

Limbic System

Now we're going to take a look at the *limbic system*. Have you ever heard of the mind/body connection? That's what science calls it, the spirit, soul, and body connection.

A principal gland in the limbic system is the hypothalamus. In fact it's called the brain of the endocrine system. Although it directly answers to the pituitary which is another gland involved in the limbic system, it is actually the hypothalamus which integrates the autonomic nervous system as well as the endocrine system.

Remember, psychology says that the soul is comprised of two compartments: conscious and collective unconscious.

Psychology says in the collective unconscious are the archetypes and dark shadows of our ancestral heritage. I say in the collective unconscious (which is the spirit of man) is where the collective garbage of the "crispy critters" of our ancestral heritage resides.

Hypothalamus Gland

1. It controls and integrates the autonomic nervous system, which stimulates smooth muscle, regulates the rate of contraction of cardiac muscle, and controls the secretions of many glands. Through the autonomic nervous system, the hypothalamus is the main regulator of visceral activities. It regulates heart rate, movement of food through the digestive tract, and contraction of the urinary bladder.
2. It is involved in the reception of sensory impulses from the viscera.
3. It is the principal intermediary between the nervous system and endocrine system – the two major control systems of the body. The hypothalamus lies just above the pituitary, the main endocrine gland. When the hypothalamus detects certain changes in the body, it releases chemicals called regulating factors that stimulate or inhibit the anterior pituitary gland. The anterior pituitary then releases or holds back hormones that regulate carbohydrates, fats, proteins, certain ions, and sexual functions.
4. It is the center for the mind-over-body phenomenon. When the cerebral cortex interprets strong emotions, it often sends impulses along tracts that connect the cortex with the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus then directs impulses via the autonomic nervous system and also releases chemicals that stimulate the anterior pituitary gland. The result can be a wide range of changes in body activities. For instance, when you panic, impulses leave the hypothalamus to stimulate your heart to beat faster. Likewise, continued psychological stress can produce long-term abnormalities in body function that result in serious illness. These are so-called psychosomatic disorders. Psychosomatic disorders are real.

Let me say this to you: the hypothalamus gland is the facilitator and the originator of the following life circumstances: *all expressions of fear, anxiety, stress, tension, panic, panic attacks, phobia, rage, anger, and aggression*. These are all released and facilitated by this one gland. It only responds to you emotionally and spiritually. The hypothalamus is called the “brain of the endocrine system,” but it is not a brain. It is a gland. It is a responder to thought. It is a responder to the environment of your life. It will only produce what is happening deep within the recesses of your soul and your spirit.

5. It is associated with feelings of rage and aggression.

6. It controls normal body temperature. Certain cells of the hypothalamus serve as a thermostat – a mechanism sensitive to changes in temperature. If blood flowing through the hypothalamus is above normal temperature, the hypothalamus directs impulses along the autonomic nervous system to stimulate activities that promote heat loss. Heat can be lost through relaxation of the smooth muscle in the blood. If blood temperature is below normal, the hypothalamus generates impulses that promote heat retention. Heat can be retained through the contraction of cutaneous blood vessels, cessation of sweating, and shivering.

7. It regulates food intake through two centers. The feeding center is stimulated by hunger sensations from an empty stomach. When sufficient food has been ingested, the satiety center is stimulated and sends out impulses that inhibit the feeding center.

8. It contains a thirst center: Certain cells in the hypothalamus are stimulated when the extracellular fluid volume is reduced. The stimulated cells produce the sensation of thirst in the hypothalamus.

9. It is one of the centers that maintain the waking state and sleep patterns.

The limbic system is the connection between your cerebrum where your brain is, down through to your hypothalamus. It is the connection between psyche (thought) and physio (the body). It is the connection between soul and body. Everything that concerns thought travels right down that connection. Good thoughts and bad thoughts. All of these parts are connected in order to process thought and give it expression in the physiological part of our lives. Just as fear can put you into fight or flight, peace can bring you into peace.