

# Dr. Srini Pillay, Best-Selling Author, Examines How Your Deep Psychological Needs Could Lead to Allergies

*"If you don't deal with your psychological crises effectively, your body will be affected." - Dr. Srini Pillay*

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, December 18, 2019 / EINPresswire.com/ -- How your deep psychological needs could lead to allergies. Allergies occur when the body's immune system overreacts to something foreign. In the case of a reaction to pollen or certain foods, the body's response is physical. Yet, according to French psychoanalyst Pierre Marty, the cause may be psychological.



Srini Pillay

Marty observed that there are distinct psychological traits that he has observed in allergic individuals.

Before I delve into these more abstract ideas, let me say that Marty himself saw his observations as a work in progress. He was by no means saying that this one view is the only psychological reality in allergic patients, and neither am I.

**A mother's stress and baby's allergies:** Marty was convinced that the body's overreaction in allergic patients was developed prior to birth, during the pregnancy phase. Certainly, more recent studies have confirmed that maternal stress during pregnancy correlates with food allergies in their children. And this stress also correlates with more wheezing in children in the first year of life. So Marty seems to have hit on something important with his clinical observations.

While the precise mechanism for this is not known, we do know that stress knocks a key brain hormone system off kilter in mothers, and the resulting changes probably affect the infant. These stresses could, in theory, be environmental or psychological—like being worried about bringing a baby to term, or having significant ambivalence about the pregnancy.

**The violent need to possess and control:** In any case, Marty noticed that stress during pregnancy seemed to be correlated with his allergic patients (the children) having certain exaggerated psychological traits that showed up in their relationships. While many people experience passion and strong connections when they meet a good friend or lover, in allergic patients this initial reaction was exaggerated.

In Marty's words, the allergic person takes up the person who is an object of affection immediately, completely and violently at first. There is such a strong identification with this person that the allergic person cannot tell the difference between themselves and the other

person. This leads to a confusion of identity, which the allergic person experiences. Once the object is found and internalized, the allergic person attempts to control the object, gradually. One way to think about this is that the internalized romantic object is like a foreign body. If that person is subsequently found to be different in any way, a psychological crisis may result.

For instance, one partner may feel better because of how the other partner dresses. But if they wear something that they cannot relate to, it may create immense anger and rejection.

You might wonder how this psychological crisis can spill over into a bodily reaction—a good question. Firstly, your psychology comes from your body (your heart, brain and gut.) So, your body and psychology are intimately connected. Secondly, psychoanalysts Braunschweig and Fain explain this well when they state that “there exists for everyone a threshold beyond which, despite all our efforts of representation and verbalization, our flesh is endangered”. Simply put, if you don’t deal with your psychological crises effectively, your body will be affected. Modern research now demonstrates that the brain does in fact communicate with the immune system (involved in allergies) through the hormonal system. Since your psychology involves your brain, it can change your immunity as well.

So what can you do about this? Marty points out that the therapy with allergic patients can be complicated, because the therapist often becomes an internalized object that cannot be controlled, and is therefore prone to rejection and being seen as a reason for massive disappointment.

What the allergic patient can learn from this, is how to exist in the world without fusing with the identity of someone close to them. They can practice this by building a separate life that strengthens their ego so that they are not dependent on the other person. They can also develop a different social life and learn to love people, even when they are not the same as them.

Also, patients can learn not to choose and control objects that might be dangerous for them. After a few tumultuous relationships, people often learn about people who may be attractive, but not well suited to them. For instance, a defiantly independent person will likely be a major source of stress to someone who wants to spend most of their time together with them.

Food allergists are often at odds with these psychosomatic theories, but there is no reason not to take a more practical view of the physical allergy as well as a more nuanced view of the psychological underpinnings of allergies.

By recognizing the psychological correlates of allergies, people can explore whether changing these correlates can change the immense suffering that comes from allergies.

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[Srini Pillay M.D.](#) is a Harvard-trained psychiatrist, brain researcher, certified master executive coach, technology entrepreneur and musician. He is regarded as a pioneer in the field of transformational neurocoaching and has been extensively featured in the media including CNN, Fox, The New York Times, The Boston Globe, Forbes and Fortune. He is an award-winning author of multiple books and an in-demand keynote speaker. His most recent book is “Tinker Dabble Doodle Try: Unlock the Power of the Unfocused Mind”.

Pillay is the founder and CEO of NeuroBusiness Group, voted one of the Top 20 movers and shakers in leadership development in the world by Training Industry. He has worked with leaders internationally in many Fortune 500 companies, and is currently an invited member of The Consortium for Advanced Adult Learning and Development (CAALD) at McKinsey & Co. and The Transformational Leadership Council (TLC). Recently, Pillay created a series of videos on “Managing Depression in the Workplace” for LinkedIn Learning.

Aurora DeRose

+1 951-870-0099  
[email us here](#)  
Michael Levine Media

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