

BRUCE LIPTON, PHD

Epigenetics

Author of *The Biology of Belief: Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter, and Miracles*

Be not afraid of life. Believe that life is worth living, and your belief will help create the fact.

WILLIAM JAMES

Dr. Bruce Lipton is a diehard scientist. He's devoted his life to understanding human biology and behavior. He received his PhD from the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, and then went on to the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine, where he was an associate professor of anatomy.

With his traditional track record, why do some people see him as controversial? Why did he step down from teaching medical students and strike out on a career path few had traveled? Simply put, Dr. Lipton has discovered that things aren't what they seem to be. Nor are they what he was teaching in med school or what we've been told to believe.

"Our health is not controlled by genetics," he told me in his characteristically upbeat and excited manner. "Conventional medicine is operating from an archaic view that we're controlled by genes. This misunderstands the nature of how biology works."

Medical professionals from around the globe may curl their lips and snarl, but Dr. Lipton's research—and the empirical evidence of colleagues—is forcing the issue enough so that changes in medical-school curriculums are currently underway.

But let's back up for a moment and sit through a blessedly unscientific explanation of Lipton's mind-expanding logic and what is known as epigenetics, "the study of inherited changes in phenotype (appearance) or gene expression caused by mechanisms other than changes in the underlying DNA sequence."

"Medicine does miracles," he said, "but it's limited to trauma. The AMA protocol is to regard our physical body like a machine, in the same way that an auto mechanic regards a car. When the parts break, you replace them—a transplant, synthetic joints, and so on—and those are medical miracles.

"The problem is that while they have an understanding that the mechanism isn't working, they're blaming the vehicle for what went wrong. They believe that the vehicle, in this case our bodies, is controlled by genes.

"But guess what? They don't take into consideration that there's actually a *driver* in that car. The new science, epigenetics, reveals that the vehicles—or the genes—aren't responsible for the breakdown. It's the driver."

In essence, if you don't know how to drive, you're going to mess up the vehicle. In the simplest translation, we can agree that lifestyle is the key to taking care of ourselves. Think well, eat well, and exercise, and your body won't break down and need new parts.

Dr. Lipton refers to the work of Dr. Dean Ornish to extrapolate. "Dr. Ornish has taken conventional cardiovascular patients, provided them with important lifestyle insights (better diet, stress-reduction techniques, and so on), and without drugs, the cardiovascular disease was resolved. Ornish relayed that if he'd gotten the same results with a drug, every doctor would be prescribing it."

That's fine and dandy for people with heart disease, diabetes, or obesity, but what about cancer? Even the strictest lifestyle changes don't cure cancer in everyone. What about genetic predispositions to getting the disease? "It used to be that we thought a mutant gene caused cancer," Lipton admitted, "but with epigenetics, all of that has changed."

Then he explained how his research revealed the science of epigenetics. "I placed one stem cell into a culture dish, and it divided every ten hours. After two weeks, there were thousands of cells in the dish, and they were all genetically identical, having been derived from the same parent cell. I divided the cell population and inoculated them in three different culture dishes.

"Next, I manipulated the culture medium—the cell's equivalent of the environment—in each dish. In one dish, the cells became bone, in another, muscle, and in the last dish, fat. This demonstrated that the genes didn't determine the fate of the cells because they all had the exact same genes. The environment determined the fate of the cells, not the genetic pattern. So if cells are in a healthy environment, they are healthy. If they're in an unhealthy environment, they get sick."

Dr. Lipton then took this a step further, which brings us back to the cancer question. "Here's the connection: With fifty trillion cells in your body, the human body is the equivalent of a skin-covered petri dish. Moving your body from one environment to another alters the composition of the 'culture medium,' the blood. The chemistry of the body's culture medium determines the nature of the cell's environment within you. The blood's chemistry is largely impacted by the chemicals emitted from your brain. Brain chemistry adjusts the composition of the blood based upon your perceptions of life. So this means that your perception of any given thing, at any given moment, can influence the brain chemistry, which, in turn, affects the environment where your cells reside and controls their fate. In other words, your thoughts and perceptions have a direct and overwhelmingly significant effect on cells."

This echoes, from a highly scientific point of view, what the intuitive and spiritual healers have been advocating for years: your mind can and does contribute to both the cause and healing of whatever ails you—including cancer.

Other than the mind, two other factors impact the fate of cells, according to Dr. Lipton: toxins and trauma. All three factors have been associated with the onset of cancer.

With this body of knowledge comes promising news. According to Dr. Lipton, gene activity can change on a daily basis. If the perception in your mind is reflected in the chemistry of your body, and if your nervous system reads and interprets the environment and then controls the blood's chemistry, then you can literally change the fate of your cells by altering your thoughts. In fact, Dr. Lipton's research illustrates that by changing your perception, your mind can alter the activity of your genes and create over thirty thousand variations of products from each gene. He gives more detail by saying that the gene programs are contained within the nucleus of the cell, and you can rewrite those genetic programs through changing your blood chemistry.

In the simplest terms, this means that we need to change the way we think if we are to heal cancer. "The function of the mind is to create coherence between our beliefs and the reality we experience," Dr. Lipton said. "What that means is that your mind will adjust the body's biology and behavior to fit with your beliefs. If you've been told you'll die in six months and your mind believes it, you most likely will die in six months. That's called the nocebo effect, the result of a negative thought, which is the opposite of the placebo effect, where healing *is* mediated by a positive thought."

To read the rest, buy the book!