

I remember as a kid, when I or one of my siblings would complain of a symptom for which there was no obvious reason, my mother would often tell us it was probably psychosomatic. She was essentially telling us that it was in our heads and not in our bodies. I didn't know at the time, but that was a relatively new term and in those days it was popular to blame obscure conditions on imagination.

The word itself simply means mind-body as psycho means mind and soma means body. My mother believed that the term psychosomatic simply meant an imagined physical condition. The truth is that the mind can actually cause or influence physical conditions.. There has been a lot of research over the years since my childhood to substantiate this connection and influence.

Studies show that positive thoughts can help an ill person get better and negative thoughts can bring on or make worse a condition.

In a recent study published in *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* it was shown that holding a grudge can be detrimental to your health. Many people understand that stress can worsen heart health and cause ulcers. A grudge has the same physical effect on the body as stress, so it would be reasonable to assume that holding a grudge can have a similar effect on the heart and stomach.

In fact, according to this study, holding a grudge can impact the health and function of many parts of the body. They found individuals with grudges not only increased heart related conditions and ulcers, but also had more headaches, back pain, arthritis pain, and neck problems.

The obvious solution then, would be forgiveness. Forgiveness may not only be good for you mental health, but physical health as well. The phrase "forgive and forget" might mean that you can forget about your physical problems once you forgive the action of another or even yourself.