



You are the answer

why it's time to trust your body

NAOMI MILLS

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For Richard and Beatrix and
everyone who is open to creating
more joy in their lives.

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Preface

It's 4pm on Tuesday 8 December 2015 and I'm sitting on my sofa beside a twinkling Christmas tree, put up 2 weeks earlier than usual so that I can enjoy its soft glow during my planned home birth. My 10-day-old daughter Beatrix lies asleep on my chest after a feed. I feel exhausted and slightly detached from myself. I assume this is how every mother who has just given birth feels, it's my first time so I wouldn't know. My brain doesn't remind me of the many women I have seen over the years who have arrived to their scheduled Chiropractic appointment with me and proudly presented me with a baby they have given birth to the day, or even evening before. I have forgotten that not everybody feels as though they have been run over by a bus following childbirth.

My phone rings and it's my independent midwife who has been out to see us that morning as part of her daily check-ins. Today she commented on how tired I seemed and noticed I was slightly breathless when changing my bedsheets. "I've been thinking about you all day," she tells me, "something doesn't feel right. I've spoken to your GP and he is going to see you at the surgery in an hour, just to put my mind at rest." My husband, Beatrix and I head down to the GP expecting a quick visit. He is very careful in his examination, which includes measuring the circumference around each of my calf muscles. One is 2cm

larger than the other but as a Chiropractor, I know that all bodies are different. "It could be normal variation", I tell him. He agrees with me, but acting on his own instinct he wants me to have a blood test at the hospital just to be safe.

At the hospital, the junior doctor assures us that once the results of the blood tests come back, we will be heading home. I don't have any 'significant' symptoms, it's just routine. The results take a while, so Beatrix and I are taken to the post-natal ward to wait and my husband goes home. At 3am I am awoken by a huddle of doctors around my bed. They want me to have a chest CT which, they tell me, will increase my lifetime risk of developing breast cancer by 10%. I don't want to have the scan if I don't absolutely need it, I don't want to do anything that makes me more likely to have cancer and I tell them so. "You have to be alive to have breast cancer" the female doctor replies.

My blood results showed my heart was breaking down into my blood and they didn't know why. The consultant radiographer who was called into the hospital at 4am to do my scan even commented, "If this woman has a blood clot, I'll give £5000 to charity." The scan revealed I had 2 clots blocking my heart. Pulmonary embolism is one of the biggest killers of post-natal women in the UK with 66% of new mothers dying within 30 minutes of a clot forming. Despite being young and healthy and having had a home

water birth, I had won a form of healthy lottery, becoming that rare person that develops a clot in the days after giving birth. Given the wrong set of circumstances, even healthy bodies can become seriously sick.

When I first got my medical diagnosis of 'bilateral pulmonary emboli' I expected an equally medical solution. Surely the doctors had developed some sort of laser to break them down, or a drug that would dissolve it? Not so. All that could be done was to thin my blood to prevent more blood cells from sticking to the clot to make it bigger, like snowflakes creating a snowball. Otherwise, the solution was to give my body rest and time to break down the clots on its own. Rest and time to heal, the two most common pieces of advice I gave my clients every day. Here I was in a life-threatening situation and I had to trust my body to save me.

I am so thankful that my background as a Chiropractor meant that I already trusted the natural cleverness of my body and so I was able to accept this plan of action and feel at peace with it. I gladly accepted the blood thinners so that my body didn't have to work as hard to get the job done. Within a few months, the clots had broken down and I was able to make a full recovery, thanks to the fact my body knew what to do in a crisis, just as it had in childbirth. Medicine is most valuable when it supports the natural processes of our bodies or when it can rescue us

when mother nature cannot. However, it is not in our best interest to look only to medicine to maintain our health. Your body has a natural cleverness and healing power all of its own. By trusting in your body, you can have faith in your ability to play a part in your own healing process. May you never underestimate how important that is.

I've spent the last 20 years of my life caring for people: half in care homes and hospitals, half as a Chiropractor and it saddens me how little interaction there is between medicine and natural healthcare.

Our current system, based on the idea that the human body is in its essence weak and vulnerable, is wrong. It ignores the natural cleverness which runs through our nervous system, giving us the ability to heal, adapt and create resilience to stress and ill health. By understanding and working with this system rather than against it, each of us can learn to trust our body and create our own health.

Medicine and surgery have a place, but only where Mother Nature needs support and for all our sakes, should never be the first or only step. My vision is for a world that promotes good health, over managing sickness. By honouring the awesome partnership of body and brain through the central nervous system, we can find hundreds of ways to create a long and happy life. For this to happen we need to look inside ourselves for the answer. The first

step is to reconnect with our natural cleverness, learn to trust the signals our bodies give us and interpret them into action.

This book is intended to show how and why shifting our reliance for health away from external resources and back inside each person, is the most rewarding and reliable way to create lasting health and happiness for our whole community.

HEALTH KEY

By trusting in your body, you can have faith in your ability to play a part in your own healing process

Introduction

Growing up I always knew that I wanted a job where I could help people. In my eight-year-old brain, 'helping people' meant helping them to feel good in their own skin. I was also very interested in the human body and my favourite book for many years was *Blood, Bones and Body Bits*. Every tiny, disgusting and amazing fact I learned only made me more curious to understand how human-beings work. Because of this, I naturally assumed I would become a medical doctor. After all, what other job would allow me to talk to people all day and work with human bodies? Doctor had to be the job for me.

Because I like to test theories before putting them into practice, I decided to do a year of work experience in a hospital before I started a medical degree. At 18 I got a job as an assistant nurse in a surgical ward at a busy hospital. Life at the hospital was hard for the people working there. Everyone had to work to their maximum capacity most of the time, and the politics and power structures meant there wasn't much flexibility in the job. Even though staff cared about patients a lot, they were rarely able to go above and beyond for them or build relationships. Instead, many of my colleagues were stressed and worn down from years of caring for others. It took all of their energy just to get through each day and it was easy to see how,

after a few years, my own enthusiasm and drive would also be diminished.

It also bothered me that after their surgery, patients were sent home 'as soon as they were (medically) ready' but often this was before that person was emotionally prepared or physically strong. As a care assistant, patients would often share these fears with me, knowing they didn't have the extra support they needed at home. I remember one woman was so desperate to stay in hospital where she felt safe and supported, that after being discharged from the ward she sat in the main reception until I found her later that day.

My time at the hospital showed me that while I still really wanted to help people, this particular way of helping didn't seem to fit me. I loved the work, and I liked my colleagues, but something didn't feel quite right. The jobs I saw the doctors and nurses doing didn't look anything like the ideal job I had in my head.

It would take nearly 15 years for me to be able to understand why this traditional model of healthcare and helping didn't fit me perfectly. Over this time, I have gone on a huge journey both personally and professionally. I have come to understand that the human body is incredibly clever and that when we honour this cleverness and work with it, everyone can experience more energy, health and joy in their life. You don't need a medical

degree to understand how your body works. You just need a body!

Most doctors will tell you that their training is almost exclusively about when things go wrong with the body, with very little time to spare on how it is naturally clever and designed to heal on its own. If medicine focuses on everything which can go wrong for you, I have written this book to remind you of everything that is already right within you. By knowing this for yourself, you can take back control of your health.

Everything I've learned can be summarised by these 4 core beliefs:

- The whole capacity of the human body, how it works as a system, is much greater than the sum of its parts
- Health comes from the inside out, not the outside in
- The human body has a natural cleverness, in other words symptoms happen for a reason
- Being healthy means enjoying a friendly relationship with my body where I know I can trust and rely on it.

In this book I want to share my journey: the experiences, people, challenges and realisations that helped form these beliefs. I also want to share how they have helped me to

make more sense of my health and the world around me and in doing so, completely transformed my life. There is so much that I want to share with you in the hope that it does the same for you.

Chapter 1 is all about my favourite topic: your clever body. It's so important that you realise up front, that you are not broken or flawed, but already have everything within you to live an awesome, healthy and fulfilling life.

In Chapter 2, I will explore ideas around health and encourage you to gently question some of your pre-conceived beliefs around what health looks like and what it really means to be healthy.

This is essential before going on to Chapter 3 where we explore your life potential. This is the part where you start to take control of your health and future happiness. Where you can look beyond today, into how you want to experience life in the future. When you can see how clever you naturally are, and that health isn't just about 'not being sick' but about enjoying a complete sense of wellbeing, a world of possibilities will open up for you.

Finally, in Chapter 4 I share all the practical tools and tips that have helped me on my journey up to this point. After reading this book, I don't want you to rely on anyone for your health and happiness other than yourself. Of course, you'll always benefit from the help and support of friends

and professionals. But you are the decision maker. You know what is best for you, because you understand why it is so important to be connected to your body, how to hear and understand its signals and what action to take next.

A lot of the ideas I explore in this book are based on the latest science and research, particularly in the field of neuroscience (the study of how the brain affects the body through the nervous system). To keep this book light and easy to read, I have stuck with the broad brush-strokes of some complex scientific ideas. If you have a need to understand a particular concept on a more detailed level, I encourage you to explore this for yourself.

Working with the natural cleverness of your body will change your life. Your body is clever because your brain and body work in partnership. Re-connecting your brain to the inner world of your body creates a tremendous shift on the inside which is reflected on your outside. Seeing this shift happen for people, when they become re-connected to their inner world, is the most rewarding job I can imagine. I see it every day in my work as a Chiropractor and I hope that after reading this book, you will begin the process of making your body a friendlier place to be. It's important to do, since the two of you (your brain and body) are together for a lifetime. The quality of that life is directly made better or worse, depending on how well your body-brain partnership is working.

If you're ready, let's get started!

HEALTH KEY

Your body's ability to heal is much greater than
anyone has allowed you to believe

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<https://lifeandlightchiropractic.co.uk/serve/book>

About the Author

Naomi Mills is a family Chiropractor, mother, teacher and author. She is passionate about creating change in how we see health and ourselves

Naomi has worked in some form of healthcare for the last 20 years, half in traditional medicine and half in natural healthcare. She has always loved working with people but found our traditional model of healthcare didn't quite fit her because it focuses almost exclusively on when things go wrong with your body rather than how our bodies are naturally clever and designed to heal themselves given the right environment.

In 2011, she graduated as a Doctor of Chiropractic from the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic and began experiencing first-hand how having a healthy nervous system can change people's lives. She spent the first 10 years of her career running a busy family Chiropractic centre in Nottingham before feeling called back to her native Scotland. She lives on the outskirts of Edinburgh with her husband Richard, daughter Beatrix and dogs Jelly and Frank.

Naomi spends her time at Life and Light Chiropractic, mentoring other Chiropractors and teaching locally. Her spare time is spent with family, crafting, reading, walking, meditating and connecting with friends.