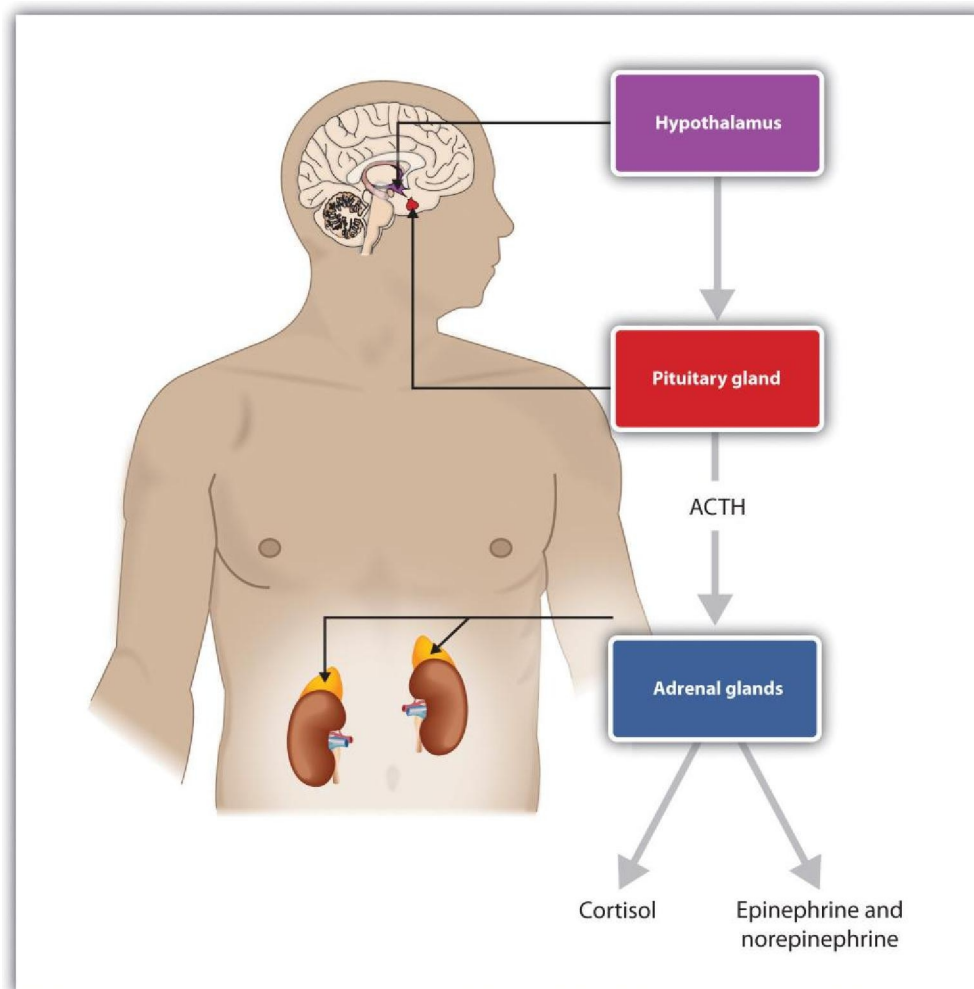


# How Your Thoughts and Feelings Affect Your Health - January, 2021

By Dr. Derek Conte



Whatever thoughts we have, whatever we feel, whatever we sincerely BELIEVE is true... even if it is NOT true... affects our brain and body chemistry and can make or break our health. It is often said that the mind is a powerful thing. Very true words - especially when applied to human physiology. But how can the mind affect the health of the body???

Deep inside our brain is a region called "The Limbic System", where all our primitive drives originate: hunger, thirst, lust, rage, fear. In short: self-preservation. The limbic system is a subconscious structure containing the well-known Hypothalamus which directs the Pituitary gland to release powerful hormones on cue that signal distant glands governing the function of our organs and global physiology. Among those are the Adrenal glands which release Adrenaline, for quick action, and Cortisol, for long-term stresses.

So how can our thoughts and emotions affect our physiology? Here's a classic example we are all familiar with: A mother sees her child pinned under the wheel of a car and, without thinking, she rushes over and finds the strength to lift the end of the car to rescue her child. We call this the "Fight or Flight" response.

What has happened here, physiologically? The visual input of the child pinned under the wheel is relayed to the limbic system generating a powerful fear/protection response; the Hypothalamus commands the Pituitary to release a stimulating hormone to the Adrenal glands to secrete a fast-acting hormone, Adrenaline, to the muscles giving the mother extraordinary strength and the child is saved.

But there is more to this. In addition to the strength the mother derived from the emergent chemical bombardment, her heart rate jumped, her blood pressure went sky-high, she dumped huge amounts of sugar into her veins, her sensitivity to pain was greatly reduced, and her digestive, reproductive and immune systems were shut down to conserve vital energy for the task at hand. But we cannot sustain this state of being forever.

Now, here is the point: the survival-based Limbic system is not conscious or rational. It behaves in a very basic, child-like way. It doesn't know when an emergency is real or not... **ONLY THAT PRESENT DANGER IS PERCEIVED!** What if the mother described above only **BELIEVED** her child was pinned under the car? Would the same powerful chemical cascade still be released??? The answer is yes.

Similarly, imagine a person carrying a great amount of fear, resentment and anger throughout their life from an awful trauma... the vivid memory can be re-ignited by a mere smell or sound, an image, even a song. This emotional memory is **STILL** relayed to the Limbic system as if it were actually happening **NOW**, and the same physiological responses ensue... not for a minute, but for months or years or decades.

Long-term, unrelenting stresses can break the body's health. There are many components necessary to good health: clean food and water, good sleep and enough of it, healthy productive movement, and pursuit of a spiritual life and peace of mind achieved through reconciliation and forgiveness. More than we realize, we are the physical products of our thoughts. Remain strong in these times. Blessings to all.

Dr. Derek Conte is co-founder of Chiropractic Specialists at 1154 Concord Rd. in Smyrna and can be reached at: 404-784-6008. For more info, articles, photos or directions, go to: [drderekconte.com](http://drderekconte.com)