

Mind, body and spirit make critical contributions to healthy aging, believes Dr. Dan Chartier, one of the area's pre-eminent psychophysiological psychotherapists and practitioner of AGING WELL.

"One of the true blessings of the work that I do is the doors that are opened by so many of my clients to new and deeper understanding of the issues and elements that together we call 'the aging process,'" he says.

"For example, I've been working with a gentleman who, piece by piece, is remaking his life. He has gone from 280 pounds and a diagnosis of serious heart problems to a healthy 180 pounds with a much healthier heart. The focus of our work has been his learning techniques for stress reduction and untangling a number of relationship issues.

"One of the things he brought to our sessions was an introduction to the *China Study*, which my life and professional partner, Dr. Lucy Chartier, and I have since incorporated into our own healthy aging regimen.

"The *China Study* is described as the largest comprehensive evaluation of human nutrition ever conducted, in a long-term partnership between Cornell University, Oxford University, and the Chinese Academy of Preventative Medicine.

"The author of the study, Dr. T. Colin Campbell, says the results of this work are conclusive: *eat plants for optimal health*. People who ate the most animal-based foods got the most chronic disease. People who ate the most plant-based foods were the healthiest. There are virtually no nutrients in animal based foods that are not better provided by plants, this study concludes.

"There is also compelling evidence from this study that heart disease can be reversed through nutrition.



Dr. Chartier has become an avid cycle enthusiast, which, he says, has made a major contribution to his overall health.

For further information about neurofeedback, biofeedback and psychotherapeutic services offered by Dr. Lucy Chartier and Dr. Dan Chartier and their associates, contact:
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Linking Mind, Body, and Spirit

"Embracing the best possible nutrition is high on my list in considering the whole idea of healthy aging. Eat well, live well, age WELL."

"And so clearly embracing the best possible nutrition is high on my list in considering the basics of healthy aging: Eat well, live well, AGE WELL!

"And without question a cornerstone and absolute fundamental building block of healthy aging across the life span is physical activity—exercise. Our bodies are physical, and we need to move. Lack of movement has all sorts of negative consequences on aging and the decrements of aging. The cardiovascular and brain fitness that comes from regular intense physical activity is irrefutable. If all you can do is walk, then walk. I have migrated from running to bicycling as my knees and ankles have been a bit more problematic with advancing years."

Dr. Chartier notes, "incorporating healthier eating guided by the *China Study* and the Pure Proactive support system (pureproactive.com) and increasing physical activity by training for and riding in multi-day distance bicycling events like the Michigander is certainly helping in my plan for AGING WELL. For example through my aging well effort I am 35 pounds lighter than I was a year ago and it feels great. Now a 50 mile bike ride is a fun morning outing. Mood improvement is a pleasant bonus and reflects the physical wellbeing."

STRESS REDUCTION

Biofeedback continues to be a vital tool for Dr. Chartier in helping patients effectively manage the stress in their lives—and their minds. "I think of biofeedback as an instrument of enlightenment," he says. "In its most basic form, biofeedback is the use of an instrument or device that measures something biological—that's where the 'bio' part of biofeedback comes from. And it makes that information available to the client in real time—"feedback" in the instant that it is occurring.



Healthy functioning of the brain is of critical importance in Dr. Chartier's work.

"The client can then use that information that is being fed back to them as part of a process to alter whatever it is that's going on for them that is of concern—such as muscle tension or spasm. Lowering blood pressure, for example, and relaxing tense muscles that are causing aching backs or splitting headaches are examples of the therapeutic value of biofeedback.

A HIGHER POWER

"Relationships are of primary importance in addressing the stress in our lives. People who have connections with others whom they feel are supportive and helpful—receiving and giving – are far healthier as they advance in time than individuals who feel isolated.

"And inwardly, the relationship one has with oneself, whatever their faith or religious perspective, is critically important.

"Some years ago, when I was on the medical school faculty at UNC, colleagues and I conducted a series of studies evaluating the effect of stress on people's lives. One of the major factors we found that helped separate the 'stress sufferers' from the 'stress managers' was a belief in something greater than themselves—a higher power, if you will. The findings crossed all religions and faiths and spiritual beliefs, and that long-ago finding continues to be reflected in my practice today.

"With a new client, in an initial interview, we include conversation about beliefs and faith. Over years of practice, I consistently find that clients who feel connection to a higher power will have a more rapid and positive resolution of their issues than those who feel cut off from any perspective other than their own."

HEALTHIER AGING

In the recent past, a gentleman in his late seventies came to see Dr. Chartier because his blood pressure was a bit erratic and on the rise—representative of many people he sees in his practice. He knew there were medical implications with this client from increasing blood pressure, especially for people of his age.

"He had read that biofeedback could be useful for reducing blood pressure, which in fact is well-established," notes Dr. Chartier. "And it turned out that there were other aspects of his life that were contributing to his elevated blood pressure, so there were some psychotherapeutic elements of our work as well.

"But as we began to do the biofeedback process, he was able to see a direct link between the stresses in his life that he was intellectually 'dealing with,' but his body wasn't doing so well in 'dealing' with those issues. At the physical level he was enduring them or suffering through them, contributing directly to increased blood pressure.

"One of the indicators was cold peripheral temperatures. His fingertips were much cooler. If you place your fingertips along the side of your neck, in the vicinity of your carotid artery, and at first touch your fingertips feel much cooler than the skin of your neck, it may be an indication that you're constricting blood flow to your extremities. That was the case with this gentleman.

"Over time, he learned the process of heart regulation and autonomic self-regulation, at the same time he began to recognize the various emotional and psychological baggage he'd been dragging around with him for seven decades. We began to unpack that as well, and as this occurred, his vibrancy began to return. His relationships with some adult children that had been strained got resolved. He is continuing to age in a much healthier fashion.

"We are multi-faceted beings and we all have different aspects of ourselves which need to be in balance to live most vibrantly. And it all starts at the center. Can you really take a calm, relaxed breath? Can you warm your fingertips?" Answering those questions can indicate your potential for experiencing benefit from Life Quality Resources's AGING WELL program, he says. "Incorporating and encompassing most or all of the services available at LQR and through our Team LQR associates, AGING WELL addresses and assists with most aspects of healthy aging and life adjustment. The best can be the next." **LQR**