

The Science of Thought and Emotion

Living with emotional maturity and integrity requires that we open our minds and hearts. Because this, we have included a sampling of research on the positive effects of doing so. The following conclusions based on scientific studies are drawn from David Hamilton's book, *It's the Thought that Counts*, and are shared here with his permission. In his remarkable book, Dr. Hamilton refers to more than 100 studies published in professional journals and publications which he weaves into an enjoyable, easy-to-read book encouraging us to realize how love, thought and emotion impacts our individual and collective health, and our ability to make a positive difference in the world.

Dr. Hamilton has a Ph.D. in organic chemistry and worked as a scientist in the pharmaceutical industry. His research into mind-body connection led him to leave his job and become a motivational speaker. He co-founded an international relief charity and appears regularly in the media.

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Being appreciative causes the heart to beat more smoothly. Anger produces the opposite effect.

The “internal coherence of a heart that beats smoothly entrains other organs into a similar coherent and healthy state.” 1995 study by the Institute of HeartMath, published in the *American Journal of Cardiology*

Five minutes of care and compassion causes the immune system to be elevated for five hours.

Conversely, five minutes of anger and frustration depresses the immune system for five hours.

From the Institute of HeartMath, reported in the *Journal of Advancement in Medicine*, 1995

Laughter increases oxygen levels in the blood which strengthens the immune system.

Oxygen in the blood produces endorphins (feel-good hormones) and strengthens the immune system, which helps the body keep disease away.

Physiological review in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1992

A good mood is infectious.

Within two minutes a person's mood improved when they sat in front of someone who was in a better mood than they were. And since body and mind are intertwined, affect someone's mood, and you affect their body. Feel positive, and you contribute positively to your own physical health. Research by

Friedman and Riggio published in the *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 1988

The whole body is psychosomatically wired to respond to any thought and emotion.

Gut instinct is a subjective feeling that produces neuropeptides in the brain, which makes it possible to physically feel your instinct. Neuropeptides are responsible for an array of bodily functions including hormone regulation, cellular repair, memory storage and pain management. Emotions produce neuropeptides, and neuropeptides produce emotions.

Research by Candace Pert reported in *Alternative Therapies*, 1998 and *Journal of Immunology*, 1985

People who resolve their feelings about past traumas strengthen their immune system.

1988 scientific paper by Kiecolt-Glaser and Glaser reported in the *Journal of Consulting Clinical Psychologists*

Love is more powerful than neutrality.

DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) contains our genetic code. Our thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs and intentions do influence and affect it. The more positive we are, the more access we have to the creative, resourceful aspects our DNA. An experiment at Quantum Biology Research Labs showed that love and appreciation empowered people to unwind the strands of DNA. Those who tried to unwind them mentally without love and appreciation were not able to do so.

Research by Glen Rein of the Institute of HeartMath

Love promotes growth and reduces disease. Fear produces the opposite.

In 2003 and 2005 scientists showed that gently brushing rat pups for 15 minutes a day during their first week of life altered the activation of genes so that the pups grew up to have a better memory, improved mental abilities, and a better ability to deal with stress.

In *Developmental Neuroscience*, 2003 and *Endocrinology*, 2005

Rabbits fed a high-fat, high cholesterol diet were expected to have a high level of atherosclerosis. One group of rabbits had 60 percent less atherosclerosis than the other groups. It was discovered that one of the technicians had taken this group out of their cages every day and stroked them. The experiment was repeated and produced the same results. The loving act of care and compassion had given them some protection from the damaging effects of a high-fat, high cholesterol diet.

A scientific study at Ohio State University of Medicine

Meditation increases the hormone DHEA which helps to minimize stress.

Meditators had 23 – 47% more DHEA than those who didn't meditate. For every 20 percent increase in DHEA researchers found a 48 percent drop in heart disease.

In *Meditation as Medicine* and *Autobiography of a Yogi*

Music has positive effects on the heart and mind.

Listening to Mozart has been shown to improve mental function. Fast music increases circulation and breathing, and slower, meditative music causes a substantial fall in heart rate.

Research by scientists from the University of Pavia and University of Oxford, 2005

Words and the sound of your voice can heal disease.

At a Qigong clinic in China, practitioners rapidly chanted 'Already gone' over a woman with an approximately 3" wide cancerous tumor on her bladder. Watching the real time ultrasound, the audience watched the tumor shrink right before their eyes. In 2 minutes and 42 seconds it had completely disappeared.

Reported in Gregg Braden's book, *the Isaiah Effect*

Focused intentions affect people even at a distance.

In 16 individual sessions, influencers (people doing the visualization or sending mental intentions) were able to as requested either calm or activate target people in a room 25 meters away.

Experiment by Dr. Dean Radin conducted at the Department of Parapsychology of Edinburgh University.

Meditation has been shown to substantially lower the crime rates.

FBI study, *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 1981

People can shield themselves from negative thoughts of influencers.

In a scientific experiment 32 people were asked to shield themselves from the thoughts of influencers. They were easily able to do so.

Reported at the *Parapsychological Association 36th Annual Conference*, 1993

Prayer has the power to heal.

In 1988, 150 patients underwent heart surgery at Duke University Medical Center. Half were prayed for by different religious groups, and half were not. Those who were prayed for had fewer complications and their recovery rates were 50 – 100 percent faster than the patients who were not prayed for.

Research led by Randolph Byrd, M.D. and reported in the *Southern Medical Journal*, 1988

Prayer has the power to increase self esteem, and reduce anxiety and depression.

406 subjects were prayed for by 90 people. Three people prayed for each subject daily for 15 minutes for 12 weeks. Evaluations made at the beginning and end of the study indicated both subjects and those praying showed improvement in self-esteem, anxiety, depression, mood, physical health, intellectual health, spiritual health, relationships and creative expressions.

Study by Fr. Sean O’Laoire, journal of *Alternative Therapies*, 1997

A small number of people can have a huge effect on the mental and emotional climate of the world.

The Hundredth Monkey experiment in 1952 showed monkeys on an island off the coast of Japan learned one from the other to wash the sand off of the sweet potatoes they were being fed, as the sand was eroding the monkeys’ teeth. The surprise was not that the monkeys on the island learned from one another, but that scientists studying monkeys on the mainland notice that all of the sudden every one of the monkeys they were studying began to wash their food.

From Thomas Hartmann’s book, *The Prophet’s Way*.