



Introduction

The Missing Piece of the Puzzle: Holistic Healing and the Emotional Muscle Body

Recently I went to a Korean sauna and received an acupressure massage from a man who was quite thorough, did not speak English, and landed on some points on my body that made me realize a basic concept. I had the same questions that I think most people do when they lie on a table in their most vulnerable position, the questions being: What is going through your head right now? What are you feeling? Why does that spot make me want to throw up? Why do you keep returning to that spot? What is that spot? I want to know everything you are thinking while you are treating me! What did you find? Am I healthy?

For me, body work is not relaxing. Parts of it can be and pleasure is generally woven into the treatment; however, much of the time is spent deep breathing, trying not to hold on to whatever is trying to be let out, and constantly wondering what the body worker might know about you by having their hands on you.

The body itself is a master communicator. Since time immemorial, people have attempted to translate its messages, describing and documenting the body's energetic makeup in hopes of discovering the secrets to great health and longevity. In traditional Chinese medicine, the organs all have corresponding emotions, times of day where they are at their strongest and weakest, and even food flavor profiles that pair to the organ. In Ayurvedic medicine (*Ayurveda* is a Sanskrit word meaning "the complete knowledge

for long life”), we are divided into three doshas, or body types, that correlate with different foods, different emotions, and different energies. In neuromuscular massage therapy, there’s a concept called trigger points, which is a philosophy that aims to explain the phenomenon of *referring pain*, a term used to describe a feeling of pain in one area of the body when pressure is placed on another area of the body. In reflexology, we have the entire body all mapped out on our feet! If the kidney point on the foot hurts, for instance, it could be a sign of kidney duress. There are literally tons of materials and resources available to help us understand the body’s energy patterns, chakras, nerve centers, and more. There is one avenue, however—and a major one—that has yet to be explored: the muscles.

Applied kinesiology, or muscle testing, uses the muscles to tap into the subconscious mind. The muscles test stronger or weaker depending on the questions being asked. You can perform muscle testing to find out a host of things—emotional issues, physical pains, sensitivities, etc. For example, my child was on a very strict diet in accordance with results from testing her stool sample. She is not allergic to anything, but we were given a long list of foods that create sensitivities for her. We sought out a naturopath (holistic doctor) to perform something called Nambudripad’s allergy elimination technique (NAET). He did a series of muscle tests to see what foods she might be sensitive to, and his results from testing her muscles gave us exactly the same information as our very expensive traditional medical test. (As a side note, this treatment worked for us and we no longer have to keep to that strict diet.)

I share this to say to those who have never realized that the muscles are a part of the body’s communicating system, think about the muscle-testing procedures and you may realize that there are many ways to approach our bodies for information and for healing. The muscles are a great resource into the body’s deep intelligence. Why then wouldn’t we come to see that the muscles themselves hold emotional information as well?

The muscles hold a vast amount of information about our bodies and our emotional state of being. Although the body is a master communicator, we are not master listeners. This book will open your ears as well as your eyes to many avenues of emotional and physical health and healing available to you, and you’ll learn how to truly listen to your own emotional muscle body. In discovering how to “hear” and understand what your

muscles are telling you, you'll be armed with new knowledge and insight to help keep yourself in the highest state of health and emotional wellness possible.

How This Book Came About

I began formulating the ideas behind this book from early on in massage school when my teacher told us that the psoas and the longus colli were the two most “emotional muscles” in the body. This means that by manually treating these muscles an emotional response was more likely to occur. I became instantly fascinated with what that meant and curious to know more. When I asked my teacher what else in the body is emotional or how do they even know that those two muscles are emotional, he had no answer. It seems that this information has simply been passed down through the generations of body workers as something we should know without worrying about any particular detail or dynamics of the concept.

I was determined to find out as much as I could about this. As I began to work on bodies, this subject matter became all the more necessary to my work. I realized that having an understanding of the body map with regard to treating the muscles and how they pair with emotions is incredibly helpful. Having this knowledge allows me to be able to treat the body with a deeper respect. I began to ask various people about this subject and, as it turned out, many people in the healing field all had little bits and pieces to add to the puzzle.

Ultimately, when it comes to the true backbone of this book however, it is what I found myself, through countless clients' bodies revealing this information to me. I developed an understanding of how to read the body. I began to almost speak to the muscles themselves, or at the very least I learned how to listen to the muscles as they revealed their secret language to me.

As I came forward with what I was formulating, I was given confirmation time and time again by others in this field. For example, later in this book when we discuss Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), we will find that they already knew that betrayal is held behind the shoulder blades. I knew this same information, but I had never read it anywhere. The body had taught me independently. To have confirmations such as these was invigorating, and they helped me to be able to come forward with confidence that what I offer in this book is valid.

During the process of writing this book, I turned to many teachers and highly respected people in the field. I wanted to reach out to those who would directly disagree with the concepts in this book as well as the ones who have spent their entire career in alignment with this work. I wanted to do this work true justice, and that means seeing it from all sides.

One such counter perspective came from a very well-respected massage educator and author who said, “People look for deeper meaning when there is not any. I too have seen many transformations and healing take place, and I cannot attribute them to anything other than the person was ready for change and that getting them out of chronic pain may have been the catalyst for that.” Nothing is an exact science and the body is fully capable of having several options for answers in the areas of distress patterns as well as release methods. These are things we will learn more about in the pages to come.

The Body Heals Itself: Muscle and Emotional Release

I cannot repeat this enough: *the body heals itself*. Your ability to heal is so much greater than anyone has led you to believe. It’s just really difficult to do it alone. Everyone needs someone to help them along the path to a new way of being. What you might be looking for is a psychotherapist, a counselor, a chiropractor, a physical therapist, a massage therapist, a Reiki master, or an acupuncturist who knows what it is you are looking for. I hope that by the end of this book you will have a clearer idea of the kinds of people you need to seek out for what your body and your mind need at this time.

The muscles store emotional memory. They do not create, produce, or move the emotions. It is through the muscle/mind connection that the emotions that are stored within the muscle fibers and fascia (the thin, fibrous tissue that surrounds the muscles) are able to be moved and released. The muscles do not have their own mind; the mind is the mind. The muscles simply store what the body has endured throughout its life—this is both great memories as well as traumatic memories.

In Western society, we view the muscles as our physical driving force, our source of strength—and not much else beyond that. The study of the muscles focuses on chemical makeup, origin, insertion, and functions. We even know the fiber directions of every muscle in the body. But do we have any idea that the muscles themselves hold a highly emotional part of our being? Do we know that our muscles can tell us very early on what

parts of our emotional body needs to be addressed and treated? When we learn to listen to our muscles, we can discover emotional and physical problems sooner, before it's too late to do anything about them. When we understand the emotional muscle body as a whole, we're empowered to change the patterns of our lives for the better.

Understanding your body's muscular system on an emotional level is not about weight lifting and learning how to build strength and muscle mass, nor is it essential to memorize the many chemical compounds and trigger points that exist within those muscles. What's needed is a road map to the muscles, exploring not just their physical aspects but their emotional and spiritual components as well. This book will take you on an emotional and energetic journey within your own body. It's time to unlock the mysteries of what the muscles know and hold for you. It's time to use this knowledge to improve your health, your mood, and your life.

I worked with a woman on and off for several years. One day when she came in for a massage session, she was in a great mood. We chatted for just a little bit, and then I proceeded to work on her muscles. I started her on her back, facing up. I had already finished the whole front side of her body. There was nothing too noticeable anywhere and certainly no emotions flaring up. I turned her over and worked on her legs first and then got to the gluteus, or the buttocks area. All of a sudden, her muscles became so tight that it was very painful and difficult for me to continue to work on her. And she didn't want me to, either! In fact, she was getting aggravated, hoping I would just skip past the tense area. She got angry with me. I had to be going too deep. What was the deal? I didn't let up. I knew what was coming. This was not just something physical at all. It was emotional.

I know that the buttocks holds aggravation and suppression. You know those times when something makes you angry but you know it's just not worth talking about, so you sit on it... You literally do sit on it, and the emotions enter into the glutes. It's no wonder she was experiencing aggravation as I treated this area. The emotions that it stored were coming to surface. Without any coaxing, and although she was feeling very aggravated with the massage, she lifted her head up, turned to me, and said: "Did I tell you that my ex-husband just died? Did I tell you about his new wife and all the trouble she's caused?" Now, why would this all of a sudden come up in conversation—in the conversation that we weren't having? One minute, we were talking about "Why does this hurt so much

here?” and the next minute she blurts out, “Did I tell you that my ex-husband just died?” I was massaging her buttocks, exactly where all of her frustration and aggravation were sitting! Of course she would bring this up right then! Now we were getting to it so she could let it go. The physical pain that was in that area began to subside as she talked.

Getting that area treated physically and at the same time discussing the emotional component made the pent-up pain leave. It did not have to fester into something that would become worse. It was gone. Acknowledging and understanding the emotional pain that was felt through the physical pain was truly liberating for this woman, and this is just one little story in a long line of real-life examples. This is one very simple story because the emotions were fresh. It was an easy release. But what happens when the muscles have been holding on to serious pain, anger, shame, and sorrow for years on end?

Certain muscles guard certain emotions, but it’s not always as straightforward as it might sound. When you press on one muscle and they feel pain in another part, that is known as referral pain from a trigger point. There is an emotional component to that as well. It is the part I call the Apothecary Method. When you are working on an area that doesn’t just hold trigger points and referral pains but something deeper and more emotional, the client will unknowingly stuff it into another part of their body, hoping you will miss it. It is your job to keep opening the drawers of the body to find out where that little rascal slipped off to in order to hide itself.

There are trigger points and referral pain charts everywhere, but the emotional part is not on any referral pattern chart. This is something entirely different. People don’t want to face old pains. It is not comfortable. They don’t even consciously realize that they still hold that old pain. They don’t acknowledge that they never actually faced whatever the trauma or issue was, which leads to the concept that by not facing it, it was never released. So it sits and waits to be found or prefers never to be found. We must go after it and wage a small yet more sensitive war on the little rascal so you can escort it kindly out of the body forever.

Anytime that we get our hearts broken or we witness a terrible loss, we tuck away those emotions somewhere in our minds to postpone the pain until a later date. We deal with what we can, and we hide the rest. It’s simply human nature. But I believe that when that place in your mind gets overcrowded, it calls on its resources to hang on to it

too—the muscles, the fascia, the organs, and further out into the energy fields. It has to go somewhere!

What happens to the things that you’ve stuffed into your little “soul drawers” along the way? Where are they now? When emotional pains aren’t processed and dealt with completely, they lie dormant in the body until there is just no room for them in the sock drawers of your soul and they must come out. Unfortunately, these sleeping monsters generally come forward through physical pain or illness. This is the emotional root of dis-ease. This is not to say that dis-ease doesn’t primarily have physical, lifestyle, and genetic causes, because it clearly does, but it does sometimes have an emotional component as well that can warn us in advance to the onset of illness so that we can pursue treatment before it gets worse. When we don’t listen, or when we don’t even know what to listen for, we run the risk of getting sick. Illness is the final way that our body lets us know that we are out of sync. Before it gets to the point where the emotional pain manifests itself into something physical, the body sends all kinds of warning signals in an attempt to alert us to the fact that our body and soul are in need of attention.

One of our primary security systems for letting us know when the body is in disorder is the muscular system. By noticing how our muscles feel and behave, we can nip illness and physical discomfort in the bud and liberate ourselves from old emotional tensions and sorrows that have held us back. In understanding the energetic body as a whole and how it relates to the emotional muscle body, you’ll gain the key to becoming the greatest authority on your own health, and you’ll have the tools you need to overcome any emotional or spiritual obstacles along the way. Knowledge is power, and it’s time you had yours in knowing your own body.

It is important to note, however, that not every single thing in your muscles comes down to an emotional pain that has been hiding out. Sometimes it really is just physical, or repetitive habits. Sometimes your shoulders hurt not necessarily because you are dealing with the weight of the world on your shoulders or feeling like no one else can do it like you can . . . sometimes it really is that your purse is ridiculously heavy and you don’t change arms! While what I am offering here is incredible information, it is not the only suggestion for what might be going on in your muscular body. There are too many times that we can get carried away with our holistic views and miss some very simple things.

Use this knowledge to broaden your perspective, and continue to keep your ears open to every way in which the body speaks.

Wherever in your body you have muscle pains, especially ongoing muscle pains, can reveal the emotional components that are currently in your life or were experienced in the past and left unprocessed. If you have an acute pain in your body, this does not automatically represent some sort of long-held betrayal. It may mean that something new has come up—something that may or may not be attached in any way to something old. Or it could be as simple as you moved in a weird way and the physical muscle seized up. You must go through the full list of possibilities—the physical as well as the emotional.

Are you stretching, taking care of your body, honoring your thoughts, eliminating the negative patterns in your life? Are you wearing good shoes? Do you carry stress? Do you discuss things that bother you? Do you stuff them down deep and these things are now being triggered? These questions should be part of your body scan. The mind is still the processing organism in the body, and I do not believe you can accurately release the muscles of emotions without the mind being at the wheel. You can release muscle tissue of chronic tightness, of spasms, of anything physical—yes, of course! But I am going deeper and into the area that *does* require the mind to be part of the discussion and of the movement—into lasting healing that helps not only the body but also the mind, heart, and soul. Other therapists who work with body energy and release patterns already know this. This is not a new concept. It's just that so far, only small articles and little bits and pieces have been shared throughout the years. No one has managed to put it all together comprehensively in book form.

How to Use This Book

What this book ultimately is encouraging you to do is look beyond what you know and allow your body to heal and to access not only the traumas for release but the good and the joys to increase health and vitality within your being. As we go along, we will learn the various muscle groups and what emotion is likely stored in this particular area. The mind must be a fully active part of healing, working together with the rest of the body, including the muscles themselves, to completely transform. Once we do so, we're empowered to move forward into our healthiest form of living.

Allow the knowledge and tools you will acquire throughout this book to help bring you into the highest joys of your life no matter what your age and no matter what health you are in currently. There are so many available ways to heal, and this happens to be one of them. The mind/muscle connection can be an important aspect of healing, and no longer will I allow this part to be overlooked.

In the muscle chapters, I will offer stretches, affirmations, and visualizations to help connect yourself to the muscles that can assist with self-release. Throughout this book, I will offer affirmations, visualizations, meditations, stones, and essential oils that pair with the muscle or emotion that help with healing the emotions.

Prayer: When we pray, we talk a lot and focus on things we need and are asking for.

Hopefully in prayer we are also giving thanks.

Centering: When we center ourselves, it is a way to calm our minds so that answers may be received in response to our prayers and questions.

Meditation: Meditation is a space offered to help you get into a place within your mind that allows for your mind, body, and spirit to come together for your highest space to blend into one consciousness. Going deeper beyond simply centering our minds and bodies can lead us to meditation. Meditation to me is the art of doing nothing. You are no longer engaged in your thoughts. You are not asking for anything. You can enter a space where time slows down. It lends itself to a freedom from deep within your being to calm, quiet, and accept love energy from outside yourself as well as deep within your own being.

The word *meditation* throws a lot of people off due to the complexity that it can be. The idea behind meditation is to get to a still point in your mind where you are virtually doing nothing. It is the place that you can get to that transcends all thoughts, mind chatter, and outside distractions and brings you to a place of supreme bliss. For the purpose of this book, in any meditation or centering practice, it is a stepping back and becoming only an observer of your thoughts without an attachment. You no longer engage in the chatter simply by being still in your body and calming your mind and detaching from any distractions in the path.

Affirmations: When it comes to affirmations, these are statements to be repeated to yourself to help to solidify the new attitude for various areas to heal itself. Repeating positive statements becomes affirmative in nature. This is an important component

in your journey. Affirmations are short enough that you can remember the statement easily so you are able to repeat it with ease throughout your day. As I list various affirmation options, whichever statement resonates best with you is the one to choose.

Visualizations: A visualization is like a meditation in motion. I will lead you through imagery to help you picture in your mind your body engaging in release and healing. As you go through them, truly try to visualize yourself going through each suggestion to get to a more comfortable place within your body.

Stones: Crystals and gemstones come naturally with healing properties. An example of this would be rose quartz, which is known for the unconditional love energy that the stone carries. In this text, I will offer various stones that can be the most beneficial to the area we are discussing. In the back of the book in appendix A, I will discuss how to clean your stones and which stones are best for grounding, healing, releasing, renewal, etc. In the chapters on the muscles as well as the chakras, I will include stones to pair with the area.

Essential Oils: When we discuss essential oils, the safest method of use is to drop the oil in a diffuser that contains water. This way the oils are misting into the air and can be enjoyed by everyone. When applying to the skin, it is always a better idea to mix the oil with a carrier oil such as coconut oil, jojoba oil, or grapeseed oil. Add only a small number of drops as a 3:1 ratio of carrier oil to essential oil. If you are doing a tablespoon of carrier oil, maybe add three drops of essential oil. Some oils such as lavender, ylang ylang, and jasmine (the calmer, softer oils) can be applied directly in small amounts to the skin. Oils such as peppermint, eucalyptus, and spearmint (the more revitalizing scents) should not be applied on the skin without dilution.

In appendix A, I offer recipes for detox baths, as well as more information on crystals and how to use them and take care of them. Breathing practices (pranayama) will be in that section as well.

In appendix B, I have several different people write deeper explanations of the various modalities that I list in this text. I have information on Ayurveda, Chinese medicine, tapping technique, Bach flower remedies, toe reading, a lesson in forgiveness, and more. I offer these to provide deeper insight into these subjects that can help us on our journey. As I've moved along in compiling the information for this book, I have interviewed so many incredibly generous people. All of the people who offer their expertise give way

to a deeper awareness of the body and the avenues in which to help the body heal itself. You will be able to hear from some of the greatest experts in this field, and I have been honored that they would grant me their time and their information with such love and willingness to teach us all.

I met Stephen Watson, world champion martial artist, in Sedona at a tai chi workshop many years ago. He was one of the teachers there. This is the first time I had ever met someone who spends more time of the night in meditation than in sleep. He teaches meditation classes all over the world. (Please see appendix B for his well-worn and life-tested instructions that are designed to be simple yet comprehensive.) This is one example of what is offered in the appendix section of this book.

I want to take you on a quest to learn more about body healing and body awareness. I believe that *the body heals itself*, and we are never the healers. When we help someone, whether it's through massage or physical therapy or through energy work or emotional release, we are not the ones doing the healing. We are simply the open vessel through which sacred healing energy may flow. A person must be open and willing to heal, and most of the time this is achieved through understanding what needs to heal and from where the problem is issuing.

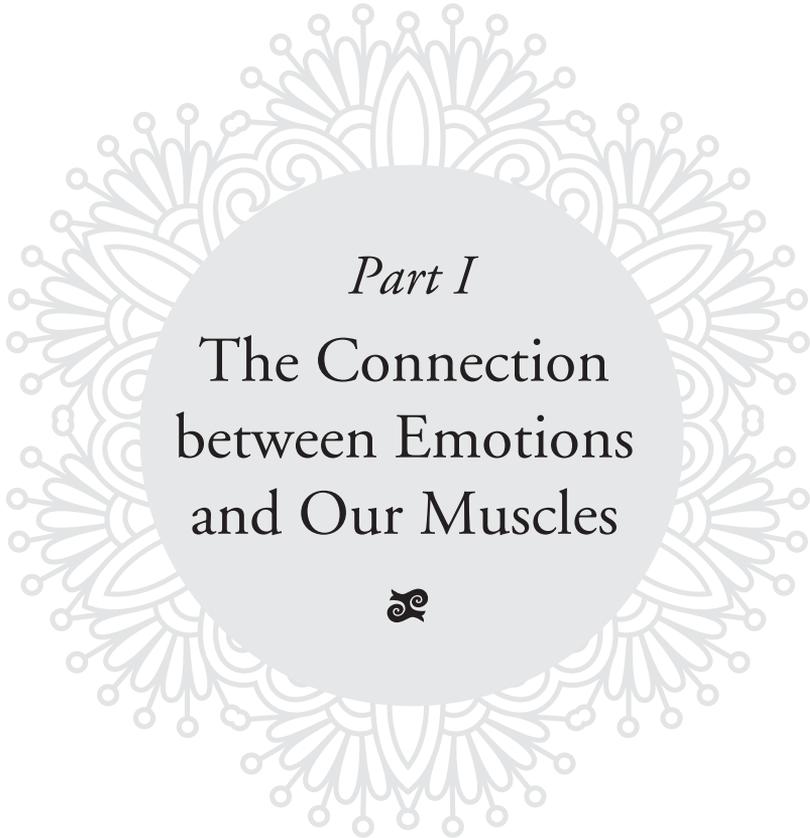
We know a lot of emotional places in the mind, we know a lot of emotional places in our hearts ... but it's time we learn of those emotional places that reside in the rest of the body, within the muscles. The body is splendid, and it is a mystery we must learn to discover.

Use this information in good health, friends. Use this as an addition to your practice and your understanding of your own body and the bodies of others. Use this with an open mind and, above all, an open heart. May we all learn that our body tells our story. Our bodies do speak our minds, our hearts, our traumas, our celebrations, and our perceptions of the world. Let our minds and our bodies finally unite in a strong and healthy way that guides us into a deeper level of healing.

I am truly honored to share this journey with you.

In full body wellness and love, I offer this work.

—Emily A. Francis



Part I

The Connection
between Emotions
and Our Muscles





Chapter 1

Muscles, Memory, Emotions, and the Link

This chapter offers a brief breakdown of the muscular system. It's important to have our muscle basics down so that we can understand the possibility of the muscles being able to store emotions and the role they play in emotional healing throughout the entire body.

When you look at a dandelion, what do you see? Some look at the golden dandelion and see amazing healing properties for body detoxification. Dandelion greens are packed with nutrients such as calcium and iron. The roots, the leaves, and the stems of a dandelion are all useful to us and have been used in medicine and food for as long as we can trace back. From a spiritual perspective, it is believed that the yellow petals represent the sun, while the white puff dandelion represents the moon. When you blow out the white puffs, it is seen as the stars. To others, they see these flowers as a nuisance and a weed. It's all about perspective.

The way that each person views the body is much the same as the way someone could view a dandelion. Some see the body separate from the brain and only give focus to the brain or the mind. Some see the body from a looks perspective and not much deeper than this. Some people view the muscles as your source of strength. Many don't think beyond what the muscles look like unless they are taught how to work with the muscles. When I was in school, the way that my teachers would scan someone's body in two seconds flat was baffling to me. Now, as a bodyworker, I do it all the time. I scan everyone

that I come in contact with. The way that I look at the whole body is completely different than it ever was before.

Someone who only works with one area of practice tends to keep the perspective to that one item. If someone treats you through cognitive therapy, that is how they will scan your whole body. How you respond verbally, as well as your physical movements, correlate to what they know about your emotional space from a mind perspective. A personal trainer will watch how you move with a completely different vision. They will watch how you move to formulate the plan of how to train your muscles to look their best. Again, it is all about the perspective from which you are seeing the opportunities to heal. Our goal here is to view the body from an emotional perspective through the eyes of physical awareness. Your muscles store emotions, and where you carry pain and tension can provide great details of your physical, emotional, and mental health.

The Muscular System

Let's begin with a simple muscle breakdown. There are more than six hundred muscles in the human body. The primary purpose of the muscles is movement of the body. There are three types of muscle:

1. **Cardiac muscles:** Cardiac muscles are the involuntary muscles that make up the heart. These muscles operate without our conscious control.
2. **Smooth muscles:** These are the muscles found in organ systems, such as the digestive and respiratory systems. The smooth muscles are also involuntary muscles that operate without your conscious control to keep you alive.
3. **Skeletal muscles:** Skeletal muscles are what we usually think of when we refer to muscles—biceps, calves, abs, and so on. These are voluntary muscles because we have to make a conscious decision to make them move. This is done through the nervous system. The nervous system receives and responds to move the muscle through the stimulation of the nerves themselves.

Each muscle has a specific nerve or nerve bundle that runs through it. The nerves send signals throughout the body via the central nervous system (CNS). The CNS is the body's messaging system. When we experience anything happy, sad, painful, etc., we feel it physically through our central nervous system. The CNS consists of the brain and

spinal cord, and this is where the link between muscle, nerve, and emotions comes to life. My studies go further than simply saying that through nerves and body signals one is able to experience emotions through palpations of the muscles. Going one step further, through working with countless bodies and also discussing this subject with several people in this or related fields, my hypothesis is that each muscle group within the body carries associations with specific emotional patterns. Each particular group of muscles tends to have a certain emotion that is associated with that particular area of the body.

The nervous system is the window to the muscles. Each movement of the muscle goes hand in hand with the nervous system. If there is a disconnect between the two, it can result in an inability to move that muscle or area. This is what we refer to as paralysis. Let that sink in. These muscles move after a conscious thought to make them move. That sentence alone should easily tie the brain to the muscles for movement and tie the mind to the muscles for the thought. They all work hand in hand. Nothing within the body operates by itself.

The supportive structures for the muscles are tendons, ligaments, and fascia. Tendons connect muscle to the bone. Fascia is a band of connective tissue that attaches, stabilizes, and separates muscles as well as the body organs. Ligaments, like fascia, are comprised of connective tissue and connect bone to other bones. Fascia requires a bit deeper understanding. As my teacher described, fascia is like the body's panty hose. Fascia is everywhere in the body with different densities of the matrix.

Life Force Energy

Chi/Qi in China, in Japan it is pronounced *KI*, and in India it is known as *prana*, all translate into the same definition: life force energy. In the United States, we have no such word or term for this. In the Eastern traditions, the body and the mind never did separate as a belief, so they are thousands of years ahead in full body awareness. In the West, we separated the body from the mind long ago, which results in a lack of understanding and a lack of application to keep the body grounded and united. We deal in sick care mostly here in the West. They deal with well care mostly as well as preventative care in the East.

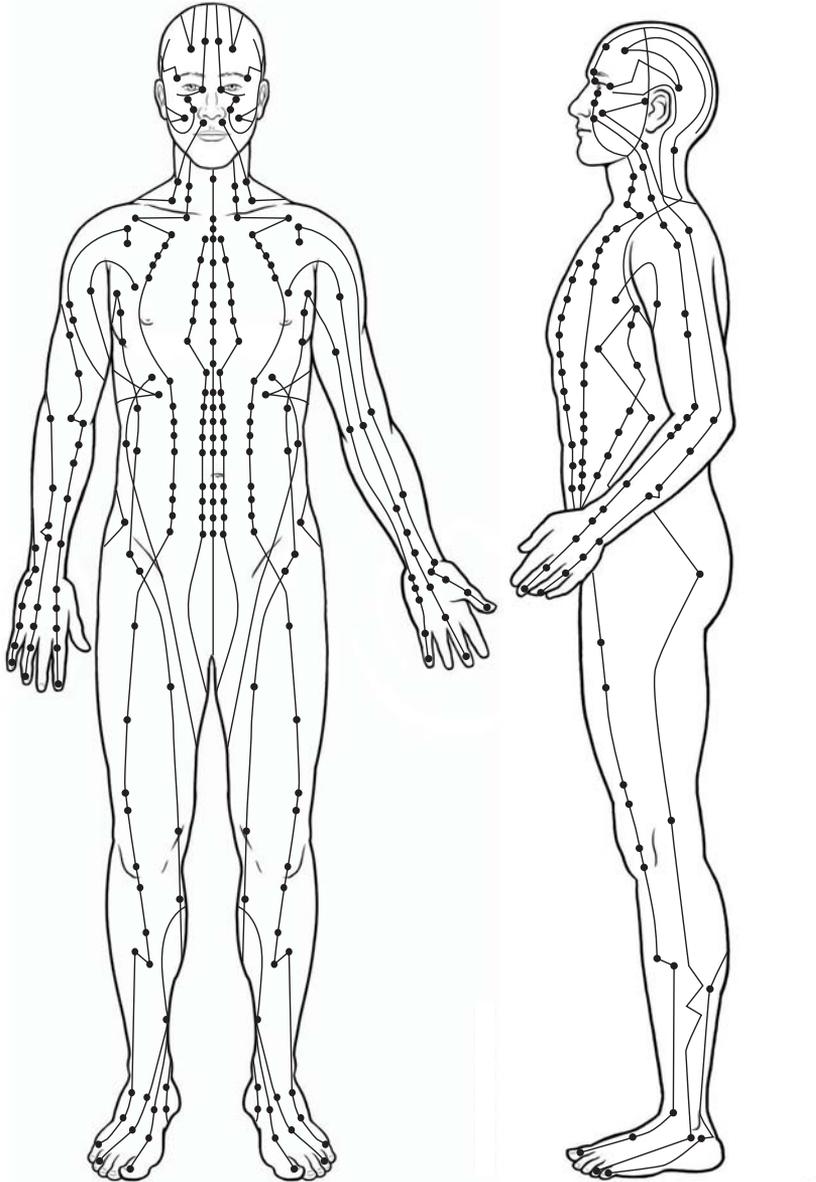
The life force energy is believed to be breathed into you the moment you were born. That same life force energy was breathed into every single living cell, animal, or person.

This is the foundation of life. When you think of your body, imagine it more like moving water. The arms and legs have water hoses running through each limb of the body. Any blockage or bend in a hose causes the water to get blocked and stop running. That is the same idea behind the chi. Meridian channels that run through the body carry the chi. This is much like the bloodstream carries blood to the different parts of your body. When we have stagnant chi, our energy body gets blocked and backed up. It is believed that in the physical sense, the chi runs through the fascia of the body.

When I began working on this book, I spoke with several professionals. I met with resistance when it came to understanding energetic and emotional differences between muscles and fascia. One person said that looking at the muscle without thinking of the fascia was like taking the water out of the river. In Chinese medicine, there are meridian channels that run throughout the body. The way that it was explained to me, with reference to fascia and the meridians themselves, was that the chi (life force energy) is conducted along the matrix of the fascia. With meridian channels, the energy is either feminine (yin) or masculine (yang). The yin and yang must remain balanced with each other to maintain good health. The energy flows through the meridian channels throughout the body. (See appendix B for further information on Chinese medicine and meridian channels.)

I had an interview with a very gifted author, speaker, and practitioner of Chinese medicine/acupuncture, Abdi Asadi MS, Lic. Ac, about this very subject. He said, “The body has intelligence. In our culture, the body is considered low level. We are brain dominant. People don’t understand that the body holds so much information. We view the body to be submissive to the brain. But the body stores everything. It’s like a CD-ROM downloaded and stored in the fascia. That is where the chi runs through. We are very geared toward the brain, but the body has intelligence.”

When it comes to healing the body, Asadi has found that because we are so brain dominant, we commit ourselves to what we perceive as truths that don’t actually resonate with the body.



The Meridians

“People don’t want the truth, but the body doesn’t lie,” he says. “People become so committed to the lie and the masks that they hide behind that they will let their body die. That disconnect is really deep.” There is always an emotional component when it comes to physical illness, whether this is cancer, cardiovascular events, and circulation issues. Even dying of a broken heart is entirely possible. Emotions are just as important to any illness and must not be overlooked. Learning new positive attitudes and clearing old painful emotions can lead to miraculous healing when paired with the physical treatments necessary for healing.

There really is no way to treat the muscles without including the fascia. The fascia surrounds the muscle everywhere in the body. However, as its own emotional component and energy being, the muscles themselves are not the same thing as the fascia. They are not made up of the same things. Blood runs through muscle. Blood does not run through fascia.

“The blood carries the emotions and relates to memory,” my fellow massage therapist and acupuncturist David Mitchell has stated. Therefore, in this respect the memories carried through the blood and plasma are delivered through the muscles and not through the fascia.

I view fascia as a structure and muscle as a function. You cannot have one without the other, but they are not the same. Emotions and energy do not carry the same way within their structures, either. In my belief, the fascia has the energy running along it, but energy does not burrow down into it the way it can with the muscles. Fascia is like the walls, floor, and ceiling of a room. In the muscles, I believe that energy and emotions bury themselves into the belly of the actual muscle and are a direct connect to the mind. In my vision of the bedroom, the muscles are the bed in the middle of the room. The fascia are the walls, floor, and ceiling that hold up the place.

I met with resistance when introducing muscles into the emotional mix. Due to the literature of Chinese medicine and the five thousand years of study behind it, emotions play a powerful role with the meridians. The meridian channels move directly alongside the fascia that encases muscle and covers the entire body. Fascia and muscle are so connected that it was difficult at first for many to acknowledge that the emotional component is slightly different between the two. I was told that it would be a good idea to expand my understanding of all of this and travel to the Upledger Institute, where Cra-

CraniSacral Therapy (CST) was founded. There I could learn about structure, function, and the nervous system all in one.

CranioSacral Therapy

At the Upledger Institute, I learned about CranioSacral Therapy. This incredible work addresses the brain, spinal cord, and cerebral spinal fluid. This work is super light with minimal movement but with maximum intention behind it. Knowledge of the brain and spinal cord is necessary for this work. Learning to tune into the body's craniosacral rhythm and then working along with that rhythm in order to help clear space and allow the body to heal itself is the foundation of this work.

I have long since been in awe of the CST work, but only from afar. What I got from my visit to the Upledger Institute was so much more than I ever could have imagined. I met with John Matthew Upledger, the son of the late doctor who had discovered this work, and learned all about his dad and how he came into CST. The doctor had several years of clinical research from the medical center at a major university that led him to discover and support this work. As a jazz musician as well as an osteopath, he had an incredible talent to tune into the body and listen to its unique rhythm.

CST is highly clinical, scientific, and energetic work that requires intense knowledge as well as a true passion for the recipient to heal. As the doctor would say, "We need to listen to a person's body in a way that has never been heard before. Love must be in your hands."

To hear the body's sacred rhythm was astounding to me. While it looks like energy work, and in part it is, it goes so far beyond with intention, knowledge, and listening. The work is intense and the results are wide ranging.

Speaking with their instructors on the subject of fascia versus muscle helped me to define or undefine various ways of discussing the body and how it applies to the muscles storing emotions. I left with a clearer picture and a deeper understanding into fascia, structure, function, and healing.

In their summary with regard to emotion, they said, "Emotion is accessed through the tissue anywhere, and it is up to our inner wisdom to decide what's going to happen." They also said that the doctor never separated fascia and muscle and only referred to it as "tissue memory" because you cannot have one without the other. I find it best to leave

it at that. I continue to define the emotions stored based by the category of the muscles themselves, with a deeper understanding that it may very well line up respectively with the meridian channels that also run through the muscles.

Muscle Memory

I want to explain the phenomenon of muscle memory and how it applies to emotions and our muscle body. I spoke with Dr. John Hammett, who is a Doctor of Exercise Physiology and currently the Dean of the College of Education at Jacksonville State University. He said:

There is something within the neurological pathways that is modified to certain recurring activities by the body. There is a neurological adaptation to repeated activity. Once you have a skill, you will always have that skill. Unless you had an injury, then there could be damage to the neurological pathway and muscle memory might become impaired. The location in which this occurs is in the cerebellum. This is the core of muscle memory. If it is a sport, you must repeat the movement in the correct way to develop the most accurate muscle memory related to a movement. For example, in baseball when they hit the bat to the ball—if they've hit it well—they know what it feels like to knock it out of the park and hit the home run. They know that feeling. It is deeply ingrained into their neurological pathways. You know it when you hit it.

When referring to a trauma, that too becomes locked into the muscle's memory. If you experience anything like it again, you will experience a body reaction to the stimulus. You know to flinch or tighten your body. It doesn't take repetitive times to lock into muscle memory. The motor control and muscle memory comes from the cerebellum. Thought processes are in other parts of the brain.

Research has shown that the amygdala, a small almond-shaped structure deep inside the brain, and the hippocampus, a tiny structure located on both sides of the brain that resembles a sea horse in shape and is part of the limbic system, seem to be the main areas involved with emotions. The amygdala is located in the front portion of the temporal lobes of the brain. There are two amygdala, one on each lobe. A primary function of the

amygdala is to connect scent to emotion. The hippocampus is responsible for long- and short-term memory and spatial awareness.

While understanding scientifically that the muscles connect to the brain and neurological pathways that have a direct effect with emotions, we somehow have missed the very basic information that our muscles/tissues/fascia/fluids/plasma are all connected to the whole. If an emotion pairs up with the nervous system, the whole body feels it.

Looking Into Emotion

Now that we have a little more information about the muscles and what they do, we can look at the mind and the cognitive function and how it includes the muscles. I reached out to a former student of mine who is a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology with a focus in neuropsychology. His response to where the muscles might fit in with relation to the mind was very interesting:

I see the mind and brain as one—that “consciousness” as we know is a by-product of neural activity, not an independent phenomenon. This is relevant to your questions because I don’t separate the idea of the “mind” and “body” (the brain being part of the body). Many in my field (myself included) see emotions as being composed of three distinct but related components—thoughts, behaviors, and feelings. Whether or not all of these components are required for “emotion” is debatable, and outside my expertise. In the context of muscles, my first thought is that muscle activity is an external expression of behavior. Since behavior is a component of emotion, it stands that muscles definitely can have a role in emotion. This is supported by experiments where facial muscle activity is manipulated while people read comics (by stimulating muscles necessary for smiling/frowning or by having someone hold a pen between their teeth or lips to mimic a smile or frown, respectively). The findings of studies like this generally show that stimulating or using muscles for smiling leads to people finding the comics to be funnier.

The effect has been found in the opposite direction, where people are injected with Botox (weakening the expression of a smile, for example) and those people report a lesser degree of positive emotion compared to controls. Thus, there is good support for the idea that the state of our bodies influences our experience of emotion.

However, this can't be the only explanation for emotion, since emotions can exist independent from muscle activity/body sensation. People with congenital disorders that leave facial muscles partially paralyzed can still experience happiness.

As for how emotion is processed in the brain, there are many structures and pathways that are important. Most research on emotion shows that there are no areas of the brain that are specific to a certain emotion—that is, any one emotion is associated with activity in many brain regions, and those regions will tend to show activity related to emotion and other functions, such as behaviors (consistent with the definition of emotion as including feelings and behaviors, maybe). From what I can tell, approximately the same systems are active for positive and negative emotion, with the frontal lobes helping to modulate the intensity of emotion by regulating the magnitude of activity in other areas, for example, the amygdala. There is a lot of research to suggest that activity in the left and right frontal lobes is related to separate categories of behavior, which can be associated with emotions—left frontal activity related to approach behaviors (excitement, happiness, but also anger), and right frontal activity related to withdrawal behavior (fear, sadness). In my view, emotions aren't "stored" as much as they are "experienced in response to internal or external stimuli."

The idea that experiences are processed and stored makes sense. Basically, there are a couple things happening: an experience (external stimulus) is associated with a certain pattern of neural activation, in certain circuits. That activity might be associated with positive emotion. Repeated exposure to that stimulus repeatedly activates the same regions and circuits, which over time are strengthened and sometimes expanded. For example, the stronger and better-rehearsed a certain memory is, the greater the extent of brain regions become active when recalling that memory. So memories, like emotions, are not "stored" in one place but are associated with more broad activation. These mechanisms of association explain why memories are stronger when you use more senses to store them. This is also partially why traumatic experiences have such a strong impact.

In summary, pain as well as pleasure is stored not just in the mind but also within the body's tissues. I believe that therapies that work with the mind can help you release the

trauma and stored pain as well, and through the muscle/mind connection and releasing through the body you can achieve the same. It is through my own experience that having the body release along with the thoughts is a faster way to get down to it and heal from down deep. With tissue release, information is released as well. The truth is, whether it is done through cognitive skills and therapies or through emotional release and body work, for each person it comes down to whichever method is able to receive the information within to reach the pain and let go of it.

When we go through any sort of shame, fear, guilt, betrayal, or any trauma, it is stored in our minds, in our brains, and in our bodies. Our mind and our brain are not the same thing, and many times they are used interchangeably and they need not be. The mind is where the thoughts live. This is where therapy can help develop the coping skills to help change the mind grooves of beliefs. The brain is an organ. It is made up of chemicals and it is responsible for keeping the body working. When we experience trauma, it goes into our mind and our emotions then trigger the brain, which then releases chemicals. The trauma also goes into the body. The pain has to go somewhere and into the muscles it burrows. Into the energy centers it hides. Into the aura it can show itself. Into every part of our being it becomes. From the emotional standpoint, this is the beginning of physical illness and can manifest into dis-ease if not treated and released from the deepest level of your being.

The Reality of the Body

I sat down for a talk with the world-renowned author, lecturer, and director of Berkeley's Center for Energetic Studies, Stanley Keleman. Among his many books are *Emotional Anatomy* as well as *Your Body Speaks Its Mind*. These books were brought to my attention at the beginning of this journey; however, I do not like to read other people's work during my own process of writing. I do not want to sound like other people or be influenced by other people and their work. At the end of my writing process, one of the books again was brought to my attention by someone else. In that moment, I knew it was time to reach out and ask for a sit down, and he was kind enough to give me that honor.

I wanted to know what his idea was behind *Emotional Anatomy*. Keleman believes in a "somatic reality" (Somatic = body, so the reality of the body). The second person who mentioned his work to me had studied with Keleman forty years before. He remembers a

time when Keleman taught at a psychiatric conference and made reference to something along the lines of “You don’t have to tell me what’s going on, I can see it in your body.”

Keleman and I sat down for a brief talk, and he told me:

Every cell pulsates. The body is a coordinated community of pulsating anatomical structures continually expanding and contracting, like the beating of the heart. Each person’s body speaks its own and a universal somatic language, which is communicated in the organizing of and expression of anatomical behaviors that include muscular and cortical activity, intention and feeling, as well as conceiving a future. The organism’s primary pulsatory dynamic is its most basic organizing force. This organizing force is expressed in the muscular shapes and cortical configurations (thinking and memory) we mobilize to meet life’s challenges.

He said he conceived *Emotional Anatomy* as a pioneering work intended to illustrate the relationships of behavior shapes and emotional attitudes. He continued:

Each body tells of its process and how it supports its life structure and tries to be alive. The human organism has inherited programs, directions for growing itself through all the stages of living, including ways of responding to protect itself and maintain survival. We call these responses instinct or reflex acts. When met with life’s challenges, the body may enact its inherited program, but this response may not be the best adaptation for forming a satisfying solution.

He mentioned to me the S shape, which would signal to him that a person may be living in a way that suggests resignation or “I give up.” He has identified other common body shapes such as startle, investigation, fight or flight, despair or collapse. He said too often people are undereducated about how to use themselves to intervene and modify problematic behaviors, and that sometimes we are operating on a false belief that our bodies always know the best way to maintain a state of health and healing. Overusing meditation or deep relaxation as a way to effect behavior change has limited success because the body does not always know how to make novel behaviors (which are new anatomical configurations) nor how to support them. That is why a person who feels great after

body work may feel terrible again three days later. They don't know how to maintain the new state and continue to support healing on their own unless they learn to use themselves differently. I feel the same way with regard to three days after body work you may be faced with the same challenges unless you find someone to help you to release from a deeper place within.

✂ CLENCHING AND RELAXING VISUALIZATION

Flexing and releasing your muscles is the easiest way to get the body to relax. Taking it slightly deeper with the intention to fully engage with your body allows it to release the tension it carries around without you realizing it is weighted down.

Begin by lying down on your back and closing your eyes. Bring your arms out from the body with your palms facing up. Let the legs also come out from the body and let the feet fall out to each side. Breathe slowly and deeply into the body. Notice your belly rise and expand with each breath in, notice the belly button come back down toward the spine with each breath out. Come into the space of your breath and relax into it. Take a breath in and hold your breath. Tense all of the muscles in your legs and lift your feet an inch off the ground.

As you exhale, relax the legs completely. Let them be heavy, limp. Inhale and hold your breath and tighten every muscle in your arms and make a fist with your hands. Lift your hands one inch off the ground. Exhale and relax the arms and open up the hands, wiggle the fingers. Allow your arms to hang off the body like the arms of a rag doll. No tension. Inhale and hold your breath. Lift your chest and stomach up high, arching the back. Tighten every muscle in the stomach and the back.

Exhale and lower the back down gently, unrolling the vertebrae of the spine down deeply into the floor from the top of the neck to the bottom of the spine. Clench your bottom and relax it, tucking your hips under and allowing your low back to get as close to the ground as possible. Inhale and hold your breath. Lift your head one inch off the ground. Tighten the jaws; shut the eyes tight. Exhale and lower the head down and relax the face. For a second after, open your eyes wide, stick your tongue out, and then relax your face completely and close your

eyes. Notice in this space that the entire physical body is relaxed. Breathe deeply into this space, locking into your muscle memory the sensation of being completely and utterly relaxed.

Repeat the following:

- I'm relaxing my feet. My feet are relaxing. My feet are relaxed.
- I'm relaxing my knees. My knees are relaxing. My knees are relaxed.
- I'm relaxing my legs. My legs are relaxing. My legs are relaxed.
- I'm relaxing my hips. My hips are relaxing. My hips are relaxed.
- I'm relaxing my abdomen. My abdomen is relaxing. My abdomen is relaxed.
- I'm relaxing my chest and collar bones. My chest is relaxing. My chest is relaxed.
- I'm relaxing my back. My lower back, my middle back, my upper back are relaxed.
- I'm relaxing my arms and hands. My arms and hands are relaxing. My arms and hands are relaxed.
- I'm relaxing the back of my head. I'm relaxing the top of my head. My head is relaxing. My head is relaxed.
- I'm relaxing my face. My forehead is relaxing. My eyes are relaxing. My cheeks are relaxing. My teeth and tongue are relaxing. My chin is relaxing. My ears are relaxing. My entire face is relaxed.
- I'm relaxing my kidneys, my spleen, and my gallbladder. I'm relaxing my stomach, my intestines, my pancreas, and my liver. I'm relaxing my lungs and my heart. Finally, I am relaxing my brain. My entire body is relaxing. My entire body is relaxed.