

And God Laughs...

The Arthur Jones Autobiography

www.ArthurJonesExercise.com

“The problem is not the scientific method; the problem is that very few scientists even understand it, and even fewer practice it.”

Anon.

A scientific study published a few years ago suggested that at least fifty percent of the benefits produced by any kind of medical treatment are a result of the so-called placebo effect, improvement that resulted from the fact that the patient believed that they were being helped. A more recent study suggested that the placebo effect may be responsible for as much as seventy-five percent of the improvement provided by any form of medical treatment. And any medical doctor worth his salt clearly understands the value of convincing the patient that the treatment is helping them.

My opinion on the subject? Undecided; I would not even venture a guess about the actual, or relative, value of the placebo effect; but I have seen at least three vivid examples that clearly demonstrated the fact that the mind has an enormous influence on the body.

One, for years I had one of the worst cases of the piles in recorded medical history, sometimes believed my guts might fall out on the floor, once had more than a double handful of my lower intestines sticking outside my body. But eventually I noticed that my problems with the piles occurred in an on again, off again fashion, sometimes gave me fits for a period of weeks or months, but then might not bother me at all for a long period. Somewhat later, I became aware of a relationship between my problems with the piles and my emotional state at the time these problems occurred; if I was under pressure, emotional pressure of any kind, then my piles would bother me continuously; but as soon as the emotional pressure was removed, the piles immediately stopped bothering me. I discussed this matter with Bo Miller, who also had a problem with the piles, and after thinking about it a while he told me that the same thing happened to him.

Two, during the mid-1960s, while I was working under conditions that imposed enormous emotional stress on me, I started getting sharp pains in my throat; but having been carefully examined by several doctors, none of whom could find any slightest reason for the pain, I then discovered a factor that I had previously overlooked: at the time I was flying back and forth frequently between this country and various places in Latin America, and the pain was continuous as long as I was in this country, but as soon as I crossed the border heading south the pain immediately went away; and did not return until I crossed the border northbound on the return trip.

The pain was a direct result of stress; but once out of this country I was out of contact with any source of stress, could not be reached by phone or otherwise, and that immediately stopped the pain. Once I realized that the pain was a direct result of the placebo factor it never occurred again.

Three, for a period of about forty years I trained, off and on, with weights and exercise machines that I designed and built for my own use; trained either very hard or not at all, off or on like a light switch. The result being that I had two distinct sizes and levels of strength; my out of training size and strength level and my in training size and strength level. Having been up and back down about a dozen times over a period of several years, I learned exactly what to expect, knew how big I would get and how strong I would become when I resumed training after a long layoff, and knew exactly how long it would take me to reach that size and level of strength.

But then I discovered that I could markedly increase both my muscular size and strength level by merely deciding that I was going to resume training after a long layoff; if, for example, I decided on a Friday that I was going to start training again three days later, on the following Monday, but did nothing in the meantime, my bodyweight would increase by as much as ten pounds and the circumference of my upper arms would increase by as much as a full inch, and my strength would rise in direct proportion. And it should be noted that an increase of an inch in the circumference of a muscular arm is an enormous increase in size, usually represents about a fifty percent increase in the size of the muscular cross-section of the arm. In one case that we measured very carefully, an increase of four and one-sixteenth

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inches in the circumference of a muscular arm, which was about a twenty-seven percent increase in circumference, produced an increase of two-hundred percent in the muscular cross-section; that is, following that increase, the arm was then three times as big in cross-section.

Assuming that both arms are muscular, an increase from a circumference of twelve inches to one of eighteen inches will usually increase the muscular cross-section by a factor of eight, even though the increase in circumference would be only a fifty percent change.

These very obvious and undeniable increases in bodyweight, muscular size and level of strength were produced entirely by the placebo effect; and it came as a great surprise to me the first time I observed this effect, but eventually I realized that it would always happen, and clearly understood why it happened.

Most people have heard stories about people who died only and simply because they decided to die, or were convinced by a witch doctor's curse that they were going to die, and many of those stories are true; and almost any experienced doctor can tell you about cases where people should have died but did not, survived simply because they refused to die.

And while such an attitude on the part of a victim is certainly not a guarantee of survival, it can be, and frequently is, the only difference between survival or a failure to survive.

On the subject of my problems with the piles: when I was having these problems I usually had to drop my pants and shorts a dozen or more times a day, spread the cheeks of my ass with my left hand and then take the second and third fingers of my right hand and push my guts back inside my rectum. If I permitted these protrusions to remain outside too long they would become raw from contact with my clothing, would start bleeding, and might then swell up so much that it was sometimes impossible to get them back inside of me without help, and in such cases was very painful.

Working in a civilized place I could usually retire to a bathroom and perform the required reinsertions in private; but working in the field in Africa or South America, I had no choice about the matter and had to do what was necessary regardless of who was watching. Which, initially, usually embarrassed the people around me; but, eventually, they started treating it as a joke. Apparently thought it was very funny.

My brother chopped my piles out in 1964 and I have never been bothered by them since, but I will never forget the problems that I had with them for a period of many years.

In 1973, I signed a contract with a major Japanese company and licensed them to permit the manufacture of Nautilus exercise machines in Japan, and they sent two engineers to my plant in Lake Helen, Florida, for a period of several weeks in order for them to learn how to manufacture Nautilus machines. According to our contract, these engineers were supposed to be fluent in English, since none of us could speak a word of Japanese; but the men they sent could not speak a word of English, which forced us to attempt communication by using a Japanese/English dictionary and looking up any intended statement one word at a time. Which made conversation very slow, to say the least.

Both of these men, like almost all Japanese, were very formal, and always dressed as if they were going for a visit to the White House to see the President; so they were more than somewhat shocked by my appearance and total lack of formal manners. I have been a slob throughout my life, and would probably appear to have just finished a fight with a pig in a mud hole if I had been dressed in a tuxedo two minutes earlier. And my usual style of communication normally leaves very little room for doubt about what I mean; while Japanese, almost invariably, seldom say what they mean, since doing so apparently is not considered polite.

Having seen a rather large number of very muscular men around our offices, these two Japanese men, both of whom weighed little more than a hundred pounds, decided that they wanted to look like the men they had seen, and asked me how to go about increasing their muscular size; so we took them into our gym and put them through a literally brutal first workout, which is the way all of us trained, and then very carefully explained to them the necessity for a second workout the next day; told them that it would be necessary for them to train every day for a period of four days in a row in order to avoid becoming very sore as a result of their first workout. And they assured me that they would

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return for a second workout the next day; but then we did not see them again for eight days, did not see them sooner because they were too sore to get out of bed for more than a week, probably spent that time groaning and cursing me.

Then, when they finally did come back, in an attempt to save face neither of them would admit that they had been sore; but since they had to have some sort of an excuse for their prolonged absence, they both told me that they had been suffering an attack of the piles. Which I knew was a lie.

So I simply could not resist the temptation: told them that I had also suffered greatly from the piles but that I had learned to avoid certain common mistakes; one of which mistakes, I told them, I would explain to them so that they could avoid it. Then I dropped my pants and shorts, carefully explaining exactly what I was doing, step by step, spread the cheeks of my ass with my left hand and then demonstrated how to reinsert the protruding piles with the second and third fingers of the right hand, and then said . . . “So far, so good, now you understand what to do up to this point; but now, if you are not very careful, you will make a serious mistake. Before you pull your shorts back up, you have to clean off your fingers; if not, then you will get your shorts dirty. And since you will not always have anything to wipe your fingers on, the best way to clean them is like this.” Then I started licking my two fingers with my tongue, as if I was cleaning them.

All of which, of course, was delivered with a perfectly straight face, and all of which they took very seriously. I will never know just what kind of stories they told when they got back to Japan, but they would probably have been very interesting if perhaps not very accurate.

Another man from that same company, a man who did speak fluent English, sought me out in Japan while I was negotiating my contract with his company, and was very agitated when he came to see me. He had learned that his company intended to offer me only \$100,000.00 at the time our contract was signed, but told me not to accept less than \$300,000.00; which, he said, they would pay if I insisted upon it. He did not want me to accept less because he had assured his boss that I would not accept less, and thus if I did he would lose face with his boss. So he was perfectly willing, even anxious, to spend \$200,000.00 of his company’s money only in order to save face.

On another occasion, while I was conducting a meeting with the chief executives from several of the largest firms in Japan, and while he was serving as my interpreter, I began to suspect that he was not telling the audience what I was actually saying, and also suspected that most of the people there could understand English although they claimed otherwise; so I asked the man who was interpreting for me if he was telling them exactly what I was saying. Whereupon he told me that he was not doing so, because it would not be polite. So then I told him that I would decide just what was, and was not, polite, and that if he changed any more of my statements I would kick his ass there and then; and while I told him this in a very calm tone, it was obvious to me from the expressions on the faces of the audience that they did understand English. Just how much face that cost him I will never know; but it may have gotten him fired, because I never saw or heard from him again and he had previously been my usual source of contact with his company.

But if he did get fired it served him right, because he was a very irritating bastard: on a long flight in one of my airplanes from Florida to Los Angeles, to attend the Superbowl game between the Miami Dolphins and the Washington Redskins, he almost talked my ears off. I was able to shut him up only after he asked me what I had been doing thirty years earlier, by telling him . . . “Killing Japs.”

He also claimed that he was strictly business, that he never wasted time in attempts to amuse himself; then went out that night and got roaring drunk and tried to start fights with men twice his size. I finally had to cold cock him and carry him home to bed across my shoulder in order to prevent a riot; none of which he even remembered the next day.