

Preface

You must give birth to your images. They are the future waiting to be born . . .
fear not the strangeness you feel. The future must enter into you long before
it happens. . . . Just wait for the birth . . . for the hour of new clarity.

Rainer Maria Rilke (cited in Brigham, p. 329)

“Come on in—the water is fine” (Holt, 1964). This frequently quoted invitation to investigators by Robert Holt in 1964 did not fall on deaf ears. In the course of the last 35 years, an ever-increasing number of scientists and clinicians have enthusiastically answered Holt’s call, and by their tireless efforts, imagery has become recognized as a legitimate and fruitful area of inquiry and as an effective therapeutic tool. This book celebrates the coming of age of the once ostracized.

To my knowledge, *Healing Images* is the first comprehensive attempt to reflect the current state of knowledge concerning the role of imagination in health. All chapters are written by internationally or nationally known experts or in collaboration with them. This work consists of 22 chapters and discusses theory, research, and clinical applications. It presents a brief history of the use of imagery for healing in both Eastern and Western traditions, a review of research that deals with the physiological consequences of imagery and related approaches, and an explanation as to how images lead to such bodily changes. *Healing Images* covers the latest theory and research on the relationship between imagery, cerebral laterality, and healing. An attempt is also made to integrate modern systems theory and concepts of information and energy, which disclose the role of imagery and love in health. Imagery and music in health are also discussed.

Healing Images examines how and why mental images help in connecting with our inner wisdom and covers in detail applications of imagery in pain management, smoking cessation, weight management, sex therapy, and in the treatment of phobic disorders, eating disorders, and cardiovascular disorders, depression, trauma, and cancer. This volume also explores imagery in intuition and spiritual development and includes a discussion of transpersonal and death images along with their implications for health and growth.

Foreword

The reality of human existence includes our experience of illness, suffering, and death. Pretending that we are not sick when we are, or that we will never die, would be as foolish as to deny the possibility of ever getting well.

As living beings, we all wish for happiness and seek to avoid suffering. One of the major factors here is our mental attitude. Physical health is closely related to our state of mind. Scientific experiments have shown that if the mind is stable and calm, basic physical functions like digestion and sleep improve. On the other hand, when someone is mentally distressed, even the presence of friends, comfort, and wealth will not make them happy.

This book, *Healing Images*, deals exhaustively with the role imagination can play in health. I have no doubt that an important factor even in matters of physical health is to train the mind. On the one hand this means cultivating a sincere compassionate motivation and performing positive actions. On the other, it means calming and controlling the mind, which may involve structured use of the imagination and is a more profound way of preparing for the future. Moreover, by identifying negative states of mind like anger, hatred, frustration, jealousy, and pride, we can work to eliminate them. At the same time we can cultivate positive attitudes like compassion and love, tolerance, and contentment. Training the mind in this way is both useful and realistic. Positive attitudes are a source of health and happiness for ourselves and others.

In the practice of healing, a kind heart is as valuable as medical training because it is the source of happiness for both oneself and others. People respond to kindness irrespective of whether medicine is effective or not, and in turn cultivating a kind heart is a cause of our own good health. Helping others wherever you

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can according to their need is the true expression of compassion. I have no doubt that employing the imagination in a positive way, and this book describes many different ways of doing so, can have a significant impact on improving our physical and mental health and well-being.

Tenzin Gyatso
The 14th Dalai Lama

December 15, 2001
Dharamsala, India

I am delighted that His Holiness, the Dalai Lama has taken the time to adorn this book with a few words of wisdom. It is a brand of wisdom which has molded him into a consummate human being, a beacon of love, compassion, and understanding. The endorsement of the efficacy of imagery by a man who is a profound scholar and who has thoroughly explored the far reaches of the human mind by meditation, undoubtedly will be an inspiration to many researchers.

In conclusion, I cordially thank all contributors. Each chapter uniquely elucidates many questions, poses new ones, and enriches the debate. Also I am grateful to the staff of Baywood Publishing Company, especially to its president, Stuart Cohen, and Bobbi Olszewski, Julie Krempa, and Joi Tamber-Brooks, for their patience, cooperation, and valuable guidance. At the Marquette University Department of Psychology, I am indebted to Sherri Lex for her expert help, and particularly to Sue Farrell for her cheerful, generous, and conscientious assistance and her kind support throughout the preparation of this volume. Also, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Marquette University for the assistance provided to me through its sabbatical leave program.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to lovingly acknowledge the valuable assistance and encouragement provided by my wife, Katharina, not only throughout this project, but also during the numerous other imagery-related endeavors over the last many years. Without her generous help and support, I know I would not have been able to accomplish even half as much as I did.

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