

Body wisdom: John F Barnes PT, LMT, NCTMB.

Myofascial release techniques and myofascial unwinding allow for the complete communication necessary for healing and true growth. I believe that the body remembers everything that ever happened to it.

The link between mind-body awareness and healing is the concept of state-dependent memory, learning and behaviour (also called *déjà vu*). We have all experienced this, for example, when a certain smell or the sound of a particular piece of music creates a flashback phenomenon, producing a visual, sensorimotor replay of a past event or important episode in our lives with a vividness as if it were happening at that moment. I would like to expand this theory to include position-dependent memory, learning and behaviour, with the structural position being the missing component in the state-dependent theory.

Studies have shown that during periods of trauma, people make indelible imprints of experiences that have high levels of emotional content. The body can hold information below the conscious level, as a protective mechanism, so that memories tend to become dissociated or amnesic. This is called memory dissociation, or reversible amnesia. The memories are state- or position-dependent and can, therefore, be retrieved when the person is in a particular state or position. This information is not available in the normal conscious state, and the body's protective mechanisms keep us away from the positions that our mind-body awareness construes as painful or traumatic.

It has been demonstrated consistently that when a myofascial release technique takes the tissue to a significant position, or when myofascial unwinding allows a body part to assume a significant position three-dimensionally in space, the tissue not only changes and improves, but also memories associated with emotional states and belief systems rise to the conscious level. This awareness through the positional reproduction of a past event or trauma allows the individual to grasp the previously hidden information that may be creating or maintaining symptoms or behavior that deter improvement. With the information now at the conscious level, the individual is in a position to learn what holding or bracing patterns have been impeding progress. This release of the tissue, emotions and hidden information creates an environment for change that is consistent, safe and effective.