

## Surgery and Aspects of Faster Recovery

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If a hysterectomy is simply taking out an used and troublesome part why do so many women struggle in their recovery?

How come there are forums and groups where women reach out for advice as they battle with a feeling of loss, identity change and an impacted life.

'I am 16 months post op and feel that I am finally making way'

'I am delighted to have no problems with bleeding and pain anymore. But why do I feel so sad?'

'I feel like I am grieving for something I don't even know what it is'

When a woman has a gynaecological procedure it is so much more than a mechanical investigation or removal of an organ.

Being human means that we are a whole system of mind and body. A human being is a whole system and anyone trained in systems theory will tell you that if a part of that system is altered - broken or even fixed, the whole system will change.

How does your body influence your mind? Your emotion influence your body? Your mind influence your body? In many, many ways that you may not have realised.

Every cell and organ of you is involved in a system and, like any system, if a part of that is not working so well, then the whole system breaks down in some way. Because the cells and organs are not just simply 'things' that work independently it is like a tangle develops and . They are deeply part of and influencing your own psyche and vice versa. You are your own system.

Understanding this will lead to you being in control, of having power, in how your body and mind responds to how you are being healthy, how you are being unhealthy, how you are having a great day or even a rotten one. You can have emotions and beliefs that colour your experiences for good or bad. And you can create within your physiological body, the conditions that make you feel like the world is a dreadful place. Posture, where you look, how deeply or quickly you breathe. Pain for example can make you feel alone and lonely, grumpy, sad, afraid, small, hopeless. Using the mind/body connection theory, you can change the response you have to it so that you are not so mentally or emotionally affected. The physiology of pain changes.

The organs that sit in the pelvis hold the essence of being a woman and the essence of sexuality. This is intricately linked with identity and personality.

When a woman comes to me for coaching before a hysterectomy or similar procedure, we look at the physical aspect of the procedure and then get down to the emotional aspect of what the womb means to that woman as it greatly impacts who that woman is.

You see there is much wisdom to be held in those organs. The ovaries, uterus, fallopian tubes, cervix and vagina that have been doing the job of confirming regularly, the womanly aspects of creation of further life. And there is a lifetime of thinking towards those organs that may not have been too encouraging, consciously or unconsciously.

The sexual intelligence that is held in the pelvis is directly linked to the colour and vibrancy of life. Not only do they have a 'function of reproduction, but that area is intimately involved in directing desire, interest and attraction for pleasure, bliss and ecstasy. The drive and urges, connecting, stimulation, creation and excitement. But all of these words are not only reserved for sexual excitement. They apply to how the woman experiences her life. The vitality, vigour and co-creativity.

So here is the evidence.

Back in 1894 Byron Robinson, M.D. advocated that the ganglionated mass located at the lateral border of the uterus should be termed the pelvic brain (*cerebrum pelvicum*). A brain is defined as being a centre of intelligence, capable of neuroplasticity and memory. (There are other centres of intelligence in the heart and gut and spread out via the autonomic nervous centre. And of course, in our head). Robinson observed the profound and intimate connection between the enteric nervous system (abdominal brain) and the pelvic brain.

Giudice, *et al.* 2012 confirmed this when he commented that the neural interconnections and fibres that supply the pelvic organs may link with the enteric nerve plexus - the supply to the gastrointestinal tract.

Our language even indicates how important our feminine centre is and how the strong link is to the gut. Sexual lust is described as a hunger. We 'consume' our new loves. We 'consummate' marriage.

So how is the vibrancy of life influenced by the neurons of the pelvis?

Naomi Wolf in her book *Vagina* writes 'It is not so surprising that when the neural pathways from the brain to the vagina are damaged, one feels that life has less meaning; truly, the well-treated vagina is a medium that releases, in the female brain, what can be called without exaggeration the chemical components of the meaning of life itself'

Naomi, in her book, goes on to describe the effect of rape on women in warring countries. She says that to break a woman's spirit the most effective way is to rape and mutilate their most feminine parts, especially the pudendal nerve. Some victims say they would cope with losing an arm but the treatment and damage of their vaginas have stripped the colour of their world and how they experience it.

'Once one understands what scientists at the most advanced laboratories and clinics around the world are confirming - that the vagina and the brain are essentially one network, or 'one whole system,' as they tend to put it, and that the vagina mediates female confidence, creativity and sense of transcendence - the answers to many of these seeming mysteries fall into place' she writes.

So is it any surprise that sexuality and those organs specifically associated with that have aspects that impact the biology, emotion, social, psychological and spiritual realms?

Is it any surprise that after a Hysterectomy, Oophorectomy (and even Orchidectomy in men - they have a centre of sexuality as well!) the patient commonly feels that a personality change has occurred? Those people write on forums and pages saying that they have lost their zest for life. They don't feel like getting out there as they have no energy or vigour. They feel sad most of the time. They are different now and no longer have a sense of humour. And these comments are written 12, 14, 16 months after the operation. It is apparent that simply removing an organ of sexuality has the possibility of a vastly greater impact on the woman than is attributed to.

So how do I prepare my clients for what could be a life changing operation? Where they are under the impression that it is only a part that is no longer useful, but maybe have a feeling that there is more to it than that?

Take Megan (not her real name). Megan was booked in for a complete hysterectomy. She was looking forward to being rid of the problem that had plagued her for years. 'Better out than in.' She came to me for coaching because she 'didn't have time' for reported complications after the procedure, needing to get back to her family and work as soon as possible. Nobody at work knew she had been having issues as she had been covering up the pain and 'inconveniences' and she was loathe to go to her manager and ask for extended time off for a womanly issue. Her team was about to start a new project and she didn't know how to ask them to slow down and wait for her. She didn't have time for a prolonged recovery back to health. Time was money and time was dignity. She was stronger than that!

During the session we explored her feelings about what her pelvic organs were for and what they meant to her. She realised how she had spent her life being vexed by the annoying monthly periods and now utterly tired of the pain, bloating and irregular bleeding experienced. But she also realised that because she had a uterus, ovaries and cervix, she was able to conceive and bear two amazing children. And that she was a woman with womanly thinking, capable of nurture and creation.

That created a change within.

The gratitude Megan felt for having that special female skill and ability gave her a completely new perspective on her pelvic area. Where she came in to my office annoyed, irritated and hating the trouble caused by those female organs (she wished she was a man), she now experienced a turnaround of opinion. She realised the possibility of a wisdom within her that she hadn't been listening to. She likened it to a child trying to speak to her and she not taking any notice.

Megan suddenly felt that there was something that she was missing. Upon further exploration we looked for what her centre of being female was trying to bring her attention to. She had a deep insight into how she was driving her life - with power and force, just like she always had. And that she needed to practise nurture towards herself.

Megan suddenly felt an experience of deep gratitude for her whole self - of love. This took her by surprise as she was used to driving projects forward, be they work or family and taking this softer approach to herself was one that she realised was vital to her going forward in a healthy way. She realised that she had denied herself many things up until now, feeling an almost masculine drive to push forward - but for why?

Having received these insights we worked with her to pass the wisdom of those pelvic organs, about to be removed, to the rest of the body. This works on the premise that the body is actually a system and if a part of that system is changed or removed, the whole system is affected. Sharing the 'information' with the other cells of her body meant that the wisdom would not be lost. And the other cells, organs and parts of her were able to farewell those organs as well - this was something she came up with herself.

Megan left feeling calm and confident for her operation, confident that her body would be able to continue with the now shared information of the part that was about to be removed. And confident that she had a more complete understanding and that her body would respond physically with no complications and rapid recovery. 'I've got this' was how she felt.

Megan felt fully recovered two months after the operation. She didn't experience blood loss and neither did she get any post-operative infections, and she was delighted to not need to go back into surgery for complications. She was able to actively participate at work within the four weeks.

She said that she was feeling very 'complete' and had a feeling that energetically, she was complete. She also had the distinct feeling of loving her body and who she was. It was almost like she had been introduced to herself - her essence, and she felt stronger in taking care of herself, taking a more gentle and nurturing approach to her work and family.

The technique I use is a mixture of NLP, and the multiple Brain Integration Technique (mBIT). mBIT was developed by Grant Soosalu and Marvin Oka in the field of mBraining. It creates alignment in the centres of information (brains) that we all have, being the head, heart, gut, pelvis and nervous system so that the feeling is of alignment or flow. So that there is no internal struggle or discord. Ultimately there is the feeling of being in the highest wisdom - a wonderful place to be in!

We have all had those times when things go almost effortlessly - those no brainer decisions that you hold of high value and motivation. And we have all had those times when it has been a constant struggle and maybe a feeling of 'it was a good idea at the time', followed by regret. Alignment within you is the difference. I apply these principles of alignment and flow to health and in particular assisting my clients to preparing themselves mentally and emotionally for a surgical event, in order to achieve faster and more complete recovery than is expected.

I firmly believe that a woman can heal completely and rapidly if she is fully prepared for the surgery, with preparation being at a level of being more than only knowing which part will be removed. Those beautiful organs in our pelvis' are worth so much more to us than being no longer useful to us.

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