation. This is what mind medicine is about: We don't submit to any outside authority, and we experiment with what we discover to find out if it is true. When we practice in this way, we achieve remarkable results in short order. People become able to progress constructively with their lives.

In the physical realm mind medicine is also concerned with reality and truth. I don't for one minute think that physical expressions of illness should be denied or neglected. If I did, I would be making the same error as the physicians who deny the reality of physical symptoms when no "organic cause" can be discovered. We have to engage the symptoms by embracing them, even thanking them for making their appearance so as to alert us and give us an opportunity to make significant changes in our lives. They are part of a whole picture of mindbody integration within the context of our social and moral relationship to the world.

The Will to Power and the Will to Love

Truth and logic are mirrored by love and power, respectively. Truth and love are provided to us and through us by the invisible reality, while logic and power, which aim at controlling the future, have evolved from the human mind by dint of our choices.

22 HEALING INTO IMMORTALITY

The interplay of logic and power is illustrated by Adolf Hitler's heinous book *Mein Kampf*, which sought to show logically that the Jews were responsible for all the troubles of the Germans and that the way out of those troubles was to exterminate the Jews. His "logic," of course, was based on a false belief. False belief is at its basis a will to power, an unnatural megalomania that attempts to supplant even God.

The origin of the false belief that engenders the will to power goes back to the archetypal story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In this paradise there is no disease and no death, only eternal life and happiness as promised our first parents by God, who tells them that Eden is theirs for eternity, if only they listen to His voice and do not eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In this paradise, the couple is visited by the serpent, who makes Eve a proposition that is very difficult to refuse. *He promises her that she and Adam will be able to usurp the knowledge and power of God and thereby gain omniscience of the future and omnipotence over the future and, consequently, like God, become immortal.* All they have to do is eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Eve is thrown into a terrible quandary by this offer. She is torn between listening to God's voice or to the serpent's voice, which promises a future reward based upon giving in to the experience of the fruit. Eve finally resolves the conflict by going for the fruit. The rest is the history of the world.

Today, the serpent represents all of the individuals, authorities, and institutions that live by the will to power and the inherent promise in that will that we shall control our future, otherwise known as destiny. But all the while those same individuals, institutions, and authorities are trying to control our destiny for us. The serpent, lied to Eve and Adam, and we all labor

under the same lie proffered to us by the agents of the serpent, who promise us what inherently can never be our mandate—namely, to usurp the knowledge and power of God.

Truth and love are analogous in the Western spiritual tradition. There has always been a conflict in the West between the will to power and the will to love. The will to power comes from the impulse to usurp the knowledge and power of God. Our belief that we are God is megalomania. The urge toward superhuman status represents the tragic side of the Western tradition that sees the world as meaningful and as the context for actions that can either benefit or destroy us.

When in our grandiosity or megalomania we stumble over the First and Second Commandments—First, You shall not have any Gods before me; Second, You shall not make a graven image and not bow down before any graven image or created idol—we lose our way. Above all, our *humility* atrophies. The subverting of humility brings disaster into our individual human existence and can even spell disaster for a larger social community as well, as in the case of Hitler, Jim Jones, Idi Amin, and Saddam Hussein, to name but a few. Such destruction serves the will to power, which requires that the one seeking power subjugate or dominate others in some discernible way.

The physician I met on the Geraldo Rivera show seemed to exhibit an absence of loving-kindness toward those who had been healed. She negated their experiences. They had all come out of love for what they had received from God, but the physician met them with an attitude that said: “Don’t believe what has happened to you and what your senses are directly telling you.” In truth, she told them that they were crazy for believing something and experiencing

24 HEALING INTO IMMORTALITY

something that did not conform to a man-made scientific standard. She devalued and demeaned their experience in an apparently unloving manner.

Love is the nutrient force of the invisible reality that makes truth and morality possible, and at the head of that reality stands God. Love, showering from above to below, permits the created world of the earth to continue functioning. Each of us is infused with the capacity to perpetuate this life energy by acting as its agent here on earth. Nothing that comes into contact with this monumental force can die. Consequently, contrary to popular belief, we are not meant to die as a “natural” ending to the process of birth and development. We are meant to live—in fact, to live forever. Death is a process we impose on our own freedom, for we are the only beings capable of integrating with our inborn capacity to live forever—to overcome death, as it were.

God never meant for anyone to die. He has wept ceaselessly for us since the fall from Eden, and in His everlasting and unswerving love He has steadfastly remained devoted to us and to our efforts to reach Him. When our efforts fail, we are then swept away by the great surgeon called death, so that we may begin the cycle all over again.

Acting out of love, in accord with the moral standards presented to us from the beginning and rooted in serving truth, gives us the way to overcome death. It is only out of love that we are moral toward each other. The commandments are teaching tools that define our relationship to each other and to God. Every act of moral correctness comes out of the will to love. Conversely, every deviation from moral correctness comes out of the will to power. It is love that makes us behave in the likeness of God.

There will be much more to say about love elsewhere in this book, but it has to be noted here that love is a necessary ingredient in spiritual medicine. It is the nutritive force of the universe and the emanation from the heart of God. I have seen untold suffering and unhappiness manifested in the absence of love. We need to be loving. We may need to be loved as well, but lovingness is the key ingredient. The absence of loving in our lives sets the stage for incredible grieving, “quiet desperation,” abject sadness, and depression that can manifest as serious physical illness as well. It is well known that love is strong as death, that love can even conquer death. The will to love serves the force of life, while the will to power serves the force of death.

How does this clear dichotomy come about? The answer starts with God, as it always does in a spiritually based medicine. God came and said that at every moment in life, we would be faced with choosing life or choosing death. We choose our own path—life or death. Choosing the path of death means clinging to anything that is *not* connected with the present moment. This includes holding on to the past, believing that the future is real, accepting man-made standards as true, genuine, and worth striving for, letting logic take the place of truth, believing that outside authorities hold the answers to our existence, putting some god before God, and a myriad of other mistakes that are discussed at other points in this book. Choosing any direction that denies the reality of the invisible spiritual dimension and the reality of the present moment as the only truth consigns us to the domain of death. For now, as we move on to the next chapter, we will take a closer look at the domain of life, at vertical causality and its influence in our lives.