

REINVENTING THE BODY, RESURRECTING THE SOUL



How to Create a New You

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THE THIRD JESUS

Also by Deepak Chopra

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Return of the Rishi

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Ageless Body, Timeless Mind

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The Third Jesus

Jesus



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HOW TO CREATE A NEW YOU

DEEPAK  CHOPRA



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*To my beloved grandchildren,
Tara, Leela, and Krishan*



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INTRODUCTION: THE FORGOTTEN MIRACLE



In my first semester in medical school, I walked into a stifling dissection room and faced a body lying under a sheet. Pulling back that sheet was shocking—and definitely exciting as well. I took my scalpel and cut a fine line down the skin over the breastbone. The mystery of the human body was about to reveal itself.

At that moment I also stripped the body of its sacred nature. I crossed a line that is nearly impossible to recross ever gain. Thanks to science, a huge amount of factual knowledge has been gained, but at the same time a wealth of spiritual wisdom has been lost.

Why can't we have both?

It would take a leap of creative thinking, a breakthrough. I'm calling this breakthrough the reinvention of the body. You may not realize it, but your body is an invention to begin with. Pick up any medical journal, and you come away with a host of concepts that are purely man-made. One day I sat down and listed the articles of faith I was taught in medical school. It came to a long list of dubious propositions, as follows:

The body is a machine assembled from moving parts, and like all machines it wears out over time.

The body is at constant risk for contamination and disease; a hostile environment teems with invading germs and viruses waiting to overwhelm the body's immune defenses.

Cells and organs are separate from each other and should be studied separately.

Random chemical reactions determine everything that happens in the body.

The brain creates the mind through a storm of electrical impulses combined with biochemical responses that can be manipulated to alter the mind.

Memories are stored in brain cells, even though no one has ever discovered how or where this occurs.

Nothing metaphysical is real; reality comes down to atoms and molecules.

Genes determine our behavior; like microchips, they are programmed to tell the body what to do.

Everything about the body evolved as a matter of survival, the ultimate goal being to find a mate and reproduce.

I used to find this list very convincing. The bodies that I examined and treated in my medical practice conformed to it. Patients came to me with parts that were wearing out. I could pare their symptoms down to treatable problems. I prescribed antibiotics to fend off invading bacteria, and so on. And yet every one of these people lived lives that had nothing to do with machines breaking down and needing repair. These lives were full of meaning and hope, emotions and aspirations, love and suffering. Machines don't lead such lives. Neither do collections of organs. Before long I began to see that the body as seen through the lens of science was inadequate and artificial.

Without a doubt, the body needs reinventing. To have a meaningful life, you have to use your body—you can't experience anything without one—and so your body should be meaningful, too. What would give your body its highest meaning, purpose, intelligence, and creativity? Only the sacred side of our nature. This led me to the phrase "resurrecting the soul." I am hesitant to use religious terms because they are loaded with emotional baggage, but *soul* is unavoidable. Ninety percent of people believe they have a soul, and that it gives their lives ultimate meaning. The soul is divine; it connects us to God. Insofar as life contains love, truth, and beauty, we look to our soul as the source of those qualities; it's no accident that a perfect love is called a soul mate.

There is constant feedback between the soul and the body. We invented the separation between the two, and then came to believe that separation was real.

You may object that you've never felt ecstatic or sensed the presence of God. This simply reflects our narrow conception of the soul, confining it to religion. If you look into the wisdom traditions of every culture, you find that the soul has other meanings. It is the source of life, the spark that animates dead matter. It creates the mind and emotions. In other words, the soul is the very foundation of experience. It serves as the channel for creation as it unfolds in every second. What makes these lofty ideas important is that everything the

soul does is translated into a process in the body. You literally cannot have a body without the soul. This is the forgotten miracle. Each of us is a soul made flesh.

I want to prove to you that your body needs reinventing and that you have the power to accomplish that. Every generation has tinkered with the body, strange as that sounds. During the pre-scientific age, the body was deeply distrusted, and it was provided with squalid sanitation, wretched food, and barely enough protection from the elements to survive. Thus it became natural to expect a short, nasty life filled with pain and disease.

So that's exactly what the body produced. People lived thirty years on average, and were scarred for life by childhood illnesses. You and I benefited enormously when this life view became outdated. As we began to expect more from our bodies, we stopped mistreating them. Now your body is ready for the next breakthrough, which will reconnect it with meaning, with the deeper values of the soul. There is no reason to deprive your body of love, beauty, creativity, and inspiration. You are intended to experience ecstasy just as much as any saint, and when you do, your cells will join in.

Life is meant to be a complete experience. People keep struggling with problems both physical and mental, never suspecting the root cause: that the bond between body and soul has been severed. I wrote this book in the hope of restoring that bond. I'm as eager and optimistic as the first day I used my scalpel to uncover the mysteries waiting under the skin, only now my optimism extends to the spirit as well. The world needs healing. To the extent that you wake up your soul, humankind is waking up the world's soul. It may yet happen that a wave of healing will sweep over us, a small wave at first, but one that could swell beyond all expectations in a single generation.

REINVENTING YOUR BODY
