

## **Subtle Shifts for Powerful Actions... Yes, We Can Change Our Emotions!!** By Carol Harris-Fike, Ontological Coach

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A month had flown by with my world turning upside down. I had promised to marry a wonderful man, but the promise came with the understanding that I would sell my beautiful home, take early retirement from my 30 year career in six short months, move away from family and friends, and begin a new career. The first month after this decision was full of planning, excitement, and much love. The beginning of the second month began with a sudden awakening not long after I had fallen asleep. I was awake the rest of the night wondering just what had I done... I was full of fears: What if this wonderful man died before we married... or proved not to be so wonderful after we married? What if my new career was a bust? What if I hated my new home and the new town? I didn't sleep the rest of the night and was entering a state of depression as I went to work the next morning. About mid-morning, I called my mentor coach for our hour of coaching. He asked how I was... I stopped at, "Gr..." (my usual response of "Great!") and said, instead, "I'm going into a depression... What have I done? What if...?" Charles asked me to stop my story. He asked me to describe how I was sitting... how I was holding my body. I was leaning forward, my hands clenched on my desk, my body tense, and tears streaming down my face. My ontological coach suggested I lean back in my chair and put my hands behind my head. He then asked me to take some deep breaths and when I was ready to tell the story again. This time the words changed... all the possibilities were back in my thoughts and words... the depression had completely lifted and I was again full of hope, joy, and wonder at the changes to come in my life. All of this in less than 30 minutes. I asked Charles if this could happen with everyone and he replied, "If they want to go there." Wow... I was then, and am now, totally sold on the wonder that comes with my new career as an ontological coach; supporting others in shifting emotions... all through subtle shifts in the body which effects the language which effects the emotions which effect the body which... well, you get it.

During the year and half in my "new" life, I have been continuing my lifelong pattern of researching the why behind what I practice and teach others. There is profound new, and not so new, research on the body and the brain coming together to explain what so many have known for so long... actually, what all of us know to some degree. This article will share some of that research and how you can shift your emotions... in a matter of moments.

Several years ago I began a concentrated study of the brain research and what it was saying on how one learns. That long career I left behind was in public education as a teacher... principal... district administrator. My attention was concentrated on learning how to learn so all learners... students, teachers... all of us could achieve what we want. The brain research led me to ontological coaching. Ontology is the study of "being"... how we are in this world and how we view our world. Have you ever wondered how we each "see" an event in different ways... sometimes even contradictory ways? Well, that is because we each see through our own eyes and those eyes are affected by our culture, our knowledge at that moment, even our body position at that moment.

Candice Pert has a quote I really love: *"Our bodies are more like flickering flames than a hunk of meat"* (Pert, 2005). Did it get your attention? Well, wait till you hear what is beneath that quote! It offers proof that we can not only change our emotions, but can change our physical bodies... or is it that our bodies change which changes our emotions. Confusing? Let me explain some of what she says. Pert began looking for molecules of emotion... peptides, hormones, all those things in our bodies that effect our organs, our actions, are feelings, over 25 years ago... and she find them and wrote *Molecules of Emotions* in 1996. She has great CD out in which she is interviewed about her work and the understandings she now has that relates to what I'm writing about in this article. It is called; *Our Body IS Our Unconscious Mind*, (Pert, 2005). I listened more than once to the CDs before I truly understood the title. It has to do with that quote... our bodies contain and function because of and with all of these molecules of emotion. Our conscious mind is what we are paying attention to at any given moment... but the rest of the body is influencing what we are paying attention to or *not* paying attention to... it truly IS our unconscious mind. I'll come back to what Pert says... but let's talk more about what the researchers are saying about the body.

Stuart Heller and his wife, Carol Heller, have a fantastic website that explains their work: [www.CultivatingExcellence.com](http://www.CultivatingExcellence.com). Stuart Heller, Ph.D., is an ontological coach who focuses especially on the body... the nonverbal part of us that is 90% of what others know about us vs. the 10% others pick up from our words. He is aptly named, "Dr. Move", as he can watch a person walk or even sit and stand a few times and know more about them from the body positions than is imaginable by most of us. And yet, Heller says that we all know this... just some folks pay more attention to it or even learn to use the knowledge to effect their own emotions and language. Heller then coaches people to move in the way they want to be which effects their emotions... See? Back to my title, again!! Recently, I spent two days with the Hellers being introduced to their work with the body and emotions. We explored how we hold our bodies with different emotions and how if we changed our bodies our emotions would change. We discovered that we really can't do anything... move, feel, think, speak, or learn without the "whole" of our bodies. Magic? Not really if you read or listen to Candace Pert and other researchers. Ontological coaching is based on the idea of the coherence of body, emotions, and language... the BEL model as taught by Julio Olalla and the Newfield Network.

Brain scientist and author, Antonio Damasio says: *"Emotions are not the intangible and vaporous qualities that many presume them to be. Brain systems work together to give us emotions just as they do with sight and smell"* (Damasio, 2003). So, when I've said to someone: "Those are my feelings and they are real", that was literally true. How comforting!!! Also, I need to remember that by working with (as opposed to against) my body I can affect those same emotions. I don't have to hold on to them forever... uhmmm. As Pert talks about on her CDs, emotions can be literally "bottled up" in us... which also means we can "pop the cork" and let them out and then change them.

The next time you are choosing a paint color with the Walmart paint guy who is strongly suggesting that he could add a little more red to change the brown tint just a little more and you don't care anymore and just want the paint mixed and shaken, (true story), try this: Lean slightly back, uncross your arms from your chest and hold your palms slightly forward (open) towards the guy, smile slightly, and breathe. Check in with your emotions and see if they have shifted from frustration (or more) to gratitude (or something positive) for such a conscientious guy serving you. It works with something relatively small like this story and with much, much stronger emotions. If this is interesting you and you want to learn about one researcher's work with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), read the book: *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force* (Schwartz and Begley, 2002). Swartz is a leading researcher in brain dysfunctions and has developed a successful method for relieving OCD and he discovered that the individuals who were successful actually developed new neural pathways... in effect, changing their emotions.

Daniel Goleman, the "emotional intelligence" guy, has just published a new book about social intelligence (Goleman, 2006). His latest work will reveal how we can actually develop social intelligence as we can emotional intelligence. (I'll tell you more when the back-ordered book finally gets to me... all of you must have ordered it through Amazon before I punched the *OneClick* button!!)

All of these ideas are coming from the study of quantum physics, because we can only understand the concepts... hey; actually use them, if we look at all of those as a holistic model... a true coherence of body, emotion, and language. Want to learn more? Watch for my next article to be published on my website: <KaleidoscopeCoaches.com> in the next few weeks.

Okay, back to Pert's studies: In the interview on the CDs, she says that emotional molecules have been found in all animals... even mosquitoes. It is also proven that these molecules communicate within our bodies (and the mosquito's) AND between animals. This is why we pick up 90% from the nonverbal presence of another person and only 10% from the verbal. (I guess all those molecules of emotion are working harder than the molecules involved in hearing!) Pert refers to the NIMH studies, (Google Frank Putnam) on multiple personality studies. I learned through my brain studies that a lot of what scientists have learned about the nervous system has been discovered through studying disorders. Although we now have fMRI's and PET scans, etc. (scientific measuring devices), we are early in our study of the brain. Anyway, according to Pert we all have multiple personalities... think about it... but if it is a *disorder* we don't recognize when our personality has changed. When Dr. Jekyll becomes Mr. Hyde, his blood type may change, his eye glass prescription may go from correction for nearsightedness to farsightedness, and he may lose a severe allergy to cats, etc. That is where Pert created the quote I used earlier, which bears repeating: "Our bodies are more like a flickering flame than a hunk of meat!" Therefore, consciousness creates reality because the structures of the body are not fixed. Wow!!

Stuart Heller talks about the “bureaucracy of habits and beliefs” (Heller, 1994). So, if you don’t break the bureaucracy you may struggle to make this happen in the way you want. In other words, if you are used to crossing your arms across your chest in a protective or defensive stance, you may not think to relax and open your body to affect a more positive response from the clerk at Walmart. One more thought on this, Pert says: “We only see what we want to believe” (Pert, 2005). So, if you want to believe the idea behind this article... you will begin to see it in your daily life... but it takes practice to make it happen on a regular basis. When we become different observers of ourselves, others, and the universe, big changes come into our lives. The whole idea behind ontological coaching is doing just that. The coach guides the coachee with questions that help the coachee to get a different perspective and through the new perspective discover new actions that can lead to dramatic results. And, if we become different observers through movement, feeling, and thinking, our body, emotions, and language will change because our beliefs have changed.

Chris Argosy developed a model used by Newfield Network, Inc., (and other ontological coach folks) called the Observer/Action/Results (OAR) Model. It goes like this: We *observe* a situation and take an *action* expecting successful *results*. If we don’t get the result we want, we usually take another action, then another, then another until we get the desired result or use up our “bag of tricks”. Argosy says if we go all the way back to the observer part AND observe the situation in a different and possibly new way we have far more choices for actions. Often, it becomes immediately obvious as to why our actions are not achieving the desired result and we can become successful rather quickly. Going back to the “observer we are”, means checking out our beliefs and judgments around the situation. Are they really true? Did we miss something? Did we misunderstand what was said or done? Were we misunderstood in the situation? Could we change our body, emotion, or language and see things with literally new eyes??

This article is meant to peak your interest in learning more about the possibilities that are available to every one of us if we begin to understand the connections between the whole of us. Many researchers have added to what we know about the body (which includes the brain), the emotions, and language. Working with the body, how we hold ourselves, and how we move can affect the emotions and the language we use in our thoughts and speech. The same is true if we work with our emotions; our body position will change and our language will change. And, likewise, if we work with changing our language (how we say or think something), our body position and emotions will also shift. May I suggest that working with an ontological coach can support and accelerate the success of people who want to affect their emotions as they move through life. Simple practices are available for anyone to learn... including children and, not surprisingly, whole organizations.

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