Deepak Chopra

Deepak Chopra (Hindi: दीपक चोपड़ा) (born October 22, 1946) is an Indian American public speaker, and writer on Ayurveda, spirituality and mind-body medicine.[1][2] Chopra began his career as an endocrinologist and later shifted his focus to alternative medicine.[3] Chopra was a top assistant to Maharishi Mahesh Yogi before launching his own career[4] in the late 1980s by publishing self-help books on New Age spirituality and alternative medicine.[5]

A friend of Michael Jackson for 20 years, Chopra came to widespread public attention in July 2009 when he criticized the "cult of drug-pushing doctors, with their co-dependent relationships with addicted celebrities," saying he hoped Jackson's death, attributed to an overdose of a prescription drug, would be a call to action.[6]

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Family history

Chopra was born in New Delhi, India.[1][7] His father, Krishan Chopra, M.D. (1919–2001) was a prominent Indian cardiologist. He was head of the department of medicine and cardiology at Mool Chand Khairati Ram Hospital, New Delhi, for over 25 years,[8] and a lieutenant in the British army.[1][7] His paternal grandfather was a sergeant in the British Army, who got help for his heart condition from Ayurveda after Western medicine did not help.[9]

Chopra's younger brother, Sanjiv, is a Professor of Medicine and Faculty Dean for Continuing Medical Education at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center.[10]

Early life and education

As a young man Chopra's desire was to become an actor or journalist but he reports that he was inspired by a character in Arrowsmith by Sinclair Lewis and became a doctor.[11]

Chopra completed his primary education at St. Columba's School in New Delhi and graduated from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).[12] After immigrating to the US in 1968, Chopra began his clinical internship and residency training at Muhlenberg Hospital in Plainfield, New Jersey. He had residency terms at the Lahey Clinic in Burlington, Massachusetts, and...
He earned his license to practice medicine in the state of Massachusetts in 1973[13] and received a California medical license in 2004.[14] Chopra is board-certified in internal medicine and specialized in endocrinology.[13] He is also a member of the American Medical Association (AMA),[15] a Fellow of the American College of Physicians[citation needed] and a member of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists.[citation needed]

Career

Chopra taught at the Tufts University and Boston University Schools of Medicine. He became Chief of Staff at the New England Memorial Hospital in Stoneham, Massachusetts[7] later known as Boston Regional Medical Center, before establishing a private practice.[7]

After reading about the Transcendental Meditation technique, Chopra and his wife learned the technique in 1981, and two months later they went on to learn the advanced TM-Sidhi program.[16] Sources also describe a 1981 meeting between Chopra and Ayurvedic physician Brihaspati Dev Triguna in Delhi, India in which Triguna advised Chopra to learn the TM technique.[12] In 1985, Chopra met Maharishi Mahesh Yogi who invited him to study Ayurveda.[12][17] In that same year, Chopra left his position at the New England Memorial Hospital and became the founding president of the American Association of Ayurvedic Medicine, and was later named medical director of the Maharishi Ayurveda Health Center for Stress Management and Behavioral Medicine.[12][17][18] He was initially the sole stockholder of Maharishi Ayurveda Products International, but divested after three months.[19] He has been called the TM movement's "poster boy" and "its leading Ayurvedic physician".[20] In 1989, the Maharishi awarded him with the title "Dhanvantari (Lord of Immortality), the keeper of perfect health for the world".[21]

In its May 22/29, 1991 issue, the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) published an article coauthored by Chopra: Letter from New Delhi: Maharishi Ayur-Veda: Modern Insights Into Ancient Medicine.[22] JAMA editors claimed that Chopra and his co-authors had financial interests in "Maharishi Vedic Medicine" products and services. In the August 14, 1991 edition of JAMA, the editors published a financial disclosure correction[23] and followed up in October 2, 1991 with a six-page Medical News and Perspectives exposé.[24] An article discussing this chain of events was authored by Skolnick in the Newsletter of the National Association of Science Writers.[25] A 1992 defamation lawsuit brought against the article's author and the editor of JAMA was dismissed in 1993.[26][27] Media reports published four years later saying that there had been a monetary settlement of the case were later withdrawn as untrue.[28]

By 1992, Chopra was serving on The National Institutes of Health Ad Hoc Panel on Alternative Medicine.[29] In 1993, Chopra became executive director of the Sharp Institute for Human Potential and Mind–Body Medicine with a $30,000 grant from the Office of Alternative Medicine in the National Institutes to study Ayurvedic medicine.[12] Chopra's institute also maintained affiliation with Sharp Healthcare, in San Diego.[17][18] That same year Chopra moved with his family to Southern California where he lives his wife and near his two adult children, Gotham and Mallika.[12]

According to his own account, Chopra was accused by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi of attempting to compete with the Maharishi's position as guru and Chopra left the Transcendental Meditation movement in January 1994.[30] Todd Carroll said Chopra left the TM organization when it “became too stressful” and was a “hindrance to his success”. [5]

In 1995, Chopra was the recipient of the Toastmasters "International Top Five Outstanding Speakers" award.[31] In 1997 Chopra was given the Golden Gavel Award by Toastmasters.[32]

He was presented the Medal of the Presidency of the Italian Republic awarded by the Pio Manzu International Scientific Committee. In the citation committee chairman and former Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev referred to Chopra as 'one of the most lucid and inspired philosophers of our time'.[33] Esquire Magazine designated him as one of the "top ten motivational speakers in the country".[11][31]

In 1996, Chopra parted company with the Sharp Institute. That same year, Chopra and David Simon founded the Chopra Center
for Well Being, which incorporated Ayurveda in its regimen, and was located in La Jolla, California. The University of California, San Diego, School of Medicine and American Medical Association have granted continuing medical education credits for some programs offered to physicians at the Chopra Center.[7][12][17]

Since 2000 Chopra has sat as an advisor for the National Ayurvedic Medical Association.[34]

In 2005 Chopra was made a Senior Scientist at The Gallup Organization.[35] He currently serves as an Adjunct Professor at Kellogg School of Management.[36]

Chopra has a Sirius XM weekly radio show where he interviews prominent scientists and leaders in the development of human potential on Sirius/XM Stars Radio show Wellness Radio.[37] He is also a weekly columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle, a regular contributor to the Washington Post's On Faith section and a prolific contributor to the Huffington Post.[38][39][40]

In 2006, Chopra launched Virgin Comics LLC with his son Gotham Chopra and entrepreneur Richard Branson. The company's purpose is to "spread peace and awareness through comics and trading cards that display traditional Kabalistic characters and stories".[7] Chopra was awarded the 2006 Ellis Island Medal of Honor by the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations.[41][42]

He was the recipient in 2009 of the Oceana Award.[43] Also in 2009, Chopra established the Chopra Foundation with a mission to advance the cause of mind/body spiritual healing, education, and research through fundraising for selected projects.[44] In 2010 the Chopra Foundation sponsored the first Sages and Scientists Symposium with prominent scientists philosophers and artists from around the world.[45]

In 2010, Chopra received the Cinequest Life of a Maverick Award for his collaborations with filmmakers Shekhar Kapur and his son, Gotham Chopra. The award goes to "inspirational individuals who touch the world of film while their greater lives exemplify the Maverick spirit".[11]

Chopra is in UniGlobe Entertainment's cancer docudrama titled I a Minute scheduled for release in 2010.[46] The documentary is being made by Namrata Singh Gujral and will feature cancer survivors Olivia Newton-John, Diahann Carroll, Melissa Etheridge, Mumtaz (actress) and Jaclyn Smith.

He received the 2010 Humanitarian Starlite Award "for his global force of human empowerment, well-being and for bringing light to the world." [47] Chopra is the recipient of the 2010 GOI Peace Award[48]

In September 2010, Deepak Chopra published a criticism of Stephen Hawking's book The Grand Design.[49]

**Criticism**

According to a 2008 article in *Time* (magazine), Chopra is “a magnet for criticism” primarily from the scientific and medical communities. Some critics say that Chopra creates a false sense of hope in sick individuals which may keep them away from traditional medical care. The *Time* article summarized Chopra's reception and popularity thus: "Of all the Asian gurus…, Chopra has arguably been the most successful at erasing apparent differences between East and West by packaging Eastern mystique in credible Western garb. …[H]is quest to construct a pleasing and seamless model of the universe tends to jump to easy conclusions and to spackle over problematic gaps and inconsistencies in the ideas he presents — is obvious to all but his most starry-eyed fans. But grousing about such crimes — as many do — does little to explain his enormous popularity. Chopra is as rich as he is today not because he has been dishonest with anyone, but because his basic message — that love, health and happiness are possible, that mystery is real and that the universe is ultimately a friendly and benevolent place where orthodoxies old and new can meet and make peace with one another — is one that he wants to believe in just as sincerely as his readers do."

The Skeptics Dictionary, a book by Robert Todd Carroll, says that Chopra is the "foremost advocate of Ayurvedic medicine in America".[5] The book also says that, according to Chopra, perfect health is a matter of choice, physical imbalances can be identified by taking the pulse, allergies are the result of poor digestion and washing one’s eyes with saliva can prevent or reverse cataracts. According to Carroll, Chopra has given up his work in medicine “in favor of working in religion.” However, Chopra says that he found it frustrating to give patients antibiotics, tranquilizers and sleeping pills, when he knew the drugs would not get rid of the problem.[5]

Chopra was sued for plagiarism by Robert Sapolsky for using a stress endocrine chart without proper attribution, after the
publication of Chopra’s book, *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*. An out of court settlement resulted in Chopra material that was researched by Sapolsky. Chopra acknowledges that his thought has been inspired by Jiddu Krishnamurti and others.

In 1996, the *Weekly Standard* of London published an article which accused Chopra of “plagiarism and soliciting a prostitute”; however, Chopra sued and the paper withdrew its statements and published an apology.

Chopra has been criticized for his frequent references to the relationship of quantum mechanics to healing processes, a connection that has drawn skepticism from physicists who say it can be considered as contributing to the general confusion in the popular press regarding quantum measurement, decoherence and the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. In 1998, Chopra was awarded the satirical Ig Nobel Prize in physics for "his unique interpretation of quantum physics as it applies to life, liberty, and the pursuit of economic happiness". According to the book, *Skeptics Dictionary*, Chopra's "mind-body claims get even murkier as he tries to connect Ayurveda with quantum physics." Chopra also participated in the Channel 4 (UK) documentary *The Enemies of Reason*, where, when interviewed by scientist Richard Dawkins, he admitted that the term "quantum theory" was being used as a mere metaphor and that it has nothing to do with actual quantum theory in physics.

In August 2005, Chopra wrote a series of articles on the creation-evolution controversy and Intelligent design which were criticized by science writer Michael Shermer, founder of The Skeptics Society.

In March 2010, Chopra and Jean Houston debated Sam Harris and Michael Shermer at Caltech on the question "Does God Have a Future?" Shermer and Harris criticized Chopra's use of scientific terminology to expound unrelated spiritual concepts.

In April 2010, Hindu American Foundation co-founder Aseem Shukla, on a *Washington Post*-sponsored blog on faith and religion, criticized Chopra for suggesting that yoga did not have origins in Hinduism but merely is an Indian spiritual tradition which predated Hinduism. Later on, Chopra tried to explain Yoga as rooted in "consciousness alone" which is a universal, non-sectarian eternal wisdom of life expounded by Vedic rishis long before historic Hinduism ever arose. He further accused Aseem Shukla of having a "fundamentalist agenda". Dr. Shukla in a rejoinder titled "Dr. Chopra: Honor thy heritage" termed Deepak Chopra as an exponent of the art of "How to Deconstruct, Repackage and Sell Hindu Philosophy Without Calling it Hindu!" and to the allegation of "fundamentalist" he responded by accusing Dr. Chopra of raising the "bogey of communalism" in frustration to divert the argument.

**Message**

According to *Business Week* one of Chopra’s main messages is that by ridding oneself of negative emotions and developing intuition by listening to signals from the body, health can be improved. According to Chopra, slowing down or reversing the aging of the mind through his methods can increase one's lifespan up to the age of 120 years. As a result of his writings and lectures in this area, he is thought by some to be "one of the pre-eminent leaders of the mind-body-spirit movement".

**Publications**

Chopra has written more than 57 books. His books have been translated into 35 languages and sold more than 20 million copies worldwide. His book, *Peace Is the Way* won the Quill Awards and *The Book of Secrets: Unlocking the Hidden Dimensions of your Life* received the Nautilus Award. Chopra is represented in the United States by the literary agency, Trident Media Group. His first book, *Creating Health*, is credited with helping to create initial, international recognition for Chopra.

- 1991 *Unconditional Life: Mastering the Forces That Shape Personal Reality*
- 1994 *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success: A Practical Guide to the Fulfillment of Your Dreams*
1995 *The Path to Love: Spiritual Strategies for Healing*
1997 *The Seven Spiritual Laws for Parents: Guiding Your Children to Success and Fulfillment*
1998 *Healing the Heart* ISBN 0-609-60035-4
1999 *The Seven Spiritual Laws for Parents: Guiding Your Children to Success and Fulfillment*
1999 *Perfect Digestion* ISBN 0-609-80076-0
2000 *The Seven Spiritual Laws for Parents: Guiding Your Children to Success and Fulfillment*
2000 *How to Know God: The Soul's Journey into the Mystery of Mysteries* ISBN 0-609-60078-8
2001 *The Deeper Wound: Recovering the Soul from Fear and Suffering, 100 Days of Healing* ISBN 0-609-60079-6
2001 *Manifesting Good Luck Cards: Growth and Enlightenment*
2001 *Golf for Enlightenment: The Seven Lessons for the Game of Life*
2001 *Synchrodestiny: Harnessing the Infinite Power of Coincidence to Create Miracles* ISBN 1-84413-221-8
2002 *Manifesting Good Luck: Love and Relationships, 50 Card Deck*
2005 *Why Is God Laughing? The Path to Joy and Spiritual Optimism*
2006 *Reinventing The Body, Resurrecting The Soul*
2006 *The Ultimate Happiness Prescription: 7 Keys to Joy and Enlightenment*

Music CDs/Audio Books

- 1986 *Total Health: The Rediscovery of Ayurveda* ASIN B-000-K06QY-4
- 2000 Pathways to God: A Dialogue Between Joan Borysenko, Ph.D. and Deepak Chopra ISBN 1-56170-736-8
- 2001 Healing the Planet: A Dialogue Between Marianne Williamson and Deepak Chopra ISBN 1-56170-743-0
- 2001 Training the Mind, Healing the Body ASIN B-000-BGT8K-6
- 2001 Soul of Healing Meditations – A Simple Approach to Growing Younger ASIN B-000-05TZS-K
- 2002 The Yoga of Love and Devotion with Shree Ma ISBN 1-56170-838-0
- 2002 Rituals As a Path to the Divine: A Dialogue Between Stephen Huyler, Ph.D., and Deepak Chopra ISBN 1-56170-841-0
- 2002 The Soul and Relationship: A Dialogue Between Shakti Gawain and Deepak Chopra ISBN 1-56170-917-4
- 2002 Yoga as a Form of Meditation with Yogi Amrit Desai ISBN 1-56170-839-9
- 2002 A Gift of Love II: A Musical Valentine to Tagore ASIN B-000-061ZP-E
- 2004 Chakra Balancing: Body, Mind, and Soul ASIN B-000-667GN-W
- 2004 The Ultimate Deepak Chopra Collection 20 CDs ASIN B-000-BGV45-I
- 2006 Escaping the Prison of the Intellect ISBN 1-878-42456-4
- 2008 Whispers of Spirit & Happiness with Don Miguel Ruiz ISBN 1-559-61945-7
- 2008 The Soul of Healing Affirmations A-Z Guide to Reprogramming the Software of the Soul ASIN B-001-2SAT7-S
- 2009 The Soul Of Healing Meditations ASIN B-000-05TZS-K

Videos
- 1995 Seven Spiritual Laws of Success
- 1995 *The Way of the Wizard*
- 2003 *God and Buddha - a dialog*
- 2004 *Soul of Healing - Body, Mind, and Soul Vol. 1*
- 2008 *The Love Guru*
- 2010 *1 a Minute*

**Other published work**

- 2008 Introduction to Kim Feinberg's *A Mother's Legacy*[^64]
- Chopra co-authored *Ask the Kabala* with Mike 'Zappy' Zapolin and Alys Yablon, which is a set of 22 cards, each one representing a story or character from the Old Testament and a life lesson based on that story from a Kabalistic perspective.[^65]

**See also**

- Alternative medicine
- Quantum mysticism

**References**

2. ^ab^ EnlightenNext Magazine web site (http://www.enlightennext.org/magazine/bios/deepak-chopra.asp)
3. ^abc^ The Boston, Oct 19 2009, Dr. Deepak Chopra (http://boston10.cityspur.com/2009/10/19/dr-deepak-chopra/)
8. ^abc^ Krishan Chopra, M.D. bio at Hayhouse web site (http://www.hayhouse.com/authorbio.php?id=137)
9. ^abc^ international dreamer – deepak chopra, March 31, 2010 (http://www.streeteditors.com/2010/03/31/international-dreamer-deepak-chopra/)
13. ^ab^ Massachusetts Board of Registration Physician Profile (http://profiles.massmedboard.org/MA-Physician-Profile-View-Doctor.asp?ID=6568)
14. ^ab^ California Physician Profile (http://www2.dca.ca.gov/pls/wlpub/WLQRYNAS$CEV2.QueryView?P_LICENSE_NUMBER=1)
15. ^ab^ AMA Profile (http://webapps.ama-assn.org/doctorfinder/member.do?id=1233951172026&index=0&page=1)
16. ^ab^ The Boston, "Dr. Deepak Chopra" (http://boston10.cityspur.com/2009/10/19/dr-deepak-chopra/)


Further reading


External links

- Official Site (http://www.deepakchopra.com/)


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