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# My Journey to Better Medicine: Healing the Mind-Body Split through an Integrated Cross-Cultural Model

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My Journey to Better Medicine: Healing the Mind-Body Split through an Integrated  
Cross-Cultural Model

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As a future medical doctor, I will always see the process of healing through the hybrid consciousness of my Eastern-Hindu upbringing and Western academic and scientific training. The Eastern philosophy of healing has been linked to consciousness and how the powers of human consciousness can affect the body's healing.<sup>1 2</sup> The Western perspective of medicine, which has developed as a result of the industrial and scientific revolutions, generally treats the human body as an object.<sup>3</sup> However, this is not to say that Western medicine is flawed. In fact, Western medicine is incredibly effective in certain specialties, but is limited by the mind-body split. Therefore, it neglects to recognize the valuable effects of consciousness in medical practice. A cross-cultural model that brings together these two medical perspectives is what I would like to apply to my future medical practice, health advocacy work, as well as scholarship. I see myself as a pioneering medical professional serving in the United States and helping to advance a holistic approach.<sup>4</sup>

Being raised as a Brahman Hindu, I grew up understanding that natural remedies and intentional focusing of the mind are the best forms of healing. Attending school in America, pursuing a career in Western medicine, and learning the ways of Western medical practices, I have come to learn the exact opposite: there is a set, scientific way to treat every medical problem that does not take into account the psychological or spiritual state of the patient. One of the central problems that arise from this Western paradigm is the mind-body split. Being able to look through both of the Eastern and Western perspectives, like a binocular, shines light on a new form of medicine, in which the mind and body are healed together. However, it is nearly impossible to decide, to this day, whether the mind and body are two separate entities or if there is only one entity that represents them together within a unified field of consciousness. Many questions arise from this debate attempting to define the separation or

oneness of the two. For example: If the mind and body are distinct, then how do they interact? If these two were separate, which of the two is in charge? Is there another entity that controls both? In this University Honors Thesis, I provide analysis to these questions and an integrated cross-cultural model of the Western and Eastern perspectives that will lead to better medical treatment for all.

As aforementioned, the mind-body split has made the West focus on the body alone, which has caused it to become successful in developing technological advances in all types of medical procedures based on objectivity (surgery, joint replacement, x-ray and neuroimaging). Now, these advancements are used throughout the entire world. On the other hand, the spiritual science from the East focuses on the connection between the mind and the body, and how that connection can be used to heal. It has been said that most innovation and advancement brings together what first seemed separate, and I plan to prove myself as the healer of the mind-body separation to provide better medical care for all patients. However, my journey to heal the split is not short, so in order to do so I must first begin by describing the mind-body problem and defining Dualism and Non-Dualism. Then, I will analyze the arguments for Dualism and Non-Dualism. After this, I will try to explain the difference between the scientific approaches to the healing process in terms of psychiatric medicine, alongside the general mental techniques that can be used to help healing. Then, I will go into the spirituality of experience provided by my Hindu background. Finally, I will end by educating future doctors and my choice in osteopathic medicine as a field more open to a holistic approach.

## Physical vs. Non-Physical

Many theories have been put forth to attempt to explain this interaction between the mind and body, but the two essential arguments that are talked about the most within the field of this debate are Dualism and Non-Dualism. Dr. Karen Shanor is a Western M.D. who understands the holistic interaction of mind and body and has given numerous talks in the area of brain and consciousness. According to Dr. Karen Shanor, “Every experience and every thought changes our brain” (Shanor 6:02). The human brain can change numerous times a minute.<sup>5</sup> If this is true, then, logically, there is no possibility that we can accurately measure the activity in the brain at a particular moment. Furthermore, it can be inferred that measurements of the ‘mind’ are completely inaccurate.<sup>6</sup> It is not only because the brain changes so much, but also because of the conclusion that the brain is not the mind. This idea has been labeled “Dualism”, and it perpetuates the belief that there are two types of substances: the physical substance and the non-physical substance. Contrary to what Non-Dualists believe, in Dualism the non-physical substance refers to the intellect, mind, and consciousness.<sup>7</sup> It is thought that the terms, intellect, mind, and consciousness are all interchangeable; when in reality they are very different in definition. Before we can analyze the differences between these terms, we have to look directly at what a non-physical substance is and how it can exist.

Using the example of ideals that have real-world consequences, the ideas of truth and justice are abstract, and in that sense, it can be logical to call them non-physical concepts. Likewise, the mind, for example, does not have its own measurable existence, but it is a non-physical concept existing in addition to the brain and physical matter as an active thinking entity. It can be argued then, how could a thing with no physical substance think and produce

all the thoughts that we have? Most dualists would believe that this provides proof of the existence of a mind-body split. Gottfried Leibniz gives a splendid example that explains the reasoning behind the Western Dualist argument. He says, “Imagine that there is a machine whose construction would enable it to think, to sense, and to have perception... when visiting within it, find only parts pushing another, and never anything by which to explain a perception” (Leibniz 17:12). Likewise, suppose our brain was a machine that could think and make decisions. Then, when examining its internal parts, there would be no particular thing that could be distinguished as the “part that thinks”. This results in the mind-body split, and consequently, the Western belief that to treat the part within the machine that thinks, you must treat the machine itself. While the intentions of this kind of thinking are benevolent, after some time, the recognition of the parts within the machine is lost, which is what we often see from Western physicians who forget about the consciousness of their patients.

### **Dualism and Non-Dualism**

René Descartes, the 17<sup>th</sup> century philosopher advocated that he could imagine a mind without a body, but not a body without a mind. His ideas resulted in Cartesian Dualism, or the Cartesian Split, which argues that there is a two-way interaction between mental and physical substances. Descartes believed that the mind interacted with the body at the pineal gland. This type of belief proposes that the mind is the one in charge and maintains control over the body, but it also accounts for the situations in which the body can also influence the otherwise ‘rational mind’, such as when people act out of passion. However, Cartesian Dualism over-emphasizes rationality and individuality where experience and the feeling within the body are obscured. Descartes also proposed ‘*cogito ergo sum*’, which when translated means “I think, therefore, I am” (Heffernan 7:140). Descartes believed that he could cast doubt on the

existence of his body, but not the existence of his mind, and the fact that he could doubt one but not the other, told him that he must be made of two different kinds of substances.

Cartesian Dualism recognizes the thought “I am” as the foundations of individual identity, but says nothing of how the quality of consciousness is the ultimate unified state of being. This kind of thinking can be seen as like the driver and the car. The driver controls the car, but would not be able to get anywhere without the car. If the car breaks down or crashes, then you would need a mechanic to fix the car so the driver can go places again. This is just like Western medicine when treating the body. The dualistic view of the mind-body split emphasizes a mechanistic treatment for when the body is facing illness just like a mechanic fixes the car. The Non-Dualistic view would take into account the presence of the mind, or the driver, as a state of evolved consciousness and a reflection of themselves, beyond the embodiment of who they see. We are not limited to our body, and because of this view a Non-Dualist would treat the patient how they would want to be treated.

In the Non-Dualistic view, there is recognition of the mind as being a part of an evolved consciousness. The body serves as the reflection of the mind and of those around us and something that does not represent us in any, other way but physically. We have our individual experiences but our shared consciousness represents our ultimate unity of being. Think of a raindrop falling into the ocean. Each raindrop is like each individual, but they are all comprised and come from the same unifying essence. This view is important in medicine and is the main component in my cross-cultural model, because understanding that a patient is not only their body and that they are of the same essence as we, the doctors, are, will allow a doctor to better care for the patient.

## Logical Proof of Mind-Body Dualism and Western Perspective

In illustrating my points, it is interesting to take into consideration a thought experiment proposed by Saul Kripke in lecture 3 of his book, *Naming and Necessity*, which describes the logical proof for Dualism. The argument begins by giving your physical body a name. For the sake of consistency with Kripke, let us call it BERT. Everyone, whether dualist or not, can agree that YOU and BERT are connected because BERT is the physical embodiment of you. If I were to step on BERT's foot, then you would feel pain. However, this does not indicate that YOU ARE BERT. Following the dualist perspective, this makes sense because there are two things here: YOU and BERT. So what the dualist argument is trying to establish is that YOU are not BERT, or more specifically, YOU are not IDENTICAL to BERT. This is the conclusion of the argument, but to understand it even clearer, Kripke describes two premises. He begins by saying that there needs to be a distinction between truths that could have been false, and truths that could not have been false. For example, if I were to say I was a student. This is a truth that could have been false, because I could instead be a teacher. Another example of a truth that could have been false is that there could have been dinosaurs. This could be false because evolution could have failed to produce dinosaurs. This is not to dismiss the insurmountable evidence there is to the existence of dinosaurs, but for the sake of this argument, believe that it could be possible that the dinosaurs could have not existed. Then, a truth that could not have been false would be phrased: Either there were dinosaurs or there were not dinosaurs. The truths that could not have been false are structured as logical truths that cannot be disputed. In this case, this truth did not just happen to be true, it could not have been otherwise.

Now that the foundation has been acquired, it is time to connect to the example of YOU and BERT. If someone were to point at you and say YOU are BERT, suppose that it is true. This truth would be a truth that could not have been false as it could not be otherwise that you are not the physical embodiment of yourself. This is the first premise for the argument for Dualism: If it is true that YOU are BERT, then it could not have been false that YOU are BERT. However, is it possible for you to exist without BERT existing? It does not seem implausible that there exists a situation in which you can be without BERT, but if you could have existed without BERT existing, then it could have been false that YOU are BERT. This gives the second premise: It could have been false that YOU are BERT. Our two premises now have the form: If P, then Q; and not Q. Premises of this form follow a rule of inference called “modus tollens”,<sup>8</sup> which would therefore mean not P. The two premises combine to imply: It is not true that YOU are BERT, which is exactly the Dualist’s conclusion. Although, this serves as a logical proof to the existence of the separation between the mind and the body like in the dualistic view, it can be used to think about how Western doctors need to realize that the person they are treating is not limited to their physical body in the room. This can be hard to accept because the scientific approach to medicine has always proved to be so effective and there are several noteworthy cases that prompted it.

### **Phineas Gage and the Scientific Approach**

An investigation of the interaction between the mental substance and the physical substance proposed by Descartes and held by modern dualists would be incomplete without the presentation of Phineas Gage. Gage brings my argument forward by showing the intricacies of the brain and how a scientific approach to healing may not always be sufficient to understanding how a person behaves. Becoming neuroscience’s most famous patient was a

complete accident and probably caused excruciating pain, but Phineas Gage's case not only answered many of the questions of the mind/body debate, but also opened up new mysteries to be solved. In 1848, Gage was a twenty-five year old foreman of a crew cutting a railroad bed in Cavendish, Vermont. On September 13, as he was using a tamping iron to pack explosive powder into a hole, when suddenly, the powder detonated. The tamping iron, which was nearly as tall as he was, shot upward and "penetrated Gage's left cheek, ripped into his brain and exited through his skull" (Twomey 1). Gage somehow survived the incident and through the observations made by John Martyn Harlow, the doctor who treated him for a few months afterward, Gage's name was etched into history. However, as you would expect, despite the initial survival, Phineas Gage did undergo some personality changes. The Phineas from before the accident, and the one who lived after it, did not seem to have a lot in common. The Phineas with no hole in his brain was a proper, hard-working gentleman, but the Phineas with the injured brain was a belligerent and obnoxious jerk. The changes in Phineas Gage's brain proved to show the interaction between the physical nature of the brain and the mental process that occur as a result of brain function.

There is certainly a case to be made in which a physical connection between the mind and the body can be identified. This exact idea is the pinnacle of modern psychiatric science. Doctors have identified certain pathways associated with hormones to tackle psychological problems that can be extremely debilitating for many individuals. By using certain inhibitors or stimulants, or even just a pill packed with hormones, you can somewhat alleviate the symptoms caused by some, if not all, psychological diseases. In some cases, like with mild depression, the symptoms can go away completely and the person can return to their daily routine. However, this can result in the person becoming dependent on their pills to live their

normal life. These cases of modern advances in medicine do not always work, but they show that a physical component outside can create a bridge between the mind and the body.

### **Placebo Effect and Proof of Mind-Body Connection**

It is interesting to note the effects of a placebo drug on the mind, and consequently the body, while discussing the effects of medicinal treatments to psychological disorders. The placebo effect is a prominent, beneficial effect, produced by a placebo drug or treatment, which is in most cases an inactive sugar pill. Therefore, the effects cannot be attributed to the properties of the placebo itself, and must be due to the patient's belief in that treatment. One study uses neuroimaging techniques to look closely at the effects of a placebo on emotional self-regulation and psychotherapy in patients with Parkinson's disease. Taken directly from the study, "The findings of the neuroimaging studies reviewed here strongly support the view that the subjective nature and the intentional content of mental processes significantly influence the various levels of brain functioning and should be seriously taken into account" (Beauregard et al 221). Some individuals on a drug regimen will experience significantly greater effects from the placebo drug as opposed to the active drug. This could be because the actual drug treatment has side effects that are associated with it, while the placebo drug can act only as a beneficial drug with no directly associated negative side effects. The power of belief in something and its effects on your body comes in many different ways. There is a psychological component to every disease, regardless of how it manifests, and our perception of how to deal with it, and how we are feeling while dealing with those diseases, can affect our healing. Studies have shown that severe prolonged stress and chronic negative thinking can compromise the immune system. On the other side of the coin, the same studies have also revealed that individuals with a positive attitude toward life tend to become sick less often.

Furthering the latter point, a healthy upbeat attitude can in itself mobilize and stimulate the body's defenders. A prime example of this is in a study of women with breast cancer. Dr. Sandra Levy at the University of Pittsburgh's Cancer Institute found that, "Women who were more depressed had lower natural killer cell activity than those with a hopeful and positive outlook" (Levy 47). This mind body interaction extends to all sorts of other areas that all have possible beneficial effects on our life as a whole. The Western research on the Placebo Effect shows evidence of the beneficial effects of the Non-Dual understanding of how the mind can affect the body.

### **Techniques to Heal the Mind and the Eastern Perspective**

From my Hindu upbringing I learned that the mind can affect the body so much that if you truly believe in something, it can be. Repeated thoughts can give rise to attitude, so to explain the mind body interaction from this standpoint of your attitude's effect on your body; we need to delve into the scientific explanation of the interactions between the neurological, endocrine and immune systems in your body. While these interactions are incredibly complex, they can be explained in a very simplified manner. With respect to emotions and stress, if you are experiencing fear, anger or any emotions that might engage your sympathetic nervous system and increase your stress level, these thoughts will be picked up by your brain. The brain will then signal your endocrine system to release hormones that have an adverse effect on the immune systems cells. Consequently, the decline in immune function could cause you to become more susceptible to illness. An acute or prolonged tensed state may cause: the heart rate and blood pressure to increase, a dry mouth, enlarged pupils, sweaty palms, and fast shallow "chest" breathing. These are just some of the countless examples of the mind's effects on the body. I have only expressed the negative effects of depressive or

unsettling attitudes on your body, but have yet to discuss the possible healing methods that are present from intentional positive attitudes and ideations. Several extremely effective “inner healing” methods such as relaxation techniques, mental imagery/visualization, meditation and attitude affirmation, can be used to heal from within.

Visualization is a simple technique when explained, but can be extremely difficult to master. Essentially, it involves the power of your imagination using sights, sounds, feelings and smell to create a desired state of mind. If you are able to visually place yourself somewhere in the world that you believe would make you relaxed and let go of your fears and whatever may be causing you anxiety, then it is possible that your body will react in a way in which you are actually relaxed and without anxiety. However, visualization is not purely limited to dealing with stress. Successful people have reported the power of visualization as a step to achieving their success. This holds true not only in becoming successful in life, but also this incredible technique can provide useful in cases where you are trying to pass a test, or do well at an interview. By visualizing your success and believing in yourself, you can actually perform better during the event or thing that you wish to be successful at. Dr. Carl Simonton and Stephanie Matthews, authors of *Getting Well Again*, say “They encourage their cancer patients to visualize their cancer as broken up hamburger meat and their white blood cells as dogs devouring the hamburger” (Simonton 155). The patients who practiced this in conjunction with their medical treatment lived twice as long as patients who only received conventional treatment.

Another extremely effective strategy to use that links the mind and the body is meditation, and is one that I have taken particular interest in investigating in my personal life. Meditation has been described as a state of extreme relaxation, but constant awareness and

alertness of your surroundings. It acts as an integration of mind, body and spirit. It can be focused silence and even a form of prayer. Meditation is very difficult to master, but when done correctly can be the most powerful technique on both your mind and body.

Scientifically, meditation has shown to drop blood pressure from borderline high to normal ranges, relieving general fatigue, stress that can lead to heart attacks, strokes and hardening of the arteries. (Carrosicia 2).

For most of my life, I have been attending Hindu school where I learn about the Hindu religion and the Hindu perspective of spirituality. My favorite class that I took part in at the school was the class on meditation. Our teacher explained to us that meditation is not as simple as sitting down, closing your eyes and saying Om. He told us that in order to perform meditation appropriately; we needed to understand the importance of listening and being able to focus our listening on something. He gave us multiple activities every week to help us better our listening in order to adequately prepare us for when it comes time to try meditating. Some of the activities include: brushing your teeth and focusing purely on the sound of the brush scrubbing against your teeth, taking a shower and only listening to the sound of the water, or turning on a fan and only focus on the sound of the blades spinning. Eventually, after a number of similar exercises we began to meditate and were told to focus our attention on a single picture (a picture of God since it was a religious school) and listen to the sound of our teacher's voice. At first this was incredibly difficult, but it began to become second nature the more we did it. Soon after, we practiced shifting our focus from listening to concentrating, and in this case we were to purely concentrate on the picture and try to filter out all external sounds. After two years of weekly practice, most of the students in our class were able to meditate for fifteen minutes without being able to hear anything, which was quite impressive

because our class was held in a room next to the freeway. In fact, in order to further test us, our teacher opened the windows so the noise from the freeway was even louder. This state of enhanced listening is only one of the many potential benefits that can be achieved through meditation. Tailoring your meditation to achieve the changes in mind and body is up to you and what you want to focus on, but it is completely possible with meditation as your guide. I describe meditation as something only a patient can use, but even as a doctor, it is important to understand that being focused and being aware of everything around you is your job. Meditation does not need to be long and difficult. Doctors are constantly on the move, but taking a few minutes to yourself to breathe, relax and becoming aware takes you away from the busy-ness around you and allows you to perform better.

The final example of a technique that can be used to influence your body through your mind is attitude affirmation. This technique is a means to release the negative and embrace the positive. It is normal and natural for all individuals to feel anger, fear and stress, but if we were to remain in the anxious frame of mind, it is possible to experience lack of control, hopelessness and helplessness. How is it then, that we can release all these negative feelings? The first step is becoming aware that you are stuck; followed by asking yourself why you feel that way and what exactly in your life is causing you to feel that way. By identifying the reasons why you are feeling these negative emotions, you can figure out ways to tackle them. Next, you validate your negative emotions by expressing them. This can be done by talking with someone about them or writing them down. This part is known as the 'release'. Patty Carrosicia in her article states, "Letting go of all of those emotions opens up your mind to the positive and affirming powerful positive statements of a desired state will fill up that space inside" (Carrosicia 6). Repeat all of the positive statements until they become a part of you.

By following those steps, and truly believing in them, people report that they have had better moods, their anxiety is gone, and they feel like they are not scared or worried anymore of whatever it was that was causing them to be so negative and depressed (Carrosicia 8).

### **Spirituality of Experience and Hinduism**

At this point, I would like to talk about the concept of reductive physicalism as a counterargument against Non-Dualism,<sup>9</sup> and how the introduction of yet another thought experiment can be used to describe the spirituality of experience. Reductive physicalism is a doctrine stating that everything in the world can be reduced down to its fundamental physical, or material, basis. This doctrine stands as the opposite of Non-Dualism, in which it is believed that not everything can be reduced to something that is tangible and physical, rather that there is a mind, or a unified consciousness that represents our experience of life. Contemporary Australian philosopher Frank Jackson presents us with the thought experiment of Mary, “a woman who has spent her entire life in a black and white room learning everything via a black and white television” (Furash 32). While locked in this room, Mary becomes a neurophysicist, specializing in the science of color. She learns everything there is to know about light, optics, the physics of color and how it affects our sensory organs, but she has never seen it for herself. When Mary finally walks out of the room and sees color for the first time, has Mary learned something new? This is Jackson’s argument against reductive physicalism. He believes that the experience of seeing a color- say red- is not the same as knowing facts about red. If everything in the world could be explained in terms of purely the physical, then when Mary in the thought experiment saw red, it would not have contributed to her understanding at all and it would not have told her anything that she did not already know. The missing component from this is the spirituality that comes from experience. When our body

experiences something, like stubbing our toe, eating the first bite of our favorite food, or seeing a color for the first time, that experience is felt through our body and connected with our mind. This mind-body interaction is what creates the feeling of experience that we have at all instances of our life. In the same way that Mary might have known everything about the color red, a doctor may know everything there is to know about a certain disease, but may have personally never experienced it. I am not advocating that doctors should infect themselves with the disease they are treating, but take into account the fact that the patient they are treating is experiencing the disease first-hand. It is necessary to take realize how they are being affected mentally in addition to physically. Knowledge and expertise, as well as empathy of the patient's experience, are paramount for better medical practice.

I have been explained the spirituality of experience from the teachings of my religion, and it has shaped my view on not only the separation of mind and body but also has led me to create my own approach to modern medicine. Hinduism teaches that the body is a vessel given to us by god so that we may fulfill our dharma (duty).<sup>10</sup> Interestingly enough, to whom is god giving these vessels to? We can conclude that in terms of the religious argument, there is some non-physical substance that exists in addition to our materialistic existence provided through these vessels. To understand what Hinduism proposes, it is quintessential to explain the BMI chart designed by Swami Chinmayananda. Traditionally known as the Body Mass Index, in Hinduism, the BMI chart shows the relationships between body, mind, and intellect. The body is the perceiver of the objects around us. Separate from the body is the mind, which derives feelings from emotions that are provoked, possibly from some perception acquired through the body. Beyond the mind, Hinduism believes that there is a separate non-physical substance that plays a higher role and that it represents the "thinker". As I mentioned before,

Gottfried Leibniz uses his “thinking machine” example to come to the conclusion that there is nothing in the human brain that can be directly pinpointed as a part that thinks. This is where most dualists stem their beliefs from, and conclude that the mind is separate from the brain and that it controls our thoughts.

Despite representing the Eastern Non-Dualist view, Hinduism takes this one step further by establishing the intellect. The intellect represents the thing that differentiates between right and wrong, good and evil, just and unjust, etc. It makes decisions, and processes all of our thoughts. Now, with the proposal that the intellect is the actual thought creator, what purpose does the mind serve? According to Swami Chinmayananda and the BMI chart, “the mind is the feeler”(Chinmayananda 106). Since the mind reacts to anything and everything provoked by external sources, it can become attached or simply continue to wander and find something else to react to.<sup>11</sup> If a person does not have an intellect, their life would be controlled by instincts and emotions, all of which can derive from attachments to certain things. This could either be good or bad, depending on the individual, but regardless, having a governing entity like the intellect is imperative. Perhaps Hinduism unintentionally provides insight to the debate between dualists and monists. This does not mean that the mind-body debate needs to include the intellect. Instead, this argument proposes the existence of another non-physical piece of us that can exist.

### **Educating Doctors for Healing the Mind-Body Split**

The very idea of mentally separating the body from the mind is applicable to modern medicine. Doctors are often quick to make judgements about individuals before even treating them. It is understandable that a doctor who is extremely knowledgeable in his or her medical

field feels that he or she knows all of the pathologies to every problem, but this does not mean the doctor should dismiss other irregularities. Before we can delve into how modern medicine should change to incorporate a holistic mind-body approach, we must first define 'Healing' and the process of healing. Healing should not be seen as something only a professional can do. Everyone heals on a daily basis. Every night that we go to sleep, we are healing. We are allowing our body to regain the energy that was lost, just as if we are in a state of being hurt. Whenever we are in an altered state of mind, being stressed or anxious for example, the body is in a state of emergency and this could also be seen as a state in which we would need healing. Healing is not limited to what someone else can do for us; it includes all types of changes to our body that have been reverted or 'fixed' to go back to our normal state. That being said, I think doctors need to realize that sometimes drugs or physical treatments to the body are not the only route to healing. When a patient comes in to a doctor's office, they will undoubtedly be feeling some level of anxiety, questioning what is wrong with them, and wondering if it is anything serious. A doctor's first job should not be to identify the problem right away. Instead, I think it would be extremely beneficial to the patient to first attempt to put their mind at ease, and heal them mentally first. This could prepare them for the actual treatment that is about to come.

Western medicine believes that there is problem and one answer to that problem. It is difficult to find another route because this route has produced the best results. However, that same route will not work on every patient. It is possible that the stressful activities throughout the day can hinder your performance on a patient you are treating at that moment. Certain aspects of life fall beyond what we can choose. We are unable to choose to choose our birth, our looks, status at birth, and even the genetic content that may lead us to severe disease. It is

important that doctors realize this and withdraw their judgements about the patients they are treating because they did not choose to be in that state. There are times when a doctor provides a diagnosis for one of their patients and the patient cannot bring themselves to believe that the diagnosis is correct. Instances have been reported that show that a doctor dismisses a particular patient's symptoms as depression or, in the case of females, related to their menstrual cycle, when those patients feel completely otherwise. There is some truth in the statement that the intuition of the patient and their knowing of their own body that holds more weight than a medical professional's assessment of their body. With all this in mind, it is necessary to heal the mind-body split to provide the best medical care for all individuals. Not all care should be done purely objectively or purely subjectively but by combining the two and finding a balance, it is possible to create a more holistic and complete healing.

### **My Journey to a Better Medicine**

Fortunately, there is a type of medicine that is already more open to this holistic approach and it is Osteopathic Medicine. Originally, Osteopathic Medicine began as a protest against the turn-of-the-century medical system. By the middle of the 20th century, the profession had moved closer to mainstream medicine and adopted many of the modern public health and biomedical principles. I am pursuing a degree in Osteopathic medicine because a holistic approach of treating the mind and body of each individual is emphasized at its core. In addition to its practice of combining hands on manipulative osteopathic techniques with typical aspects of allopathic medicine, it shares my belief in treating a patient as a whole being, rather than just their body. More physicians who train in Osteopathic medicine are leaning towards an allopathic-style practice and forgetting to recognize the core principles of their profession. This is why I want to pioneer a cross-cultural model of Osteopathy that

integrates the core principles of holistic healing and the modern principles of scientific healing. Finding a balance between both the Western and Eastern perspectives of healing with Osteopathic Medicine as my foundation, I will be able to achieve better medical care for all.

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<sup>1</sup> Eastern-Primarily India, but refers to any country that believes in consciousness, spiritual science and the co-existence of mind and body.

<sup>2</sup> Consciousness is the awareness by the mind of itself and the world around it.

<sup>3</sup> Western-Primarily the United States, but refers to any country that follows the non-dualist argument of the existence of only the physical body.

<sup>4</sup> Cross-Cultural model refers to my belief in combining the two perspectives of Western and Eastern healing cultures.

<sup>5</sup> This is reference to brain plasticity and brain functioning. Neuroimaging studies have shown the effect of how belief in a drug can change brain plasticity. If this is true, then our everyday thoughts are constantly changing the brain. See study by Beauregard

<sup>6</sup> Here, mind refers to the area of the brain that would be designated as the area that thinks.

<sup>7</sup> Intellect, mind, and consciousness are all somewhat interchangeable despite each having different meanings. The reason for this is to allow the reader to understand that there is something separate from the physical and whether they believe it to be called the Intellect, or the mind, or consciousness is for them to decide.

<sup>8</sup> Equation for Modus Tollens: If P, then Q is accepted and the consequent does not hold (not-q), then the negation of the antecedent (not-p) can be inferred. P+Q, -Q, -P.

<sup>9</sup> Reductive Physicalism is the argument against the existence of something higher than the body. This doctrine believes that everything can be reduced to the physical or material.

<sup>10</sup> Dharma is what we deem ourselves to be responsible for while we our living. It is often linked to our purpose in life. However, Dharma can also represent our responsibility to becoming aware and realizing the existence of our own innate consciousness.

<sup>11</sup> The mind is always wandering-It is difficult to focus on one thing when there are so many things happening around us.