

TRIPLE WARMER: It's Hotter Than You Think

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The energy system described by the term “triple warmer” is among evolution’s great success stories. Triple warmer functions as a meridian, but it is more than a meridian. It shares properties with the energy system the Chinese physicians called the “strange flows” or “extraordinary vessels,” but it is also more than a strange flow. Triple warmer, in fact, governs three of the body’s most extraordinary mechanisms:

1. The immune system
2. The emergency response to threat (“fight or flight”)
3. The ability to form habitual behavioral patterns for managing stress or threat.

With these strategies, triple warmer has helped millions of species survive over millions of years. But it evolved for a world that no longer exists. Triple warmer’s essential task is to identify threat and to protect you, both internally (immune response) and externally (fight or flight). As civilization, and technology in particular, have advanced, the ability of triple warmer to sort out what is friend and what is foe has been overwhelmed, so that for many people, triple warmer is on continual alert. Thousands of chemicals are in our foods that did not exist while triple warmer was evolving. It is triple warmer’s task to decide which may harm you, and most of them are not preprogrammed into the border patrol system that evolved over the eons. The same is true of pollutants in the air, the artificial electromagnetic fields that surround us, even the pace and stresses of modern life can cause triple warmer to set off an emergency reaction.

Triple warmer takes charge of the meridian system and organizes its energies for this response. The entire emergency reaction may be triggered not only by actual threat, but it may be set off by any unrecognized stimulus, and it may become conditioned to a host of “false alarms.” When the heart speeds up at the thought of entering an elevator or if it shuts down when another person is becoming too intimate, triple warmer is in overdrive. This is the dynamic that explains many of the maladies people suffer, and it is here that energy psychology treatments often focus.

Triple Warmer and the Fight or Flight Response

Just as a pathogen (a disease-producing microorganism or substance, such as a virus, bacterium, or environmental pollutant) causes a cascading series of chemical events within the bloodstream, an experience that is perceived to be psychologically threatening or stressful causes a cascading series of responses within the meridian system. Both the response to alien microorganisms or injury (immune response) and the response to a psychological or external physical threat (fight or flight) are governed by triple warmer. One of the unique functions of triple warmer is its ability to conscript energy for the purposes of defense from any of the other meridians (except heart meridian, whose energies are protected at all costs). These conscripted energies are utilized in both the immune response to microorganisms and its behavioral analog, the fight or flight response to threat or stress.

Physiological Characteristics of the Fight or Flight Response.

The physiological impact of the fight or flight response (the “stress response syndrome”) includes: heart rate may double or triple; blood pressure increases as the coronary arteries dilate; respiratory rate increases; muscle tension increases (“muscle bracing”); hormones such as adrenaline, noradrenaline, cortisol, oxytocin, and vasopressin are released into the bloodstream; hydrochloric acid is secreted into the stomach; glucose is released from the liver; the basal metabolic rate increases; blood leaves the forebrain and digestive tract and moves into the muscles and limbs; pupils dilate improving eyesight; systems not essential for fighting or escaping, such as the immune, digestive, and sexual systems, virtually shut down. In addition to its immediate costs on the body’s physical and energetic resources, if fight or flight is chronically activated, the cumulative buildup of stress hormones can lead to disorders of the immune and autonomic nervous systems, susceptibility to infection, autoimmune diseases, chronic anxiety, chronic fatigue, and depression.

Activation of Fight or Flight and Psychological Problems

When understood at the level of the body’s energy systems, the fight or flight response is a far more intricate and pervasive mechanism than when understood only in terms of its biochemistry [see in the CD ROM [HYPERLINK ".../AWAKE/Embedded%20Topics/Fight%20or%20Flight%20Primer.htm" \o "Jump to Review of the Fight or Flight Response"](#)] It is, in fact, the underlying mechanism involved in many psychological problems:

Whenever psychological stress or perceived threat exceeds a critical threshold, an analog of the fight or flight response occurs within the energy system (this actually precedes and regulates the biochemical reaction).

- ∞ This response may be activated by: direct experiences of stress or perceived threat or experiences associated with previous stress or threat or internal events (thoughts, images, memories) that evoke stress or threat
- ∞ The psychological impact generally includes: quickened impulses and reactivity, increased acuity, and diminished perception of pain. But it also includes a significant decrease in perspective and other cerebral functioning and a tendency to rely on habitual stress-induced behavioral patterns rather than to form a creative response to the situation. In addition:
 - Anger or rage tends to accompany and support the fight response
 - Fear or panic tends to accompany and support the flight response
 - Hysteria, overwhelm, or numbness tend to result when the fight or flight response is activated but then inhibited or otherwise not acted upon.
- ∞ The precise psychological impact also depends on which meridians have been activated in the service of the fight or flight response. Each meridian governs specific emotional and behavioral themes (Feinstein, 2001), and triple warmer, using its own unique calculus, may conscript energy from any of the meridians for the fight or flight response.

An Example of Fight or Flight in a Psychological Problem

John’s wife raises her voice slightly while asking John once more not to leave his clothes on the floor. This evokes a habitual pattern within John’s energy system that traces back to his mother’s criticism when he was a boy. Triple warmer treats the increased volume and trace of irritation in the voice of an intimate female as a threat to John’s well being. It conscripts energy from the liver and gall bladder meridians, as it has been doing for decades in similar circumstances, and uses these energies to initiate a “fight” reaction within the stress response syndrome. John’s anger is instant and intense (in addition to anger being characteristic of the fight response, rage is the reactive emotion when the gall bladder meridian is out of balance). He simultaneously is angry with himself, first for again having left his clothing on the floor and then for his angry response to his wife (anger toward self is the reactive emotion when the liver meridian is out of balance). Neither response is tempered by his usual good humor or good judgment since he is in the middle of a stress response reaction. His wife, having witnessed this sequence too many times, stomps out of the

room with derogatory observations about how he refuses to grow up. They do not again speak intimately to one another for several days.

A Basic Treatment Strategy

To intervene in a long-standing pattern, a typical energy psychology treatment might (after correcting for neurological disorganization and psychological reversals) involve having John bring to mind his wife's raised voice, assessing the meridians that become disturbed (liver, gall bladder, triple warmer, possibly others) and stimulating them until the thought can be held with no disturbance in the meridian system.

How Long Do Such Energy Corrections Typically Hold?

Two opposing principles influence how long an energy correction will hold:

1. The Principle of Rapid Adaptability: It is because of this principle that the “instant cures” which have brought energy psychology so much attention in the popular press are possible.
2. The Principle of Deep-Seated Survival Patterns: It is because of this principle that even habits that are patently dysfunctional and self-destructive can be so difficult to change.

Both principles are reflected in the activities of triple warmer. The principle of rapid adaptability is seen, for instance, in the immune response to an unrecognized substance in the bloodstream. A rapid determination is made about whether the substance is a danger, and if it is determined that it is threatening, tailor-made antibodies are promptly created to neutralize it. This ancient survival strategy is remarkable in its sophistication.

The principle of deep-seated survival patterns is rooted in the economy in habit

A parallel process occurs in the energy system. Triple warmer is continually scanning for danger. When it identifies a threat or potential threat, it mobilizes the energies governed by specific meridians to respond to that threat.

A survival strategy can be implemented for a new threat more efficiently if it is patterned after strategies that have worked in the past. This economy, however, carries two risks: 1) the survival strategy may not be sufficiently attuned to the immediate danger, and 2) the survival strategy may become deeply embedded and evoked in circumstances where it is not needed, the “false alarm” factor which is at the root of many psychological problems.

When a survival response is triggered by a life event or internal experience that is not an actual threat, the cascading chemical responses and the accompanying threat-related emotions are still just as costly and the clean-up operation after the crisis has passed requires just as many resources. More to the heart of psychological problems, because the threat response overpowers reason, the resulting perceptions, thoughts, and actions are often self-destructive.

The mechanism that maintains deep-seated survival habits within the body's energies is the conditioning of a disturbed response in one or more of the meridians to stimulus, such as an internal image or external situation. Working with acupoints that bring balance back to that meridian in the presence of the provoking stimulus reconditions this habitual pattern.

Because triple warmer operates in part according to the principle of rapid adaptability: a single treatment can be enough to cause triple warmer to shift the pattern. The habit of activating an emergency response in the meridian system is interrupted, nothing bad happens, the habit is dropped.

Because triple warmer operates in part according to the principle of deep-seated survival patterns, the meridian response may be intransigent or tied into a more complex survival strategy. Changing this habit may require repeated treatments to shift the well-established energy pathways or treatments that address other aspects of the survival strategy.

Calming Triple Warmer

The probability of triple warmer being overactivated when a psychological problem has been accessed is high. Except in rare cases, such as anaphylactic shock or an asthma attack, you will not do damage to sedate triple warmer, and it usually makes the system more receptive to other interventions. We will close with three simple methods of sedating triple warmer:

Tracing Behind The Ears

- A. Rest your face in your hands, palms at your chin, fingers at the temples. Hold this for two breaths.
- B. Breathe in deeply and lift your fingers two or three inches, smoothing the skin from the temples to above the ears.
- C. On the exhalation, circle your fingers around your ears, press down the sides of your neck, and hang your hands on the back of your shoulders, pressing your fingers into your shoulders.
- D. Stay in this position through at least two deep breaths. Then drag your fingers slowly over your shoulders with pressure. Once your fingers reach your clavicle, release them and allow them to drop where they may.

Tapping The “Gamut Spot”

- A. Tap 10 times the point on the back of the left hand that is just below the knuckles and between the ring finger and the little finger.
- B. Pause and take a deep breath
- C. Tap about 30 more times.

The “Triple Warmer/Spleen Hug”

- A. Wrap left hand around right arm, just above elbow
- B. Wrap the right arm around the left side of the body underneath the breast
- C. Hold for 3 deep breaths
- D. Reverse sides

Triple warmer is one of the body’s most potent and least understood energy systems. In addition to the issues typically associated with immune functioning and the fight or flight response, these mechanisms are involved in a host of problems ranging from obesity to boredom. Simply being aware of triple warmer’s presence and keeping it calm amidst other energy interventions is a way of telling the body, in its own language, that you understand its concern for survival.

References

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