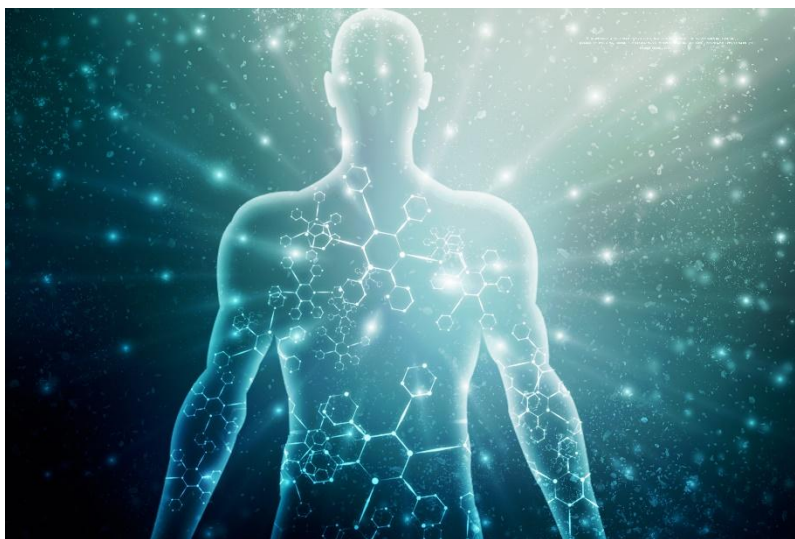


## THE STORY OF HEALTH – COVID 19 (PART 6)



Across the world we are seeing different responses and strategies to the on-going concerns about COVID 19. Some lockdowns continue to be strictly enforced to flatten the curve, whilst in other parts of the world there is some modification to the advice and the restrictions – as the data around infection rates and deaths is showing that some progress is being made.

The ex-British Prime Minister, Theresa May said this week: “We cannot have a situation where the cure for the disease does more damage than the disease itself.”

Mrs May was referring to a massive increase in cases of domestic violence since the lockdown, which has risen by 49% in terms of the number of cases being reported. What’s more disturbing is that a lot of cases are never reported and so the real figures will be much worse than this.

Furthermore, Yvette Cooper, the chair of the Home Affairs Committee in the UK, stated that since the lockdown there is now evidence that the number of women and children killed as a result of domestic violence, has increased sharply and is at its highest level for over a decade.

This negative trend can be seen in the increased reporting of all forms of child abuse, self-harm, suicide and other familial conflicts and there has also been a steady rise in those suffering with depression, general anxiety disorder and panic attacks.

Just to be clear, this article has no interest in getting embroiled in the politics and policies in relation to Coronavirus. We do however, because of our clinical experience and the evidence we see at the coalface, agree with the very important point Mrs. May is making.

Therefore, whilst taking the necessary precautions to save lives, we need to have a plan for how we are going to deal with the fallout when we begin to come out of lockdown – because it’s clear that there is going to be a negative legacy, which is not just financial but also emotional, psychological and relational. It’s already happening.

In part 6 of this series, we want to introduce you to The Story of Health. This is a clear, comprehensive model, designed to help you identify your areas of vulnerability and needs in order that you can apply the necessary solutions. We hope by the end of this piece you will be inspired to create your own story of health plan – a personalised formula for your life, not just for this period of lockdown but beyond.

## **What is The Story of Health?**

The Story of Health, put simply, states that if we are to fully meet our own needs, we have to address the three primary aspects of the self, which are mind, body and spirit – and we also have to ensure that our environment adequately supports those needs.

As we said in COVID 19 (part 3), when we were discussing spiritual immunity, we have no interest in engaging in the complex debate surrounding the spirit or soul. This is a matter for each one to work out for themselves. What we mean by spirit, is how you truly ‘feel’ about yourself when no one is looking. It has nothing to do with your public persona, it’s the needs of the often ‘unseen you’ that we are inviting you to focus on.

The Story of Health also states that the needs of these four elements are equal. If we are meeting the needs of the body but neglecting the mind, we will struggle to achieve well-being. Equally, if one’s environment is untidy and chaotic, achieving peace of mind and equilibrium is unlikely.

In fact, unless the needs of mind, body, spirit and environment are equally addressed, what you will find is that there will be imbalance in some area(s) of your life and despite your best efforts, you will be unable to access the resources you need to achieve the outcomes you desire.

A good way to conceptualise The Story of Health is to think of a table with four legs. Isn’t it best when all four legs are the same in stature and length, each positioned in such a way that the table is strong and balanced, able to perform its many functions? If the legs of our table are not equal in size and proportion, if they are not properly placed, then of course we will be unstable, incapable of fulfilling our potential.

We need to treat the legs of our table with love, reverence, and respect. This means focusing on them equally and not neglecting their respective needs.

In the previous articles, we’ve given guidance on how to create a peace palace and make your mind a fortress, so that you can address the storms of this time. Understanding the principles around The Story of Health will further help you to achieve these objectives.

For those of you who want to explore The Story of Health further, please click the link at the end of the article. But for the purposes of how it can help you deal with the rising emotional and psychological pressures, and any other stresses you may be enduring now, below is a summary of the needs of the spirit, mind, body and environment.

### **What does the spirit need?**

The spirit needs a life of meaning and purpose, otherwise it moves through life aimlessly, feeling unfulfilled.

It needs to be true to itself. There is nothing quite as liberating as integrity and truth.

It needs a sense of its own value and worth. Without this the spirit is lost in the malaise of life.

It needs heartfelt and meaningful relationships.

It needs altruism and benevolence – charity really is good for the soul.

It needs to be loved and to belong to something more than itself.

It needs to be surrounded by peace and joy givers, things that enable us to thrive and flourish.

### **What does the mind need?**

It needs a diet of positive, self-nurturing thoughts, which uplift and inspire.

It needs a clear vision/mission statement, so it knows where it is going and what it is trying to achieve.

It needs a set of 'non-negotiables' – helpful practices that sustain and support its equilibrium and evolution.

It needs stillness and silence for repair and rejuvenation.

It needs to pursue activities that cause no harm whilst promoting pleasure and joy.

It needs to forgive itself (and others) for its mistakes because without compassion one cannot fulfil one's potential.

It needs to develop an attitude of gratitude. The more we count our blessings, the more blessings we will have to count.

### **What does the body need?**

It needs a diverse and balanced diet. The more colour in the diet the better.

It needs deep restorative sleep – which is essential for the good 'housekeeping' and repair that takes place during the night.

It needs hydration, as we are 'vertical rivers' and nothing works properly in the body without water.

It needs regular exercise – movement is health, stagnation is disease.

It needs pampering, which means pursuing activities that are self-indulgent and nurturing.

It needs a minimum of 90 nutrients per day, to give our immune systems the resources they need to respond to our toxic environments.

It needs positive self-talk. The mind and body are intimately entwined – and the body does not respond well to self-condemnation.

### **What does the environment need?**

Before we can address this question, we need to appreciate that there are in fact four environments, which are independent but also interdependent. Therefore, it's difficult to talk about one without referring to the other three. So, if we are to meet the needs of our environment, we need to understand these four aspects. Below is a summary of each.

#### **The four environments**

Firstly, there is the environment of the self (our inner landscape – thoughts, feelings and perception). Secondly, the environment of the body, whose 60 trillion cells form our various organs and systems that collectively sustain our physical health.

Thirdly, there is the environment outside of ourselves, which includes our families, relationships and wider communities – this also includes our physical space. Finally, there's the environment of the planet, with its vastness and complexity. This is the wonderful stage on which the drama of life is played out.

Once we understand these four different environments, we can begin to see that meeting the needs in each area will require different things. It's interesting to note that although these four environments do require different activities and resources, there is an intimate relationship between them as one underpins and supports the other.

For example, the hormones and neurochemicals that are essential to brain health are produced out of the water, essential fats, vitamins and minerals that we imbibe. Without these it's difficult to maintain a positive outlook because the raw materials that enable positive thoughts are in short supply.

Also, creating a space for silent reflection, helps to develop feelings of love and kindness, which enhance our social conscience and encourage us to be more benevolent and proactive in the world. The overlap and connections between these four environments are numerous.

When looking at meeting the needs of your environment, we would recommend you begin by focusing on your physical space. Bringing order in that dimension of your life has proven to have enormous consequences on the environment of the self (thoughts, feelings and perception), your body's health and the quality of your relationships.

### **Here are some things to consider about the environment**

Where possible, create a physical sanctuary, a space for reflection and self-nurture, which leads to an improved self-image and physical well-being.

Developing a social conscience is vital. Start by creating a culture around you where all are equally valued and respected – family, friends, colleagues etc.

Consciously minimise your negative impact on the world – manage your carbon footprint mindfully.

Order creates peace, chaos creates an unsettled feeling. Whether at home or at work, it's important to organise your physical space in a way that's uncluttered and everything is accessible. Our inability to let go of things that are no longer useful holds us back.

Avoid waste in all its forms. Waste harms the mind, body, spirit – and the planet.

We need to learn to conserve energy and to make the most of the resources available to us. This requires awareness and creativity.

When we really understand these four environments, we are compelled to offer each of them our attention and respect.

### **Story of Health plan**

We said earlier that we hope you'll be inspired to create a story of health plan. What this means is identifying at least one thing you can do for your mind, your body and spirit and one thing you can do to enhance your environment.

Take a close look at your lifestyle and see where the areas of neglect exist. By looking at these four dimensions separately, you're more likely to find your deficiencies and contradictions. It's important to note, that this is not an act of self-condemnation, you're merely trying to work out what you could be doing differently to help yourself. The more honest you are in your self-examination, the more likely you are to see those things that are most holding you back.

Once you've established what is missing, you need to make a heartfelt pledge to introduce the antidotes to address those deficiencies. We refer to these pledges as non-negotiables.

A non-negotiable is exactly that... something so important to you that you are unwilling to negotiate it away – a promise that even under difficult conditions, you're not prepared to break. This is not about pursuing perfection; this is about being the best you can be. For something to qualify as a non-negotiable we do need to do it at least 80% of the time. It's at that point that we can really feel the transformative effects in our lives.

So, think of something you could do that would really benefit each of the four areas, mind, body, spirit and environment. It could be something simple to begin with like increasing the amount of water you drink by 10% until you're drinking an adequate amount for your needs. Or increasing your exercise in a similar way. But it could be something more challenging for you, like reorganising and decluttering your home and getting rid of things that are no longer useful. It might be something more intangible, like forgiving yourself for something you have found unforgivable... or forgiving someone else for hurting you in some way.

A story of health plan is not something we can be too prescriptive about, because each person has their own deficiencies, needs and areas requiring resolution and healing. So, you are best placed to work out what your plan should look like.

Creating a story of health plan gives the opportunity to write a new script for the mind, which is more positive and kind. It gives us the opportunity to develop better strategies for the body, ensuring its needs are met. It provides the spirit with greater meaning and purpose and enhances our innate joy. It also ensures that we meet the multifaceted needs of the environment because without doing that our sense of well-being will come tumbling down.

Start creating your own story of health plan today. Once you have managed to do one thing consistently for each area for a month, try adding a second thing and build from there. You will find doing eight things much more powerful than doing four. But don't try to force this. Become consistent before adding anything else to your plan. This will build your mental resilience.

Good luck!

