

## The maths add up: you can trust in your heart

By Ruth Ostrow

A FEW years ago, Paul Pearsall, PhD, psycho-neuroimmunologist, and international speaker at numerous medical conventions, was giving a lecture in Houston about his theories on the human heart.

The best-selling author of *The Heart's Code* (Bantam) was discussing his controversial findings -- that the heart is actually the main "brain" in our body, that it has its own memories, personality, ideas and that the heart houses the mind and soul -- when a medical practitioner at the conference stood up to speak and started crying.

The woman, a psychiatrist, took the microphone to discuss one of her patients who was the recipient of a heart transplant. The case had disturbed her so much she could hardly speak.

"I treat an eight-year-old girl who received the heart of a murdered 10-year-old girl. Her mother brought her to me when she started screaming at night about her dreams of the man who had murdered her donor. She said her daughter knew who it was. After sessions I could not deny the reality of what this child was telling me. Her mother and I finally decided to call the police and, using the description from the little girl, they found the murderer. He was easily convicted with evidence the patient provided: the time, the weapon, the place, the clothes the girl was wearing, even what the little girl he killed had said to him."

This was one of the many stories that encouraged Pearsall to go public in his belief that the heart not only feels but also thinks, remembers, communicates with other hearts and regulates the immune system.

In his book he talks about another remarkable story, arranging for a female doctor to meet the recipient of her deceased husband's heart. The husband, David, had died in a head-on collision. During the meeting the wife and the young Spanish recipient bonded deeply. At one point she unbuttoned the man's shirt and put her hand on his chest and began to cry.

As she was doing this she overheard the recipient's mother telling Pearsall that since the operation her son kept using a strange word: copacetic. He didn't know what it meant. "It means everything is OK," exclaimed the wife in shock. It was a private word used by David and her to reassure each other, she said.

The recipient then admitted that since the operation he'd turned from being a vegetarian to a lover of meat and junk food, developed a love of '50s music and kept dreaming of lights from a car coming towards him. "David!" whispered the wife.

In *The Heart's Code*, Pearsall talks about the heart as central to consciousness, how feelings and intuition are part of our true wisdom and, more radically, he uses scientific data to explore evidence that the heart -- with its "love energy" -- can soothe the immune system, diagnose disease, solve problems and talk to other hearts. That it is a powerful sender and receiver of a healing energy the

Chinese call Chi, the Indians call Prana, the Christians call Holy Spirit but which can be measured scientifically as "Lifeforce".

What Pearsall terms "energy cardiology" is a newly emerging field of science exploring one of the most significant medical, social and spiritual hypotheses of our time: that the heart is more than just a pump. Rather, it is at the essence of our being.

And he isn't the only one extolling these theories. In fact, a whole movement, HeartMath, has started in the US, giving a wealth of scientific evidence about the theories discussed here.

The Institute of HeartMath in California, a nonprofit, educational body made up of physicists, psychiatrists, cardiologists and scientists, has (according to its website [www.heartmath.org](http://www.heartmath.org)) been conducting research into phenomena such as cellular memory, meditation and heart energy for over a decade.

One of the institute's main books, *The HeartMath Solution* by Doc Lew Childre, Howard Martin and Donna Beech (contributor), which became a bestseller, provides techniques and exercises to help balance heart rhythms, reduce stress hormones and boost performance at play and work.

The authors focus on "heart intelligence", which refers to both the heart's "brain", or the 40,000 neurons found in the heart -- the same number as in the brain itself -- and the intuitive signals the heart sends, including feelings of love, happiness, care and appreciation.

When such positive emotions are felt or conjured up through techniques advised by the institute, they not only change patterns of activity in the nervous system, they also reduce the production of the stress hormone cortisol. When there's less cortisol, there's more DHEA, the so-called "fountain of youth" hormone known to have anti-ageing effects on many of the body's systems.

HeartMath has become vogueish in corporate America with several Fortune 500 companies adhering to the institute's teachings on synchronisation of mind, breath and heart rhythms -- which some are describing as the West's answer to ancient mystical and Eastern traditions such as reiki, chanting, yoga and meditation.

The heart movement is well worth checking out in detail. From what I've now read, I'm convinced that "a change of heart" literally changes everything.

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