

Body over Mind

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Note: Everything I say below is only my opinion, which is based on my own experiences and observations. – *Swami Devanand*

Body over Mind

Body is about physical sensations and mind is about thoughts and feelings. We have physical abilities and mental abilities. When body and mind are in balance, life is wonderful. DH Lawrence says this beautifully in this quote:

Life is only bearable when the mind and the body are in harmony, and there is a natural balance between them, and each has a natural respect for the other.

DHL uses the rather pessimistic word "bearable", because he has serious grievances about human life itself. But that's a different matter altogether.

In the age of intellectual thinking and artificial living, the mind has been steadily gaining over the body and the balance has been seriously disturbed. Physical activity has given way to hours and hours in front of screens and gadgets. Actual sports have been replaced by online consoles and game controllers. Soccer is played using fingers instead of feet. Outdoor exercises have been replaced by treadmills and ellipticals with mounted TVs: yes, it is still physical exercise but without the interaction with nature, which is an important part of "being physical".

Because of advances in medicine we have become careless about the body. Prevention of problem is no longer needed because there are pills for every malady. Exercise, physical activity, sport have all become "hobbies": optional activities to be pursued if there time from all the mental, intellectual work. How many of us can stand naked in front of a mirror and feel good about what we see?

Even relationships are becoming more mental than physical. We indulge in romance over the phone, over digital media, but do not give importance to the most enjoyable medium of physical touch. Instead of enjoying physical intimacy, some of us are even happy to condemn it as lust: something lowly, animal-like.

There is a need to bring the balance back in place. Body is as important as the mind, if not more. Our existence is physical first. Mind would not exist if the physical brain wasn't there.

What does it mean to be "physical" or "physically aware"? It means being aware of our body, being aware of its needs, being aware of its power, being aware of its potential in our happiness. It means paying attention to our physical senses of sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste, and

truly enjoying their inputs. It means keeping our body clean and fit, putting it to use, taking part in sports.

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