



# THE HEART HAS BECOME A WEAPON FOR WAR

*JON BURRAS*

Imagine placing your hands over your heart as a gesture of love or affection. To “lead with your heart” is often a symbol of divine guidance. “Follow your heart,” tells us to trust in our intuition. “Open your heart” is a sign to trust in others. A “ heartfelt thank you” is as comforting as a warm cup of tea.

The heart is a symbol of our loving and connecting with our fellow human beings. When our “heart is broken” we are suffering and in pain. When our heart “is fluttering” we jump with joy and anticipation. The heart has historically been a center for communication and information.

In recent times though, a radical shift has occurred in regards to how we perceive and use our heart. We have become a predominantly brain based culture and have forgotten about the magic of the heart. We are now using our rational thought to dominate and control the heart. In the process, the heart has become a weapon for war.

In generations past we embraced each other with our hearts. We used our heart energy as a tool to guide us through our lives. The heart held a sacred place within many cultures as a place of reverence and respect. But the emergence of brain-based cultures has changed the role of the heart. Much of this change comes about due to the institutionalization of sport and competition. The heart’s new role is as a skillful weapon to kill and conquer. Many of our modern day movements continue to train the heart for this new role.

Movement is natural. We need to move our bodies in order to maintain optimal health. Throughout the course of human history we have used natural movements to maintain our health, both in body and in our heart.

The last few decades have seen rise to artificial movements. As the industrial age came and went we soon saw the emergence of the information age. Both of these periods have created many labor saving devices that have lead to a more sedentary lifestyle. Exercise, or artificial movement, was created in order to counter this lack.

Unfortunately, exercise often does not reflect natural beliefs or movements. Often exercise originates from brained based cultures that attempt to turn our bodies into machines. A chief component of this machine-like attitude is how we use the heart as a machine for war. The heart is often referred to as a just a pump, like a machine pump, that “pumps” blood through the body. Only a culture that is based in its head would refer to the heart with this kind of mechanistic view.

From war developed sport and competition. Men would train for war by competing against each other to strengthen their bodies. Warriors, as they were called, trained their bodies for war by making the body parts harder and stronger. The heart, just like the pectoralis muscle or the bicep, was also included in the training. The better trained the heart was the more warriors who could be slain and the more battles won.

Sport developed out of this training for war. Even though the battle was no longer to the death in most instances the tactics did not change. The heart was still being used as a weapon for war. Competition is war for the body. To compete against an opponent or another team is to place your mind at body at war. Being defeated is symbolic of death or being conquered.

When we enter into a competitive mind-set we “deliberately” place ourselves in a stress reaction- or fight or flight response. We are hyper-alert and aroused. We perceive danger- albeit often only imagined danger. We are on guard to defend ourselves. Our bodies are just as alert to attack in a sport or competition as if there were a real enemy lurking nearby. For our mind and the subsequent body reactions there is no difference. The heart also feels this heightened state of

alertness when it is braced for competition. Engaging in sports or self-competition places us in a state of war.

The language of sport is still the language of war. We “march” up the field to “conquer” the opponent. A golden trophy is the equivalent of hanging your defeated enemy’s head before you. A quarterback in a football game will throw a “bomb” to a sprinting wide receiver downfield. A catcher in a baseball game will “gun down” a runner trying to steal a base. We “dodge a bullet” when we prevent an opponent from gaining the momentum back. To come from behind in the score is to “be in the hunt”.

One does not necessarily “play” sports; one competes at sports. Competition is almost always about moving the body from a place of fear. This equates to moving under stress. Stress is a state of war for the body and the mind.

While in this state of war a well-trained heart performs like a sword or dagger. The better-trained heart is able to defeat more opponents and gain more glory. A heart capable of peak performance conquers the enemy in record numbers. Beneath his ironclad warrior body beats a machine-like pump that regulates his endurance. Whether it is on the basketball court of the Tour de France cycling marathon it does not matter. The more the heart can pump the more victories for the warrior.

The training of the heart as a weapon grew in popularity with the emergence of the belief of aerobics. In the 1960’s, then NASA scientist Dr. Kenneth Cooper helped to originate this new belief. Cooper taught us to jump, run, and pound our bodies to get the heart to pump more and more blood. It was Cooper’s belief that health was equated with maximum heart capacity. Now ordinary citizens of every size and shape could become warriors to create a machine-like heart.

Decades later, Dr. Cooper has changed his mind about running. Cooper says in Fit Magazine 2000, “What made me change my mind was telephone calls from distraught widows whose husbands had died of heart attacks.” Instead of running Cooper now recommends walking at any pace.

Heart surgeons have grabbed onto the myth that a strong heart pump equates with optimal health. But when we continue to place our body in a state of

war, which is what all types of competition do, the arteries of the heart are actually narrowing. This is directly opposed to what many of us have been told. It is not uncommon for athletes and former athletes to suddenly die of heart attacks. Competition and aerobic movement help to create a heart that suffers from the affects of war being waged.

The heart is more than a pump that drives blood throughout the body. The heart is an energy center that has wisdom and memory. Dr. Paul Pearsall in *The Heart's Code* writes, "Our understanding of the heart as a sentient organ is about where our understanding of the miraculous complexities of the brain was more than one hundred years ago. In comparison to the continuing rapid progress in study of the brain, learning about the heart as more than just a pump is developing much more slowly."

Dr. Pearsall writes about the profound relationship we have with our own hearts. "An American Indian shaman told psychologist Carl Jung that white men, with their wrinkled faces and constant anger, were so cruel and murderous because they thought with their heads. Whole, healthy people, he said, "think in their hearts."

The heart is capable of storing memories. When a heart is transplanted to another individual memories and information are also transplanted. Along with the heart pump a library of personal information from the previous heart owner now inhabits the recipient of the new heart.

Unfortunately, we have been lead to believe by a brained-based culture that the heart can be hardened to perform and conquer. A brain-based culture will think its way through the world with the head. A heart-based culture will feel its way with the heart.

Through our mechanistic way of seeing the world we have been taught to believe that heart disease is purely a physical manifestation. Many of the beliefs about heart disease are only about the heart pump not receiving enough blood. Saturated fats and cholesterol have been blamed for much of our heart disease. But there is much more to the story than that.

Dr. Uffe Ravnskov writes in *The Cholesterol Myths*, “The idea that saturated fats cause heart disease is completely wrong, but the statement has been “published” so many times over the last three or more decades that it is very difficult to convince people otherwise unless they are willing to take the time to read and learn what all the economic and political factors were that produced the anti-saturated-fat agenda.”

Dr. Ravnskov supplies ample evidence to suggest that heart disease has very little to do with the amount of cholesterol in our bodies. When we begin to examine the heart from an emotional and energetic center this hypothesis becomes even more apparent.

Not only are saturated fats and cholesterol based stories becoming ancient mythology but many of our conceptions about heart disease may be falling by the wayside. Dr. Pearsall writes in *The Heart’s Code*, “A person with a seemingly healthy heart is just as (if not more) likely to have a heart attack as someone who has some of the major risk factors such as obesity and high blood pressure.”

With the heart as a spiritual center capable of immense guidance and information, why would you want to transform your heart into a weapon for war? The survival of our species is dependant on the return to a heart-based species. When we come out of our heads and drop down into our hearts the way we treat ourselves and others will begin to change. We will no longer use our heart to conquer and destroy. The heart will be used to embrace and heal.

### *Resources*

*The Heart’s Code, Paul Pearsall, Ph.D., Broadway Books, New York, 1998*