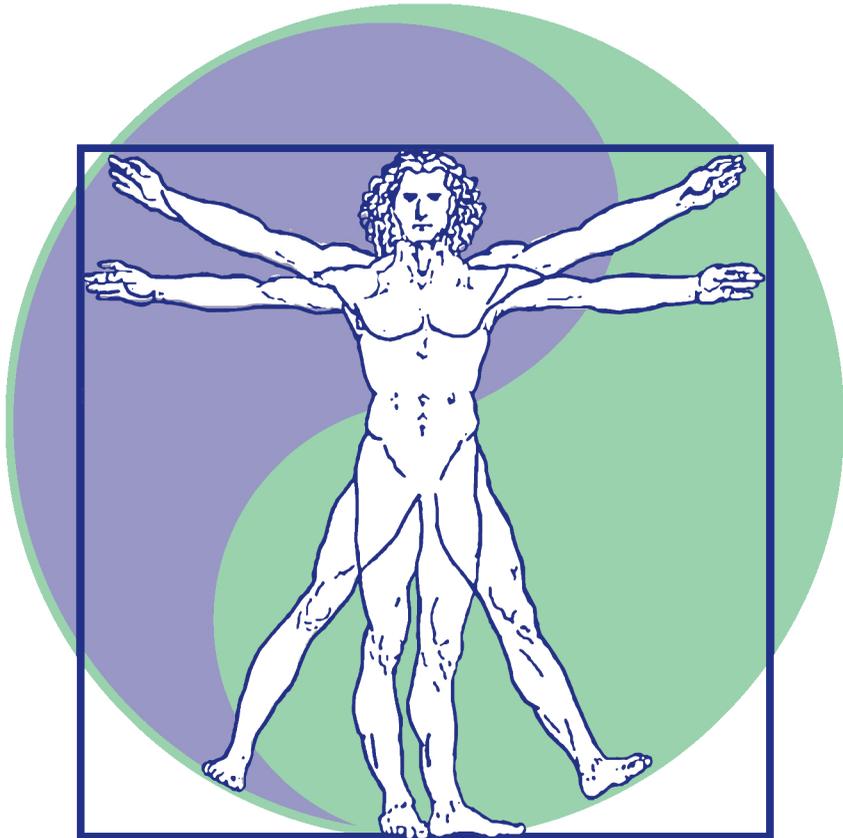


Is your mouth making you sick?

THE DENTAL CONNECTION

The Role of Holistic Dentistry
in the Integrative Healing Paradigm



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*Thanks to my beloved wife Marisa and our daughter Donielle
for their love, patience, and dedication.*

To my team without whom I couldn't get much done.

*To my mentors and teachers and those
who came before us who showed us the way.*

*And to the thousands of patients I have cared for over the years
who taught me so much.*

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PREFACE

My Story

My evolution as a holistic dentist really began way before I had thought of becoming a dentist. It began when I was a kid. When I was going to the dentist, I always had lots of cavities. It seemed that with every checkup, there were more mercury silver fillings to be placed. Then I needed braces. Because I had lost a tooth (a premolar) in my lower jaw due to an accident, the orthodontist decided to close the space by bringing my teeth all the way over across the front, from the right to the left. My teeth ended up looking straight, but my jaw was crooked.

I had a difficult time in school. Everyone told me I was an underachiever. (Today they might have recognized that I had a learning disability.) I had difficulty processing information that I would read—a form of dyslexia. I also had a difficult time with sports because I had poor coordination. I always had headaches and assumed that everyone did. Years later, I was to discover that this all had a lot to do with the conditions in my mouth and how the rest of my body was being influenced by it.

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Subsequent to my graduation with honors from Temple University School of Dentistry in 1978, my headaches got worse and I developed neck discomfort. Though I often had headaches as a kid, this was worse. It turned out to be related to the misalignment of my jaw. In the summer of 1980, I got a biteplate and some physical therapy, and all seemed okay. My treating doctor was Dr. Richard Pertes who was head of the Department of Craniofacial Pain at the New Jersey School of Dentistry and Medicine. Dick introduced me to Dr. Harold Gelb, a pioneer in the multidisciplinary treatment of temporomandibular disorders. I was fortunate to work in Dr. Gelb's office as an associate for eighteen months.

During that time, my wife and I were living in Ossining, New York. One winter, there was a pretty good snowstorm, and being newlyweds, we had not yet acquired all the accoutrements of a suburban household and did not have a snow shovel. Well, my car needed to be dug out of the snow. All I could find was a frying pan, and so it went.

I injured my back, causing a subluxation between my lower lumbar spine and my sacrum. I was in pain! What made matters worse was I could not find a practitioner who knew how to treat me. I saw chiropractors, physicians, and physical therapists, but no one could provide any relief. As time went on, the pain got worse and spread over more of my body. Eventually, I had pain in my jaw, face, head, neck, and upper and lower back. I had pain shooting down my leg. It didn't matter if I stood, sat, or laid down, the pain was unrelenting and wore me down.

Eventually, I found Dr. Harold Briks, a chiropractor par excellence. Dr. Briks was an expert in the use of Applied Kinesiology and Sacral-Occipital Technique. Applied Kinesiology is a biofeedback technique that uses the phenomenon of muscle reflex testing discovered by Dr. George Goodheart back in the mid-60s. It allows a practitioner to diagnose disorders of the musculoskeletal system with great efficiency

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and precision. Sacral-Occipital Technique is a method of analysis and treatment of imbalances of the skull and sacrum developed by Dr. Major Dejarnette. These are discussed in more depth later on. From that very first visit with Dr. Briks, I started to experience relief. I was intrigued by his technique because with it, he would get great results for me. I started to attend chiropractic seminars on Applied Kinesiology and to study how to apply it in my dental practice.

Though I was getting great pain relief, I still wasn't feeling quite right and began to look elsewhere for additional answers. I experienced fatigue and had poor digestion. I went to a dentist named Bob Poritsky, DDS, who I knew practiced nutritional therapy. Bob was studying an interesting form of diagnosis based on the electrical conductance of acupuncture points. It was known as Electro-Acupuncture according to Voll (now known as Electro Dermal Screening). With this method, Bob was able to analyze the energetics of my body, gaining insight into the functional capacity of my organs, and determine the likely causes of stress on my system. Bob told me that a major source of stress on my body was from mercury. I had heard before of the potential for people to become ill from mercury in their fillings. I subsequently had my mercury fillings removed by Howard Hindin, DDS, and immediately felt some improvement energetically. As it turns out, this was all the beginning of what became an odyssey of many years.

I subsequently worked with health practitioners in many different fields, all the while improving my health and developing an understanding of the role of interdisciplinary healthcare.

Over the years, I continued my study and training, seeking to advance my skills in dentistry and keep up with advances in dental technology as well as broaden and deepen my understanding of the interrelationships between the mouth and the rest of the body. This book, *The Dental Connection™*, which I conceived initially in the early 1980s, is a product of that journey.

CHAPTER I

Anti-aging Dentistry?

As we get older, our bodies change. It seems pretty natural, yet for many of us the changes that occur are not actually aging but the gradual onset of disease.

Things sneak up on us, or so it seems. We might put on a little weight. We seem to tolerate stress less easily. Our blood pressure may become more elevated. We experience more fatigue and tension in our body. Our teeth may wear, discolor, or maybe we have lost some or all of them.

As we move forward dealing with the challenges of an aging population with many in declining health, there is value in reflecting on the lessons to be learned through healing traditions from around the world. Examples would be the Chinese healing arts of acupuncture and herbal medicine and the ancient healing practices of Ayurveda from India.

There are common principles found in these and other healing practices to be applied. There is a clear health benefit to living our lives with an awareness and attunement to the natural world around us. It is health promoting to eat a diet of whole foods grown free of

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pesticides, antibiotics, and other contaminants. It is essential for our bodies to stay free of toxins and pollutants. It is just as important to maintain a healthy digestive and elimination system. It promotes good health to have proper posture and good habits in exercise and the rest of our bodies. Healthy self-esteem promotes the choice of healthy habits and lifestyle. These basic principles form the foundation for all holistic health practices.

In dentistry, these principles have become relevant as we have learned more about the influences of oral health on systemic health and vice versa. An anti-aging holistic approach to dental care integrates knowledge of natural healing with that of contemporary dental science and technology. A few areas of concern are discussed below.

A mouth full of old mercury fillings can contribute to heavy metal toxicity causing all kinds of effects within the body, including fatigue.

Research is showing that mercury from silver fillings can contribute to the development of Alzheimer's disease. Mercury toxicity has also been implicated in other neurologic and autoimmune disorders, such as MS. It is amazing that 50% of dentists still believe it is okay to keep putting mercury in people's mouths.

Other influences can occur from the development of abnormal electrical fields that can be caused by the use of various metals in the mouth. Fortunately, with advances in technology, most dentistry can be performed virtually metal free.

Crowded, crooked teeth, and a bad bite resulting from poor development of the jaws and face can contribute to a broad range of health problems in kids and adults.

This may include such problems as headache, learning disabilities, digestive problems, poor posture and scoliosis, and improper breathing and constrictions of the airway leading to snoring and sleep apnea, which can impact both heart and brain health.

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Did you know that years of treating your mouth one tooth at time can lead to a situation where the teeth barely look and fit like your teeth did when you were younger? This can result in worn teeth or crowns that are flat and misshapen. Often a consequence is that the bite may be uneven causing all kinds of stress throughout the body, including head, neck, and back pain, as well as other ailments.

My practice treated a woman who suffered from anxiety and from an irregular heartbeat. This was a major disruption for her, causing her to travel throughout the country seeking a solution. She found her way to our office, and we discovered that an imbalance of her bite was disrupting muscles in her neck and chest, leading to heart rhythm abnormalities. Her problem was resolved by the correct dental treatment to fix her bite and bring the muscles of her jaw, neck, and chest into balance.

We also treated a gentleman who had been experiencing nausea and elevated blood pressure. This had started after some bridgework had been done on his upper front teeth. It turned out that the new bridge compounded an underlying problem of his bite, interfering with the natural movement of his skull bones as well as affecting his jaw muscles. The result was changes in the mechanisms responsible for maintaining equilibrium and regulating blood pressure. The symptoms resolved when we corrected the bite problems by balancing the forces between his bite and the moveable bones within the skull that will be discussed in chapter V.

Research into the relationships between periodontal disease and systemic illness provides a deeper understanding of the nature of disease in general, as well as the associations between systemic and oral health. Bleeding gums and that film that coats your teeth are caused by dental plaque that can affect your heart and your major blood vessels, cause an increased risk of stroke, influence diabetes, and has been associated

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with pancreatic and prostate cancer as well as other health conditions. Inflammation is a common denominator between gum disease and systemic disorders.

There are various factors that may generate inflammation in your body overall, and when present, they will promote more inflammation in your gums. These systemic issues are caused by nutritional deficiencies, toxicity, faulty digestion, and stresses on the immune system from eating foods you are sensitive to.

Based on principles of natural healing, the methods of a holistic approach will help identify if there are hidden or unidentified sources of dental stress in your mouth that may contribute to the process of aging or the development of disease in your body.

The following is a list of dental conditions that may impact your health. These are considered dental risk factors that affect your general health and overall sense of well-being.

- Allergy or toxicity related to dental materials
- Infection and inflammation of the gums
- Decaying teeth leading to infections
- Teeth with failing root canals
- Residual bone cavitations in the jaw
- Electromagnetic currents created by electro-galvanic dental metals
- Imbalance of the bite or misalignment of the jaws causing neurologic, neuromuscular, cranial sacral, and myofascial tension
- Restrictions of the airway leading to snoring or sleep apnea (as well as dental stress caused by malocclusion preventing deep restorative sleep)

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- Discoloration or disfigurement of the teeth affecting your self-image and comfort in smiling

In the pages that follow, I will discuss these risk factors in greater depth so you might gain more insight into those that may be impacting your health or that of a loved one. You will also develop an understanding of the benefits of a holistic approach to dentistry that cares for the health of your teeth and your mouth with your overall well-being in mind.

CHAPTER II

An Introduction to the Holistic Philosophy

“The doctor [dentist] of the future will give no medication, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease.”

—Thomas Edison

Introduction to the Holistic Philosophy

We have sought to understand our biological nature through the examination and dissection of ourselves and the world around us, hoping to find through an understanding of our parts that which would make us whole. This has led us to a fragmented view. With all the knowledge we have of our parts and how they work, we have not come to understand our essence.

Our view has been to see ourselves as distinct entities—similar, but separate from one another and the world around us. Because of this sense of separateness, we have evolved to see ourselves as outside of nature rather than as an expression of nature.

In the philosophy of eastern cultures, there has been a perspective that all things of the universe exist as expressions of an innate intelligence that exists as a field of energy. The intelligence within localized areas of this energy field gives expression on the planes of matter to chemical and physical entities, as well as life itself. This is now validated

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by the evolving fields of quantum physics and quantum biology.

Health is the result of the maintenance of an ordered state of our physiology over time. Our organism is highly evolved to adapt to changes in various environmental conditions. The more extreme these conditions are, the more adaptation we need to make and the more our physiology is stressed. With sustained stress, our systems expend their adaptive capacities, and organization of the system decays. Health is the ability of our system to maintain a highly organized state of function, what scientists call homeostasis.

Loss of health occurs because of an organism's less than optimal state of function as a whole or because of deterioration of the systems functional components. This dysfunction leads to a serial decay of the integrity of the organism as a whole resulting in disease. This process is commonly associated with the aging process, though it is truly not aging. There is abundant evidence that human beings can maintain a highly functioning state of health throughout their lifespan, though this is a relatively uncommon experience.

This deterioration of the integrity of the system, the loss of order, and the deterioration of function leads to disruptions of the body—energetically, biochemically, structurally, and functionally—ultimately creating the conditions we call disease.

Study of the world's great traditions of natural healing reveals certain truths that can be applied to promote health and well-being. Amongst these are the need for healthful nourishment, the elimination of toxins, and the maintenance of physical, emotional, and energetic balance. These basic principles form the foundation for all holistic health practices.

When disease is present, it may be viewed as evidence of a disruption in the life force. Rather than just treating the consequences of disease, a holistic practitioner is oriented to finding the cause and where possible, assisting the affected individual in reversing the disease process.

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Often the cause is traced to an individual's lifestyle, their diet, their environment, their attitudes and beliefs, etc. Once the causative factors are known and eliminated, the patient's natural healing forces will resolve the "dis-ease." Healing occurs from within the individual. It cannot be imposed upon them.

Holistic Integrative Medicine is an emerging paradigm for health-care that integrates principles of healing and health promotion from the art and science of different health professions in different cultures. The unity of the human being in mind, body, and spirit is central to the philosophy and principles employed.

For dentistry, this model is exemplified by the recognition of the mouth as a holographic microenvironment of the body and as an integral part of a whole. The art and science of dentistry have evolved in far-reaching ways since the days of our ancestors. Despite our technological advances, we still have not come to a complete and integrated understanding of the interrelationships between the mouth and the sum total of our being. There is much to learn on this subject from advances being made in many different fields of study.

In many respects, we seek truth with blinders on. We have been prejudiced by history and our personal past experience. The historical events that have guided the evolution of the dental profession have shaped our thinking and molded our beliefs about dental health and dental healthcare.

In a bygone era, a dental practitioner's scope was limited to the filling of cavities with crude materials, extracting infected teeth, and replacing them with primitive prosthetic devices. The materials used were often toxic, and the dentures sometimes created stress on the patient due to poor fit and design.

Today, the scope of dental practice has broadened immensely to encompass a wide range of sophisticated services. In essence, dentistry has progressed from concerns about only teeth to concerns about teeth,

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gums, and the preservation of teeth with diseased nerves (which is not always a good idea, as we will discuss later on). With the coming of age of implant dentistry, we have developed sophisticated means to replace lost teeth.

Over the past thirty years, the dental profession has become more knowledgeable in understanding the relationship between the bite and the function of the jaw joint and muscles of the head and neck.

In recent years, many advances in research have begun to reveal associations between periodontal disease and chronic systemic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer. One could say that if this trend continues, we might just discover there is a body attached.

All along we have looked at the mouth from the perspective of dentistry, as well we should. However, as Einstein taught us with his theory of relativity, the perspective of an observer influences what she or he will see. Therefore, it is time we take a broader perspective.

A Historical Perspective: How Did We Get Here?

In the traditions of natural healing that originated in India, known as Ayurveda, healing is described as the process of the body remembering its identity. That is, to remember its “self.” This is profound.

When we look at the process of disease evolving in our bodies, we may recognize that disease is the result of the body moving away from its self. Where initially there was order and organization, over time chaos ensues. This becomes expressed in the most extreme of diseases such as cancer where cells of the body cease to recognize they are part of a whole and take on an identity of their own.

A fundamental principle of Ayurvedic medicine is to re-establish the balance of mind/body/spirit through balancing the chakras. Chakras are energetic centers of the body that align with the energy or life

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force. Each of the seven different chakras is associated with various ailments and areas of the body. More will be discussed about chakras in chapter X, “The Body, Mind, and Mouth as Thought and Emotion.”

A deeper understanding of our nature and our place in the universe can also be found in an exploration of the paradigm presented by Chinese medicine. From its conception, Chinese medicine dealt with the relationship between man and the cosmos in which we live. The energy of the universe is Chi. Chi is the energy of life. Chi exists in a myriad of forms. Practitioners of the Chinese healing arts have understood this for thousands of years.

It wasn't until Albert Einstein gave birth to quantum physics and his formula “ $E = mc^2$ ” that the western world began to awaken to appreciate the energy within nature. We now understand that there is both a continuum and a sameness between energy and matter. As we explore this continuum, we shall appreciate the continuity and sameness between biological energy, biological chemistry, and biological structures. This will give us a foundation for understanding in more depth the Dental Connection™.

Where Did Western Medicine Get Off Track?

Concepts of natural healing have evolved in all parts of the world and in many cultures. How is it that today there seems to be such a gap between medicine as practiced in the west and what we are relearning about traditions of natural healing from around the world? How have we forgotten so much? There are probably a variety of influences.

Some relate this to the evolution of the process of scientific inquiry that evolved in the west from Descartes and Newton, etc., leading to a reductionistic manner of investigation where the whole was viewed as merely the sum of its parts. Dissect the whole and study its parts, understand them, and you understand the whole. That was the reasoning anyway.

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The evolution of western scientific philosophy and technology has brought us into the modern world where our life span has improved because we don't succumb to infectious disease and malnutrition, which still affects so many in the third world countries, yet we live long enough to suffer the ravages of chronic degenerative disease. Where has modern medicine gone wrong?

Another major influence in the United States occurred shortly after the turn of the last century. In the late 1800s, there was a strong interest and widespread practice of principles of natural healing, some evolving here in the U.S. and others being imported from the natural healing traditions of Europe.

The chiropractic profession and the osteopathic profession were gaining wide support because of their effectiveness in providing relief to many who suffered from physical pain and disability. They both originated in America's Midwest. Concepts of natural healing through fasting and the use of herbal medicines were brought from Europe by Benedict Lust who founded the American School of Naturopathy.

This emergence of a natural health movement in the United States was profoundly impeded by the publication of The Flexner Report in 1910. An educator, Abraham Flexner was commissioned by Andrew Carnegie to study the quality of medical education in the United States and make recommendations for its improvement. His report, which was broad in its scope of recommendations, led to many improvements in the quality of training of allopathic physicians (MDs). Unfortunately, there were negative consequences as well.

"When Flexner developed his report, allopathic medicine faced vigorous competition from several quarters, including osteopathic medicine, naturopathic medicine, eclectic medicine, physio-medicine, herbal medicine and homeopathic medicine."¹

Flexner had a firm conviction that the physician should be scientific

1. 'Flexner Report', *Wikipedia* http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flexner_Report.

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in his approach to treat disease. In his time, the only field of science that had firmly established itself was the field of chemistry; the fields of biology and physics were in relative infancy.

In the field of medicine, the discipline of surgery was well established. Much advance had been made on the battlefields of the Civil War and in the subsequent years.

There had been much success preventing and treating infectious disease following the emergence of the germ theory in the late 1800s and applying the ideas of antiseptis introduced to the hospital setting by Joseph Lister. Lister had introduced the use of carbolic acid (now known as phenol) applied to surgical dressings to prevent infection as well as the concept of sterilization of surgical instruments.

Physicians had also been using chemical compounds to alter the physiological effects associated with disease. Aspirin had been introduced by the Bayer Company of Germany for the treatment of pain in 1899. It was the first non-addictive pain medication.

In 1903, barbiturates were introduced as a sedative, and were soon to replace the use of bromides that had been used to relieve symptoms of headache and stress. (Bromides were used in products such as Bromo-seltzer and were found eventually to be toxic and discontinued in use following WWII.)

Flexner, therefore, declared that to be scientific the physician needed to restrict his treatments to the use of chemical or surgical interventions. Flexner believed that any form of medicine other than allopathy that didn't employ drug therapies to treat disease was the same as quackery and charlatanism.

"Medical schools that offered courses in bioelectric medicine, eclectic medicine, naturopathy, homeopathy, or 'eastern medicine', for example, were told either to drop these courses from their curriculum

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or lose their accreditation and underwriting support. A few schools resisted for a time, but eventually all complied with the Flexner Report or shut their doors. This led to the standardization of the curricula of surviving schools.”²

It is of interest to note that in 1930 Flexner cofounded the **Institute for Advanced Study**, located in Princeton, New Jersey. Albert Einstein was one of the first professors that Flexner recruited there.³ By this point, Flexner recognized that science was broader than what the field of chemistry alone had considered.

But the die was cast, and the evolution of medicine and dentistry (which sought to follow the “scientific model” of medical education) continued for almost one hundred years following an allopathic model seeking to counter disease states of the body with surgery and chemical formulas, but gaining little more understanding of the nature of chronic degenerative disease.

2. ‘Flexner Report’, *Wikipedia* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flexner_Report.

3. ‘Albert Einstein’, *Historical Society of Princeton*, <https://princetonhistory.org/research/historic-princeton/albert-einstein/>.

CHAPTER III

Our Energy Body and the Mouth

As we embrace knowledge drawn from ancient concepts of healing such as Ayurveda and Chinese medicine, we understand that the body is an energy field with physical form.

Chinese medicine, the medicine of energy, speaks of this energy as Qi (also known as Chi). Chi is the energy of life. Chi exists in a myriad of forms. The Chinese have understood this for thousands of years. It wasn't until Albert Einstein gave birth to quantum physics and his formula $E = mc^2$ that the western world began to awaken to this. We now understand that there is a continuum and sameness between energy and matter. All is one. Sound familiar? We are an expression of nature and the field of the universe. We maintain health to the degree we maintain the order of our being in harmony with those conditions that promote life.

These ancient concepts have now been explained by the concepts of modern science such as quantum physics and the related field of biophysics. These concepts are well described in the book *Energy Medicine: The Scientific Basis* by James Oschman, and explored further on

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his website.⁴ This book is a must-read for anyone wanting a more in-depth understanding of the energetic nature of biologic systems.

The energy pathways of the body, known in Chinese medicine as the meridians, run from our feet through our torso, neck, and head, along our arms to our fingertips and back down again to our feet. As they pass through the body, they follow along pathways that course through the skin and underlying fascia, our muscles and bones, through our organs, and through the skull and teeth. Every cell of the body is in communication with every other cell via this connective tissue energy internet.



Figure 1: The Liver Meridian from an ancient drawing

The terms Yang and Yin used in the Chinese model of acupuncture energetics reflect the duality of Qi as seen in nature and the balancing push/pull of energy. This manifests as day and night, light and dark, hot and cold, up and down, male and female, etc. Interestingly, again there are parallels in contemporary western thought introduced by Einstein's Theory of Relativity. In our bodies, we can think of Yin as energy that flows into our body from outside and Yang energy that flows from our bodies to the external environment. A general rule is that "Yang will tend to excess, and Yin will tend toward deficiency."

The simple act of walking in nature drives an energy exchange that can be healing. There is an energy exchange between the earth and the body with every step. A bare foot enhances the transfer and provides

4. 'James L. Oschman', *Energy Medicine University*, <http://www.energymedicineuniversity.org/faculty/oschman.html>.

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natural changes to the energy state. All meridians of the body pass through the ball of the foot and absorb the positive energy of the earth. This creates the effect called “grounding.”

In the West, we speak of circulation systems in the body pertaining to the flow of fluids, primarily blood and lymph. In Chinese medicine, a broader view is taken with the flow of fluids being only a component of the overall flow of energy through the body's tissues.

Chinese medicine views the flow of energy as occurring through a network of channels, known as meridians, both on the surface and deep within the body. Access to influence the flow of energy through the body is afforded by the presence of acupuncture points that manifest along meridians on the surface.

Energetic therapies like acupuncture provide patients with the release of chronic tension and pain caused by previous traumas and other adverse effects of the body. Acupuncture gives comfort to individuals by bringing them closer to their true selves, facilitating the body's energy flow. In this way, the client's body is freed of discomfort and debilitating conditions.⁵ Similar results can be achieved through other forms of therapy that deal with the continuity of the body's tissues such as cranial sacral therapy, osteopathy, and chiropractic. All of these methods assist the body in restoring “homeostasis.”

Stimulation of points along these meridians will have an influence on remote, related organs and tissues. For example, “When acupuncture points on the kidney meridian are stimulated, they affect not only the kidney, but also embryologically related organs such as the ovary, testicle, uterus, fallopian tube, and to some extent the adrenal.”⁶

This is because, as the information encoded in our DNA is manifesting in response to the evolving energy fields of the embryo, tissues

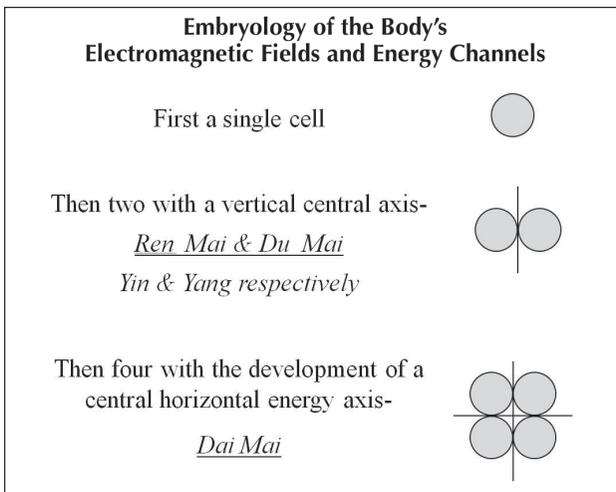
5. Mark Seem, *A New American Acupuncture: Acupuncture Osteopathy - The Myofascial Release of The Bodymind's Holding Patterns*. (BluePoppy Press, 1993).

6. Felix Mann, *The Ancient Chinese Art of Healing and How It Works Scientifically*, 2nd edition (Vintage Books, 1973).

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differentiate and at the same time maintain energetic connections to the germ tissues of their origin. Organs and tissues originating in different germ layers and regions of the nascent embryo share connections to their embryologic roots, thus the holographic nature of the body.

The meridians develop as our embryo is formed and begins to define us. As the initial fertilization of the egg by sperm occurs and the egg then divides in two, the first meridian relationship is formed because there are now two cells with an interface between them where they now have an electromagnetic relationship.



**Figure 2: The author's conception of
the development of the meridians**

This electromagnetic relationship continues to evolve and become more complex. It is persistent throughout our growth and development, as well as during our life. The connective tissues and the energetic relationships that develop provide for the continuity and relatedness of all of the cells within our body.

The major pathways of energy flow, defined as the Regular Meridians, are twelve pathways of energy flow that manifest along the superficial tissues of the body. They run from hand to head, from head to the foot, and vice versa. These meridians are known by the names of the organs (Zang Fu)

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with which they are related such as Lung, Large Intestine, Stomach, Spleen, Heart, Small Intestine, Bladder, Kidney, Pericardium, Triple Warmer [not actually an organ in the western sense, it relates to the balancing of energy, most closely related to our endocrine system], and Gall Bladder.

These Regular Meridians have subsidiary branches called divergent and collateral meridians that supply areas of the body adjacent to them. The divergent meridians run interiorly, and the collateral meridians run superficially. Keep in mind that the meridians incorporate every cell of the body.

For a basic understanding, consider that the meridians that are described as Yin are related to the organs involved with energy flowing into and circulating deep within the body. They arise from the feet and course deep within the body through the torso, head, and teeth to the tips of the fingers. Therefore, we have the Kidney, Liver, and Spleen arising in the feet (around the arch of the foot and the big toe) flowing into the torso and the head, and then the Heart, Pericardium, and Lung flowing into the hands to the tips of the fingers.

The meridians described as Yang run more superficially. They run down the back of the hands through the head and teeth to the torso, back down the legs and then through the heel and lateral part of the forefoot back to the ground. Originating in the hands, these are the meridians of Small Intestine, Triple Warmer (related to the flow of energy through the torso), and Large Intestine, which flow to the head and teeth and their continuation is as Bladder, Gall Bladder, and Stomach flowing down through the body to the feet.

These twelve Regular Meridians are described in *Chinese Acupuncture and Moxibustion* as “conduits which distribute Qi (Chi) and blood of the twelve major meridians to nourish the muscles, and possess the function of connecting all the bones and joints of the body in the maintenance of the normal range of motion.”⁷

7. Ibid.

The Teeth Are Connected to All Parts of the Body through the Meridians

The teeth are connected by the meridians to all parts of the body. The Chinese did not describe this. This fact was first described by Rheinhold Voll, M.D., in the 1950s. He invented a device known as the Dermatron with which he could measure variances in the galvanic skin response at different acupuncture points. In turn, he was able to stimulate acupuncture points that were out of balance to encourage a return to balance.

As he gained experience over time, his success in treatment continued to improve, and he made several important discoveries. One of the most important was the relationship of the teeth to the meridians. Voll discovered that when a tooth was diseased or had a toxic material used in a dental restoration, it impeded the healing of his patients. In other words, disease within the teeth will influence other regions of the body and vice versa. See Figure 3 on the next page.

This is readily demonstrated by means of Applied Kinesiology reflex testing as well as Voll electro-acupuncture diagnosis. When the teeth are diseased or stressed and acting as an influence elsewhere in the body, they are defined as being a focus of irritation within the energy systems of the body. The most common condition of a tooth that results in it acting as a focus is when the tooth has become infected because of a degenerative condition of the nerve pulpal tissue, which often results in root canal treatment of the tooth. Frequently, root canal treated teeth will act as persistent foci despite the appearance of a successful root canal treatment. More on this in Chapter VIII, "Focal Infection: a Challenge to the Immune System."

Another important part of the mouth's influence on the energetic body arises from the relationship of the bite to the function of the body as a whole. Because each tooth and the jaw system itself are connected to the body's energy internet, too much pressure from the bite on an individual tooth has the potential to short circuit its associated meridian.

Our Energy Body and the Mouth

This can result in weakness of muscles or stress on the organ associated with the muscle.

Misalignment of the jaw structures may also disrupt the flow through the meridians, as well as contribute to misalignment and imbalance of major structural elements of the body including the cranial sacral and musculoskeletal system. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter V, "Our Physical Body and the Mouth."

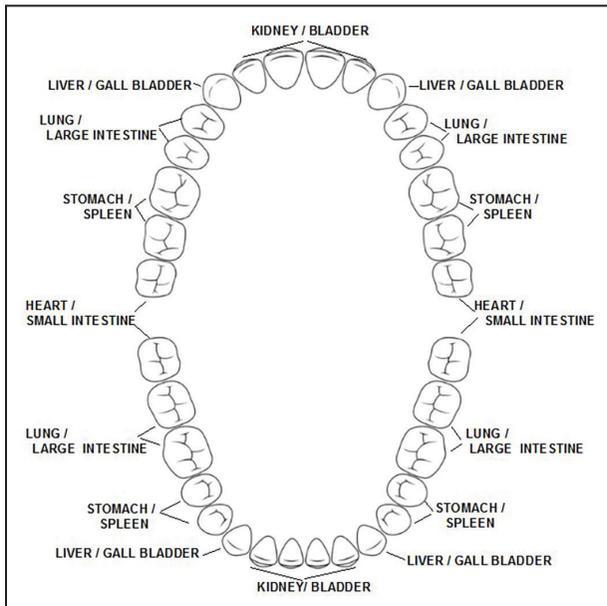


Figure 3: Voll's Dental Meridian Connections

When concerned about our general health, it is important to consider the energy connections to the mouth, jaw, and teeth. As stated, the tissues of the mouth and teeth are connected energetically to all other parts of the body. Each tooth corresponds with a different energetic pathway including the organ associated with it.

We hope you have enjoyed reading this introduction to
**The Dental Connection: The Role of Holistic Dentistry in the
Integrative Healing Paradigm.**

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The Dental Connection on Amazon.com

The Dental Connection is a book that bridges the gap between the ancient traditions of natural healing and modern dental technology.

This is the story of one dentist's odyssey from conventional dentistry to becoming a holistic, biological, and physiologic-oriented dentist. It is also a historical and scientific exploration of the evolution of holistic thinking in healthcare as it pertains to the mouth.

Today, the concepts of biological medicine and dentistry reflect our understanding of the causes of chronic disease and the options available to promote healing and disease reversal. The focus is on the patient rather than on the disease. Examination and diagnosis are based on understanding the changes in a patient's physiology; energetically, biochemically, structurally, and psychologically.

In this book, we focus on the principles of biological dentistry as well as our philosophy of structural integration of the mouth and the body that we call Dental Somatic Integration.

"If I needed to remove either the medical or dental component of my clinic, I would keep the dental because chronic problems will not resolve without biological dental care."

~ Dr. Thomas Rau, Director of Paracelsus Clinic, Switzerland



After experiencing his own health struggles, Dr. Lerner embarked on a journey to broaden and deepen his understanding of the interrelationship between the mouth and the rest of the body.

As Dr. Lerner continued to develop his skills as a dentist, he studied and trained with practitioners on the cutting edge of the fields of Chiropractic, Physical Therapy, Osteopathy, and Acupuncture to gain an understanding of the structure of the human body and how it works.

His exposure to Biological Medicine led him to explore the bio-energetic and bio-chemical connections between the mouth and the body with the intent of understanding the causes of dental diseases and their systemic ramifications.

All of this has led him to develop his unique approach to dentistry that treats the mouth with the body in mind.