

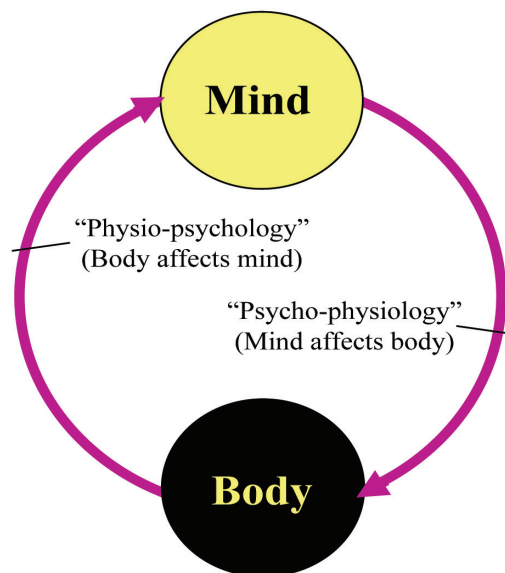
Dear Reader,

Once again I apologize for being a bit late with the COHERENCE Newsletter for the month of August. Dee Edmonson and I have been busy preparing for our workshop at the ISNR annual meeting in San Antonio where we presented the workshop *The Respiratory Arterial Pressure Wave - The Cardiopulmonary Mechanics Behind the Heart Rate Variability Cycle*. I'm happy to say that it was very well received and prompted a lot of interest in our new book *Coherent Breathing - The Definitive Method - Theory & Practice*, a key focus of which is the physiology of respiration, blood flow, and autonomic status.

You may recall that the subject of the July COHERENCE Newsletter was “the popular ego” and its origin, where I proposed that the thing we commonly refer to as “ego” is really the human organism in a persistent variable state of fight/flight. That this persistent fight/flight is an outcome of the stubborn “sympathetic bias” with which most of us are used to living, and that by “balancing” our autonomic nervous system via breathing we are able to modify this bias, and with it, the ego.

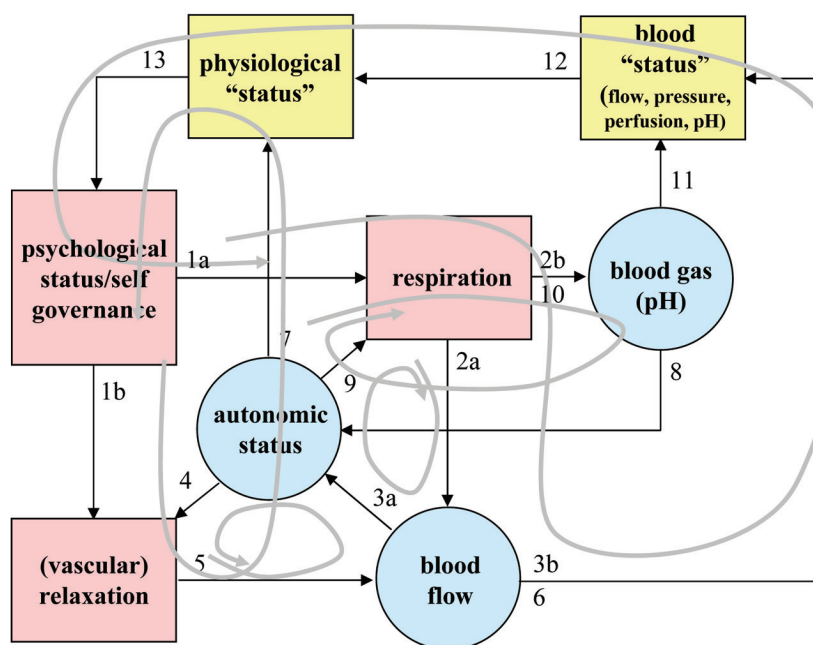
In heart rate variability (HRV) circles we've grown used to the idea that mind, specifically our emotions, have a profound affect on our physiology. The term “psycho-physiology” refers to this relationship. However, implicit in my argument regarding the ego, is that the state of the mind is predicated on the state of the body, i.e. our “physio-psychology”. If our body is tense, our breathing relatively rapid and shallow, this physiology is reflected in our state of mind. I believe that this is because the autonomic aspect of the central nervous system underlies both. In this regard, I see mind and body as being inseparable.

This raises an interesting question of “the chicken and the egg”. Does the mind govern the body or does the body govern the mind? Which comes first? To this question, I propose this answer, “The mind.” The mind is in the driver's seat so to speak. Given what can be a vicious circle (mind-body-mind-body, etc.), is it possible for the mind to effectively assert itself when the body is in



an acute “out-of-balance” incoherent condition? Yes, definitely! I’m confident that we are seeing regular evidence that this is so, where Coherent Breathing intervention yields distinct improvement in the ability to self-govern. We see this with adults, but in particular, we see it with children, where their ability to self govern may improve dramatically within a few sessions, specifically when accompanied by a significant increase in the amplitude of their heart rate variability cycle. I’ve believed for some time that the amplitude of the HRV cycle is a quantitative measure of one’s ability to self-govern. One day I hope to research this very question.

The figure below attempts to capture the gross “autonomic process” by which mind and body relate. Start with “psychological status/self-governance” and follow numbers from 1 through 13. Note that there are numerous “positive feedback loops” in this diagram. Positive feedback is “constructive”



or “strengthening” in nature. Take the loop 3a-4-5. Increased blood flow yields a change in autonomic status, which yields relaxation (in this case of the vascular system), which results in increased blood flow. I believe these positive feedback loops explain how conscious Coherent Breathing yields the tendency toward balance when at rest or semi-activity. The body/mind has a tendency to “snap” into cardiopulmonary resonance and homeostasis.

I advocate that the single most important thing anyone can do for their health is to assume complete responsibility and accountability for their own state of being. After all, survival requires it. Accountability necessitates self governance – self governance necessitates deliberate management of our thinking, breathing, relaxation, emotional response, diet, exercise, etc. Each time I take this pledge with myself, I can sense a distinct improvement in my own confidence, vitality, and well-being.

Thank you for your consideration,

Stephen Elliott

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