



The body is the gateway

by Rick Belden

I've learned over the years that I can get helpful information from my body at any time. I simply have to give it time and space to speak to me. And I have to listen. But how, in practical terms, is this done?

Two of the first and most fundamental questions to ask when seeking information from the body are:

- What am I feeling?
- Where am I feeling it?

Posing these two questions to yourself, and listening for the answers, provides a great starting point. But what then? How does one approach the resulting information and work with it? I'd like to share some thoughts and ideas from my own experience.

Everything is alive in its own way. Everything may be thought of as energy. Everyone and everything has its own life process. Respect the autonomy and the boundaries of these processes in all cases.

Let things speak for themselves, whether seeking information in the body, in waking reality, in dreams, whatever the context. Maintain an open, friendly attitude toward whoever or whatever presents itself to you. Ask questions: Who or what are you? Why are you here? What is your story, or what would you like to tell me?

When presented with pain or discomfort in the body, ask the same questions. Be still, be patient, and listen for whatever comes. It may be a word, an image, an impression, a feeling, or something else. Your body may have a story to tell you. Allow the story to come. Note any changes in the body ... relaxation, movement of energy, change in breathing. Let the story unfold until it seems to be finished. Let imagination work to bring the information to full consciousness.

The body is a container, a vessel, a vehicle for the expression of energy. Sometimes energy gets stuck or trapped. This can result in physical pain, discomfort, structural problems, or illness. A story is also a container, a vessel, a vehicle for the expression of energy. Energy can be trapped in the body in the form of a story. Some stories that emerge from the body are literally true and verifiable in terms of one's real world experience. This type of story is often referred to as a body memory. But stories that emerge from the body need not be literally true and verifiable in terms of one's real world experience to have value.

Sometimes valid stories emerge from the body in other forms, such as fantasies, or as streams of images, words, or feelings with no clear narrative and no obvious connection to the conscious world. Some stories emerge from the body in the form of what is often called a "past life" memory. From the standpoint of using the information for insight and healing, it doesn't matter if a fantasy or a stream of images makes sense at first, or if a past life memory is literally and verifiably true. What matters is whether or not the energy the story contains and expresses feels real and authentic in the body and the psyche. The metaphorical significance of the information may be evident almost immediately, or it may reveal itself gradually over time.

When working with the body, it's very important to ask for information before trying to jump straight from problem to solution in an effort to try to make the pain or the problem go away. Explore, investigate, listen. The simple process of focusing patient, understanding attention on an area of discomfort will often effect a shift that is significant enough to transform or clear any underlying psychic issue, and clear or significantly reduce the associated pain or physical discomfort in the body as well.

Such a shift may also be accompanied by a surprising psychological insight that puts the original issue in a new, more understandable context and provides a sense of greater peace or completion in relation to that issue.

The body is the gateway to the knowledge of the soul. The physical experience of the body provides many rich opportunities for self-exploration and healing. Our stories are with us throughout our lives, wherever we go, waiting there in our bodies to be discovered, heard, acknowledged, understood, and finally, released.

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Rick Belden is a respected explorer and chronicler of the psychology and inner lives of men. His book, [Iron Man Family Outing: Poems about Transition into a More Conscious Manhood](#), is widely used in the United States and internationally by therapists, counselors, and men's groups as an aid in the exploration of masculine psychology and men's issues, and as a resource for men who grew up in dysfunctional, abusive, or neglectful family systems. His second book, [Scapegoat's Cross: Poems about Finding and Reclaiming the Lost Man Within](#), is currently awaiting publication. He lives in Austin, Texas.

More information, including excerpts from Rick's books, is available on his [website](#) and [blog](#). You can also find him on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#).