

The Amazing Power of the Heart

By Roger Kenneth Marsh, Mastery teacher and GLEE co-leader



ITP is an integral practice, integrating body, mind, heart, and soul. When we speak of the practices that develop the heart, we most often speak of things related to emotions and relationship with self and others. Generically speaking, the body is equated with our physical self, the mind our intellectual self, the soul our spiritual self, and the heart our emotional self.

The main ITP practice developing the heart, or our emotional self, is our practice of staying current. Staying current involves a process of becoming aware of your feelings (both when your needs are being met and when your needs are not being met), coming into a balanced and centered state, and then skillfully communicating with another if there is a communication that would serve your “staying current,” or restoring balance, with both yourself and others. It’s a multi-faceted practice, rich in depth and detail.

In the western world, practices for developing mind and body are quite well established, while practices for the heart and soul are less well developed. This is unfortunate because the heart (not to mention the soul!) is a most amazing and powerful element of one’s body and being. Here are a few amazing facts about the heart:

- In a fetus the heart is formed before the brain
- The heart has its own complex nervous system: the “heart brain”
- The heart beats independently from the brain, and during open heart surgery it can continue beating even when removed from the body
- The heart sends far more information to the brain than the brain sends to the heart
- Signals from the heart especially affect the brain centers involved in strategic thinking, reaction times and self-regulation
- The heart produces the largest electromagnetic field of the body, many 1,000’s of times of times stronger than that of the brain

- The heart's electromagnetic field can be measured with a magnetometer up to three feet away from the body, and is hypothesized to extend much, much farther
- Like a cell phone signal, the electromagnetic field of the heart is a carrier wave for information about your emotional state - your heart is broadcasting your emotions 24/7 and can be read by those sensitive enough to pick it up
- The heart impacts the body in four distinct ways: 1) physically as a pump, 2) electrically as a sender of electrical signals, 3) chemically as a major producer of hormones, and 4) electromagnetically, as we've seen, producing the largest electromagnetic field of the body.

Besides having worked in the field of Interventional Cardiology for many years, much of my understanding of the power of the heart comes from my 10 years of training and certification with HeartMath®. Headquartered in the Santa Cruz mountains of California, HeartMath was founded in 1991 to help individuals, organizations and the global community incorporate the heart's intelligence into their day-to-day experience of life. They are specialists in the power of the heart.

I have found HeartMath very complementary to ITP (their research, tools and practices, and commitment to uplifting humanity and planet). My HeartMath practice has taken the "heart aspect" of my ITP practice to new depths and levels. HeartMath's foundational practice for accessing the heart's intelligence is the Heart-Focused Breathing™ technique. This is a simple, yet very powerful practice where you focus your attention in the area of your heart and imagine your breath is flowing in and out of your heart or chest area, breathing a little slower and deeper than usual (suggestion: inhale 5 seconds, exhale 5 seconds, or whatever rhythm is comfortable). For more on the Heart-Focused Breathing technique visit: <http://tinyurl.com/zg44car>.

Not only has HeartMath scientifically validated a physiological state they call "coherence," but also that you can reliably produce and experience this state by engaging the various HeartMath practices. Coherence, as defined by HeartMath, is an optimal state where the heart, mind, and emotions are aligned and in sync – physiologically, the immune, hormonal, and nervous systems, function in a state of energetic coordination. You might think of this state as one of being internally balanced and centered.

The heart is a deep, rich, and powerful aspect of our Integral Transformative Practice, one that has much to offer. With some added focus and practice, we can increase our capacity to tap into our heart's intelligence, experience the power of the heart, and realize that, as we say at HeartMath, a change of heart changes everything!