



The Role Of Consciousness In Healing

Greg Eckel, ND, LAc With
Dr. Pedram Shojai



Greg Eckel, ND, LAc

Hi, everybody. Welcome back to the Bioenergetics Summit. I am Dr. Greg Eckel, your host, and I have Dr. Pedram Shojai here, the urban monk. We're talking about the role of consciousness in healing. Little of his background. He's a New York Times bestselling author of several books and the producer of over a dozen films and series. He's the founder of bpossible.com. He hails from the tradition of Daoist Qigong masters, and is an Abbott from the Yellow Dragon monastery. Dr. Pedram, welcome aboard.

Dr. Pedram Shojai

Great to be here. Nice to see you.

Greg Eckel, ND, LAc

Ah, this topic is very compelling. The role of consciousness in healing, and it is an enormous topic and very important one at best. I wanted to start out with this question of, well, one, why did you pick this one for the Bioenergetics Summit?

Dr. Pedram Shojai

I think a lot of times, people in our world, in our culture, people are talking about the myriad ways to address certain things down in the level of as Daoists would say, the 10,000 things. But before the 10,000 things, there's the five elements, there's yin and yang, and then there's the great Dao. And I think understanding that we need to swim upstream to really come to resolution at a level that actually transforms things in life is important. I could try to direct a topical remedy to say an eczema issue, but not realize that it came from something upstream in my gut or something from my anxiety. And so I think there's this precious little conversation around that, and I figure in a summit like this people are gonna be talking about a lot of the other stuff. And so I would like to kind of put a pin in this piece of it and say, let's talk about the



way this is mapped out, and the way the ancients saw it because I think that energy healing great, right? But the Qi follows the Shen, so what's the Shen? And so for one doctor of oriental medicine to another, let's get into kind of the core philosophy, and then reconstruct back how this conversation started in ancient Daoist circles.

Greg Eckel, ND, LAc

I love it. All right, well, let's start then with what are the three treasures?

Dr. Pedram Shojai

Jing, Qi, and Shen, Jing being the essence, the DNA you came in with, what your parents gave you, the endowment if you will. For good or for bad, the genetic tendencies, the anxiety, the allergies, the immunity issues, in some aspects, the quality of the way your brain processes. A lot of stuff we can't control. Our parents could have controlled, had they known better in some ways, and some of it just goes down multiple generations and takes a lot of time to heal on a conscious level. So that's the essence, right? And so the metaphor would be a candle, that's the wax. The Qi is the energy, and the Qi would be the flame of the candle. And then the glow around that flame is the Shen or the spirit. And so you have this kind of material substrate that has incarnated in a human body, but then this process of life is the energy that's flowing all around it. But for what, right? What is it? What's the vision? What's the mind map around it? Where is the ultimate expression of that?

And in this metaphor would be the halo or the glow around the candle, and that's what we're gonna talk about today because the treasures, the three treasures that we talk about in the Daoist system, you know, always want to preserve the Jing so that life is long and life is healthy. And then you wanna treat the Qi or flow of that energy so that you can have healing and resolution flow. But the most important part that I think gets side stepped in a lot of these conversations, not by all but it doesn't hit the narrative as much, is that the rule being that the Qi follows the Shen. The mind directs the flow of energy. So whether that is an external idea. I wanna build a tree house for my kids. I think about the tree house, I think about the tree house, and I put mental energy and assemble kind of the mapping of this tree house.

But then I also put my feet under me and put some money behind it, and go buy some lumber, and nails and do the thing. But then I drive energy into manifesting this vision on planet earth, and finally my kids get a tree house, right? Whether that is healing a shoulder, whether that is bringing up a kid, all of these things need your consciousness anchored first, and then the energy follows. And that sounds really cool and abstract, but what I would put to our listeners is



that we live in an attention economy. We live in a universe where we are perpetually being distracted more and more by the myriad things trying to grab our attention and monetize 'em, or get our votes, get our money, get our energy, whatever way that is. And it makes us less capable of being present, and anchoring our consciousness on one thing at a time so that we can actually heal that body part, manifest that thing, get the promotion, build the tree house, right? And so the attention is a scarce resource, and it's something that I'd love to spend more time talking about with you today because there's been a lot of talk. Wayne Dyer's worked about the power of intention, you know? You muster up a bunch of willpower and you push it into something and you make it happen. But I would say that intention is half the battle, right? The intention sits in the kidneys. It's the juror. It's the part of our energetic system that is anchored to our water, but the manifestation platform for Daoism and the way we think about things and my temple lineage is it's always fire and water working together as a manifestation platform. And so the fire sits in the hearts, the Shen. So how do you take the intention and attention, put 'em together to actually make things happen in the world around you? That's what I'd love to spend some time talking about today.

Greg Eckel, ND, LAc

I love that. The statement is energy or Qi goes where the tension flows. So the energy flows where the attention is, and that component of the heart and the kidney and the steaming that the fire steams the water from the kidneys and then distributes to the body. I think it is so crucial. We can't go through it unconsciously looking for the purple pill to take mindlessly. And even what that stirs up for me is that even that thought around consciously creating the world that we want to live in from our health, to our relations, to our balance with the planet, and it is what is missing now in Western medicine, and kind of the Western world, is this rootedness and consciousness, the remembrance of almost our future of where we're going as a species together. You brought up this concept of Shen, spirit, and you said that resides in the heart. Will you expand on that a little?

Dr. Pedram Shojai

Yeah, it lives in the blood, resides in the heart according to the ancients, and it's also synonymous with mind. So mind and spirit in the Chinese system are very integrated. Now there's a different aspect of mind called yi or lives in the earth element. So there's different areas of mind and different ways the ancient Daoists had kind of mapped out the different parts of how the intellect versus spirit that's connected with the universe at large. And so that's the one I'm talking about. The fire element aspect of mind that is the anchor of your consciousness. And to your point, we're all walking around these kind of empty shelled meat suits trying to look for



external fixes to problems that we're having because we have been distorted in a reality that is looking for answers from without instead of within. And so I come from a steam school actually, Tao Ton Pai, and the lineage I come from is a fire water school. It's the fusion of fire water into steam that creates that fusion of heaven and earth, if you will. And that is the missing ingredient. Everyone is looking for a Quaalude, whether it's Advil, or tapping, or some meditation or some device that zaps my Qi, I'm looking for something outside of myself to fix this thing, instead of embodying the temple and bringing the consciousness back in which is the agent of change. And that consciousness will map all change in a way that will then bring balance to your life. Not just put a bandaid on what you think you need to fix.

All I did was make more money, then my life would work out. All these kind of if then clauses that, you know? Or if this damn shoulder wasn't bugging me so much, I'd be working out every day. Turns out people fix their shoulders and they still don't work out every day. What is that, right? Where's the operating system in that? And so this mapping of the Shen to the heart, the heart being the emperor and kind of the lore of Chinese and Chinese cultural influence on their medicine is obviously all over the place, right? They approximated the metaphors to reflect their reality, and still works, right? The emperor being the heart, the general being the liver, and there are different elements working through the body to kinda help you execute this thing called life. And I think that when you bring the consciousness back into the fold, not only do you then stop and say what am I doing to contribute to this problem?

What am I doing that's not helping this problem? How am I involved in this thing that I'm asking for help on? It's so easy to go help, Dr. Fix me, right? But you've run your life into this corner, so where's your agency? Where's your relationship with whatever this ailment is, and how do you become a central player in bringing that resolution back? 'Cause again, if I'm looking to Dr. Greg over here to fix my shoulder, my Qi is now over here with this wonderful doctor. But this guy outside of myself saying, you come in and fix me oh external person, instead of retroreflecting my attention and putting my consciousness in my own shoulder and saying, you know, it's funny. It feels like when I do this, it grabs here. And then working with this agent called Dr. Greg to help come to a resolution together, right? And so I push my mind out of my body looking for someone from outside to help it back in. And that, man, that seems like it's a syntax error in computer science, right? It just doesn't work that way.

Greg Eckel, ND, LAc

Yes, it's like step one. We're disempowered, we become a victim in that scenario of external reality fixing us. I'm gonna do this. Yes, boom. It's almost like we've become a victim with that



step one of going outside of our body and looking for that external fix. And if we look at this from the ancients, and looking at the universal principle of oneness, in the inherent wisdom of the body presenting us with a symptom to show us, hey, pay attention to me, pay attention to me. I'm out of balance. If we listen to that and ask the questions of ourselves like you've brought up of like we need to bring that into the discussion and really come at it from this extra internal path, rather than immediately stepping outside of the body, becoming a victim.

That's the way that I practice, Pedram, and it's really interesting to hear it is couched. I mean, I know that, but I wanna share this and make a highlight of it for our listeners and viewers. In the oneness principle of listening to your body, listening to the symptoms, because it's the guide. That's all I do all day. I like to say I do a lot of nothing all day. It's the body, it's the medicine, it's the innate intelligence working together. And so having it clearly delineated in these ancient texts and these lineages is so exciting to be able to share this. So thank you for bringing it up, and I love that you know, you started out with the role of consciousness and healing right from the get go to really couch and put us into this vein of discussion. So, you know, the Shen, the spirit, the emperor of the heart kind of manifested or delineated by the cultural importance in China, it still does play out today. We can understand this in the west. It's not our upbringing or our backgrounds, but we get that. I love that Chinese medicine is heart centered. Any other aspects of Shen that you wanted to bring into this conversation here?

Dr. Pedram Shojai

So if you look at the trigrams of heaven and earth, it's three pure yang lines, three pure yin lines. But then when you transpose fire and water, fire will have two yang lines with the yin line in between. And it'll be the opposite, it'll flip for water. And so part of the kind of alchemical process is to take the Shen and the juror, the attention and the intention, and fuse them in a way so that you come closer to heaven and earth to your primordial kind of root being. And the Shen needs the counterpart of the juror, the water. So the intention needs the attention, the attention needs the intention.

Think about it. It's one thing to focus on something, right? Okay, I'm focusing on a seed that I just put in the ground, which is a thought form, an idea, but where's the water? And then that's where you bring the water, the flow of your vitality. So now you're taking a thought form, and you're bringing energy to it. You're watering this thought form seed until it becomes manifest. It's like a hologram that keeps taking energy from your attention and your intention, until it waters it into the unfolding in three dimensions. And so you'll see this with Sai Baba, you'll see this with people that can actually understand and short circuit this, and bring things and



manifest things very quickly, right? And so when I see somebody who is in a healing crisis and has been in it for a decade, I know that their attention is splintered. I know that they are distracted beyond repair from an outside agent, and they've been doctor shopping for a decade and everyone's let 'em down because they are not able to put their attention on something. Now, there's a lot of reasons for that. I mean, you could say, oh, you're a terrible meditator, but that's kind of a cop out. There could be a lot of trauma, there could be a lot of gut dysbiosis leading to noise that's amplifying all the voices in their heads. There are a lot of reasons why someone can't sit still, and as a physician, we work to help resolve that, move the impedance, and kind of help them come to their center.

But there is one meme that I challenge, and this isn't popular, but I don't care to be popular, is we've lost our relationship with Kung Fu. We've lost our relationship with hard work. And so, oh, I have a device that does meditation for me. I have an app I listen to that puts me into my Zen state. I take ketamine, or Quaaludes, or a pill. Again, all these outside things that are shortcuts to this state of being that the ancients found is best accessed through silence and equanimity. And that, unfortunately for our Western listener, means sit on your ass, and breath, and observe, and meditate. And every single human who's taken that advice after some time and probably after some initial friction, has gotten to a point where they say, holy crap, I don't know what's happening, but it's helping. And that's work, right? Nobody wants to hear that, nobody wants to do work. Everyone wants Dr. Greg to fix them.

Everyone wants a device that zaps them back into balance so they can go back to their lives, and that's also a crisis of consciousness where I think we've been usurped and our consciousness is no longer connected with the work that truly needs to be done, which is coming back to life through our alignment of mind, body, and spirit. And so if you're like, oh, I tried meditating. It didn't work. Get back to work. I refuse to sell sugared cereal to children, right? Everyone out there's trying to teach people that it's okay to cop out of that work, and I've never ever seen a patient who truly healed not take responsibility and step in, and wake up. Retroflect their attention and wake up.

Greg Eckel, ND, LAc

That response-ability, that is a lovely word. We put a dash in there, response-ability. We have that ability in the response, and it really is. I feel like it is the work of why we incarnated to this planet, this learning environment. And it is this remembering of this ancient component of these are miraculous vessels when operated properly. They are just meat suits when not, and it's really putting the spirit back in the consciousness aligning with ourselves as the universal one,



because that's where we return. That's where we came from. And then we have this separation and remembering. So you've talked about manifestation of when people are aligned, or like Sai Baba, or others that have mastered this component of almost magical abilities because they step out of the physical reality, and they have remembered that they are the one. Daoist manifestation and living in a chaotic world, like, it is our attention, units are scattered. There's traumas that play, you know, you went through the list. What kind of recommendations or suggestions? I mean, you definitely said just sit and breathe, number one. How else do you address this with folks?

Dr. Pedram Shojai

Yeah, it's really kind of like a universal judo flip, right? The gnostics talked about this kind of parasitic consciousness called the Archons, which were there to distract us from our God self. And everything they did created a distraction to have us forget our God selves, right? And that was kind of the orientation of the entire gnostic gospel is coming back to your God self. Realizing that Gaia or Sophia, Mother Earth is actually a goddess that gave her body for us and to incarnate, and the sun is a God, and everything is divine. And we have fallen into this dreary sleep where we forget that. And so the remembrance of that, and, you know, you gotta be careful about this because once you start talking about the G word, people start fighting about it. And I think that is also the devil's work is to intercept the dialogue at that level and not let us find our God selves, because my God self, and a Muslim, and a Jew, and a Buddhist God self is the same essential God self. And then people start fighting over the words and it gets very dangerous.

But I would say that the central orientation of waking up to who you truly are and awakening your consciousness to the immortality of its true essence, whether or not that carries through in this body or not, is irrelevant. The immortality of life and the energy of that spring, that kernel of life, that's moving through all of us that has an awareness upon itself, and turning our externalized awareness back to that and becoming cognizant of this thing that is inside of us, that is the only game in town. Everything else is band-aids, right? Everything else is distractions. And so if you look at all of the kind of ancient traditions coming home to who you truly are is it. It's the only game in town. Everything else is there to distract you away from your God self. Everything there is an externalized pull of your consciousness to somewhere where you are less focused on that very thing. And the more you focus on that, the more that light starts to turn on, the more you wake up and the more you realize you can never harm another human because that is you.



Greg Eckel, ND, LAc

Beautifully said, and I just am gonna reiterate that energy flows where attention goes. So it is our responsibility to focus our attention into what we're creating, what we want. So this Daoist manifestation, I mean, it's the ancients had it figured out and it's been transmitted through time. You're this lineage holder of an Abbott. I wanna put people into action at the end of our interview here. And what would you recommend? What would be your best next step for somebody watching, viewing, listening? What do you recommend there?

Dr. Pedram Shojai

I would say, you know, and one of the things that you said is energy goes where your attention, the energy flows to where your attention goes. And then the last part of that statement is, and that's what grows, right? And so you are watering those seeds and so I would say, if you're listening to this right now and if it's your shoulder, it's your adrenals, it's your Lyme disease, whatever, I would immediately retroflect my attention back inward to the thing that's bothering me, and ask my body, ask the thing, ask that joint, what do you want? What is this? What's ailing you? And really kind of get into the subtle messaging and communication system that has constantly been running. Pain is a really blunt instrument, and pain comes much later on the information highway. And that usually comes because we're too distracted and distorted to hear the subtle messaging well before.

A meditator would understand that they're experiencing a minute amount of anxiety probably two years before the panic attack starts, right? And so the question is, how do we go back into asking this child, if you will, why it's crying inside our body? Whatever that ailment is to you. And again, learn to listen and learn to retroflect your attention back to that so that the meaningful information helps you unravel that. Now, it doesn't mean you fire your doctor. Doesn't mean you don't do other interventions, but it means you're now in the ring, and you are an active participant, if not the conductor, of this orchestra again. And once that happens, listen, I've seen thousands of patients and been around the block. Used to have a lot of hair, right? It's the people that take responsibility and bring their consciousness to the campfire who heal. Everyone else is shopping for outside solutions, and they're gonna continue to shop and it's exhausting.

Greg Eckel, ND, LAc

Love it. I think you really brought it back. The role of consciousness in healing. Thank you so much. Any last parting words for our listeners and viewers?



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Dr. Pedram Shojai

Yeah, listen, you are more valuable today than you were yesterday to planet Earth. And so the onus is on you, not just for the planet and what it needs of us, of your family, of your community to be the best, brightest, and most healthy expression of yourself every day going forward. And so again, the sooner you wake up the majesty of that, the sooner you start to clean out your systems, and heal your body, and bring energy through your life to then be a co-creator of a beautiful dream. Instead of someone who's a passive participant in what could be construed as a nightmare, right? So the world needs you back. Please come back.

Greg Eckel, ND, LAc

Thank you, Dr. Pedram so much.