



# Emotional Cleansing

by Dr. Funda Gulmen

More than a few times in the last couple of years, patients have asked about cleansing, usually in reference to the liver or colon...“does acai berry really work?” There haven’t been many questions about emotional cleansing, however. Perhaps it is because we tend to expect or tolerate a certain amount of stress, tension or dysfunction in our lives. Either that or we simply curse out the person who cut us off in traffic and keep moving down the road. But what if some of those emotions – anger, resentment, blame, fear, grief – cling to the walls of our being the way pesticides might in our cells? What if they clog up the channels of happiness the way other toxins might gunk up our bile ducts? Either one can impede the flow of life-giving blood or life-giving joy. As with many mysterious, albeit intriguing, aspects of medicine, I stumbled upon the importance of emotional cleansing while providing a patient with a basic regimen they had requested. In the end, though simple in process the outcome was surprisingly profound.

## The body can lead the mind and heart

A gentleman patient complained of post-herpetic neuralgia (severe pain that can be experienced for years after a bout of shingles). He had read about physical cleanse programs and was curious to try one. During a hydrotherapy session, part of a regimen also involving nutritional counseling and homeopathy, he suddenly, without prompting, began telling stories of heartbreaking life experiences. I don’t believe he had ever shared them before. He mentioned abuse he had endured during his time in the service, pain about being estranged from one of his adult children, a high school sweetheart who had suddenly passed away from cancer. I simply listened, stunned at his willingness to reveal the things he had carried heavily on his heart for so long. What was increasingly noticeable was that as each layer of physical toxin was discharged, a corresponding emotional toxin was released, as well. Over the course of his six-week program he became increasingly calmer, more upbeat and less pained. While this was one of the first instances where I witnessed this phenomenon, I have seen many times since that undoing pain in the body can lead the mind and heart in the same direction.

## Speak it... write it... draw it...

At times it can be too threatening to talk about sensitive matters out loud. Luckily, there are many ways to support release of negative emotions. Some people find it effective to journal or write about their experiences. Others discover that expressing their feelings through creativity, art, music, or dance/movement works best for them. What color or

song represents what you are feeling? At times it can be helpful to explore emotions by writing letters to people we have not completely forgiven. One technique to explore is writing three letters on three consecutive days, each one addressed to the same offending party detailing any hurt, pain and anger. As you write the letters notice what feelings arise and how they shift each day. Begin each letter with, “Dear \_\_\_\_\_, I’m mad at you because \_\_\_\_\_,” and allow whatever feelings that surface to flow freely. The letters may begin to reflect developing awareness of these long-standing emotions. Perhaps you might realize that the perceived perpetrator is/was incapable of providing love, protection, or honesty as hoped for or wanted in that particular instance. Sometimes even anger toward the self will arise and need to be released during this exploration. Once we recognize these various layers they can finally be released, whether through more writing or another healthy outlet. Dislodging deep caverns of grief may not be easy, but can often culminate in replacement of the heaviness of pain with a feeling of being lighter and freer.

## Going beyond the mind

For those looking to supplement talk therapy, or seeking additional channels to wellness and peace, another of many healing modalities offered is homeopathy. Typically a homeopathic remedy is given to someone after completion of a comprehensive intake matching their particular symptoms with the appropriate remedy. Homeopathic medicine is considered to be an energy medicine. An undetectable amount of a natural substance, such as a plant, is placed into water to make one of these remedies. Homeopathy can be particularly effective for mental and emotional conditions that seem to be untouched by other methods. While some aspects of emotional trauma can best be processed through methods that reach the mind, homeopathy appears to be able to lift and lighten the aspects of trauma that seem to have been imprinted deeply into the tissues of the body.

Growing up I used to think that crying was a sign of weakness and avoided it as much as possible, as many people do. Today I see it as a sign of courage to deal with long-standing and often painful feelings. The relief that people receive if they are willing to dive into these watery depths is phenomenal. The tears they shed along the way are truly sacred tears of healing.

*Funda M. Gulmen, N.D., M.S. is a licensed naturopathic physician who offers natural family medicine through her private practice in Connecticut. For more information, call 203.895.5534 or visit [www.naturesourcecare.com](http://www.naturesourcecare.com).*