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Preface

I started the study of heart-brain medicine with a symposium in Miami on June 19–20, 1978, entitled “Cerebral Manifestations of Episodic Cardiac Dysrhythmias.” One of the participants, Dr. Shlomo Stern, said, “I believe that this meeting was the first of its kind, focusing as it did on the brain/heart relationship. I do not know of a previous meeting that has been directly devoted to the subject, and I consider this as important as the discussions on the areas that we do not know much about.”

It was a very successful meeting, but little happened after we all went home. Since that time, I have felt strongly that we need to study the whole body—not just the individual “organs”—when someone has a disease. Doctors who look at the whole body (such as internists and general practitioners) do better, most of the time, at being correct in their diagnoses, whereas those who specialize in a single organ tend to be less accurate. This approach of looking at the whole body helps us all with the use of “integrated” medicine, which is more complete at “healing” at much lower cost. Healing is 20% science and 80% alternative (complementary and alternative medicine).

I am pleased with what is happening at the Heart-Brain Summits, and pleased with the great research that is ongoing at Cleveland Clinic and around the world in the area of heart-brain medicine. But I am even more pleased that patients everywhere are receiving better care because better diagnosis is tak-

ing place when the whole person is considered—body, brain, heart, spirit, and, very importantly, the mind. (See my “10 points” from the proceedings of the first Heart-Brain Summit, held in 2006.¹)

The mind is separate from the brain and yet can have major effects on our health. Professional journals on the mind are becoming more pervasive. More and more, I am encountering doctors, educators, and researchers who want to discuss the mind—how the mind takes over when the brain shuts off. The mind is in us, and much is around us, and quite possibly there is some part of it connected to the cosmos.

It is interesting, and hard to understand, how the mind reacts to a placebo and causes the same change in the brain as a chemical or medication does. We have much to learn about the internal workings of the body. Many of these ideas relating to these complex connections will be covered at the 4th Annual Heart-Brain Summit, to be held in October 2009.

Although I wasn’t able to attend the 2008 Summit, I stay updated and involved with the Bakken Heart-Brain Institute and the world of knowledge that continues to emerge on the significance and importance of these multiple connections—30 years after the first meeting of this kind.

■ REFERENCES

1. Bakken EE. The dream behind the summit. *Cleve Clin J Med* 2007; 74(suppl 1):S7.