



## Resilience and Healing

By Kathy Marshall Emerson, Executive Director  
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Recently three colleagues encountered major health crises. Halfway around the world one was dealing with catastrophic surgery and a potentially life threatening diagnosis. Closer to home a young woman was near death due to extreme alcoholism. Further away an adult son was grappling with shocking news of a tumor near his heart. In all three cases the patients' and family members' resilience depended on finding hope from the inside out.

In the midst of the darkest news like this it is clear the healing power of understanding the principles is a critical part of how such stories turn out. A clear and calm mind allows us to see what we or our loved ones are dealing with in all the horrid detail, and at the same time keep an eye on the future and what may be. The future is only the next minute if that is all we can handle. A touch, a smile, a quiet presence are powerfully wonderful and neurologically good for us at all stages of healing.

Amazingly the person facing very major surgery was calm and secure enough to write a global note letting us know what was happening and asking for our thoughts and prayers. And, after a few days the young woman could be a bit lighthearted about how she was in the bottom of the trash barrel and ready for help. The mother found peace and rest at moments even in the midst of her son's tumor testing; "I don't know where that comes from, but I will take it!" My friends knew they wanted the understanding of the principles to be part of the healing path.

Why is that so important? *What we know will help us heal* matters. Ester Sternberg, M. D. and former Chief of Neuroendocrine Immunology and Behavior at the U. S. National Institute of Health (NIH), asks, "Can believing make you well?...the placebo is a very potent cure, since at least one-third of the effect of any cure, whether modern medication or health regimen of any sort comes from that belief that it will cure, from the placebo effect." (*The Balance Within*, p. 167)

Outcomes are due in part to what is in our heads! Why not? Of course this is true. If we hold a knowing thought, it triggers a healthful chemical response, spills across our neurological system and impacts the physical body as Sternberg details. With an understanding of the principles we also know that as healthy thought produces increased levels of well-being, we are more likely to choose the next healthy thoughts that pop into our heads. We are indeed creatures of habit especially in terms of our thinking. Experiencing one good thought leads to noticing another.

Naturally medical crises require that we have good information and carefully choose what we *know in our hearts* to be the best treatment options. *Knowing* is beyond the intellect; we put our trust in what we come to sense is best. Without such mental certainty, our reoccurring questions rob us of the healing effect of a peaceful state of mind.

But you say 30% [as established in science] is only a part of how we heal. Yes, that is true and it may be much greater. But even that proven 30% improvement brings joy, relief, hope, perseverance, good feeling and a host of beneficial experiences even in declining health.

Perhaps Roger Mills offered the best example as he faced end-stage cancer. See his last interview at [threeprinciplesmovies.com](http://threeprinciplesmovies.com). The truth is we have a spiritual dimension; we are always more than our physical bodies.

Larry Dosey, M.D. and co-chairman of the Panel on Mind/Body Interventions, NIH Office of Alternative Medicine, goes even further documenting the scientific evidence that prayers and intentions impact others' health outcomes. He offers another way of saying my spirit can touch your spirit and healing can be engaged. "The real cure is the realization that at the most essential level, we are all 'untouchables'—utterly beyond the ravages of disease and death." (*Healing Words*, p. 36)

No situation is ever 100% guaranteed to end in early death; there are unforeseen changes, spontaneous remissions and inexplicable divine interventions. However many, many health situations are precarious. We can choose to opt for the odds of successfully tipping the balance in the direction of improved health and continued life. It is worth doing our part to live in a mentally secure, calm state of gratitude. That is at least the 30% that can sway the balance. Amit Sood, M. D., clearly describes the neurological impact of a stressed (default) or calm (focused) state of mind. (*The Mayo Clinic Guide to Stress Free Living*, pp. 2-12)

I am not usually a betting person, but I will always put my money on hope and the healing effect. It buys time at worst, and tips the balance at best. Not bad odds given that no matter what the outcome, every moment living the principles is better than any moment lived ignoring the principles.

Syd Banks was so fond to say, "Happiness is just one thought away." What he did not always say so simply and directly, but clearly taught is that how we operate is a spiritual process. Once we experience the deeper nature of the principles it is easier to know happiness is simply a thought away. We step away from our intellectual, analytical selves and thinking shifts on its own; we do effortlessly meet life in a state of gratitude. It is your choice, even when you or your loved one is very ill. From a neurological standpoint, it can be dangerous to dwell on anything other than thoughts that produce hope, gratitude, acceptance and love.

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