

# Anatomy of an illness as perceived by the patient

Business



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BUSTER**

Norman Cousins was a famous writer and diplomat, who was also known as a holistic healing promoter and a tireless optimist.

In his book *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration*, Cousins demonstrates the connection between the human mind and the recovery from illness. He states that the ability to maximize the life we live is in us. We only need to understand how we can achieve this. However, at times, people neglect the essence of a good state of mind, social psychology, motivation and emotion, sensation and perception in their daily lives. On sensation and perception, we need to first recognize what these mean or should mean to us.

Sensation by definition denotes the process of intuiting our environment by sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. That is to say we use our five sensing organs: eyes, nose, tongue, ears and skin. The information from these sensing organs is sent to the brain, where perception or rather insight comes to play. Most of the situations we are in are the result of the way we perceive our environment (both the external and internal environments). When stressed or when undergoing difficult situations like illness, the best way to go is to control our perception of our current situation.

Inducing stress into the situation only worsens it. Cousins himself got healed through the kind of lifestyle he lived throughout the period he was ill and was able to get back to work again. Research has shown that psychological stress restrains immune system functioning. Cousins managed to skive off unnecessary stress by engaging in activities that raised his emotions and

made him move in excitement. He may have not realized that he was actually giving the drugs the best of their working environment.

Systemic factors, such as the use of tobacco, alcohol consumption among others, have negative impacts on the healing process. Some patients have a negative perception of their current states. I overheard one patient saying to her up keepers, " I am doing you a favor by taking your bitter and numerous drugs. I have never improved since I started taking them. Why won't you let me die? You could save this much for my funeral.

" Her negativity grew to the point that she never felt good while taking her food. This situation led her to diie even after healing for she dreamt of death to her death. Contrary to this, Cousins took the correct medical prescriptions plus his own social prescriptions. One should be able to have a feeling that he or she can get out of a situation and do exactly what is required of him or her to achieve this. Taking medicine, having cool moods and avoiding bad social habits are some of the helpful tips. In conclusion, one should control the psychological environment, including the perception of the sensations.

One can control the sensation by getting himself or herself the right environment. Getting a soft music with a message can make one forget about his or her illness to take onto the dance floor. I recommend good eating habits as well for the best results. A lot of things, both internal and external, affect our present state. Sensations, noise, stress, and obviously alcohol consumption and drugs all should be contemplated. Fortunately, our brains are always accommodative of new things.

I, therefore, know that through the education on the research on the psychological impacts of our perceptions, we will learn to adopt new lifestyle and cope with difficult situation.