



Come To Your Senses: Demystifying the Mind-Body Connection

Stanley H. Block, MD with Carolyn Bryant Block. Atria Books, 2007. 221 pages. ISBN-13: 978-1-58270-126-4

Reviewed by Christine L. Allison, OD, FAAO, FCOVD. Illinois College of Optometry

Come to Your Senses, Demystifying the Mind-Body Connection, 2nd edition by Block is a revised edition of the first publication from 2006. This edition contains a new chapter, which describes ways to implement a 10-day plan to improve the reader's life. In the Preface, the author explains that the book can be read in two ways, either straight through to the last chapter, where the reader can then implement the recommendations from the book, or by jumping immediately to the last chapter and filling out the life requirements in that chapter as preparation for reading the remaining chapters of the book. The approach the reader is to take depends on how quickly they wish to implement the system in their own life. As a reader whose sole purpose was to review this book, I chose to read the book in chapter order to get a feel for what it is about, but I did not actively participate in any of the exercises that the book recommends, thus I did not use the final chapter in the way that the authors intended.

The basic premise is that we all have an Identity System which is composed of self-centered thoughts. The author states that, "The human Identity System evolved in order to confirm and deepen the separateness of family, clan, religion, culture, race, nation, and species – i.e., to help us create our individual identity." Thus it was developed to be a useful tool to help human self-interest. The authors feel that the problem arises when the Identity System becomes dominant.

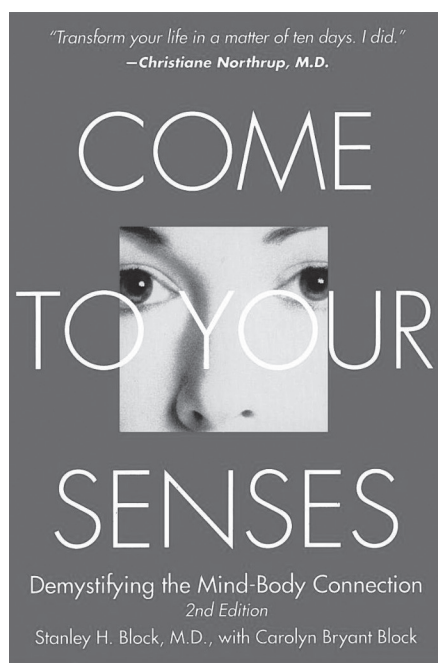
When the Identity System becomes overactive, it is postulated to create fear and restrict awareness. It can be disruptive to the "harmony and balance of the mind-body connection". The Identity System produces requirements or specific thoughts that reinforce your damaged self and can cause tension, fear, and physical stress.

In order to shift your awareness from these overactive negative thoughts that your Identity System promotes, the authors recommend a "bridging" practice. Bridging is just your mind's natural way of expanding consciousness, and is a function to use to get past your worries and stresses. The Identity System has two assistants, the depressor and the fixer. The depressor makes you feel you are not good enough, and the fixer makes you consistently try harder. Both of these assistants fuel the damaged self and cause an imbalance.

Throughout the book, the authors promote using bridging exercises consistently throughout the day to rid the self from the Identity System's control. They give many examples of scenarios

in which bridging could be used to help with anxiety and stress. They promote labeling your thoughts to enhance the bridging activities and require a lot of mind-body mapping. The authors suggest putting ideas and feelings on to paper in the form of closed circle types of maps. Some of the suggested maps for the reader to design are the mind-body problem map, the "Who I Am" map, the "How I Got to Be the Way I am" map, and the "My Relationship Requirements for Others" map. Each of these maps give the reader a way to find their natural self without being overtaken by their Identity System.

While I did not participate in the exercises in this book, they may be useful for someone who is



struggling with anxiety and extreme stress in their day-to-day lives. This may be appropriate for us to recommend for certain patients that are dealing with these types of issues. On the whole, though, this is not a book that I would recommend to be on every optometrist's shelf. There is a lot of terminology in

this book that I believe would be a bit overwhelming for some readers, but the plans to follow in the final chapter are simple and easy to use. It is a way for readers to explore their own nature and heal their mind-body connection; however there are many other methods that may cause this to happen as well.



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