

Symptoms:

THE INNER

Language of Life

The next time you feel a sore throat coming on, ask yourself the Seven Questions (on the back of this page) for why you might “need” to get a bad cold. These seven points of inquiry can help to ask yourself about a particular physical problem or symptom as it arises.

The Seven Questions addresses benefits, negative beliefs, traumas, and downloads; by answering them, you’re very likely to arrive at one or more answers for the overarching question: “Why might I need this symptom now?”

By reflecting on each of the questions separately and genuinely for a moment, you can often narrow down the possibilities that could be causing their illness or discomfort.

Sometimes a person will find their answer to “Why might I need this symptom now?” after thinking about just one of the questions. Other time, the overarching question could require reflecting on three or four different questions because the symptom’s cause has multiple issues playing a part in its origin.

It’s common for us to automatically think of an outside cause for our symptoms. We’ll often think or say things such as: “I caught the bug that’s going around,” “It is a high-pollen day, so my allergies will be awful,” or “This health problem runs in my family, so I’m destined to have it.” Now we want to look for the primary cause of uncomfortable symptoms, and it’s usually from some kind of an inner psychological issue, not something from the outside.



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Connecting to the root cause, not the symptom

Why do we need a Symptom?

SEVEN QUESTIONS TO FIND OUT

1

WHAT DO I HOPE THE SYMPTOM WILL GET FOR ME?

Could you be seeking love, attention, rest, sympathy, or downtime that you haven't been able to give to yourself? For example, "James" found that coming down with the flu was his only way of taking a break from his stressful job.

2

WHAT WILL THIS SYMPTOM GET ME OUT OF DOING?

At times, everyone has commitments or responsibilities they wish they could shirk, including going to work, taking care of someone, or attending an event. For example, "Sally" did not want to go to her in-laws' house for the holidays because they never welcomed her, and then to avoid discussing the issue with her husband, she experienced debilitating muscle spasms in her neck that made it impossible to travel.

6

DOES THIS SYMPTOM COME FROM UNCLEARED TRAUMAS, DEEP STRESSES, LOSSES, DEPRIVATIONS, OR CUMULATIVE PAINFUL EXPERIENCES? IS THE TRAUMA FROM CHILDHOOD, SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED TEN YEARS AGO, OR CURRENT? ARE THERE A BUNCH OF RECENT STRESSES?

For example, "John" was dealing with a major marital conflict as well as the death of his mother when he developed an ulcer.

3

WHAT NEED OR EMOTION IS THIS SYMPTOM EXPRESSING FOR ME?

Emotions that aren't dealt with constructively—guilt, anger, or vulnerable feelings such as fear, hurt, sadness, or a deep yearning—may crop up when you ask this question.

5

IS THERE A PERSONAL, FAMILY, OR TRIBAL BELIEF BEING EXPRESSED IN THIS SYMPTOM?

Examples of family or tribal beliefs: "If I am exposed to a cold or the flu I will get it." "I don't deserve to be healthy and happy if my mother or my sister is not." "My grandfather and father had receding gums, so it's inevitable that I'll get gum disease too." "We all always get strep throat if one does." "The doctor will fix it for me." There's also the belief that family always sticks by family, no matter what—even if what the family does is hurtful, destructive, or illegal.

4

IS THERE SOME METAPHOR BEING EXPRESSED IN THIS SYMPTOM?

Is someone a "pain in the neck"? Is a chore "back-breaking"? Is there an unsavory task you can't "stomach"? Or do you fear moving forward with something? Is there something you do not want to see or cannot express? Notice how your symptom feels when you focus on that issue.

7

IS THIS SYMPTOM A DOWNLOAD FROM A PARENT OR OTHER EARLY CARETAKER? ARE YOU REPEATING A PARENT'S HEALTH PROBLEM? OR ARE YOU USING THIS SYMPTOM IN THE SAME WAY YOUR PARENTS DID?

An example might be, "If my mother didn't like the family's choice of where to go for a weekend getaway, she got a migraine so that we couldn't go."