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Eplerian Life Philosophy is a Model for Being Your Authentic Self

Gary Epler, M.D.

ABSTRACT

The fundamental principle of the Eplerian Life Philosophy is that people need to be their true authentic selves for optimal health and live a life filled with high energy, creativity, and enjoyment. Know who you are moment by moment which means know where you're thinking from, and that's who you are. Learn to stop thinking from your selfish head. The mind is not the brain. The mind is the universe outside the body with unlimited knowledge and information. Be your authentic self by thinking from the heart with kindness and from the mind with creativity to solve problems and help others, courage to be your authentic self, and inspiration to improve the world.

Keywords: eplerian life philosophy, authentic self, authenticity, heart, mind.

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Eplerian Life Philosophy is a Model for Being Your Authentic Self

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ABSTRACT

The fundamental principle of the Eplerian Life Philosophy is that people need to be their true authentic selves for optimal health and live a life filled with high energy, creativity, and enjoyment. The philosophy is “know who you are moment by moment” which means know where you’re thinking from, and that’s who you are.

You can think from the head, heart, gut, body, and the mind. The mind is not the brain. The mind is the universe outside the body with unlimited knowledge and information. Think from the mind, not the brain. Have an impact on yourself and others, be your authentic self by thinking from the heart with kindness and from the mind with creativity to solve problems, courage to be your authentic self, and inspiration to improve the world.

Keywords: eplerian life philosophy, authentic self, authenticity, heart, mind, heal, self-compassion, self-awareness, well-being, creativity.

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I. INTRODUCTION

“Know who you are moment by moment” are the seven words of the Eplerian Life Philosophy (ELP) (1). This means know where you’re thinking from and that’s who you are. The five locations to think from are the head, heart, gut, body, and the mind, which is outside the body. Being your true authentic self is the core principle. The objectives of this writing include showing the function and feelings associated with five locations to think from, the benefits of being your true self, and how to use ELP as a model to be your true authentic self by thinking from your heart and thinking from the mind.

Eplerian Life Philosophy: The idea of the Eplerian Life Philosophy is from the words carved in granite 3400 years ago, “Know Thyself” (1). Socrates expressed the virtues of this adage by writing “The unexamined life is not worth living,” and Aristotle wrote “To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom.” In the twentieth century, the Swiss Psychiatrist, Carl Jung wrote, “Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart.”

The benefits of being your true authentic self are limitless, but an easy, simple method for being your authentic self has not been developed. Innovative technology not available to Socrates or Aristotle provided me with the solution. Functional MRI (fMRI) technology shows where people think from (2). Early fMRI studies transformed my traditional teaching of thinking from a single brain concept to thinking from three primitive independent brain regions.

We can only think from one region at a time. These three regions include the amygdala anger center, cingulate stress center, and accumbens addiction pleasure center. Thinking from these three brain regions can be a powerful life-altering, devastating force in people’s lives and needs to be stopped.

For the Eplerian Life Philosophy, there are five locations to think from that include the head for healthy social judgment, heart for kindness, gut for risk management, body for strength, and the mind for creativity.

The head. The amygdala anger center is an early development primitive brain region located in the base of the brain (3). Anger is defined as something being taken away usually in a personal or abusive way such as getting fired or being robbed, but more commonly taking away pleasure, opinions, or personal values. Anger is a

natural response from this primitive reptilian brain responding to a personal attack and can be modulated.

The anger center region functions by instinct to save your life, but there is no thinking from here, it's too slow. Therefore, to eliminate the anger response, no thinking. Do not think about the situation or the person, not a single thought. Instead 'feel' the anger, let it peak in six to eight seconds, and then the parasympathetic system will neutralize the cortisol sympathetic response restoring calm (4). The goal is to eliminate triggering the anger center through long-term conditioning.

The cingulate region is also an early development primitive brain region associated with the amygdala. Functional MRI studies regarding PTSD show that when individuals have thoughts about themselves, they're stressed (5, 6). For example, thinking about your problems causes stress and shows increased brain activity in the cingulate region; therefore, self-centered thoughts cause stress. If you're stressed, you're thinking about yourself. I call this 'selfish' brain region the 'stress center.'

As with the anger center, this cingulate region also functions by instinct to help you out of life-threatening situations. This region is not for thinking about yourself because this causes stress. There are abundant thoughts that are self-centered, many that are subtle and obscure. For example, obvious thoughts include thinking about your problems while less obvious include comparing yourself to others, trying to be your job title, and pleasing others. Other self-centered thoughts include complaining, criticizing, and blaming. Worry and guilt are these types of thoughts. Obscure self-centered thoughts include controlling people and seeking power.

Thinking from the stress center needs to be eliminated as any self-centered thought will cause stress. There are several ways of doing this that include feeling the stress with no thinking, letting it peak in six to eight seconds, and the parasympathetic system will neutralize the stress response. Other ways include diverting this harmful thinking to thinking from the heart with

kindness to yourself or distraction through exercise, a cold shower, upbeat music, or a positive conversation.

People need to live at zero-level stress. The average stress level in the general population is 5.0 and higher. This is the disease zone causing cortisol-induced inflammation, heart disease, and cancer, and responsible for more than five million deaths worldwide each year (7). These deaths can be prevented by the simple act of people not thinking about themselves from the cingulate stress region.

The accumbens brain region is located above these two regions and is triggered by the dopamine pleasure chemical. The sole function of this region is for human reproduction and continuation of the human species and not for the brief and fleeting dopamine pleasure from drugs, alcohol, or sugar. This also includes not thinking from this center for the four seconds of dopamine pleasure that self-centered, egocentric individuals experience by manipulating and hurting people or making them feel bad about themselves. You can only think from one location at a time; therefore, thinking from this chemical pleasure center causing an addiction at the expense of thinking from the heart with kindness.

There are four alternative locations for thinking and feeling that include the heart, gut, body, and the mind.

The heart. The function of the heart is to keep itself healthy and has millions of neurons and other defense cells to do this (8,9). The heart keeps itself healthy by making decisions and by positive feelings. If you have a life-changing decision such as a new job, a new house, or a new relationship, then unlike the indecision from the head, the heart will give an instant unilateral yes-and-no decision based on what's best for your health (10). This is related to authenticity because this takes you away from thinking from the primitive brain region which will lead you to making bad decisions for your health.

Feelings for keeping the heart healthy include kindness to yourself with self-compassion. Being kind to yourself fosters authenticity. Instead of

feeling sorry for yourself and blaming yourself for failures, use self-compassion to restore healthy feelings. Other feelings from the heart include unconditional giving, appreciation, gratitude, and empathy.

The gut is for nutritional guidance and risk management through the gut-brain connection (11, 12, 13). The origins of nutritional advice began with altering you to avoid poisonous liquid or food. Today, your gut is telling you 'no' when faced with a plate full of french fries, fried food, and a huge sugary dessert. Listen to your gut, it's good for your nutritional health. This guidance has expanded to risk management using fear as a warning to avoid hazardous situations.

Dysfunctional connection between the gut and the brain can cause irritable bowel syndrome and other gastroenterology illnesses. These can be managed and improved through neuro conditioning (13).

The body is for strength from the feeling of the muscles and joints (14). The good feeling from exercising can be used to enjoy and sustain a daily exercise program. Your exercise routine can include walking, running, elliptical, and swimming along with yoga stretches and weights.

Group classes can be helpful with the added benefit of social energy. For athletic performance, combining thinking from the body and the mind propels Olympic success because this shuts down negative thinking from the head.

The mind is not the brain. For centuries, the words 'brain' and 'mind' have been interchangeable. They are opposites. The brain is an organ in the head. The mind exists outside the brain and the body. The mind is the universe surrounding the physical body.

Thinking from the brain is limited by inhibiting creativity, innovation, and performance. Thinking from the mind is unlimited connecting you to all information and knowledge in the past, present, and future.

Thinking from the brain is negative with thoughts of complaining, criticism, blame, and judgment.

Thinking from the mind is positive with courage, total calmness, and unsurpassed joy.

Thinking from the brain is selfish. Thinking from the mind is inspirational with helping others and improving their lives.

Because the mind is outside the body, the mind cannot be accessed by the typical 14-cycles per second beta-brainwave state. The brainwaves need to slow to alpha at 10-cycles per second or theta at 7 cycles per second. This is initially developed through meditation training (15) and then continual practice enables instant access to the mind as needed.

The function of the mind is for creativity and innovation (16). Feelings from the mind include deep calmness, total acceptance and belonging without judgment, and joy beyond the waking beta brainwave state (17). Attention is from the mind.

Be your true authentic self: The expressions 'know thyself' or 'be yourself' are too general as people have many roles during the day. Therefore, I added 'moment by moment' for specification.

You can know who you are moment by moment because it's where you're thinking from. During infancy, instinctive reactions from primitive brain regions are needed for survival such as a cry for food or a cry for a diaper change, but these regions are not needed after that as thinking from these regions causes anger and stress. This is reptilian thinking and does not represent the true human self.

Benefits of being the authentic self: It's freedom to be who you are without having people or society telling you who to be. You are your own person. There is no need to try to be someone else and compare yourself to others. There is no need for complaining, criticizing, blaming, or excuses.

You take responsibility for your actions, and you accept the occasional bad outcome. You have no negative thoughts about yourself. You have no negative thoughts about the past or the future. You have no guilt or worry. You have zero-level stress because you have eliminated self-centered

thoughts. You think from your heart with kindness and the mind with creativity.

Reasons why people are not their true authentic selves: (1) People don't think they are smart enough (2) People fear the consequences of being their true selves. People don't want to experience failure, criticism, or ridicule. However, these are life's events regardless of whether you're being your true self or not, and more common if you're trying to be someone else. If you are being your authentic self, failures are learning experiences, and criticism and ridicule are empty words not applying to you as a person. This fear must be overcome by accepting the consequences for a few seconds and moving on. (3) People may want to be their authentic selves but don't know how. A simple, easy solution has not been available until ELP which now serves as a model: stop thinking about yourself and think from your heart and the mind. (4) There is a small dysfunctional group of people who do not want to be their authentic self because their deviant behavior of lying and manipulation gets them everything they want.

This is addicting behavior because they receive a 4-second burst of dopamine pleasure from the accumbens pleasure center when they treat others badly to get what they want. They will go into a rage at the suggestion of abandoning this behavior, not willing to accept and replace the 4-second pleasure with pleasure from thinking from the heart with kindness and giving that lasts a lifetime.

Three fundamental health requirements for being your true self: (1) Live a healthy nutrition lifestyle which is eating the right foods (no added sugar, no added salt, no processed foods) in the right amount at the right time and prepared in a healthy manner. (2) Eight hours of sleep is needed every night which includes six hours for recharging the brain energy and two hours of dream sleep for feelings of kindness from the heart and enabling a peak functional prefrontal lobe for appropriate social judgment. (3) One hour of exercise every day is needed for energy and body strength by mixing it up with walking, running, treadmill, elliptical, or swimming along with weights, yoga stretches, and group sessions.

Implementation of these three health requirements will provide the energy, resilience, and discipline to be your true authentic self and follow the principles of ELP. A healthy nutritional lifestyle will prevent inflammation and disease. Sleep will provide peak functioning prefrontal cortex for healthy social judgment. Exercise will provide energy for the day.

ELP model for being your authentic self by thinking from your heart: The ELP is knowing where you're thinking from and provides a model for being your authentic self. Think from your heart with kindness to yourself. If people make a mistake or fail, then they criticize themselves or wallow in self-pity. These self-destructive thoughts are stress, which is unproductive because if you're stressed you can't think from the mind to create solutions to help yourself or help others. Self-compassion is always there especially during downtimes, while the popular term, self-esteem will abandon you during troubling times.

Giving with expecting nothing in return is from the heart and is being your authentic self. On life's success ladder, givers are on the top with takers or head thinkers far below; however, givers are also on the bottom because they give without considering their own self-interests. This can be prevented by first reviewing your situation and balancing this with giving. Other feelings include appreciation and gratitude. It feels good to be grateful for the people in your life who take nothing from you and for the positive experiences in your life. Forgiving comes from the heart and eliminates stress by stopping the anger loop.

Finally, empathy comes from the heart because it's a healthy response to consider other people's perspective rather than the self-centered response from the stress center.

Here are examples showing the difference between non-human reptilian thinking and human thinking from the heart. You're excited about an upcoming special event, and you want to share this with your spouse or friend. They respond with an instant angry attack "NO" because they don't like the idea. You're left speechless and want to run away.

You're relaxing with friends having a coffee, when your family member disrupts the enjoyment by yelling, "You ruined by life." Media blasts you and makes you feel guilty and bad about yourself claiming you did an injustice 200 years ago.

Where does this self-serving behavior come from? It's not a human response from the heart. It's an instinctive crocodile response from the head amygdala anger center and the cingulate stress center. You respond from the same primitive brain region, instinctively wanting to get away.

A healthy response for the first example is from the heart by sharing the excitement and exploring the details with enthusiasm. You may not want to do this eventually, but you will have a positive conversation about it that will last indefinitely instead of being left with anger and not wanting to talk to the person ever again.

The response to the media blast is to be your true authentic self and not believing these words, and know these words have nothing to do with you as a person. This is taking the negative consequence of being yourself and letting empty threatening words move beyond you.

Be your authentic self. Think from the heart, not from the head. Be a heart-thinker, not a head-thinker. The takeaways for thinking from your heart and being your authentic self include being kind to each other and considering the other person's situation. This means being kind to yourself and appreciation for what people do for you and for the positive people in your life who take nothing from you. This means being grateful, content, and happy with what you have in the moment.

The ELP model for being your authentic self by thinking from the mind: In the context of ELP, the brain and the mind are two separate locations. The brain is the physical organ in the head. The mind is the universe outside the brain and the body. The brain is for life-saving instinctive reactions in a severe automobile accident or a fallen tree. The mind is for creativity and innovation. The mind is for attention and courage. The brain is limited. The mind is unlimited. The brain is selfish. The mind is inspirational.

The brain has primitive thinking with anger and self-centered thoughts causing stress, and the brain operates in the beta-brainwave state at 14-cycles per second and cannot access the mind.

The human brain can connect with the mind in the normal waking beta 14-cycles-per-second brainwave state. However, the human brain can connect with the mind in the slow alpha 10-cycles-per-second or theta 7-cycles-per-second brainwave state, separating itself from all other living beings.

These brainwave states occur during sleep; therefore, you need to learn to be in these brainwave states while awake to use the mind. Learn the feeling of this slow brainwave state through traditional transcendental meditation or eyes-open meditation. Once you recognize the alpha state, then use this to explore the mind on an as needed basis to solve problems, innovation, and help others as well as to experience the deep feelings of calmness, total acceptance, and exuberate joy.

II. CONCLUSION

The Eplerian Life Philosophy (ELP) is a model for people to be their true authentic self. ELP is knowing who you are moment by moment which means know where you're thinking from one of five locations, head, heart, gut, body, or the mind, which is outside the body. To always be your true authentic self means thinking from your heart with kindness and giving; and thinking from the mind with creativity to solve problems and help others, courage to be your true self, and inspiration to improve the world. Eliminate thinking from the head anger center and head stress center. The head is selfish. The heart is kind. The mind is inspirational for making the world a better place.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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