

Heart-Based Living

by Doc Childre



Transforming the Earth through the Awakening
of Your Heart Intelligence

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In the last few years, more people than ever – from different backgrounds and walks of life – are talking about the heart. More company mission statements make a point to mention the importance of the heart in leadership and customer care. More speakers, articles and books, both spiritual and non-spiritual, are referring to the heart. Whether people mention speaking from the heart, listening to the heart, connecting with the heart, or following the heart, it is a clear sign that there is increased energetic awareness of the importance of the heart in all of life's decisions.

This desire for more heart is a growing momentum, one that people seem to be drawn to by the nudge of their own intuition or conscience. It's being experienced by millions who are coming into more global awareness and feel an internal need for the deeper connection and nurturing of spirit that comes from heart-based interactions. This interaction can be within a person's own mind and heart or between people who are trying to build community to facilitate personal growth and planetary peace through cooperative interaction.

Viral Momentums

Every year there are more viral media momentums that illustrate the hidden power of the heart. The movie, *What the Bleep*, showed research on sending love to water and the crystals changing into more harmonious shapes. The movie, *The Secret*, showed the power of positive feeling and the law of attraction to draw more desirable experiences

into our lives. These viral media momentums are creating personal inspiration and leaving people with a sense of fresh air and adventurous enthusiasm.

A viral momentum toward healthier living started in the '70s and has kept growing ever since. The viral movement toward greener living to help the planet began in the '80s and has kept growing as well. Both of these movements are aspects of heart awakening.

Specific examples of heart-directed movements gaining momentum now are deeper care about issues such as: stopping global warming, saving the rainforests, helping starving populations, putting war behind us, providing universal health care, and standing up for governmental policy changes with heart-felt common sense and directness. Since people have their own ways of relating to the heart, there are many more heart-directed initiatives – seen and unseen – that can be included in the general context of heart awakening.

In her book, *Turning Silver into Gold*, about the values and aspirations of today's baby boomers, Mary Furlong talks about the boomers' desire to connect with others and give back to society as an important spiritual component of their lives. She says, "It is what the baby-boom generation started in the 1970s with the human potential movement, and it is what they have the potential to realize today." Connecting, sharing and giving back is not just a fashion or a fad. It's a fast-growing momentum.

A poll within AARP, one of the largest membership organizations in the United States (38 million people age 50+), revealed that the No. 2 New Year's resolution of its members in 2007 was to become more spiritual. A 2004 Gallup poll reported that 80

percent of adults in the United States feel a need for spiritual growth, compared with 40 percent just four years before (from a report titled, *Surveying the Religious Landscape*).

The momentum to become more spiritual is quickly building because more people are intuitively picking up a need for heart connection, accompanied by an energetic encouragement and sparkle that seems to be in the air. This growing energetic brings a sense of hope and adventure, yet it's grounded in practicality and inspired by spirit. We call this increase in heart awareness and desire for practical spirituality a shift to heart-based living.

Heart Qualities

Heart-based living is not confined to religion or to any particular spiritual path. It's not a club you join. Heart-based living refers to all intentions and actions that express qualities of the heart in daily life. These heart qualities can include things like appreciating or caring for others, expressing kindness to those around you and giving back by volunteering to work with others to relieve suffering in humans or animals and to help the planet.

One of the most important and empowering aspects of heart-based living is the inner work required to discern your heart intuition and then follow your heart.

People have, for centuries, talked about and told others to "follow your heart." Why? Because people instinctively know that their heart's intuition yields the highest outcome – often at the expense of the mind's opinions, preferences and habits.

The practice of listening to the heart's intuition unfolds your "real self," a term we've all heard much talk about. Becoming your real self involves removing self-

centeredness and separation through the practice of being non-judgmental and forgiving, managing your emotional reactions, and expressing more love and appreciation.

Today, more people intuitively feel a need to increase their care and kindness. As they free themselves from the mind's preset judgments, they begin to see that neither global nor individual peace can be had as long as judgment, blame and bitterness persist between cultures and within personal relationships. More are realizing in their heart-of-hearts that they do care, that they do want a warmer connection with others and a deeper connection with their real selves.

The resistance to deeper caring and appreciation comes from society's handed-down entrainment patterns of judgment and separation. This laziness about caring more for others is contagious. It blocks genuine compassion. Sincere compassion eases the way for effective human interactions and higher outcomes.

As a society in general, we are not bad-hearted, yet we are vulnerable to mind-driven ambitions that disregard the balance and wisdom of our intuitive hearts. Millions of people are self-absorbed and consumed by ambitions that leave little time for genuine care and appreciation in their home, their workplace or anywhere else. Because of the increasing stress factors in the world today, more people are starting to realize that ambition to get ahead cannot justify shutting off the caring and compassionate heart.

A Planetary Shift

Many years ago, through charting the changing energies and dynamics on the planet and its increasing stress levels, it became my unwavering intention to facilitate the

awakening of heart, and then through scientific research, help bridge the intuitive connection between mind, heart and spirit.

There is a planetary shift going on, driven by a desire for individual and collective heart-and-spirit integration. As the planetary intelligence unfolds, more people will understand that their heart is the natural portal for spirit integration. They will begin to realize that opening its door requires practice and commitment to heart-based living.

The aspect of heart-based living that I consider most vitally important is for people to learn to manage and be responsible for their own energies, in order to unfold the intuitive connection between their minds and hearts.

There is a natural bridge between mind and heart, yet a genuine commitment to manage and balance the emotional nature is required to manifest that connection. Most of the density between the mind and heart connection is made of old, engrained emotionally patterned responses, such as anger, anxiety, blame, jealousy, comparisons, selfish ambition, depression and more.

These attitudes create persistent blocks between mind and heart, causing stress overload. They hinder and repress the flow of spirit within yourself and in your day-to-day interactions with others and with life.

People are forever trying to "tame" or balance their restrictive, energy-draining attitudes, but often it's slow-going. That's because they are trying to do it from the mind when it's a job for the heart. When the mind realigns with the heart, then progress can be made quickly.

Stress overloads are lessened by cleaning out old issues from your heart, including resolving past conflicts with other people that you still harbor. Subtle energetic

blocks accumulate in your system when you strongly imprint experiences of hurt, betrayal or any emotional pain that resulted from life interactions or stem from self-worth problems, guilt, and more. That stored, unresolved energy often shuts you off from your heart connection, stifling the natural flow of spirit through your mental, emotional, and biological systems. You can learn to re-open your heart connection to clean out those old unresolved issues.

The Textures of Life

When you are not connected with your heart, it diminishes the feeling textures in your life's experiences. When life becomes dry, boring and bordering on depression, you're experiencing diminished spirit flow in your system. Through learning to reconnect with your heart by putting out heart qualities like appreciation, compassion, and forgiveness, you reactivate your spirit, which increases the feeling textures of your experience, bringing you more positive feelings, such as joy and happiness.

People often intuitively sense that increasing their genuine compassion and appreciation for others will generate more positive feeling textures of experience. There is a wealth of overlooked physical benefit as well.

Practicing these heart qualities is basic bottom line maintenance for mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health. When you do not reactivate these feeling textures, stress begins to stack up in your system. In *The HeartMath Approach to Managing Hypertension*, a book I co-authored with Dr. Bruce Wilson, a cardiologist, we point out that:

Cortisol is known by some as "the mother of all stress hormones." That's because cortisol is released in large quantities when you perceive or feel stress. Cortisol is important to help your body respond to stressful situations. Small

amounts of cortisol are necessary for everyday function, but you are only supposed to get an extra dose of cortisol in times of real danger when there's a very real threat to your survival. The problem is, this potent hormone is also triggered by any negative emotion like anxiety, anger or hostility, as well as depression. These emotions and moods are felt by millions everyday as their standard mode of living.

As people adapt to these moods, they begin to think that's who they are. There's a feedback loop at work, too. Just as a bad mood triggers stress and cortisol, if it hangs around in your bloodstream for awhile, cortisol can help to create a bad mood. We refer to this as a vicious cycle, because it feeds on itself. Bad mood triggers cortisol, which then makes you feel bad emotionally, which ends up creating more cortisol, which then makes you feel worse... This is one of the reasons that chronic stress from events that you repeatedly respond to with emotions like worry, anxiety or anger can lead to burnout and depression. It's not bad to have these emotions trigger cortisol — it's the inability to let go of them that keeps cortisol pumping through your system, causing the burnout and depression.

The hormone DHEA (sometimes called the vitality or anti-aging hormone) helps to counteract some of the effects of cortisol. Just as cortisol can be triggered by negative emotions, DHEA can be increased by generating positive emotions, such as love, care, compassion and appreciation. DHEA can also help create those same uplifting feelings while it's running through your bloodstream. As opposed to the vicious cycle described earlier for cortisol, DHEA seems to be at the center of a virtuous cycle, as DHEA helps create positive mood, and positive mood helps create more DHEA.

Practicing heart-based living will increase your capacity, even in a chaotic society, to manage your emotional energy and greatly reduce your stress deficit. The energy saved from the practice of living from your heart's discernment, reduces personal stress and enhances your creative solution capabilities.

It's important to understand that creativity is not just for art, music, writing or some other "creative activity." Creativity is most needed to find ways to deal with life challenges that seem to have no solutions. All types of creativity, and especially creativity for solving problems, can be accessed through listening to your heart's intuitive feelings, your heart intelligence.

Spirit Infusion

As people learn to navigate through life by aligning with the guidance of their intuitive heart feelings, they progressively spiritualize their human nature. A spirit-infused human nature doesn't exempt you from challenges, which are simply opportunities for growth. Increased spirit integration unfolds a new sense of dignity with increased love, care and compassion for others, while at the same time, guiding you to take responsibility for your own thoughts, feelings and actions. Integrating spirit with humanness helps bring sky-to-street for humanity. It's an inside job for each person, yet it's do-able and the process is friendly.

The Inside Job

To increase personal spirit integration, practice listening to the intuitive feelings in your heart so you can discern and gain insight into the small challenges that life presents. If your practice and commitment remain genuine, not ambition-driven, then significant challenges, requiring more complex discernment, will become easier to address.

Ambition tends to jam the subtle frequencies and feelings from your heart's intuition. Emotionally charged issues or mental gridlocks require more practice to discern, disarm, and resolve. This starts with a calm and sober evaluation from heart alignment.

Take five minutes to practice heart alignment by breathing in the feeling of appreciation or intentional-calm through your heart or chest area then breathing out the

feeling of appreciation through your solar plexus or stomach area. This stabilizes the emotional charge, while facilitating, intuitive connection and sober assessment.

When your approach is genuine, not mind-driven, then progress will unfold at the speed of balance, not at the speed of your mind's desire.

As you practice becoming more sensitive to your intuitive heart feelings, your mind is likely to distract you by spilling impatience into the path of your intentions, creating doubts and diluting your commitment. Just as often, the mind will try to pose as your intuition. Don't fall for it. In time, with genuine commitment to practicing heart alignment, the difference between intuitive thoughts generated by your heart feelings and mind nattering will become more distinguished and easier to sort out. The mind is not the bad guy. Its job is to help sort out and manifest your intuitive feelings, not to author your intuitive feelings.

Your feelings reveal the deepest truth of where your real self stands regarding issues within yourself, as well as those between you and others. But the mind, when not aligned with the heart, is skilled and relentless at misrepresenting what your deepest feeling truth is. You can trust that you will develop the intuitive discernment to know your deeper heart feelings as you increase spirit flow into your system. This can be done through the practice of tools and techniques, like the exercise above, which help bring your mind and emotions into alignment with your heart's intuitive guidance. The practice of tools for heart-based living gradually reveals your real self. You'll know that authenticity is increasing when you don't have to look over your shoulder as much while navigating life's course.

Heart-based living helps you learn to live in the now, bringing more of your real self into each moment. Becoming more of who you really are releases inner security, allowing you to relate to life with increased hope and confidence. Increased fulfillment is the result of this process.

Heart-based living empowers co-creation with others for the benefit of all. In the planetary shift going on, more people living from the heart can create rapid, positive global change.

About the Author

Doc Childre is a leading, in-depth researcher on the nature of human consciousness and understanding of the heart. Doc is dedicated to bringing a wider understanding of the heart to the planet, especially to the ordinary person on the street. In 1991, he founded the Institute of HeartMath, a research and education nonprofit organization that studies stress and heart-brain interactions. Doc is the architect of the HeartMath system. HeartMath programs and products have been used by hundreds of Fortune 500 companies, hospitals, schools, health professionals, athletes and individuals of all ages to improve performance, health and well-being.

In 1997, he founded HeartMath LLC to provide training programs, tools and technologies for empowering heart-based living and performance enhancement to individuals and organizations. In 2002, Doc founded Quantum Intech, Inc., to develop and license emotion-interactive technologies, including the award-winning Freeze-Framer heart rhythm coherence feedback system, the award-winning mobile emWave Personal Stress Reliever and coming intuit-technologies for intuitive decision-making (for more information see, www.heartmath.com).

Doc is the author of numerous books, including The HeartMath Solution, From Chaos to Coherence, Transforming Anger, Transforming Stress, Transforming Anxiety, The HeartMath Approach to Managing Hypertension, and Transforming Depression.

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