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The dream behind the summit

Aloha kakou. I am known as a dream weaver, and I have had a dream since the mid-1960s about heart-brain medicine. From 1965 to 1969 I worked with Drs. Seymour Schwartz and Eugene Braunwald on stimulating the carotid sinus nerve for various cardiac problems and on stimulating the brain for different heart reactions. From that point forward my dream was to start an in-depth study of heart and brain interactions. I hoped we could get results easily.

I tried in the “Medical Alley” in Minnesota to get some groups interested, but each group wanted to start a heart center or a brain center, not to have them combined.

In 1978, Medtronic was able to put together a convention on heart-brain interactions in Miami. Dr. Douglas P. Zipes and Dr. Michael Bilitch attended. “That was the start of something of great importance,” said Dr. Zipes and other leading physicians. Yet after the convention was over, nothing really happened—not for the next quarter century.

Then, in July 2004, a meeting was held at my condo at the Mauna Lani Hotel in Hawaii with two doctors from Cleveland Clinic who wanted to see our hospital (North Hawaii Community Hospital). The topic of heart-brain medicine came up, and the doctors thought it was interesting and went back to Cleveland with the idea. From that idea came the development of the institute that has convened this summit.

Since then much has happened, and we now have a great team of people that form the Bakken Heart-Brain Institute.

■ PUTTING THE BODY BACK TOGETHER

Our language tricks us into thinking that we have “organs” that operate alone. So we end up in silos where we study and specialize in a single “organ.” But this approach doesn’t really compute.

The body operates as one whole; everything impacts everything else. The cause of a problem that seems to manifest in the heart could actually lie in some other part of the body, or in the brain, or even outside the body.

Let’s put the body back together and look for these

things that affect the whole body but manifest as a problem in a single “organ.” This is not “new medicine” but rather a return to old medicine of 5,000 years ago.

To set the stage for the summit, let me list a few ways of thinking that came out of this heart-brain idea:

1. Heart problems can often be caused by other parts of the body or by things outside of the body.
2. The mind is not in the brain. The mind is throughout the whole body and external to the body.
3. We must consider the impact of chronobiology on the functioning together of the heart and brain. The sun and the moon have great impact on the function of parts of our body, including the heart and brain.
4. We must treat people with “blended medicine”—high tech, high touch, and a healing environment. All three are integral parts of healing.
5. We must treat people completely as a whole—body, mind, spirit, nature, and community. Organs cannot exist alone. There are important roles for *Ho`oponopono* and naturopathic, homeopathic, chiropractic, and blended medicine.
6. The heart is a sensor organ and tells much of the body how to operate. We have memory tissue in the brain, heart, and gut. Major decisions need to be made in the gut.
7. Multiple connections exist between the brain and the heart, with at least six kinds of signals: electrical, chemical, hormonal, muscular, ballistic, and energy.
8. The power of the spiritual component cannot be ignored. High tech is 20%; high touch and a healing environment are 80%. Most treatment centers leave out this 80%.
9. Mind-related medicine is of great importance: relationships, stress, compassion, caring, love, attitude, hate, depression, belief.
10. Energy medicine has an important role: reiki, chi gong, guided imagery, massage, tai chi, yoga, healing touch, prayer, aloha.

This Summit is very exciting for me. Let’s fulfill my dream. *Mahalo nui loa*, or “thank you from the heart.” I now start the summit.