

The Word on Wellness: Greater than our bodies

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The duality of the mind and body is a concept that has been debated for hundreds of years.

Which substance has more influence over the other? Are we more than simply flesh, bone and synapses?

When in psychological or emotional distress, it is clear that there is a side to us that is not governed by the same physical laws that bind us to the ground, but what about those moments when it appears we can defy the laws of physics? How do we explain the many circumstances when the natural laws that appear to connect us seem to lose their grip?

You can take the girl out of the dance, but you can't take the dance out of the girl. It was these words that circled my mind when I spent time talking to Loribeth Cohen, licensed physical therapist and owner of Re:Fit, 910 Waukegan Road. Founded in 2000, she has created a business focused solely on promoting healing, and it all started with a dancer looking to perform at the top of her game.

"As a young woman, I was a dancer and a runner," she said. "I loved injury prevention and spent a lot of time searching on the outside for what turned out to be in the inside."

As an avid runner and pilates enthusiast, Cohen was used to being challenged, but it wasn't until she was exposed to the metaphysical components of healing that she realized there was more to fitness than meets the eye.

While trying to manage her own body, which was beaten and bruised from hours of dancing, she stumbled upon a team of therapist that used alternative methods to help speed recovery. Her journey down that road lead to many discoveries, but none greater than the idea that you can improve your body's physical abilities by exercising the mind's capabilities.

"Your body is your house," Cohen said. "You can fill it with whatever you want. Some of us have things in the basement and the attic that weigh us down. Sometimes people need help clearing the clutter out."

Is your pain actually physical, or is it the lack of support in your life that makes it hard to stand? Are you suffering from chronic pain, or are you being inhibited by repressed traumas that were never addressed?

It's easy to think these questions are crazy and unfounded; but then again, maybe there is more to us than meets the eye.

"Ego prevents people from accepting the fact that we are more than our bodies," Cohen said. "It's just now that medical doctors are accepting that there could be more than just genetics that determine your physical health."

Re:Fit offers a wide variety of treatments and classes all aimed at bridging the gap between the mind and body. From integrative manual therapy to pilates and gyrotomics, Re:Fit is striving to redefine how we see ourselves in a world riddled with obesity and chronic conditions.

"No two people are the same, and it is not our physical attributes that create this incredible range of diversity," she said. "I can apply the same treatment to numbers of people that suffer from the same ailments and get a different outcome every time. There are other factors at play here."

Cohen says that connective tissue is the communication system within our bodies, but what is the system that allows for better communication between us and our bodies? Is ego in the way? Do we need to let go of our control in order to gain newfound health and happiness?

I don't know if the 16th century philosopher Renee Descartes was right when he philosophized that our minds and bodies can exist independently of each other, but I do know that I feel like there is more to me than the vessel I carry around. Perhaps we all need to take more time to listen to what our bodies are telling us — and take the time to think about what we would like to say to our bodies.

Falcon Fit Tip: "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today."

– Franklin D. Roosevelt

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