

Peeling the Onion

Written by Heidi Skye, D.C.

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When I talk with my kids, I love sharing analogies of how the natural world is reflected in their bodies. One of my favorite ones is this: Your body is like an onion. Layers of experiences and responses build up: falls, injuries, positioning; computer time, violin playing, golfing, etc. Every virus, every broken bone, every tension response, even every ice cream cone—everything your body goes through is reflected in those layers. (And sometimes they make you cry!)



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When you come see a new practitioner, especially a body worker, she'll ask you a bunch of questions about lifestyle, habits, illnesses, and surgeries. What she's doing, even if it doesn't always seem relevant, is trying to peel away layers of the onion to understand how you came to be where you are.

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If you took a health class in grade school, you probably learned a lot about body parts and functions. You learned how important it is to move your body and feed it well. If I gave you an outline drawing of a cell, you might even be able to label the structures. I'm willing to bet, though, that you never learned how a body actually heals.

What is physical healing, really?

On a cellular level it is the body identifying a cell as dis-eased—tagging it, digesting it, removing it, and growing a new, healthy cell in its place. Even in the fastest-metabolizing tissue, this takes six to eight weeks; in bones, it can take a year or longer. There's no short-cutting the process. You can't create a new liver cell overnight.

I don't need to share all the biochemical processes and players that are involved with healing a cell. But know that it requires hundreds of thousands of chemical reactions and actors to make it happen. Thank goodness our innate intelligence handles this, since I can't even remember Grandma's Christmas cookie recipe...and I make that every holiday season.

The layers are not only physical—muscle tension and spinal misalignment, for example—but also emotional. That's why I prefer healing modalities that allow for the expression and unwinding of the emotional layers as well. A young child who fell out of a tree and hurt her spine might not cry in front of her friends, but then as an adult she may get emotional on the chiropractic table when she begins the process of healing “sudden” low back pain.

It takes time to acquire layers, and time to peel them back. One the most powerful choices parents can make for their family is to work with healthcare providers who do not just focus on suppression and treatment of symptoms. Practitioners like chiropractors, holistic docs (N.D.s or M.D.s), craniosacral therapists, body workers, and homeopaths all create a nest of support to minimize the accumulation of layers.

Understanding this helps you view your healing process, and your child's healing, differently. Openness, attention to processes, and curating a conscious support team will contribute to your ability to allow healing to take place in the body's necessary timeframe.

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So you have homework, Revolutionary Evolutionary moms and dads! The next time you are slicing an onion, call your children over and show them the layers, and tell them how the onion is like their body. Some of the layers are thick, some are thin, some are dried out or blackened. What does your kid think might have happened to the onion while it was growing? As you talk, you might even learn something about how they see their own bodies.



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