

# Holistic Living

Learn the Keys to a Fully Integrated Life

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by lola akinmade

**T**he concept of holistic living has been around for centuries and medical practitioners have been bridging the gap between various diseases and their treatments by analyzing the body as a whole, instead of focusing on certain parts. Holism subscribes to the school of thought that the body as a whole—physical, mental and spiritual—should be taken care of collectively. Holism neophytes, we turned to Christine Garvin, who holds a masters in holistic health education, to help demystify it.

For years, Garvin battled a slew of health problems, from post-nasal drips to persistent sore throats. It wasn't until contracting malaria in Zambia that she was diagnosed with an overgrowth of *Candida albicans*. This yeast can compromise digestion, produce toxins and inhibit natural absorption of nutrients, which in turn can cause nasty diseases.

"Western medicine is only beginning to get on board with the idea that yeast infections can be systemic, and not simply localized, like thrush and vaginal," explains Garvin, who tried dietary supplements, giving up gluten, cutting sugar and alcohol, and other drastic changes to battle the infection. These struggles led her to the holistic health education program at John F. Kennedy University. "It took me the majority of the program to realize what I had been missing: spiritual practice," she says. "I exceeded at the physical, nutrition and bodywork part. That missing spirituality prompted a feeling of wholeness within me."

We went to her for more details about holism.

**Heart & Soul: What is holistic living?**

**Garvin:** Instead of "fixing" back pain with drugs or surgery, viewing back pain from

a holistic standpoint means looking at possible emotional causes, energy blockages, crisis of faith and belief in oneself, along with physical triggers of pain.

Louise Hay, author of *You Can Heal Your Life*, lists several emotions that can cause back pain, including anger and insecurity. From the physical standpoint, looking at the way one sits, stands, walks, spends time on the computer all come into play, and bodywork such as therapeutic techniques and yoga help.

**H&S: What baby steps can we start taking to live more holistically?**

**Garvin:** Take 10 minutes a day to sit in silence and attempt to focus on breathing or a mantra. This slows down the system and kicks it into parasympathetic mode, where healing and repair of muscles, tissues and organs occurs. It's one of the easiest and most influential ways to a better health and soul connection.

**PAY ATTENTION WHEN YOU EAT.** How does your body respond when eating? How about 15 minutes or two hours later? If it's not good, it's time to re-evaluate what you are eating.

Many people have undiagnosed food allergies they believe are environmental allergies and therefore take suppressive allergy drugs to help symptoms. This

"The whole is more than the sum of its parts."

Gestalt psychology (1910)

causes stress on the body and sets it up for deeper long-term diseases.

When you pay attention to how you feel when you eat, you are able to make wiser choices.

**FEED YOURSELF WITH COMPASSION.** Be honest with yourself about your feelings, and look at what's underlying them from a compassionate stance. When you're compassionate with yourself, you are destined to make better choices.

**MOVE IN A WAY YOU LOVE.** If you hate the gym, don't join one. Find a hoop class. Play outside with your kids. Walk to the store instead of taking the car. Find some form of movement that speaks to you and look forward to doing it daily.

**SLEEP.** We lack sleep as a culture and it's affecting our health in a negative way. Studies show people who work nights live years less than those who don't. Not sleeping enough inhibits the production of various hormones and neurotransmitters essential to keeping us happy. Sometimes getting good sleep means cutting out some parts of daily life—stressful work, caffeine, late-night TV—even when they seem necessary for survival. ♥

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