

Ask Dr. Allen:

The heart of the matter

Phrases such as “Let your heart sing,” and “My heart went out to them” express a deep part of our being. Sometimes the word soul is used interchangeably with the word heart to speak of our innermost feelings.

In the non-medical world, the heart represents the center of a person’s being, the source of their deepest thoughts, emotions, intuition, and will.

As stressed out people, or people who have had difficult, unresolved trauma, we can be disconnected from our heart.

We may have no reaction to a bad thing happening to someone else. We can appear numb. As trauma happens in our lives, even from childhood, we develop walls of protection over our emotions to cope with life. If the trauma and subsequent painful emotions remain unresolved, we then become further away from the heartfelt part of ourselves.

Sometimes blocking off feelings is a necessary coping strategy to get through a traumatic relationship or incident.

However, we need to later work through what happened and how we felt about it. The goal is to get the emotions out of us. This can be by exercising them out, talking them out, or by writing, singing, praying or allowing music and nature to release our stress.

As we connect with our heart, we can feel deeper feelings for the life we have. We can feel more compassion, love and concern for others. Heartfelt emotions will lead to healthy changes in our relationships, our work environment and our communities.

At Hearts Respond, we seek to put into action the response felt in our hearts for the needs of children and families in underserved communities. We also seek to inspire others to care for these kids as they let their hearts respond to what they see, hear and feel.

Join us for the first-ever fundraiser, Hearts Respond, Futures Arise, on April 23, 2026.

Help us empower underserved youth in our community through life-changing after-school programs, mentorship, and counseling. Hearts Respond creates safe spaces, nurtures resilience, and opens doors to brighter futures.

Dr Greg Allen is a practicing therapist in PVE and San Pedro. He seeks to elevate kids towards their potential, passion and purpose. He is also founder and director of the youth non-profits Hearts Respond (heartsrespond.com) and Freedom4U (freedomcommunity.com) Pen