

therapy

Body & Soul

Is emotional clutter causing you pain? Bioenergetic Synchronisation Technique {BEST} aims to rid the body of remembered trauma. Frances Ive reports

Douglas Diehl is a chatty American who seems to know what he's talking about. He's a chiropractor who practises Bioenergetic Synchronisation Technique (BEST) which, he says, goes beyond manipulation and carries no risk of being hurt.

This is comforting news before you lie down on the couch, because sometimes a chiropractor's click and crunch can be quite uncomfortable. BEST evolved out of chiropractic principles but, instead of concentrating on physical problems, its aim is to clear out emotional clutter which blocks the system and causes illness and aches and pains.

Pain of times past

'People get sick because they cannot adjust to life's ups and downs,' says Douglas. 'We're designed to go into fright/flight/fight mode when our survival is threatened. It's appropriate for anyone who witnessed the attack on the World Trade Center to go into defence mode but, when anything reminds them of the trauma, their body will respond as if it were happening all over again.'

Douglas goes on to explain that the memory is stored in the body and when we experience a smell, word, sensation or sound, it comes back and we go into defence mode again. Nowadays, nearly everyone is walking around in a permanent state of defence because most of us are stressed. This puts enormous pressure on the immune system and can make us ill.

'Most people want to get better but not to get well,' he tells me. 'To get well they must

take responsibility for their health. There are three things that make people sick: toxicity, neurological overload and stress.

'I give people a nutrition analysis because cells which carry toxicity due to stress and malnutrition cannot respond appropriately to defend us from sickness. The nervous system is like an electrical system and, if it's overloaded with too much current from injury, trauma or stress, it will blow a fuse.

'Many people today suffer from stress. It is a conflict of the mind, between the illusion of how they would like life to be and the reality of how it actually is.' He uses as an example people saying: 'If only I lived out of the city I'd be happy. 'But either you accept that you're living in a city and make the most of it,' Douglas argues, 'or you move out.'

Muscle testing

Fully clothed, I lie on the couch on my back and he asks me to put my hands under what I thought were my kidneys, but which I later realised were my adrenal glands.

Using the muscle-testing techniques of kinesiology, Douglas holds my feet and asks me to match his pressure when he tries to move them. When my hands are away from the body I can resist his pressure, but when I put my hands under my kidneys I can't compete. He asks me to put my hands across my throat as if strangling myself, and similarly my feet go weak.

According to Douglas this means that my adrenals and thyroid gland are shot but, to my relief, when I put my finger on my forehead between my eyes for my pituitary gland, the

response is positive and I can still resist his force on my feet. Ironically, I had cystitis at the time - a problem, which has dogged me for 30 years. When he asks me to think about my bladder, I tense and can't resist his pressure.

Turning on the switch

Then he touches my stomach and throat. 'When I touch particular reflex points I am activating the brain to switch the system on,' he explains. 'You might ask: "Why doesn't the body switch itself on?" The answer is that it might be prioritising something else. If we're in a state of defence, all repair work stops.

'When I touch reflex points they relate to other parts of the body in the way that acupuncture affects areas of the body that are not necessarily at the point where the needle is inserted. As I touch these points, the body has to establish that it's not under threat and, as no one is hitting you and the room is relatively comfortable, you relax. The activation at the reflex points sends a signal to the brain to switch the body on and it starts to function properly and heal itself.'

Douglas asks me to lie on my stomach while he puts pressure on areas most likely to hold tension, such as the neck area at the base of my skull. He explains that stress builds up and tension causes pain. He keeps asking me which part hurts most.

'I have to hunt around for the point that is most painful and then find an equal point which is less painful,' he tells me. 'The body then responds

by easing the painful one and the tension is released.'

Douglas is emphatic that he is not offering psychotherapy. If stored memories trigger my cystitis, he doesn't analyse them; nor does he want his clients to analyse theirs. They just exist -his aim is to make the memory neutral instead of traumatic so that it no longer causes energy imbalances and pain.

He doesn't claim instant results and tells me that I shouldn't expect my bladder to be cured immediately.

Usually he likes to work with someone once a week for three or four weeks. Once their system starts to respond, they visit less regularly.

Totally relaxed

When he finishes, Douglas suggests I walk around the room. He then asks me how I feel. I have no idea, apart from being slightly light-headed, but the word lighter keeps coming to me, so I say so.

'Most people say that because they feel more relaxed,' says Douglas. 'It's because I've started to remove the debilitating link between the remembered stimulus and the response'

'When we're constantly in defence, the immune system is depleted and our resistance lowers. So when a flu bug comes along, we're more likely to catch it.

'I try to get the body back in balance for what it is designed to do,' he explains.

'People are sick and tired of being sick and tired and some will do whatever is necessary to take control of their health. I can clear out emotional clutter to give people the capacity to take control of their life, and clients usually tell me that they're coping better and taking life more easily.'

I walk down the street feeling lighter and it isn't until I have some lunch that I realise I have no pain in my bladder -and it hasn't come back!

Who, where & how much

Douglas Diehl practises at No. 1 Harley Street, London, 020 7291 4402. He charges £40 for the first consultation, and less for subsequent sessions.

The best way to a fresh start

