

# Deepak Chopra, M.D.

# Quantum

# HEALING

## *Interview by Deanna McKinstry*

Deepak Chopra's mother was a great storyteller. Daily she read from *The Ramayana*, a scriptural epic about the great adventures of Lord Rama, who was both an exiled prince and an incarnation of God. Every day the reading concluded at a memorable moment, leaving he and his brother in the rapture of high drama. When Chopra's father returned home, he never knew if he would find them swinging happily from a star, or perched tearfully on a cliff-hanger.

It is not surprising then that Chopra evolved into a great storyteller, too. In his bestselling books *Quantum Healing* and *Unconditional Life: Mastering the Forces that Shape Personal Reality*, he tells grand tales that usually begin with a patient of his, then burgeon into stories about all of us that explore who we are, how we shape ourselves and our realities, and, most significantly, how being ill is inextricably linked to the things we tell ourselves about ourselves and about our world. Through his patient's stories he has learned some trailing things about sickness and health, propelling him into the foreground of body-mind medicine to be one of its major architects.

To Dr. Chopra, the human body is in constant conversation with itself. "A river of intelligence constantly renewing itself... our immune system is literally eavesdropping on our internal dialogue, passing along whatever we're thinking on chemical receptors called neural peptides." Every cell is a thinking cell, with attributes of memory and desire. Our immune system is in intimate communication with our nervous system. In fact, immune cells can even make some of the same peptides the brain makes. To compartmentalize body and mind is to invite trouble, because the body is going to hear whatever we are thinking, no matter how many boxes we put it in.

In the early days of Dr. Chopra's career, he had little time to ponder this body-mind unity. Arriving in the United States from India in the early 1970s, he worked long, exhausting hours as many doctors do, securing positions in prestigious medical institutions, acquiring Western medicine's prized credentials, and winning the respect of his colleagues. But somewhere along the way, he noticed that he wasn't really doing what he had set out to do—heal people.

The American medical system he now found himself thoroughly ensconced in was focused more on sickness than health. The system had become a “cycle of drugs, surgery and new equipment,” effective in crisis situations, but sadly lacking in helping people achieve and maintain health. It became apparent to Dr. Chopra that “the most important and basic system, the two person unit of doctor and patient, was absent.” Not only did doctors learn to see their patients as walking syndromes, many patients themselves longed to be seen as diseases, and even seemed relieved to find there was a name for what ailed them. Yet finding a name, Dr. Chopra realized, did not result in a cure, in true health. It was a perilous cycle for patient and physician.

During this time of this disillusionment with the conventional modalities for treating disease, Dr. Chopra discovered a way to renew his own very stressful life. Meditation. Within weeks he felt a surge of energy and well-being. He quickly jettisoned the habits of drinking and smoking he had recently acquired. In meditation, Dr. Chopra found a valuable key to healing disease. “A place that is free from disease, that never feels pain, that cannot age or die. When you go to this place, limitations that all of us accept cease to exist.” He called this place The Gap.

Accessing The Gap became central to Dr. Chopra’s method of working with people who came to him for medical attention. He observed in his own life, and in the lives of his patients, how spending time in The Gap helped to lessen the limiting often injurious side effect of so-called “normal reality.” As Dr. Chopra now sees it, normal reality is a spell cast by a “grossly imperfect organization called society. Although this spell is, apparently, necessary in many areas of our lives, the problem arise when we only know how to make the spell, but cannot break it.

To break this social spell and the other spells of our lives, we must understand how artful we were to cast them in the first place. Eventually, by realizing our participation in the spells that enable us to manifest illness, the opportunity exists for us to effectively participate in our own cure. A person catches a glimpse of her power as a co-creator, someone who can “give birth to everything that makes life worth living.”

**BW:** You talk a great deal about The Gap, the place of silence between our thoughts. Is meditation the only sure way of getting there deliberately and consistently?

**DC:** Meditation is the most consistent and reliable way, but there are many other ways of slipping into The Gap. You can slip into it accidentally, through trauma, through crisis, by being in love— that's one really good way— and through art. The whole existence of art is because of that. An artist is trying to achieve unity consciousness through what she creates. I'm sure Michael Jackson accesses The Gap when he dances, and I'm sure Michelangelo did it, too. You can't produce that kind of art without going to that place.

**BW:** If The Gap is where we really live, so to speak, and it is really the deepest realization of who we are, what are we doing and gaining in the regions of consciousness we call waking, dreaming and sleeping?

**DC:** We're having fun. It's like the movies. We don't live in the movie theater, but we go there, or go to see a play on Broadway. That play wouldn't be interesting if it wasn't for the extremes of opposites that make the play delightful. You cannot have triumph without tragedy, or comedy without sorrow. It is all part of the process of experience. Experience by definition is learning through contrast. The Gap is the state of unbounded pure bliss, but if you were there for eternity, you get bored. So you think occasional excursions into the realm of experience. The Gap is the realm of the pure experiencer, there is no process of experiencing over there. Whenever you access The Gap, you find that timeless factor in every experience... the experiencer.

*There is no physical world.*

*It's all projection.*

*The whole thing is a Quantum Soup.*

*Reality is pulling out from us rather than coming into us.*

In other words, wherever I go, the one thing I'm sure to find is myself. In the midst of every experience is the nonchanging part of that experience, and that nonchanging part is the silent witness that goes through the experience.

When we become identified with the experiencer to the same degree that we are identified with all of our experience, we established balance of these opposite poles, creating a sense of well-being.

**BW:** What do you see as the greatest barrier to infusing into our lives the fullest understanding of how body and mind work together, particularly in Western society?

**DC:** People often ask me that question and I say just wiggle your toes and you'll see there's a connection. That animating force is what makes the body alive, and you are the animating force. The biggest barrier to this

realization stems in part from a limited introduction that came about only recently. It surfaced with the French philosopher Descartes who divided everything for political reasons. The soul was the domain of the church, the body the domain of science. This separation, this schism more or less became pervasive in the whole Western tradition of science. It is still with us even today as a kind of materialistic superstition, but it's dissipating, undergoing its climatic overthrow.

All our modern technology is based on the fact that the basic unit of matter is non material. This non-material world is made up of forces and these forces have intelligence. If you don't like word intelligence, use information instead. The physical world is built up of information fields. We couldn't talk on the phone or use a FAX machine if this wasn't the case. Is it just empty non-stuff or does it have know-how in it? It obviously has know-how, because we use it all the time. I think with the advent of Quantum Physics, and its proper understanding, we go back to the fact that there's an inseparability between knowledge, information, intelligence and material reality.

**BW:** What do you mean when you say the world is a projection of the collective mind? Do you mean the mind of everything in existence, the mind of a stone, or a tree, or are you referring solely to the mind of man?

**DC:** The thing is there's only one mind. And it has hierarchies, all levels of intensity of expression and self-awareness. You can look at the universe as one field of awareness. Let's say you move an electron out of its shell. It will predictably bounce back to its shell. In other words,, it knows to go back to its own shell. So there is some level of awareness, even though it's limited. As you move up from the level of the so-called inanimate world to the world of plant life, there's an increasing repertoire of responses to any one stimulus. In animals you see even more. And in human beings even more. Finally, in a completely evolved, self-aware, enlightened human being, you see that there's the possibility of infinite choices to anyone event. So what you are seeing are the hierarchies of levels of awareness from many limited choices up to infinite choices and complete self-awareness. We could say that through the human nervous system, the universe, which is a living mind, becomes self-aware.

Now even in our own physiology, we have hierarchies of awareness. Right now as I am talking to you I am not aware of the fact that my clothes are touching my naked skin. But if I were to put my attention to that fact, then I would become aware of that. So all the levels and degrees of awareness have a very good utility value, but we don't want to overwhelm ourselves with an intensity of awareness that would disrupt our normal, healthy functioning.

**BW:** If there was no collective mind to project consciousness, would there be no world?

**DC:** There is no physical world. It's all projection. The whole thing is a Quantum Soup. Reality is pulling out from us rather than coming into us. It's pulling out just like light pours out from a bonfire or dreams pour out from a dreamer. In a dream state, you also project a certain world, but you say it's unreal. The waking world that you project out is also similarly projected by brain chemistry, which is a function of consciousness. So the fact is that the physical world is therefore never perceived quite the same by any two people. But, in general, we have a lot of agreement amongst our species as to how it's supposed to look, and that's how we see it or feel it.

It's the function of the way the nervous system is structured, not the intrinsic nature of what's outside. What's outside is a "soap" of energy and information that gets structured inside us. Behind our backs there's a radically ambiguous quantum soup. You turn around and suddenly it's there as physical reality.

**BW:** With diseases like cancer and AIDS, how do you help patients with the overwhelming emotional turmoil they may be in, as they deal with their own and everyone else's collective fears about these diseases? How might you work with Magic Johnson, for instance, who has tested HIV positive?

**DC:** I would focus on his help, not the disease. If the emphasis is on wholeness and health, then the disease can slip away into the background, so you can have the virus, but not necessarily the disease. I think the main thing is not to focus on an abnormal test but rather on how he feels at this moment. I'm sure he's emotionally distraught no matter what his appearance or physical health might be. So he would really have to focus on his emotional and spiritual well-being, and, of course, his physical well-being. He could go on forever as if he didn't have the disease and, in fact, he would be the best example of that.

**BW:** One of the prevailing criticisms of the body-mind approach to medicine is the tendency for individuals to feel a sense of blame, in addition to the pain of their disease. Illness is viewed as some kind of emotional weakness. How do you counter that?

**DC:** It's not a weakness, it's a lack of knowledge. It's an effect of our state of evolution and even very highly evolved people will have places where they are vulnerable. The whole thing is a process of evolution. It's a self-correcting mechanism, to bring us back into our true nature of interconnectedness with each other. A learning process. It's cybernetic feedback loop, basically, a process by which we are brought back to the world. Of course, we all participate in it. It's an unusual collective participation in that to the extent we can change our participation we can influence the outcome.

**BW:** At the root of all our various diseases, do you see some common thread that is making us ill?

**DC:** It's our alienation and our separation and our fear of our relationship with each other and with the world.

**BW:** Has it always been that?

**DC:** Yes. Just different manifestations.



Trained in India and the United States, Dr. Deepak Chopra has practiced endocrinology since 1971 and is a fellow of the American College of Physicians. He is president of the American Association of Ayurvedic Medicine and Director of the Maharishi Ayurveda Health Center in Lancaster, Massachusetts.

For more articles from the Meditation Magazine Archives, please visit this link:

<http://livingpurposeinstitute.com/articles-2/meditation-articles/>

For information on Living Purpose Institute: life coaching, life coach training and certification, workshops, classes, meditation ceremonies, ceremonial sweat lodge ceremonies, retreats, videos, and much more, please visit:

<http://livingpurposeinstitute.com/>