

Aging Well: The Mind/Body Connection and the Power of Words

When it comes to aging well, one undeniable truth is that we are what we think. This enduring truth has been spoken down through the ages since Biblical times, and is one which we would do well to take to heart. Experts have proven that our level of health is directly connected to what we say, which is in turn reflective of our thoughts. It has also been proven that we believe more of what we hear ourselves say than what we hear from any other source.

We can, therefore, be our own best medicine or our own worst enemy. We can choose the thoughts we harbor and the subsequent words we speak, decide whether they are good or bad, positive or negative, life-giving or health-stealing. No one forces us to think or say anything; these are our free will decisions. While it is true that emotions sometimes prompt us to say things we later regret, ultimately no one else is responsible for our choice of words.

Isn't it amazing how fast bad news can travel? This is true because the populace in general is not as interested in repeating good things as bad. We see this borne out daily on the local news. There are problems in the world, indeed; however, do we really need to discuss them endlessly? Does it help eradicate the problem to repeatedly rehearse it and all possible implications for disaster?

The more we talk about our problems, the more prominent they become in our thinking and the more we decrease our joy and jeopardize our mental and physical health. Conversely, the more we focus on and speak forth positives the more our joy increases, and therefore our mental and physical states improve.

Every thought generates something in our bodies. Negative thoughts cause our digestive system to produce acids which can lead to stomach ulcers. Constant negative thinking can lead to anxiety, depression, and a host of other problems. Positive thoughts, however, can generate feelings of calm, cause our muscles to relax, our heart rate to slow, our breathing to deepen. Several studies have linked positive thinking and its effect on our health. Researchers at the Mayo Clinic continue to delve into the effects of positive thinking and optimism on health, as seen in the article "Positive thinking: Reduce stress by eliminating negative self-talk" found here: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/positive-thinking/SR00009>.

Research shows that we can immediately increase our joy, improve our mental outlook – and consequently our overall health – with the simple decision to stop thinking and speaking negatively. In this age of an uncertain economy and ever-rising healthcare costs it appears to be a wise, cost-effective decision to employ this simple strategy of positive self-talk in the quest for aging well.

Why not start today by making a list of all the good in your life? Focus on all you have to be thankful for, direct your thoughts toward the many positives in your life, meditate on the people and relationships that make you happy. Life will likely never be problem-free for any great length of time, but we can always choose our focus, direct our thoughts, and decide to talk about things that increase our joy and that of those around us.