

Tapping the Three Brains

by John and Esther Veltheim

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

-William Shakespeare

Contrary to popular belief, we do not have one brain but three. Each of the body's brains has unique abilities, but no one brain can operate independent of the other two. Instead, the Three Brains function interdependently, in a mutually supportive way.

Intuitively, the human being senses that the brain in the head is not the only brain and that there are two more brains. Experientially, we know that we have three interactive brains that inform us in vastly different ways.

And yet, intellectually, many of us are convinced that there is only one brain and that it resides in our head. While this conviction remains strong, our experience of the Three Brains is that they function in conflict with one another.

We eloquently convey this experience when we say, "My head is telling me one thing, but my heart is telling me the absolute opposite" or, "My gut tells me to just go for it, but my head is saying it's a ridiculous idea."

Once we understand that we have a Three Brain Complex and then learn how to support it, our experience of the brain transforms.

The Head Brain

The Head Brain is like a computer. It downloads information from the body and the environment and responds by running a continuous program that supports and informs all the bodily systems. The Head Brain also handles a certain amount of generic analysis and conceptualization.

The Head Brain is the control center of the autonomic nervous system (all involuntary processes). The ANS comprises the "fight or flight" sympathetic response and the "rest and digest" parasympathetic response. These functional processes are informed by and reliant upon the other two brains—the Heart Brain and the Enteric Brain, and vice versa.

In the human evolutionary process, the Head Brain tends to take on a lot of work it is not designed to do and should not be doing. This is because developing societies increasingly over-emphasize the importance of the Head Brain, attributing to it many of the strengths and roles of the other two brains. We have made the Head Brain the designated driver of our thinking processes. As a result, many of us "live in our heads," relying on the Head Brain as our primary interpreter of life. Burdened by this misplaced

responsibility, the Head Brain is experienced as chronic tension reflected throughout the human systems. When left unchecked, a desensitization and psychophysical numbing occurs, or the complete reverse and we become hypersensitive and hyperalert. Either way, as long as we “live in our heads” we defer to thoughts to determine our level of self-worth and to even tell us who we are.

The natural impulse toward healthy introspection and self-reflection is what ensures we do not live an unexamined, unconscious life. However, the deeper the conviction goes that thinking is our most important faculty, the more impossible it becomes to turn inward. By dismissing the experiential and the wealth of non-conceptual information our systems are constantly providing us, looking within no longer comes naturally. The more normal we consider constant thinking to be the greater our stress and the greater the counter measures we start looking for. Instead of the brain as our servant, we have become its slave.

While experiencing is eclipsed by the habit of thinking, simply being feels like a personal effort. Our reliance on the Head Brain and thinking to get us through life is similar to a sailor relying on an outboard motor to move his sailboat on a beautiful windy day. In both cases, the power of nature is underestimated, there is unnecessary fuel consumption, and a peaceful journey remains elusive.

The Three Brain Complex

Underestimation of the Heart and Enteric Brains and overestimation of the Head Brain decreases brain plasticity. As brain plasticity diminishes, without even realizing it, the habit of dogmatic thinking and assuming becomes our way of life. Assumptions dull healthy curiosity and the faculty of deconstructive thought which are the cornerstones of a healthy intellect. Assumptions cloud the heart and blind us to life as it really is. The habit of assuming is the most pervasive symptom of a poorly functioning Three Brain Complex.

The reductionist view of the brain as purely Head Brain is reflected in an increasing number of autonomic diseases and psychological disorders. While the Head Brain is overburdened, the harmonious functioning of the Three Brain Complex and the entire psychosomatic system is severely hampered.

The Heart Brain

The Heart Brain is the seat of consciousness of self; this is why we instinctively point to the heart center to indicate self. Although the heart symbolizes sentimental love in many cultures, the Heart Brain’s primary function is to anchor the other two brains. When this trinity functions healthily, the Heart Brain anchors all our interactions in life.

How strongly the Heart Brain anchors the Head and Enteric Brains determines the efficiency of neurological and sensory input. When the Heart Brain fully anchors the other two Brains, the whole system calms; the “fight or flight” stress response that predominates while we live in our heads resumes its natural role, engaging only when necessary. In this way, the human system returns to its natural, healthy neurological hierarchy, with the parasympathetic “rest and digest” response predominating. When the parasympathetic NS predominates, the human being experiences wellbeing and a sense of ease both in rest and activity. In this way, like of our analogous sailor, actions become practical and stress free, happening in unison with nature, and the journey becomes peaceful and enjoyable.

The Enteric Brain

The Enteric Brain has several major functions. It is heavily involved in our entire defense mechanism, meaning it oversees the immune system and our body’s ability to defend itself from the outside. It is there to work with the small intestine, assisting in controlling and regulating digestion and the microbiome. Classically, it is also where decisions are meant to be made. The Head and Heart Brains analyze and ponder, but when it comes to the discernment of choosing between right and wrong, it is meant to be the small intestine/Enteric Brain that handles this. The Chinese and Indian systems of physiology and health have known this for thousands of years.

While the Enteric Brain’s task is misappropriated by the Head Brain, we mistake the Head Brain for the intellect. Until there is conscious awareness of input from the Heart and Enteric Brains, the human experience is one of struggle. Intellectually, we live misinformed, misinterpreting our every experience of self and life.

Implementation

The Soul’s Journey: Exploring the Mind and Three Brains is a BodyTalk modality which very specifically addresses the Three Brain Complex in terms of treatment. However, as a BodyTalker, even if you have not taken this class, you can powerfully impact the functioning of the Three Brain Complex by implementing the basic Three Brains Tapping Technique. When you tap out any BodyTalk formula, be it Access techniques, Fast Aid, or an advanced PaRama formula, you must tap not just the Head Brain and the Heart Brain—as has been standard practice—but also the Enteric Brain. The Enteric Brain is tapped out by gently tapping in the area of the navel.

You will bring awareness to the entire Three Brain Complex by tapping each Brain. This technique retrains the Three Brains to work more efficiently together, and allows us to utilize all Three Brains far better. The harmonizing of the Three Brain Complex will help the body to better respond to all BodyTalk treatments.

The simple act of consciously acknowledging the symbiotic, mutually supportive nature of the Three Brains lends them healthy support. As conscious recognition of the Three Brains deepens, systemic tensions fade; self-doubt diminishes; decision-making becomes more practical and effortless; and overall health and wellbeing improve.

Tapping all Three Brains gives you one of the most simple and effective ways of helping yourself and, thus, your clients.