



# HEART TO HEART

Heartbound Newsletter

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## Pathways

“Which shoe did you put on first this morning? You have to think? But you didn’t this morning. And you probably put on the same one you’ve been putting on first for years-from habit. Wouldn’t it be terrible if every time we put on our shoes we had to stop and ask ourselves, “Which one first?”

Or try this one. Ask a good typist to tell you, without looking, where the M or R is on the keyboard. Does the person have to think? But typists don’t have to think when they type - the habit’s been established in their fingers.

Habits can save a lot of time and energy. But how do we get them? How do the thoughts and words and actions we repeat become a permanent part of us?

In our brains we process messages and send them to different parts of the body through the nerve cells. ..Many little fibers called dendrites extend from the membrane and receive messages. And one long sending fiber called the axon transmits messages to the neighboring cells. Between the sending fiber of one cell and the receiving fiber or body of another is a tiny space called a synapse...” Dr. Sir John Eccles of Australia was examining this junction under an electron microscope and noticed some tiny enlargements on the sending fiber. “They looked to him like miniature buttons so he called them boutons, the French word for buttons.

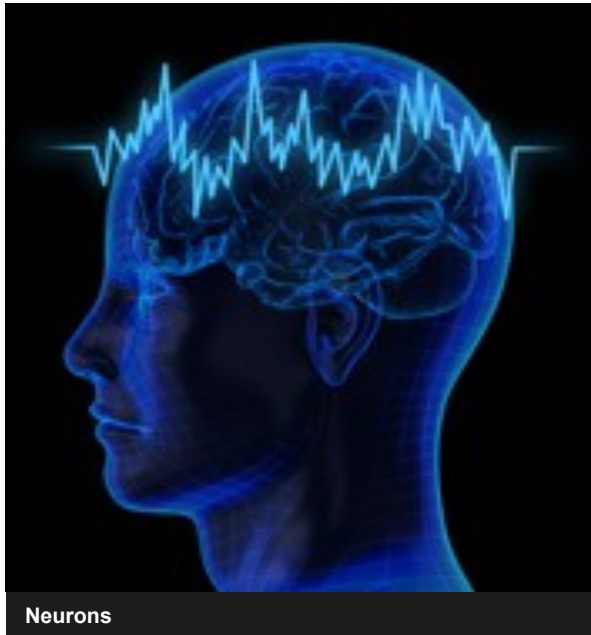
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*“Could it be that we have automatic paths of damaging responses that are set off by events?”*

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Which Path Do you choose?



Today we know these little boutons are found in different shapes and sizes. We

also know that they secrete various chemicals.” One, acetylcholine, closes the tiny gap and helps send the message on down the line.”...” Some fibers had many boutons while some only a few. He suggested that the sending fibers with many boutons wouldn’t require as much stimulation as those with few to produce the chemicals needed to send the impulse on to the next cell.

But what causes some to have many boutons and others only a few? Researchers have discovered that any thought or action often repeated builds boutons. As more and more form, it becomes easier and easier for messages to flow along that particular pathway.

So it becomes easier for a person to repeat that same thought or action the next time...” (with a similar stimulus). Many times an automatic response occurs with this path flow- happening at times of high emotion and bypassing the choice mechanism of the brain.

Dr. William Sadler, confirms that our established habits make literal pathways through the nervous system. And frequent repetition of the same thought, feeling or action wears a deeper groove. Just as repeated walking over a lawn or trail will wear a deep path in the dirt.

These paths once established, can either bless us or curse us. Could it be that we have automatic paths of damaging responses that are set off by events? Are we being controlled by our surroundings instead of our choice? If so, there is good news. By consciously examining our responses and choosing to make a different response than we’re used to making, we begin to build a new pathway. We must make that conscious choice so many times that we build more boutons on the new pathway than on the old one. Then it will be easier to take the new route than the old. Joining our choice with the hand of God in the renewing of our mind will make new pathways. We have a choice in every situation. We can always choose another route -to feel understanding instead of anger, to compliment instead of criticize, to help instead of hurt. Jesus did. I choose to act instead of react. How about you? (excerpts by E.M. Chalmers)

*“...do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..”Romans 12:2*

## Contact Us

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