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INTRODUCTION

In a sea of anatomy and physiology books, why write another? Mainly to help contradict the notion that anatomy and physiology are dry and boring, and to share more widely my particular style of introducing adults to the miracle of the body, Spirit made flesh, with the many opportunities of philosophizing, chewing the breeze, enjoying the apparent ridiculousness, and otherwise observing how to live well, that this subject abundantly offers.

I will assume that you have very little knowledge, beginning by introducing the body very simply and building on this knowledge later to add layers of understanding. The goal is to leave the reader truly understanding something of how the living body works, rather than to cover every detail of current knowledge on anatomy, physiology and pathology. It seems that many people study A & P to considerable depth – even managing to pass quite detailed exams on the subject – without ever gaining a real understanding. This book aims to remedy that.

I will attempt here a ‘holistic’ – and in places more than slightly heretical – anatomy and physiology; that is, an exploration of the mechanisms of action of the body mixed in with interesting thinking about emerging sciences such as quantum physics and the new biology, human ‘emotional anatomy’, ecological principles and spiritual and energetic paradigms. You will see that the study of human biology can be linked to broader considerations of how a human exists within, and interacts with, the environment, and experiences their existence in emotional and spiritual, as well as physical, terms. Some of what will follow is accepted ‘scientific fact’, some will challenge such facts, and some is just my own ideas and philosophies – based on both my own and borrowed observations. I will conclude with a brief overview of various paradigms of health and disease, including beginning a discussion of what total healing of body, mind, spirit and global society could mean. There are some forms of natural medicine I am very familiar with; these are the ones I mention most as examples. The absence of mention of other systems is in no way indicative of their lack of value – only of my own lack of knowledge. I hope that students of these disciplines will forgive this lack and still find this book helpful as an aid to their understanding of the medical sciences.

As this is *not* intended to be an academic work, I am referencing with almost entirely secondary references, intending where I can to point the reader on to further study. At times I repeat information to aid the learning process.¹ You can take it all with a large pinch of salt

¹ The main way human beings learn is by repetition, repetition, repetition...

(after all, our bodies are swimming in salt water), and enjoy the mental meandering which will help you to remember the plain facts. Actually, I advise you to be vigilant against adopting a fixed position – keep thinking for yourself, and rather than getting attached to one viewpoint, have an open mind and be prepared to adapt your thinking as new information emerges. Modern orthodox medicine offers many examples of what happens when you don't do this. Take anti-depressants, for example: this week, early March 2008, the headlines are full of how they only work for 30% of people. But did you know that the entire premise that depressed people have low levels of serotonin in their brains, first theorized in 1967, has never actually been proved, despite many attempts to do so? This theory has been accepted by many medics, including those in the mental health field, and is widely believed publicly, yet it seems very likely to be wrong!²

The actual physiology herein is at a fairly basic level, without being oversimplified. In places it is more technical than the interested lay reader or healer would need (or like); these readers can skip over the bits that are too detailed and stick to taking in the juicy bits. Students who are required to go deeper will gain a practical understanding of how the body works and then return to their more in-depth textbooks with renewed vigour.

The human being, in body, mind and spirit, is a beautiful and complex entity – there is always more to be learnt. In this spirit, I have included some contradictory ideas which could all be true. I would be very pleased to hear from you with new ideas, information which debunks my own ideas and any other feedback which adds to understanding our bodies, minds and existence in this way.

Please contact me via the book's website, www.holisticanatomy.com

This book is intended for:

- Anyone studying, or with an interest in, holistic medicine, *particularly those with less than 100% enthusiasm for the anatomy and physiology side of things*: this book will light your fire!
- People who want to know more about how their body works but don't want to read a straight textbook.
- Those who enjoy science, but feel it can be a little disjointed.
- Healers and energy workers who need to bone up on how Spirit looks when it's in the flesh.
- Anyone with a body and a thirst for knowledge about it, who likes to look at life sideways.

Please feel free to quote from this book, subject to acknowledgment of the source.

² 'What Doctors Don't Tell You' Vol 18 no 12 March 2008