



Book Reinventing Medicine

Beyond Mind-Body To A New Era Of Healing

Larry Dossey, M.D.
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Recommendation

Lampooning a book that steps beyond science and into the realm of spiritual healing would be easy. Many readers won't have much trouble accepting the notion that your mind can heal your body, but it probably will be harder to accept Dr. Larry Dossey's assertion that your mind can heal other bodies just as well. In fact, many readers will scoff at the idea that all minds are linked in a global consciousness that can be harnessed to accomplish tasks like curing AIDS. However, as the good doctor notes, trying to influence reality with the power of thought amounts to... well, prayer. And millions of Americans who would roll their eyes at a New-Agey term like "nonlocal mind" pray for each other every day. So if you're put off by the book's preachy tone or its inevitable omission of factual evidence to back up its conclusions, lighten up, or be ready to take a good hard look at some of your own cherished beliefs. *BooksInShort* recommends this book to anyone willing to suspend his or her skepticism for just a few hours.

Take-Aways

- We are entering a third era of medicine, in which society will accept the mind's ability to heal.
- The key to this new era is the "nonlocal" mind - a common link between human consciousness and the external world.
- The nonlocal mind's activities may include precognition, remote healing and after-death experiences.
- An element of resistance exists toward Era III medical practices.
- Some healthcare providers use Era III medicine in remote healing for AIDS.
- Of the 700,000 Americans older than 49 who lose their spouses each year, 35,000 die within a year; 7,000 of these deaths may be due directly to grief.
- Some complain that Era III medicine creates false hope.
- In a study of recovered cancer patients, 68% prayed, 65% meditated and 61% said faith was key to their recovery.
- People may be able to inhibit the spread of bacteria by using their minds.
- The medical establishment is beginning to notice the potential of the nonlocal mind.

Summary

Medical Eras One through Three

As the demise of the family doctor would suggest, medical thought has evolved substantially in recent decades, but perhaps the greatest changes are yet to come. Modern medicine has three distinct eras:

Era I dates back to the mid-1800s, when the practice of medicine first became scientific. During this first medical era, scientific thought was heavily influenced by the notion that the entire world - as well as the human body - operated as a mindless machine. People viewed consciousness as material and mechanistic, not as a spiritual phenomenon.

“The mind is infinite. This means that my mind touches and is touched by those of everyone else, and that all minds are linked together.”

Era II began a century later, as the grip of this mechanistic medical viewpoint began to loosen. By the mid-1900s, doctors had come back around to believing that one’s mind could affect the recovery of one’s body - sometimes dramatically. During Era II, medicine began to acknowledge that stress, for example, was a contributing factor to some types of disease, such as ulcers. Mind-body medicine began its ascendancy.

Enter Era Three

Now a new era is upon us. The hallmark of Era III is the nonlocal mind. Consciousness does not solely reside within the individual. Instead, it has the potential to act not only on the self, but also on distant things and people who may remain unaware of its action. Era III accepts nonmaterial properties. Just as medical authorities have accepted the influence of the mind on the body, so will the nonlocal mind become critical to our understanding of healing and ourselves.

“In a sense, medicine is burning, as old ideas and methods are fading on every hand. But medicine’s fires are purifying: new life is emerging from the ashes, as it always does.”

What is the nonlocal mind? How can you be sure it exists? Evidence for the nonlocal mind comes in two forms, scientific findings and the everyday experiences of millions of people. Buddha Mind, Christ consciousness, cosmic consciousness, collective consciousness and unconsciousness - all are examples of the nonlocal mind. Many of these ideas carry the weight of religious opinion. You probably have had experiences that do not fit into the commonly accepted picture of material reality, such as precognition, visions, prophetic dreams, or just knowing who it is when the phone rings. You might have unexplained technological or intellectual breakthroughs during dream periods. Or you might have shared physical symptoms across distances, or experienced intercessory prayer and distant healing. Researchers call such experiences "anomalous cognition."

The Three Signs of Nonlocal Occurrences

Nonlocal means unlimited - infinite space and time. The three indications of nonlocal events are:

“The aspect of Greek thought that came to dominate Western medicine was the earlier Hippocratic version - that the mind is a local event happening solely in the brain, in the here and now.”

Nonlocal events are unmediated - Generally, something else mediates most of our experiences. Something exists between the phenomenon and the experience of that phenomenon (for example, a television screen or the participation of another person). In reality, all sensory experiences are mediated, if only through the senses. This is not the case with nonlocal experiences, which are direct and without sensory input.

“Many laypeople, I’ve discovered, are often puzzled about why research studies such as these continue. They assume that scientists by now must surely have figured out the basic relationship between the mind and the brain.”

Distance does not mitigate nonlocal events - It doesn’t matter whether you are one mile away or a thousand miles away. The power of the experience is unaffected. The location of the person praying doesn’t matter. The prayer is what matters, not where it is said.

Nonlocal phenomena occur immediately - These events are outside of time as well as space. You experience them without regard to hour, duration or distance.

The Golden Rule of Era Three

The Golden Rule ("Do unto others as you would have them do unto you") takes a very local point of view. This philosophy is based upon a definite distinction between the individual and the collective human consciousness. Era three consciousness states: "Do good unto others because they are you!" This does not mean that you should abandon individual uniqueness or rights. It does posit that people are more than individuals.

Apollo 14 and the Nonlocal Mind

Apollo 14 astronaut Edgar Mitchell tested the nonlocal mind when he was in space. Only four people on Earth were aware of his experiment. Each night, he pulled out a clipboard and arranged a square, circle, star, cross and wavy line. Tens of thousands of miles away, his collaborators in Florida tried to jot down the same symbols in the same order. The results were different from those mere chance could have caused. In response, Mitchell founded the Institute of Noetic Sciences.

“We cannot make sense of our lives unless we acknowledge that our mind operates nonlocally.”

Bernard Grad of Montreal’s McGill University also researched the nonlocal mind. Grad hypothesized that depressed people’s plants would grow more slowly than plants which belonged to optimists. The results of his experiments appeared to indicate that emotions could affect plants indirectly or nonlocally. Grad conducted similar experiments on mice.

Nonlocal Healing for AIDS

Doctors at the California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco tested whether distant healing, including prayer, had a therapeutic effect on the health of AIDS patients who were kept unaware of this nonlocal spiritual intercession. The doctors recruited 40 patients with advanced AIDS from the San Francisco Bay Area. The patients, who came from various ethnic and cultural groups, all received traditional medical care for their illness. However, 20 of them also received distant healing intentions. This double-blind study indicated that those patients had fewer new illnesses, less serious illnesses and fewer days of hospitalization. They seemed to be in a better mood. Other such examples exist in medical literature.

The Emerging Picture of Consciousness

Researchers Dean I. Radin, Janine M. Rebman and Maikwe P. Cross suggest that the new model of the mind will almost certainly show us that consciousness:

- Is blind to location. It extends beyond the individual and cannot be limited to specific points in space.
- Is a principle that brings order. It can insert information and bring order to existential chaos.
- Does not equal awareness. In dreams there may be no awareness, but consciousness still exists.
- Can expand its ordering potential through coherence among individuals (love, empathy, caring, unity or oneness).
- Can affect objects and animals, not just humans.

Finding the Zone: Experiencing Nonlocality

Athletes commonly experience nonlocality. They call it "being in the zone," the sublime moments when they suddenly are able to achieve the impossible. Basketball star Bill Russell tells of a mystical experience that he had at age 16, when a "warm feeling (that) fell out of nowhere" suddenly possessed him. Russell had been hostile and angry following his mother’s death when he was 12. "Looking back," he recalled, "I can see moments when new skills seemed to drop down out of the sky, and I felt as if I had a new eye or had tapped a new compartment of my brain." While Era I and Era II medicine would be at a loss to explain this, it clearly is an example of the Era III concept of nonlocality.

Nonhuman Relationships

Nonlocality is obvious in nonhuman relationships. Animals do not intellectualize in the same way that humans do and therefore may be more open to nonlocal experiences. Indeed, you may have experienced an occasion where your pet enabled you to recover your nonlocal mind. Pets provide you with the opportunity to bond unconditionally with another living being. They allow you to express your nonlocal bond with another creature, and they do so without threatening your sense of individuality.

Dreams of Illness

One practical application of the nonlocal mind to healthcare is in dreaming, where intuition of illness may occur. Heavy smokers may dream of being shot, only to later learn that they have lung cancer. Tubercular patients may dream that they are being suffocated. But dreams are not only diagnostic; healing dreams can hasten recovery after traditional treatments fail. Other examples of nonlocal experience include:

- Dreams of intuition and revelation;
- Anticipation of danger;
- Prophecy;
- Sympathetic response - where you share the pain or joy of a loved one;
- Telesomatic connection - where you share physical sensations with a distant person;
- Synchronicity - where experience is shared at the same time over distance.

“Nor am I alone in my suspicion that we have stopped our investigation of healing well short of its potential.”

The nonlocal mind can do harm as well as good. A 1994 Gallup poll found that 5% of Americans admit to praying for harm to befall others. That means 10 million Americans use the nonlocal mind in destructive ways. Perhaps just as we evolved the nonlocal mind, we evolved the capacity to defend ourselves, using the "psychospiritual immune system."

Eras in Balance

What is the best way for people to use the nonlocal mind in healthcare? Two pillars of modern medicine are diagnosis and treatment. Nonlocal diagnosis is experiencing a renaissance. Patients often "just seem to know" what is going on in their bodies. The mother instinctively seems to sense her child’s state of health. Era I and Era II still have their place in medicine. The key to using them effectively is achieving a balance among era one, two and three approaches. Other implications of this include:

- An organ donor’s mental state could affect an organ transplant.
- Doctors in emergency rooms may use their intuitive gifts to supplement physical diagnoses.
- Healthcare workers may use intentions and prayer to accelerate healing.
- Healthcare workers may use intentions to help sterilize wounds.

Conclusion

Society already has come to accept the power of therapeutic touch and the actuality that many people have near-death experiences. Is it such a stretch, then, to believe the mind can heal? Medical thought has become more scientific in its approach. The danger: that we will overlook other opportunities to promote healing. Almost half of adults in the U.S. visit a practitioner of alternative medical treatment each year. Is it possible that they are on to something? We are just beginning to understand the power of the nonlocal mind.

About the Author

Larry Dossey , M.D., is an authority on the subject of spiritual healing. He lectures on the topic throughout the country, and wrote the bestsellers *Healing Words* and *Prayer is Good Medicine*. His other books include *Be Careful What You Pray For...You Just Might Get It*, *Meaning and Medicine*, *Recovering the Soul* and *Beyond Illness*.
