

Dear Reader,

It's been some time since my last COHERENCE NEWSLETTER, February to be exact. I apologize for the lengthy hiatus. We had to make a hard push to get what I hesitate to call the first edition of *Coherent Breathing - The Definitive Method* (www.coherentbreathing.com) out the door, and to be honest the push left me a bit "winded".

So, I granted myself a few months of much needed time for rest, reading, and reflection.

I've enjoyed meeting and dialoguing with many of you in recent months, via workshops, telephone, and email. Thank you very much for your interest and enthusiasm. It's very gratifying to see that you are finding *Coherent Breathing* to be of value.

Before we start our feature article, "What Is Ego?", please make note that Dee Edmonson and I will be presenting the 3 hour workshop, *The Respira-*

tory Arterial Pressure Wave - Cardiopulmonary Mechanics Behind the Heart Rate Variability Cycle at the ISNR annual meeting in San Antonio on August 24th. See the link:

<http://www.isnr.org/2008PreConferenceSchedule1.cfm> for details.

Some time ago, I started writing a newsletter titled "What Is Ego?", but decided that I needed to study up on the subject a bit more first. Since then, I've refreshed my understanding of Freud's original theories as well as reviewing more recent writings on the topic. One of those is Eckhart Tolle's recent book, *A New Earth*, where he posits that it is human ego that is at the root of many present ills. Tolle uses the term "ego" to mean "self centeredness", "greed", "me", "mine", etc. While this was not Freud's original notion of ego, I acknowledge that it is today's generally accepted definition. And, I agree in general with Tolle's argument, that "self centered" behavior is a root cause of today's human condition. [However, I do consider this "egocentric condition" to be worse here in the U.S. than elsewhere in the world as a consequence of the way we live. I say this because in my travels,



I see that many other (less recent) cultures have figured out “what works” and what doesn’t, not that they don’t have their own problems.] In any case, by most measures it is easy to see that today’s way of life in America is not healthy. The amount spent on health care in America is far higher per capita than anywhere else in the world, yet the health status of Americans is far lower than other developed nations. According to recent statistics, 1 in 100 American adults is behind bars. Clearly, our current approach to life and health in this nation is not optimal. But back to the question of ego...

My interest is, what *is* this thing we call “ego” (anyway)? To this question, I propose this answer. What we currently think of as “ego” is simply the natural defensive posture that results



from living is a chronic state of fight/flight. And, that this fight/flight state is an outcome of chronic sympathetic bias - chronic bias resulting from suboptimal breathing. As we know, suboptimal breathing sets up the physiology of fight/flight. Everything is affected, muscle tension, blood flow, endocrinology, energy production, etc., and of course, our state of mind which we might characterize as “a variable state of alarm”.

When we are in a state of alarm, our shields go up, we are “defensive”. We are concerned with self preservation, maybe not consciously, but subconsciously. And, our “egocentric”, “protective” behavior is the outcome. I believe this notion to be more consistent with Freud’s concept. In *The Ego and The Id*, Freud says, “anxiety is rooted in the ego” (Freud, 1927).

A defensive posture is completely appropriate when we are in a state of alarm. It is the chronic state of alarm that is inappropriate. Living in the state of alarm harms our health, limits our performance, and most probably shortens our lives. It also cuts us off from what is otherwise a normal natural communion with the world around us. Our shields go up. We lose the sense of connectedness, wonder, and higher purpose. *Why* does this happen? We’ll consider this question next month by exploring a simple “system model” of human psychophysiology.

Book Review - *The China Study* (Campbell & Campbell, 2007)

I've read *The China Study* in recent months. It was recommended to me by a good friend that presently resides in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province. I consider it a very important work and a major milestone in terms of providing critical "missing" information that we all need in order to *take charge of our own health and well-being*, which I consider to be an imperative.

It is written by T. Colin Campbell and son. Colin Campbell, a lifelong researcher in the field of nutrition, his prestigious academic career have been funded in large part by grants from The National Institutes of Health and The Food and Drug Administration, is blowing the whistle on *the system* that has suppressed the truth about the causes of cancer and other prevalent diseases for over 20 years.

The title *The China Study*, refers to a very broad national study that Chou En Lai commissioned in the 70s, before his death due to cancer, at that time a disease that was virtually unknown to the Chinese population. The study involved 650,000 people, making it the largest biomedical study ever undertaken. The clear outcome is this: the primary cause of cancer is our consumption animal protein - all forms of animal protein. The bottom line is that Western diseases, especially cancer, correlate directly with dietary cholesterol, LDL, most of which comes from our consumption of animal proteins (not fats). He goes on to make clear the biochemistry by which this occurs.

The last third of the book is dedicated to a discussion of how our system of politics, money, and power has warped the outcome of scientific research and suppressed the truth.

The China Study could be one of the most important books of our time.

Thank you for your consideration,

Stephen Elliott

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