

University Student Failed!!! Left Longing for Happiness

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An unscientific survey of the faces one passes on the campus of a large university like McGill, will allow for the hypothesis to be made that the student body is not happy. While some faces are animated with elation, and others seem still with contentment, others yet sag with exhaustion. Take this experiment one step further and discover that many eyes are glazed over with distraction; eye contact is avoided by some and intensely pursued with the searchingness of one lost by others. Engage a sample of students in conversation and the words tired, stressed, busy and frustrated are thrown around with frequency. Some may complain of too little sleep, others of too much drinking or eating, and still others yet neglect to take care of themselves at all. Seek out textual support in the form of the writing on bathroom stalls throughout the women's, and possibly also the men's, bathrooms. Here one can read anonymous correspondence that shares confusion, anger and hope regarding topics ranging from specific romantic relationships, to sexuality in general, and encompassing eating disorders, physical ailments as well as miscellaneous rants. The claim I make here is not that there are no happy students, but rather that there absolutely are unhappy ones.

I will be addressing the phenomenon of unhappy undergraduate university students in this paper. I have wondered at the value of an education that leaves its student body in large part unhappy and confused

as to how the synthesis of information being learned in the classroom can be integrated in a lifestyle. Great thinkers ranging from Aristotle to the Buddha agree that the purpose of human life is to attain real happiness by diminishing suffering. What is being overlooked in our university that prevents real learning about happiness from taking place? I propose that we are not doing enough learning about happiness as a subject of study and attention. Here at McGill University we greatly emphasize the value of accumulating more and more knowledge, however this is almost entirely analytical and hypothetical learning. We need to increase our learning about the human experience that transcends a only an intellectual valuation. Failure to do so has left a student body ill prepared for the complexities of a responsible, adult life.

In this paper I will respond to the absence of deeper guidance in the university community with a close analysis of the book *Anatomy of the Spirit* by Caroline Myss. Myss understands our health to be a holistic phenomenon that encompasses all parts of our lives. Holistic health considers more than the mere absence of disease. It is an overall state of well-being that includes high functioning emotional, mental, spiritual as well as physical components of our bodies. Factors such as energetic wellness contribute not only to the way we feel but also to our actual physical health. It is easy to understand the dynamic of cause and effect on the physical plane. The substances we put into our bodies affect the way we feel; too much alcohol makes one feel drunk, too much food makes one feel heavy. Similarly the ideas we intake affect our emotional/mental bodies. The connection between the physical and energetic bodies is a fluid one, and so the eventual manifestation of disease or illness is connected to the malaise of the subtle, invisible, energetic body, terms that will be used interchangeably in this text.

The phenomenon of happiness is dependent on a state of spiritual health. If one feels an overall sense of well-being and contentment he or she is equipped to experience happiness. Combine that contentment with individual awareness about decisions, and a safety net will be drawn that allows for emotional risks to be taken. These emotional risks open the individual up to feeling real joy without sacrificing an overall sense of

satisfaction. When we can perceive even negative occurrences as beneficial or even simply as lessons, we experience life in a much richer manner that allows us to take satisfaction in what the moment offers, without compromising our knowledge that everything can change at the drop of a hat. With the right kind of personal education, an individual can become open to great feelings of elation without having an inherent opposite of depression.

Myss contends that the cells of the physical body record the emotions of our life. She calls this cellular memory. Just as one feels a physical change in response to an emotion like fear, so does the body experience and record the repercussions and reverberations of less drastic emotional events. The decisions we make are intertwined with our thoughts and our thoughts are intertwined with emotion. If we are pleased with something, that thought elicits a positive emotional feeling, and similarly, a negative thought is intertwined with an uncomfortable emotional response. If the individual cannot make sense of the uncomfortable emotion as having a cause that can possibly be reversed, responded to, or at least acknowledged, that discomfort evolves into negativity. Therefore, if an individual has a continual thought of dissatisfaction with some element of his or her personal or professional life, it will gradually be recorded in the body and may lead to an eventual physical manifestation of disease. Granted, there are other physical factors that effect health, like environment, exercise, and diet, which are strong variables, isolated from the emotional memory of the body. These factors are also important to learn about and do not necessarily come naturally. Things like healthy diet and regular exercise are decisions that must be habituated in the lifestyle of modern urbanites for several reasons. A plethora of harmful food choices, a largely sedate work force as well as the correlation between professional stress and unhealthy life choices heightens the need for education on these more conventional health factors as well.

In the preface to *Anatomy of the Spirit*, Myss describes her earliest ventures in medical intuition. She writes, "I began to realize something I had never been taught in school: that our spirit is very much a part of our daily lives; it embodies our thoughts and emotions, and it records every one of them, from the most mundane to the visionary" (Myss 3). Myss

explains the correlation between emotional experience and physical disease. She uses a system that describes seven energy centers in the subtle human body. These correspond to the seven chakras of the Hindu tradition, as well as the seven Christian sacraments, and ten Jewish Kabalistic sephirot. The correspondence between these ancient, valued traditions legitimizes and substantiates the claims that Myss makes. It may be difficult for the reader to fully embrace this understanding of energy healing because, by its very nature, energetic healing cannot, as of yet, be scientifically proven. However, anything having to do with the spirit is to some extent speculative. It cannot be absolutely proven that there is a personal spirit or a universal one either. However, religion has long been tremendously important and prominent in societies around the world and the conclusion must be made, even by the skeptic, that there is something to such a system of belief. I would invite the reader to leave behind any preconceived notions of health or spirit to consider, with an open mind, this alternative way of thinking. Additionally, the language that is used here could be perceived as “New Age” or “self-help.” I would encourage the readers who see this as a factor that diminishes the legitimacy of the ideas presented to feel free to translate the concepts presented here into any terms they prefer, so long as the essence of Myss’ thesis is left intact.

There are three principles that Myss outlines in her directions toward achieving energetic health and vibrancy. The first is that “biography becomes biology” (Myss 40). This is what I briefly mentioned in an earlier paragraph, referring to this phenomenon as cellular memory. The actions and choices one makes in life are recorded in the body and result in health or a lack thereof according to the positive or negative nature of the decisions that are made. However, not all negativity will lead to disease. In order for disease to develop, negative emotions must be dominant. The development of an illness is accelerated by knowing a negative thought is toxic and choosing not to do anything to change. Myss gives the example of someone knowing he or she needs to forgive another and chooses not to. This is a negative and unproductive use of energy and it gradually depletes the body.

The second principle is that “personal power is necessary for health” (Myss 43). Every person develops a personal sense of security

through some means, or through a combination of various means. Some examples of these means are monetary acquisition, prestige in a position of accomplishment, a personal relationship, spiritual faith. The security one gains from such social insurance is what reinforces personal worth and well-being. If the positive security provider is compromised in some way and becomes negative, it becomes a personal power void. Rather than serving the purpose of building the individual up, that factor becomes instead the element that takes away from the individual's sense of personal well being. One example of this is trust being broken in a loving relationship. Suddenly the relationship that validated the individual's sense of security becomes a power siphon as the neglected person continues to give energy to something that is no longer a likewise power source in exchange. Another example would be a student who understands his significance as greatly dependent on his grade point average. If his or her performance in school begins to diminish, so will his personal power, allowing for more and more stress or depression, the first signs of an energetic imbalance.

The third principle is "you alone can help yourself heal" (Myss 47). Myss puts the responsibility of healing squarely on the shoulders of the individual seeking healing. She prescribes attention to the self and one's choices in a thorough, in depth manner. As a result of the often times very subtle or internal actions that contribute to loss of personal power, the individual must take action early on to pay heed to his or her actions and thoughts. Myss encourages the perspective that the body is both a physical and energetic entity. It is important for every person to begin to develop their innate intuitive skills in order to be equally aware of the energetic body as we all already are of the physical body. She encourages the individual to use his or her will to change his or her internal behavior to generate love, self-esteem and health.

It is possible that the reader may think that the problem of low energetic health is not a particularly grave issue for the university undergraduate student. One may wonder, what sorts of drains of power could intelligent individuals in their late teens to mid twenties really be subject to? Indeed, members of this demographic engage in behaviors that are nothing less than toxic, such as drug abuse. Even more importantly

though, this demographic is best situated to take preventative measures regarding holistic health. Myss rightly points out that, “there are not many ways to successfully introduce your personal needs into a circumstance that was created before you realized what your personal needs were” (Myss 53). Undergraduate students are at major crossroads. Many will be making the first major choices of their lives during this time. Important choices such as graduate school and marriage carry with them consequences that could possibly have a lifelong duration. The decisions being made by members of this demographic have tremendous emotional, financial and professional repercussions. It is therefore fundamental that in order to avoid a middle aged crisis or anything of that ilk, the choices we make now are in synch, as best as we can know it, with our personal needs.

Seven Power Centers

There are seven stages of power within the human body. Each one has associations with specific parts of the physical body, the emotional/mental body as well as various fears and strengths. They move from the gross to the subtle, the first or base chakra has to do with one’s community and is located at the base of the spine. The highest is seated in the physical body at the crown of the head and is the place for a spiritual connection. The first three power centers have to do with our relationship with the external world, the fourth is the center that integrates our internal and external worlds, where the fifth, sixth and seventh have no external manifestations. Myss names a “sacred truth” for each of these power centers and she also lists the member parts of each category. Myss mentions that it often takes a serious illness or accident to precipitate life changes that will push an individual towards becoming more aware of his or her personal needs. I posit that if we were better educated about these things then we would be more inclined to make gradual changes and hopefully avoid those times of crisis.

The first energy center is one of Tribal Power and the sacred truth associated with this power center is that *All is One*. This energy center corresponds to the base chakra and the sacrament of Baptism. It attends to our need for logic, order and structure. We experience loyalty to the values

shared with those others in our community. Honor, a characteristic that is of great importance to a sense of self-worth, is also seated in our base chakra because honor is cultivated according to our status within the larger community. Our sense of justice is also outwardly attended to through the legal and punitive systems of our tribe, although Myss writes that “the ultimate first chakra lesson is that the only real justice is divinely ordered” (Myss 124). This acceptance of justice as divinely monitored is evident in the Buddhist and Hindu phenomena of karma and in the understanding of God as omniscient in other religions. Our interest in getting out into our community and producing positively is validated by some reassurance that what we are doing is right. The opposite energy to finding purpose in doing is depression, a first chakra dysfunction.

To apply the functioning of the first chakra to the university student demographic, I would like to look at the strengths and weaknesses the university community tends to foster in its members. In the Western academic community, we are most sympathetic to the philosophy of the ancient Greeks and their philosophical descendents whose long line includes the Founding Fathers of many ‘Western’ governmental and religious institutions. There is a pervasive emphasis on the logical, scientific understanding of the workings of the universe. Within academic walls, there is a general suspicion of the emotional as somehow less legitimate than the intellectual, but still very much necessary. This value judgement has historically had a gendered manifestation. Men have been the providers for the family and are the rational, accomplished ones. Women are traditionally imaged as emotional and unreliable when it comes to the workplace, but something any successful man ought to have in order to provide an emotionally fulfilled family life. In our current time, the gender roles are no longer so strongly defined and so every individual has the task of finding a balance between the emotional, intellectual and material. In order to move towards a truly balanced and healthy personal state of well being, it is important to gain a well-informed understanding of one’s own personal needs in relation to the tribal values. One needs to be able to reconcile their position within the ‘family.’

The most prominent tribal value contradiction that must be responded to within this community is the demands upon the student that are conducive to a life of extremes. Aristotle indicated that in pursuing happiness the practical rational faculty must be developed before, and in order that full concentration on the theoretical rational faculty may occur. We must learn moderation regarding our base desires in order that we are not overcome by their demands in the pursuit of perfected knowledge, which is, according to Aristotle, the ultimate felicity. The western university is the place where one would go to strive towards intellectual perfection; however the pendulous lifestyle this community lends itself to makes the task of sublimating the practical intellect to the theoretical intellect highly challenging, especially for the youngest students. Students may study all week and drink with abandon when the weekend comes. There may be no written work due until the final week of the semester, when stress levels sky rocket and students are thrown into a whirlwind of study. The myth of the freshman fifteen, the number of pounds a student puts on during his or her first year of study, is grounded in a reality that is disappointing for most. The objective hierarchical measure of success is conducive to competition, ruthlessness and a sense of the self versus all others. It is a huge challenge for a student to develop a balance that responds to the demands of the university with the calls for attention from the other chakras.

The competitive nature of the tribal values of the university comes into direct conflict with the sacred truth of the second power center: *Honor one another*. The second chakra houses our creative impulses, our sexual impulses as well as our power of choice and the principle dichotomies we generally accept. This energy center is the hub from which we understand many of the primary issues we confront as young adults. This is a time of choices as we begin to create our adult life. As our society grows increasingly pluralistic, so grows the range of choices and the responsibility for the privileged youth of today. There are no decisions that are not considered politicized for some faction or organization. There is a meaning to every choice, a sacrifice for every opportunity. Myss writes that there are four stages of personal power that are reflected in the increase of individual

power within Western society in the past four decades. They are revolution, involution, narcissism and evolution. The first step towards positive change is by rebelling against the present status quo. After challenging the norm, we turn inward and develop an alternative. The third stage is a time when we come to be comfortable with that change and therefore have to be inwardly focused as individuals. The final stage is evolution when we no longer have to focus on these changes because they have become integrated within us and we have clearly evolved from our starting point. These stages reflect the 1960s (revolution), 70s (involution), 80s (narcissism), and 90s (evolution). This book was published in 1996, so it is unclear what stage Myss would say we are now in.

The baby-boomer generation had specific purpose in pioneering new territory by rebelling against the status quo and then taking action to integrate alternatives into a normative existence. It is new to the generation of early twenty-somethings to be, dare I say, post-struggle, which is the beginning of a much more anxious struggle. We have available to us all of the advents made from the sweat, blood and tears of the generations that came before us without a clear objective as to what is worth working towards. It does seem that the movement is towards internal, spiritual growth. However, it is still something of a challenge for young people to know how to respond to all of the choices that lie in front of them without becoming manic with ambition or paralyzed with intimidation.

Human beings have the amazing power of choice. When these choices become overwhelming, or limited, the shadow side of the second chakra rears its head and “our most prevalent fears: rape, betrayal, financial loss and poverty, abandonment, isolation, impotence and the inability to care for ourselves,” begin to control us (Myss 134). Fear is a tremendously powerful force that is debilitating in its dominance. The second chakra is the root of our desire to create bonds with other people and also to create tangible security and accomplishments on a material plane. That power center is also the origin of some of the most debilitating fears we, as individuals, might encounter because of its association with currencies as influential as money, sex and relationships. This chakra deals with our material security. It is also the force that drives us to create art and investigate

science. Through this power center we seek to understand our relationship as an individual to the world around us. Probably one of the most active times in one's life for this process to take place is in the first few years of independence from one's family, or primary tribal unit. The fear associated with this chakra is founded in the truth that "inherent in the second chakra's potential to create is also the potential for conflict" (Myss 139).

One of the primary conflicts to be wary of is one against the creation itself. It can be very difficult to abstain from controlling one's creation. Take the example of parenting. Good parents teach their children the skills to navigate their own lives successfully and do not control the actions of the child once that training is complete. The problem with controlling something one has produced is that it is in direct conflict with the natural law that change is the only consistent thing. Like the creator, the creation will continue to progress and this cannot be controlled. The student constantly produces evidence of his or her knowledge. These little creations, in the form of papers or presentations, are important to the student primarily for the grade they are rewarded; however, the student does not have the capacity to control the grade outcome of those pieces of work. The life of the student therefore is constantly filled with conflict in the creation of things that are to be evaluated in a manner that is beyond one's control. This stress leads to tension in the second chakra. The second chakra can also be overexerted in the personal lives of students. At a school like McGill, a large percentage of the student body hails from a place other than Montreal. They are charged with the task of creating a community and a world for themselves here without having direct control over the outcome of their efforts.

Also associated with the second chakra is the challenge of managing sexual energy. Again there is a huge and inherent possibility for conflict or hurt because of the raw power of sexuality. Acts of sexual expression open the individual up to the capacity of not only physical but also emotional and spiritual liberation. Sexual energy is flowing strongly in young adults and "when a person has no release, however, this energy backs up in the system and, without conscious management, can produce reactions that run the gamut from depression to violence" (Myss 144).

Some avenues of expression are exercise and creativity. If one's lifestyle is so highly structured and busy that there is no time to dedicate one to such productive outlets for this type of energy, it is very likely one will turn to some kind of repression or escape that is ultimately harmful. There is therefore a tremendous potential for energetic abuse both against oneself and towards others who open up the possibility of a sexual dialogue.

The second power center, as a result of its emphasis on the relationship between the individual and his or her external world, is the ethical center of the body. It is important to make decisions that will provide one's whole system with a healthy unity that stems from good ethics. Poor ethics are decisions one makes regarding external factors that are influenced by a negative part of one's nature, such as the desire to control others or accumulate personal power at the expense of the wellbeing of others. This divides one's energy against itself and lead to a dysfunctional element. "Power is the life-force," (Myss 161) and one needs to strive towards an accumulation of physical power that does not compromise one's spiritual ethics. Myss describes this as being in this world but not of it. We most easily calibrate our power according to external indicators, but ultimately what is needed is a sense of internal power. We need to have a unity between our spiritual needs and our worldly choices.

The third chakra or energy center has to do with personal power. Where the second chakra is associated with one's external relationships, the third chakra is the grounding of our relationship with ourselves so that we can fine tune our external interactions. The diseases that develop in the third chakra "are activated by issues related to self-responsibility, self-esteem, fear of rejection, and oversensitivity to criticism" (Myss 166). By the time an individual is in university, he or she has spent several years becoming grounded in the process of understanding one's self; however the process is still evolving. In most religious traditions there is a puberty ritual that challenges the youth but also invites him or her into the community as an adult. Through this process the youth develops self-esteem, a term that Myss sees as synonymous with personal power. Self-esteem allows the youth to make decisions based on his own sense of right and wrong rather than living according to values or standards others place on him.

The development of personal power is essential to personal well being because it is what allows a person to say no to energy that contrary to their unlimited power of positivity. Myss points out that that physical world is illusory. If we make our life decisions based on the values of that world, we are pumping our creative energy into a void that will not give back to us at all. It is important to take a step away from linear time and have the self-esteem to listen to what one's intuition tells one in the present moment. Intuition is not prophetic revelation, but rather the voice inside us that directs us to a decision at any given moment. We must have developed self-esteem in order to be able to listen to that voice, and it takes time and attention for anyone to develop his or her self-esteem. It is extremely important that action be taken to support the guidance one receives, or else nothing is changed energetically. Self-pity is easily generated when no action is taken, and this is a toxic phenomenon. Taking action towards change involves work, dedication and risk. If the changes are primarily internal, one needs to learn to give herself the acknowledgement and recognition that is desired to value the personal evolutions that occur. It takes courage to change, but it is something that happens as rapidly as we believe it can.

The prior mentioned four stages towards personal power; revolution, involution, narcissism and evolution are essential in the development of third chakra health. The act of revolution, or several mini-revolutions, involves differentiating ourselves from the values of the collective whole. It is our effort to separate ourselves in order that we may find our own voice. Involution is the stage when we assess our external world and evaluate how well it serves us. It is how we flesh out the new vision of ourselves that we generated in our revolution. Narcissism is generally seen as having a negative connotation but it is during this stage that we learn to sit strongly in our newly defined sense of self. The final step is an internal evolution towards joining a group of people who "can maintain their principles, their dignity, and their faith without compromising any energy from their spirit" (Myss 191). These are people who are aware of the illusory nature of the physical world and behave in a manner that is responsible to their personal ethics, rather than to external values.

The sacred truth of the fourth power center is *Love is Divine Power*. Its essence is emotional and it serves as the bridge between the internal and external chakras. The emotions are what inform our intellect of our spiritual needs. The third chakra focuses on our feelings about ourselves in relation to the external world and the fourth chakra has to do with our feelings about ourselves in relation to our internal world. The currency of this chakra is love. Myss on love:

We are not born fluent in love but spend our life learning about it. Its energy is pure power. We are attracted to love as we are intimidated by it. We are motivated by love, controlled by it, inspired by it, healed by it, and destroyed by it. Love is the fuel of our physical and spiritual bodies. (Myss 199)

In order to be able to receive the positive benefits of love we have to take the risk to open ourselves up to it. This involves risk because it means we make ourselves vulnerable and open. Many of us also feel that we are not worthy or deserving of love and when this happens, forgiveness is an extremely important act. We must forgive ourselves of our faults so that we can allow ourselves to believe that we are deserving of love from others. We should expect to provide ourselves with emotional validation but remain open to intimacy with another; this is a paradigm of intimacy that is empowered through vulnerability.

The Christian sacrament associated with the fourth power center is the sacrament of marriage. It means sharing oneself with another in a provocatively intimate way. In the process of getting more comfortable with one's own self esteem, it is good to begin to behave as if a marriage commitment has been made to oneself so that an experience with unconditional love can be developed. This provides us with some buoyancy from failure. If we know we are worthy of love, from ourselves, from others or from God, regardless of our material successes or failures then we will be much more able to bounce back from apparent failure.

Our emotions guide us to what our intuition tells us to do. That nagging feeling that pops up in your gut to tell you to go back in the kitchen and turn off the oven is an example of being open to listening to what we feel rather than only what we can explain. Myss writes "while intelligence or

'mental energy' is generally considered superior to emotional energy, actually emotional energy is the true motivator of the human body and spirit" (Myss 198). If we can learn to cultivate a complimentary dynamic between our emotions and our intellect we will gain a synergy between the fire that moves us forward and the knowledge that directs us.

The fifth chakra houses the power of will. The sacred truth Myss prescribes to it is *surrender personal will to divine will*. The lesson of this chakra is that acting based on divine will is the absolute best approach. We do not necessarily know what is best for us and if we are focused on controlling the physical world around us, or even our internal will, we are bound to hurt because of the inevitability of change. Myss calls for us to have faith that we will be provided for if we only listen to what our intuition tells us is the right way to behave at any given time. Change is frightening because it leads to the unknown. If we can learn to embrace change we will find it exhilarating and inspirational and absolutely the fullest way to approach living. The sacrament of confession is related to this power center because, by releasing our deepest, darkest secrets, we free ourselves from our personal will and allow ourselves to act with a freedom that is not associated with repentance or regret. Psychotherapists are our modern-day confessors and by talking through our internal struggles we break down our fears. Myss describes the process of therapy as follows, "the sweet energy of healing pours into our energy system every time we break a fear's authority over our lives and replace it with a more empowered sense of self" (Myss 229). Anything that holds us from doing what we know is best is an addiction. Myss says therefore that fear is an addiction we must break ourselves of and replace with faith.

The sixth power center is the chakra of wisdom. It is where intuitive sight is produced through the power of the mind. The sacred truth of the sixth chakra is *seek only the truth*. It is only through awareness that one has special insight that a person will be able to aid others. One must know he has something to offer in order to feel capable of giving. The Christian sacrament of ordination is associated with this chakra and "it honors the truth that each person is capable of making deeply significant contributions to the lives of others, not just through their profession, but

more important through the quality of person they become” (Myss 238). Myss advocates the increase of detachment and consciousness. Detachment is the awareness that we are not defined by a group of people or a certain circumstance, so when change comes our way we are adaptable. Consciousness is being able to “release the old and embrace the new with the awareness that all things end at the appropriate time and that all things begin at the appropriate time” (Myss 241). The most important thing to note is that becoming truly conscious carries an enormous responsibility. It is much easier for one to say she prescribes to intuitive guidance than it is to actually follow it. It may mean changing the rules by which she lives, and in order to do that she may need to let go of quite a lot from her past.

Health is when the head and the heart are in the same place. It is important to accept the end of good things as just another part of the cycle of change so that our hearts don't hold onto something that we rationally know we can no longer hold. We will then have both a healthy heart and a healthy mind. Myss mentions that there is tremendous power and benefit that can be derived from a healthy psyche. This is often overlooked because we are unaccustomed to accepting the value of something we cannot see. In the process of understanding one's situation, it is important to have objectivity, for it is essential in acquiring wisdom. One must learn to cease looking for what one wants to see in order to be able to perceive reality. This involves the leap of faith that it is best to accept catastrophe, make the most of the prescribed circumstances, and take incidents as an informer of how one ought to proceed differently in the future.

The seventh chakra is our spiritual connector and its sacred truth is *Live in the Present Moment*. The chapter on the seventh chakra is the shortest in the book because it advocates a personal relationship with God. What God is understood to be and whether or not one even believes in God varies from one person to the next. As spiritual devotion means different things to different people, this is a chapter everyone would have to write for themselves. If one does not believe in God, the concept and importance of this chakra can be understood simply as a call to surrender control of the uncontrollable facets of one's life, and instead trusting that for whatever reason, things will be worked out. Only by living to serve a

positive energy source rather than a draining material ambition will one have a real sense of freedom.

Conclusion

What is the value of higher education if it doesn't teach us how to stay emotionally sound in times of crisis and loss? If it offers us no assistance in figuring out how to balance our responsibilities and attention to our basic needs? If it offers us no guidance in how to build a life that we won't wish to trade in for another one once we are long past our prime of independence and freedom? I propose that we focus our intellectual acquisitions not only towards theoretical concepts, but also to the practical (but by no means easy) importance of our emotional, spiritual and physical needs. Students would benefit if the academic community were to shift from being completely heady to one that integrates the different components of the human body into a holistically robust approach to living.

I would like to close with a quote from *Anatomy of the Spirit* that emphasizes the importance of making changes and taking a journey towards holistic well-being.

We are all on a pilgrimage of sorts, though it is certainly not necessary to travel physically to sacred places and conduct ceremonies to release our past. It *is* necessary, however, to travel spiritually and to shed the fears that block us from recognizing the beauty in our lives, and to come to a place of healing and self-acceptance. We can take this type of journey in the privacy of our own prayers and meditation. (Myss 194)

Works Cited

Myss, Caroline. 1996. *Anatomy of the Spirit: The Seven Stages of Powers and Healing.* New York: Three Rivers Press.

This is the first in a two-part series examining the conversion and apostasy of a young seventeenth-century Innu man, Pierre-Anthoine Pastedechouan, with the aim of understanding the complex nuances of early French-aboriginal religious contact along the St. Lawrence River valley. This, the first essay in the series, examines Pastedechouan's