

Healing and Recovery

An Interview with David R. Hawkins, MD, PhD

Interview by Matt Laughlin



David R. Hawkins, MD, PhD, is director of the Institute for Spiritual Research Inc. He is a widely known authority within the field of consciousness research. He writes and teaches from the unique perspective of an experienced clinician, scientist and teacher. He has been honored worldwide with many titles. His background is detailed in *Who's Who* in the World. Dr. Hawkins has lectured widely at universities (Harvard, Oxford, et al.) and also to spiritual groups from Westminster Abbey and Notre Dame to Catholic, Protestant and Buddhist monasteries. His life is devoted to the upliftment of mankind. To learn more about Dr. Hawkins, visit www.veritaspub.com

UH (Unified Health): Thanks for interviewing with us again, Dr. Hawkins.

DH (David R. Hawkins, MD PhD): Thank you very much for the opportunity.

UH In our first interview with you, we had the opportunity to learn about your work and explore broader topics, including the varying levels of consciousness presented in the map of consciousness and how they apply to holistic medicine. Today, I am very much looking forward to exploring ideas presented in your latest book, *Healing and Recovery*. I understand it covers clinical subjects ranging from depression and alcoholism to handling a major crisis and overcoming worry, fear and anxiety. How did this book come to be?

DH This book was in the back of my mind for a number of years. I had given a series of lectures on health and healing to a large group of people made up of a composite of a lot of ancillary health organizations, AA and *A Course in Miracles* people, and people interested in multiple paths of healing. This series of lectures was recorded and made available in a videotape format. But we never got it into written form until I finally sat down and disciplined myself to edit the lectures. And the difficulty was transforming it from spontaneous lectures with a diversified group to the written form.

UH I imagine that would be very difficult!

DH Yes. (Laughter) Because you're surrounded by people and you spontaneously express things in a different style than you do for a reading audience. Many sentences sounded fine when spoken to a group, but not when dictated and written out. I had to edit all the spontaneous orations to a different format. The main work was translating the transcriptions so it sounded correct in written format.

UH It seems this book is really just as appropriate for clinicians and lay people alike.

DH Absolutely. It conveys what I have learned experientially, not just theoretically, as well as the great benefit that arises from holistic medical treatments in addition to the con-

ventional. Many doctors are quite conventional and condemn holistic medicine until they get sick.

UH (Laughter) You've overcome several illnesses of your own.

DH Oh yes. I'd dealt with 27 major illnesses, I think, at the time I wrote the book. And developed one or two more subsequently, which I've recovered from. (Laughter) It must be one's karmic propensity in addition to the stress of various kinds of endeavors. Right now, for instance, I have rotator-cuff syndrome in the left shoulder. I fell on the cement, and in trying to catch myself ruptured the left shoulder rotator cuff. I've been going for acupuncture for that and it has helped a great deal. Acupuncture plus Chinese herbal patches. (Laughter) A conventional physician may poo poo that as ridiculous.

UH (Laughter) You know, one thing that struck me while preparing to interview you about this book is that to the strictly left-brain medical person, or individuals who see the body as being the determinant of health, a lot of the ideas presented would sound absurd.

DH Yes, because they ascribe the power to the physical body itself and don't understand the power of consciousness, and levels of consciousness.

UH Sure. It seems that most in the conventional medical community, and I would say that even many in the holistic health community, would view the body as the source of both mental and emotional well-being, as well as disease and illness.

DH The body is the effect. The cause and the level of power is in consciousness itself. For instance, we can recreate any illness simply by hypnotic suggestion. We can also cure any illness by hypnotic suggestion. If I tell a person that they can't hear very well, then wake them and speak to them, they'll say WHAT? (Laughter) It's very telling that these can be caused by suggestion, by hypnotic trance induction.

UH You also note the power of the mind by way of clinical observations of working with people with multiple personalities.

DH Yes. In a multiple, when one personality is present,

the person is subject to various things; when another personality is present, the person is not subject to the same things. Knowing this, we start with looking at the overall person. We have to include their emotional state and consciousness and their cultural beliefs; cultural beliefs are also extremely important. Certain diseases are rampant in certain cultures and don't appear at all in others.

UH So, it's important to recognize that we are programmed by our family or cultural upbringing.

DH Yes. In certain cultures certain diseases never occur and in others they are highly prone.

UH What would you say is one of the central ideas that you present in *Healing and Recovery*?

DH That the mind determines what the body believes. The body believes what the mind determines, which is a reflection of one's level of consciousness and the programming that goes on culturally as well as personally, plus genetic factors. All of these factors contribute to the propensities for certain diseases.

UH Would you comment on what you mean by body, mind and spirit as it relates to the healing process?

DH By the spirit we are talking about the level of one's spiritual evolution, including all of one's karmic propensities. Modern medicine never thinks of karma, because it is seen as an arcane concept not to be credited in the western world. However, using the diagnostic method that we use, you can determine the karmic origin of multiple things that go on in the average person's life, including physical illnesses.

UH In our first interview, you touched briefly on the role of unconscious guilt in illnesses, and it seems to be a central idea presented in this series. I have the impression that it's almost as though we don't release ourselves from a disease until we have finished moving through some kind of unconscious process. Is that a correct observation?

DH In our research we have discovered no illness can occur without unconscious guilt, and I think that is a basic premise of *A Course in Miracles*. It is because of our judgmental thoughts. We develop a certain guilt of having held the thoughts, even though we didn't do anything; we nevertheless were holding the thought in mind.

UH What are some of the other preconditions within consciousness that predispose one to an illness?

DH The lower the level of consciousness, the greater the proclivity and the propensity to be programmed by our society, by our culture, by our families, by our early life experiences, which are then added to one's karmic propensities. And the limitations of protoplasm; we're all limited, because from dust we arise and to dust we return. (Laughter) So we have not only individual and cultural karma, but the limitations of protoplasm. And protoplasm wears out and ages and eventually collapses. (Laughter) You can go to the gym every morning, but you're going to topple over sooner or later anyway.

UH (Laughter) That brings to mind the realization that healing must be something more than maintaining a perfect physicality. What is healing?

DH To heal is to undo the negative belief systems, the

negative self-image, and what is possible is very much related to one's level of consciousness. Of course, illness must also serve a certain purpose. When the purpose has been served, the illness may go away. Every illness has its own complex context in which it occurs; cultural, historical, karmic, personal and family.

UH If no illness can occur without unconscious guilt, how does one heal unconscious guilt?

DH One doesn't heal it. It is unconscious. One just has negative thought forms that seem to the person to be rational -- you know, that other people are unfriendly, or that the stakes are stacked against you, or everybody in our family has such and such. They have belief systems which are reinforced. Everybody was allergic in my family. Everybody had allergies to everything, and consequently I did, too. (Laughter)

I had hay fever and I was allergic to horses; all kinds of things. My mother was very allergic and I had asthma. Suddenly in the middle of dinner she wouldn't be able to breathe and she would run to and open the window; the whole family would be frightened because she couldn't breathe. It was beyond intellect; it was hitting heavily in the emotional realm. We all had allergies except my father; he didn't have allergies. (Laughter)

UH He was from a different family who didn't hold that belief system. I guess those belief systems can go both ways. I remember as a kid repeating a family belief system all the time - that we have good eyesight. I remember, even as a boy, having this emotional confidence that I have great eyes. (Laughter)

DH (Laughter) Well, I had weak eyes and wore glasses as a kid, you know. And I couldn't go out for sports, and one of the reasons was I couldn't see unless I had glasses on.

UH I understand poor eyesight is something you overcame later in life by applying the principles presented in this book.

DH Yes. That was supposedly an optical problem. Yet, by constantly doing spiritual techniques I overcame an optical problem and was able to get along without glasses, and I did so for decades.

UH So, even gross physical limitations are not necessarily irreversible.

DH That is correct. I remember the moment when I could see across the room. It happened in an instant, from not being able to see without my glasses to being able to see across the room. It was very sudden. I could suddenly see the calendar on the wall across the room.

UH Is there a specific awareness or technique you focused on for that? How would you describe the process?

DH That was really using *A Course in Miracles* in a way, and that I am only subject to what I hold in mind; and refusing to believe that I had these optical problems anymore. They went away for, oh, I don't know, 40 years. In my late life, something suddenly went wrong with my right eye. I developed something new, out of the blue. (Laughter) I suppose its age related. We may have belief systems that are age related.

UH What do you mean by the statement that "I am only subject to what I hold in mind"?

DH I mean consciousness is so powerful that it overrules common sense and logic, and many other things. It has to be addressed directly to undo it. First of all, by doubt; the first thing to do is to begin to doubt a certain belief system. The doubt gradually undoes it, together with other healing modalities.

UH Just doubting is enough to open that door?

DH Yes, because that opens an alternate possibility. You know, the whole family is allergic, and you say, "Yes, but that may not apply to me." You begin to create a doubt block. You say that it may no longer apply to me. I suggest to people who have chronic illnesses that they say: "That may no longer apply to me." You acknowledge that karmically it was an error; it is only a period of time in your life.

UH In your DVD lecture, "Handling Major Crises", which I understand is a chapter in your new book, you talk about the technique of what you describe as 'letting an unconscious stack run'. Would you describe what you mean by that; it was very powerful.

DH It is. It's based on clinical observation as well as subjective experience. If you let go of resisting a thing you eventually disappear it. Now some things are easy to disappear and other things may take a considerable length of time. The best thing to do if you twist your ankle, for instance, is to just lie down and let go of resisting the sensation. What you do when you let go of resisting a thing, is you let go of resisting the sensation, and that pulls up the stack. Do you remember EST?

UH Sure – the seminars by Werner Erhard.

DH Yes, In EST, Erhard talked about stacks, and there were stacks of different severity – a one, a two or a three they called them. (Laughter) If you pull up a major stack it may take awhile to undo it. And you do it by letting it run. I think the longest one I ran was about 12 days. For 12 days I did nothing but stop resisting a certain belief system. Eventually, I was in the clear of the pain of loss. Oh yes, that was pain of loss of love. The loss of love, of course, recurs throughout many a lifetime, so it was a very major stack. I really didn't know how I was going to survive it. But I just lay on the couch and let go, surrendering to it. It ran quite awhile and then suddenly I was free of it. Very suddenly! The agony of irrevocable, terrible loss of love was probably the worst, and it ran day after day after day.

UH So these stacks may not be due to the personal loss of one lifetime.

DH No, that came from the collective. It's a collective. So, the stack is the collective accumulation of a certain energy over time, and the associated belief system with it. So, yes, the worst one that ever ran for me was the loss of love.

UH In the "Handling Major Crises" lecture you made a comment which suggests – if I recall correctly – for the average person it is almost as though the mind needs mental permission for this unconscious pain and suffering to come up. The example mentioned was of a woman getting into a fender bender who suddenly finds herself sobbing hysterically; the idea being that a relatively minor event might give the mind permission to allow a whole stack of repressed emotions to come up. For the purposes of healing, is there a way for

someone to access this repressed material without having to wait for a fender bender? In other words, how does someone access these unconscious stacks?

DH Well, in practice, unless one is introspective, the best thing to do is to take advantage of spontaneous occurrences. See them as an opportunity. Let's say we have a resentment against people. Every occasion that brings up resentment gives us another opportunity to let go of resisting the resentment and just let it run. Then eventually the degree of the irrationality of it all begins to dawn on you.

UH Sure. (Laughter)

DH Let's say somebody says something that miffed you a little bit. Days later you're still rerunning the same dopey sentence over and over again, still mad about it. The thing to do is to sit down and just let that resentment run; eventually it collapses. All of a sudden you'll know – you'll suddenly laugh and you say, "I can't believe I was all upset about that!" (Laughter) It was trivial when you look at it. Somebody said they didn't like your cookies and it ruins your whole winter? (Laughter)

UH (Laughter) Something I have noticed in my own life is that the emotional intensity of the anger and indignation that can come up with regard to a comment, for instance, far exceeds the situation or remark.

DH There you go. We think that the incident justifies that degree of emotionality. Actually it doesn't, because once it runs out you laugh at it. If it was so tragic you wouldn't be laughing at it. It wasn't major. It seemed that way because it triggered a stack.

UH So once a stack runs out – what is on the other side of that?

DH Once a stack has run out then you laugh at things.

UH (Laughter) Sure.

DH Because you can see where the other person was coming from when they made some dopey remark. Somehow they felt threatened by you so they had to diminish your stature, so they called you cross-eyes or something (Laughter), and they try to bring you down. Eventually it stops becoming your problem and it becomes their problem.

UH Your comments on laughter as an indicator of having run out a stack remind me of my own experience in the Landmark Forum, a seminar which has roots in EST. I don't recall whether they used the word "stack" but one exercise involved letting go of resisting fear. As I let this fear run and stopped resisting the sensations, I went into this agonizing state where I was bent over and sobbing. My throat seized up twice and I felt like I was suffocating. Anyway, after several minutes of this, when it was all over I began to laugh like I have never laughed before, and I just felt so light and joyful, and everyone looked exquisitely beautiful.

DH Oh, wonderful!

UH For the reader who might be curious about this, I wanted to mention Landmark Education, a contemporary seminar program applying some of the EST principles.

DH Yeah, EST was great. I got a lot out of EST. When it first occurred, the avant-garde hit EST first you know. In a

lot of lectures that we give, if I ask how many people did EST, a significant number of the people in the audience - this many decades later - raise their hand and say they did.

UH In the context of healing, what does it mean to “pray for the highest good”?

DH You're asking truth for the sake of truth itself, without having any position about it. In other words, I don't want it for my personal benefit, or for somebody else's personal benefit. Instead of a selfish intention, praying for the highest good means you're depersonalizing it and raising it to a higher level of intention. That prayer helps all of mankind because you are part of mankind; you are seeing yourself collectively. The more man knows the truth, the more free he becomes. Everybody's consciousness affects the overall level. So by raising your own level of truth and awareness of truth, you benefit all of mankind because you're sharing in the collective consciousness. Many of the belief systems come out of the collective unconscious.

UH In the context of healing and overcoming false belief systems, praying for the highest good really seems to broaden one's experience and awareness of overcoming an illness.

DH It reaffirms your essential freedom, and reaffirms that you are only subject to what you hold in mind. The truth constantly counteracts untruth, you might say. It replaces falsity with truth, and with that the evolution of mankind progresses.

UH Another aspect of the mind you cover in this series is the intrinsic innocence of consciousness. That behind all choices is the innocence of the child seeking happiness.

DH That is primary.

UH It seemed to be a very powerful distinction with regard to healing.

DH The mind is naive about its own degree of naivety. The innocence of the child means that you can get programmed by anything because there is a basic innocent trust within the unconscious that allows anything. So, the average person watching television news believes that is the truth of the story. We get programmed constantly, because that is the way the mind is constructed. And because of this, it is a naivety.

I always look at the Garden of Eden; the serpent was aware of an intrinsic innocence within Eve's belief systems. So although God warned them, the serpent knew that in the unconscious is the credulousness of the child who believes

anything it is told. The child as it grows up doesn't suspect falsehood or evil. He believes everything his parents tell him. So this basic innocence and trust is within the unconscious, and of course man eventually gets savaged and utilized by that which is wicked. Wickedness knows that within the unconscious of everyone is the unsuspecting innocence of the child. There is a rerun on TV about Hitler, and you watch thousands and thousands of people shouting, “Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!” as he invokes the name of God to justify genocide, concentration camps and the extermination of whole peoples and cultures. And the people are cheering Adolf Hitler.

UH That reveals how naive faith and innocent belief are strong in the mind.

DH Yes, and it is easily abused. So the politicians – the evil ones – take advantage of this intrinsic innocence and the juvenile nature of the average person's mind.

UH We've covered a lot of engaging topics. Is there anything else you would like to share with regard to your book *Healing and Recovery*?

DH Well, I am interested in its practical application. Because I myself go to physicians, you know; I have a bunch of them. Because when you get elderly there are various things that go wrong and you have to tend to them, so it is a matter of tending, like you take your car to be serviced at the garage. It is beneficial I think to be aware that there are multiple healing modalities, and if one doesn't work, others will.

For instance, my own internist scoffs at anything holistic. If I told him I am going for acupuncture he would just snort with indignation. (Laughter) I carefully do not tell him.

UH So your book is a great resource for individuals seeking to explore many different avenues to healing...

DH Yes, because many people also have illnesses that have not responded to traditional medical treatment. They think they're at the end of the road and become despondent. I want them to know, no, it's a whole new ball game. If you haven't recovered with one modality, now begin exploring all the other modalities. And if traditional medicines scoffs at it, that's a very good sign. (Laughter)

UH Thank you for your time, Dr. Hawkins.

DH Thank you so much, it is always enjoyable talking with you.

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