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Science, Emotions and the Heart: *Skipping the usual beat and exploring the heart’s other wonders*

For National Heart Month being observed in February, HeartMath is offering insight about the heart and its connection to health and our emotions. HeartMath is also offering a free technique to the public to help reduce stress.

Boulder Creek, Calif., Feb. 2, 2011 – Heart Month beats in every February, often unnoticed by many who carry on with busy lives and those that already realize heart health is about eating right, exercising and the list goes on. For everyone thinking the heart is pretty ordinary, the following information may come as a surprise in discovering there’s much more to consider about the heart beyond that constant “lub-dub” sound.

Research has shown that emotions are encoded into the electromagnetic (EM) field generated by the heart that radiates through every cell of the body, and it can be measured three feet outside of the body. Research also suggests this field may even reach farther than what modern science equipment can currently measure. These understandings have led scientists to question how these complex fields, which are broadcasting from our heart and throughout our body, affect both us and others.

HeartMath (www.heartmath.com), a company that produces stress-reduction programs and technologies, has been using this science to help people live healthier and happier lives. HeartMath’s sister organization, the nonprofit Institute of HeartMath, has studied the heart for nearly two decades. Their research reveals fascinating information about the heart. Not only does this sophisticated blood pump emit an electromagnetic field, but it also affects our emotions, and consequently, it impacts health as well.

The institute’s research director, Rollin McCraty, Ph.D., explains, “We are able to measure the variability in your heart’s rhythm and get a reading about your emotional state using a heart rhythm feedback technology, like the emWave. The benefit to these measurements is that you can use them to learn how to respond differently to stress and shift into a harmonious state that allows your mind and body to operate more efficiently – reducing stress that can otherwise erode away at health and cloud your thinking and decision making.”

Researchers at HeartMath have shown that focusing on the heart or chest area and sustaining a positive emotion has incredible benefits for the body and brain. Doing this can synchronize the heart, brain and the activity in the nervous system and entire body -- we actually shift into a highly efficient state called heart coherence.

Numerous studies have shown that coherence is associated with reduced stress, increased clarity of thinking and enhanced cognitive functions such as memory and our ability to sustain focus. In contrast, when experiencing stressful emotions – anger, fear, impatience, irritation, etc. – our heart rhythms become more chaotic and our cognitive abilities are not as sharp indicating that our systems are not running as efficiently and energy is being wasted.

Studies have also shown that the risk of developing heart disease is significantly increased for people who impulsively vent their anger and those who repress angry feelings.¹ HeartMath offers technologies and programs that coach people in how to react differently to stress.

“We can give our personal health an advantage by learning how to create more positive emotions. With practice we can increase our ability to maintain a positive attitude even in stressful circumstances. This significantly increases our mental clarity and the ability to find more creative solutions so we can more

effectively resolve the issue that is causing stress,” said McCraty.

McCraty also cited a study of 1,200 people at high risk of poor health, where those who learned to alter unhealthy mental and emotional attitudes through emotion self-regulation training were found to be more than four times more likely to be alive 13 years later compared to the equal-sized control group.²

HeartMath is offering this exercise as a simple practice that people can use to reduce stress and create more heart coherence.

Quick Coherence® Technique (<http://bit.ly/Quick-Coherence>):

Step 1: Heart Focus. Focus your attention on the area around your heart, the area in the center of your chest. If you prefer, the first couple of times you try it, place your hand over the center of your chest to help keep your attention in the heart area.

Step 2: Heart Breathing. Breathe deeply but normally and feel as if your breath is coming in and going out through your heart area. As you inhale, feel as if your breath is flowing in through the heart, and as you exhale, feel it leaving through this area. Breathe slowly and casually, a little deeper than normal. Continue breathing with ease until you find a natural inner rhythm that feels good to you.

Step 3: Heart Feeling. As you maintain your heart focus and heart breathing, activate a positive feeling. Recall a positive feeling, a time when you felt good inside, and try to re-experience the feeling. One of the easiest ways to generate a positive, heart-based feeling is to remember a special place you've been to or the love you feel for a close friend or family member or treasured pet. This is the most important step.

To learn more about HeartMath's stress reduction programs and technologies go to emWave.com. You can find more information about HeartMath at heartmath.com and on their Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/HeartMath>.

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About HeartMath:

The HeartMath System was created by Doc Childre. HeartMath LLC, a cutting-edge performance company, provides a range of unique services, products and technologies to improve health and well-being, while dramatically reducing stress. HeartMath clinical studies have demonstrated the critical link between emotions, heart function and cognitive performance. HeartMath studies have been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals such as *American Journal of Cardiology*, *Stress Medicine*, *Preventive Cardiology* and *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. Their organizational clients include *Stanford Business School*, *Blue Cross Blue Shield*, *Kaiser Permanente*, *Duke Medical Center*, *NASA*, and dozens of school systems and thousands of health professionals around the world. HeartMath's award-winning emWave technologies include the [emWave Personal Stress Reliever](#) and the [emWave Desktop](#). The emWave Personal Stress Reliever won the Last Gadget Standing People's Choice Award at the 2009 International Consumer Electronics Show, the Award for Distinction and Innovation from the American Institute of Stress, Mac World's Editor Choice award, and *Today's Caregiver* magazine's Caregiver Friendly Award.

References:

1. Carroll, D., G. Smith, et al. (1998). Blood pressure reactions to the cold pressor test and the prediction of ischaemic heart disease: data from the Caerphilly Study. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* (Sept.): 528-529.
2. Grossarth-Maticek, R. and H. J. Eysenck (1991). Creative novation behaviour therapy as a prophylactic treatment for cancer and coronary heart disease: Part I-Description of treatment; Part II-Effects of treatment. *Behaviour Research and Therapy* 29(1): 1-16; 17-31