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Body, mind and spirit journal

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Reiki — an overview

Dr. D.E. Mistry

Editor's Note:

Amongst the various holistic systems now in vogue, reiki belongs to a type of healing through energy, somewhat similar to certain aspects of homoeopathic healing.

Definition

The word *reiki* is Japanese. It means Universal Life-Force Energy. It can be broken down into two components, “Rei” and “Ki”. “Rei” stands for Universal transcendent spirit; “Ki” is the life-force energy very similar to the *Chi* of Chinese acupuncture, the vital force of homoeopathy and the bioplasmic energy of the Russian researchers. It is the “Ki” that flows through all living beings. Thus reiki is the energy of life itself and everyone is born with it.

History of Reiki

During the mid 1800s, Japan was opening its closed frontiers to Western influence and the industrious Japanese quickly adopted the technology and other aspects of the Western world. The Christian missionaries followed and in turn many Japanese took to Christianity. Dr. Mikao Usui — the original pioneer of this system was then the Dean of a seminary at Kyoto. He was one day challenged by his students that if Christ could heal through touch then he as a disciple of Christ ought to be able to do the same and in turn teach them. Not being able to do so, Dr. Usui resigned his post and went to U.S.A. to get the answer. He failed. Then he turned his attention to Buddhism, having heard of Buddha performing incredible healings. Not finding the answers in the *Japanese Lotus Sutras* of Buddhism, Dr. Usui studied Chinese in order to study in-depth the Chinese *Sutras*. Once again he found very little, so he began to study Sanskrit in order to study the Tibetan *Sutras*. Studying these, he found the intellectual answer to how Christ healed. But the actual process of empowerment eluded him. He went back to Japan to a sacred mountain near Kyoto. Here he began a twenty-one day fast-cum-meditation. At the end of the 21st day the full technique of this empowerment was revealed to him in three-dimensional Sanskrit characters. Usui began to run down the mountain. In his haste he tripped and stubbed his toe. As he reached, down and grabbed it, he was amazed to see that the bleeding stopped and it healed completely. He went back to Kyoto and during the course of years formulated the five basic Reiki principles and began to teach them throughout Japan. Shortly before his death, at the turn of the century, Dr. Usui handed over the charge to Dr. Chijiro Hayashi who in his own right was a very powerful mystic. Dr. Hayashi foreseeing the advent of the Second World War consciously left his body before the war began but not before he had initiated a Japanese-American lady from Hawaii, Mrs. Takata. This simple but enterprising lady trained about twenty-one Reiki Masters before she passed away in December 1980. Today there are very many masters in the reiki system of healing all over the world.

The Principles of reiki

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1. Just for today do not worry.
2. Just for today do not feel anger.
3. Honour your parents, teachers and elders.
4. Earn your living honestly.
5. Show the attitude of gratitude.

Reiki healing is very simple to learn. What is known as the first degree attunement taught by a trained Reiki Master over the course of two days is a series of four attunements. This is the very core of the Usui process of healing, — the actual placing of hands and other techniques are secondary. Reiki then comes under the category of energy-work in the same line as bio-energetics, acupressure, acupuncture, magnetic healing and pranic healing. The very first impact one notices on oneself after having undergone attunement is the increase in the amount of energy or the feeling of heat when undergoing treatments. The patient draws just the right amount of energy through the hands of a reiki channel. There is no question here of 'over-dosage', nor does the 'channel', i.e. the practitioner, get tired or exhausted or drained. Reiki can then be used either in its own right or as a means to complement other kinds of healing methods. Reiki treatment is given mainly on the endocrine organs and on any painful spots.

Effects of reiki treatment

- a — Helps release emotions.
- b — Releases stress.
- c — Amplifies energy.
- d — Balances energy.
- e — Increases awareness.
- g — Works on the causal level of disease.
- h — Creates total relaxation in the physical body.
- I — Reverses processes which hasten aging.

While undergoing reiki, each individual is affected in a very personal way. The result is determined by the needs of the individual undergoing treatment. Individuals often go into profound sleep while undergoing treatment. One is filled with a sensation of peace, vitality and joy. A pleasant feeling of security is experienced. If one treats oneself one can experience the release of withheld emotions and energy blocks.

Reiki works holistically, affecting changes in the very chemical substance and texture of the body, helping to create a mental balance. It helps to consciously develop awareness and this is used by many as one of the key elements in various body-mind therapies. Besides the first degree attunement process, which always increases the vibratory level, there is a second degree attunement in which the vibratory level is increased at least four times more than the first degree.

Here certain symbols are taught which help in sending distant healings. In the first degree, it is the physical body that is chiefly energised so to say; in the second degree, it is the etheric body which is worked on. The third degree attunement is done only to initiate a master.

A formal one-to-one treatment of a reiki session takes an hour at least. There are what is known as group treatments in which many reiki students or masters lay their hands on the person to be healed. This shortens the time-factor, and also amplifies the energy.

Such group treatments are being done to help people with cancer and AIDS. In addition, group treatment can be sent to promote peace in war-torn countries, heal areas afflicted by floods, earthquakes and other natural calamities and in general offer energy to any situation which needs it.

Conclusion

The Usui system of reiki is not only a simple and natural healing method but also the most effective way of transferring this universal life-energy. Once a person is attuned to become a reiki channel, concentrated life-energy will flow through his hands on its own accord and this ability will remain for the rest of his life.

References

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[Courtesy: *Clinical Case Recorder*, January-March 1995.]

Cameo Cases

(A brief study of cases treated with homoeopathy)

Dr. D.E. Mistry

Editor's note:

Many times during the course of homoeopathic treatment of the patient's main complaints; an isolated but quite disturbing localised complaint crops up. Such a complaint is not an old complaint returning, but very often a new incident that is bothering the patient, far more than the ones for which he is undergoing treatment. Such a symptom disturbance very often leads to a rare or a small remedy, by the giving of which the complaint goes away and then one can come back to treat the constitution. We have given sac lac which may suffice — but in our experience if the complaint is bothersome and distressing, and more so when the patient demands that the new complaint be treated first and relieved; it is unethical just to sit quiet and let the patient suffer and hope that the vital force in due time will remedy the situation. Such type of cases we term CAMEO cases. The Oxford Dictionary explains CAMEO as "A small but well acted part in a film or a full play". Each of our CAMEOs given below has a story to tell which we hope our readers would enjoy.

Case 1

Mrs. L.C.M. was under our treatment for burning of soles, headache, varicose veins and dysmenorrhoea. During the course of treatment she developed a severe vulvovaginitis with *Candida albicans* as the incriminating organism, according to her gynaecologist under whom she was treated during the 8th month of her pregnancy. She was disturbed by the vaginal itching and mild lumbar backache as she was approaching the end of her pregnancy. We decided to try a rare remedy and she was given *Candida albicans* 30 twice a day; the remedy being prepared in a Libra Vibronic Radionic Apparatus. She had complete relief of this distressing symptom and later on went to deliver a healthy baby boy.

Case 2

Master Vishal N. who was initially referred to us for the complaints of temper tantrums with breath holding attacks, suddenly developed during the course of treatment, on 02/06/98, pain during urination with passage of some drops of blood after urination. He was given a few doses of *Phosphorus* 30 while we awaited his urine report, which showed: Albumin 41, RBC 21 and acidic urine. His mother remarked that the child cried before passing urine. We took the following rubrics from Kent:

- (1) Bleeding urethra after urination
- (2) Urination; Dysuria
- (3) Child cries before it starts.

The remedies were:

Sars3, borax3, Lach2, Lyco2, NV2

8 doses of *Sarsaparilla 30* were given and 2 days later the mother remarked that he dances less before urination though the bleeding is still the same. *Sarsaparilla 30* TDS was given for more than a week, though the urine had become totally clear a week after starting *Sarsaparilla*. The problem has not repeated itself since.

Case 3

Baby Mausam Shah first came to us when she was 1 1/2 years of age in Aug'96 for the complaints of chronic loss of appetite and chronic constipation with flatulence. She was, according to her mother, a very finicky eater. She liked spices and sweets, salted chew nuts but very often would take food in the mouth and then throw it out. She passed stools once in 4 days and ailed from evening flatulence, itching urethra and generalised crankiness. Many remedies were given to her including *Sulphur*, *Cina*, *Thuja*, *Calcareo carbonica* as per the indication, but her constipated state did not respond. She also received a course of *Silica Marina 3X* which could not be given for a prolonged time as this child would bring out all sorts of small intercurrent problems like cough, coryza, fever etc. which would need other indicated remedies. Periodically she would vomit and develop loss of appetite with shrinking stools, colicky pain in the abdomen and a habit of pinching her parents. She received a single dose of bowel nosode *Bacillus Gartneri* in 200 with remarkable improvement in appetite and in stools. Some indications of this nosode given by Bach Paterson are:

- * Malnutrition
- * Suitable to small hypersensitive children
- * Suitable to nervous intelligent persons
- * Restlessness of the feet and hands
- * Desires company
- * Wants light while sleeping
- * Cannot digest fatty food, bread, meat and fish
- * Vomits after sweets
- * Severe constipation
- * Indifferent or poor appetite

One dose of this remedy was repeated after 3 months in the same potency when she developed constipation again. Subsequently she improved on *Calcareo carbonicum* and *Tuberculinum* though her mother still feels her stools are not as normal as she wants them to be. The appetite has improved.

Case 4

Mrs. L.D., who originally came for Rt. sided sciatica in May'94 from which she recovered, returned back to us for the complaints of dry cough during Aug'98. It started after eating sour curds. Two prominent modalities were:

Cough dry < talking
Cough dry > lying

Manganum aceticum came out most prominently which was given in the 30 C potency: 6 doses. This remedy also has cough; worse in wet weather [Boerricke; Page 422]. She had immediate relief by this remedy but subsequently developed urination on coughing. The cough was still dry and had returned after eating oily food. This situation needed a change in the remedy and *Pulsatilla* 30 followed by 200 helped her considerably.

Case 5

Pt. G.N. first came to us with pain around the rt. big toe from a shoe bite after he had the nail of this toe removed by a surgeon for an ingrowing toe nail. Four months later the same complaints returned in the same toe for which he took some treatment from his previous doctor. He had besides pain in the calf muscles, backache and throbbing headaches. He was treated with *Rhus toxicodendron* and *Calcarea carbonicum*. The nail was simply dressed with *Calendula*. The healing of this nail was taking a very long time. So he received a few doses of *Silica*. Strange to say, after *Silica* a right sided tonsillar swelling developed suddenly which shifted to the right side with pain on swallowing, headache and coryza. Now the patient was not concerned about his nail as much as about his tonsillar situation. We decided to give him *Merc. iod. Rub.* though the books reveal *Merc.* to be inimical to *Silica*. 3 doses of *Merc. iod. Rub.* made a remarkable difference to his tonsillar inflammation. This made us question as to whether we are unnecessarily following the dictates of what is given in the books of the so called inimical relationships of our remedies. However, the ingrowing toe nail still remained a problem. So on 02/10/98 he received a rare remedy *Magnetis Polus Arist.* given in 200. There was an immediate relief of the pain and swelling. Boerricke says this remedy of the South pole of the magnet is given for severe pain in the inner side of the nail of the big toe. It also reads: ingrowing toe nail, easy dislocation of joints of feet and painful feet on hanging down. However, though the pain and swelling of this person improved there was no decrease in the pus discharge which ultimately was cured by *Hepar Sulfuricum* 200 and 1M. Subsequently there has been no recurrence of the toe problem till date.

Case 6

Mr. N.C.N. initially came to us for the complaints of foggy vision. He had been operated for bilateral cataract with glaucoma. He was on *Natrum muriaticum* for his vision problem. During the course of treatment he developed a new symptom of watery discharge from both ears with impaired hearing. He said "I feel as if there is something blocking the ears." We took this modality as:

Deafness, Impaired — Cotton stuffed with

as if, from Phatak; p. 175

: *Ledum*

So *Ledum* 200X 4 doses were given to him. He returned after a few days saying that there was no ear discharge and he could also hear better.

The patient is still under treatment for his primary complaint.

Case 7

Mrs. L.S.N., a 39-year-old lady, first came on 14/08/97 with the complaints of vertigo during menses, while lying with eyes closed since a year. She also suffered from headaches during menses which were relieved by vomiting. In addition she complained of hyperacidity during menses, scanty menses and leucorrhoea off and on. She had suffered grief after her first stillborn which subsided after the next baby.

Taking the rubrics:

- * Vertigo on closing eyes, while lying;
- * Headache better by vomiting;
- * Headache during menses;

Lac. defloratum emerged. She was given 8 doses of *Lac defloratum* 30 which were repeated next month. She was normal during the next two periods.

In March'98 the complaints returned and again *Lac defloratum* 200 was given. She developed boils on the neck in June'98 which responded to a few doses of *Belladonna* 30. Since then she has remained well.

Case 8

Mrs. A.A.B. first reported to us with complaints of Lumbago (? Prolapsed intervertebral disc).

Her repertorised remedy came to *Rhus toxicodendron* which was given in 1M potency every month. During mid July'98 she developed a scraping cough and complained of severe burning in the throat on coughing. Murphy's Repertory page 1454 shows *Muratic acid* as the only remedy with 2 marks for this symptom. 5 doses of this were given in 30. She reported on 31/07/98 and did not complain of her throat problem. Subsequently her treatment for Lumbago was continued with infrequent doses of *Rhus toxicodendron* up to March'99 when her pains were considerably less. She has not reported after that.

Case 9

Mrs. V.A., 27 years of age, came with complaints of recurrent coryza and breathlessness. Her constitutional remedy was *Pulsatilla*, which was given in 1M potency on 20/03/96. During the course of treatment she developed breast pain which occurred anytime. The pains felt like those that had occurred when breast feeding had been suddenly stopped and milk congestion had occurred 5th months after her first delivery when she had had to resume duty. 1 dose of *Lac caninum* 200 relieved this complaint which has never again been brought to us. She is still under treatment for her breathlessness.

Case 10

Mrs. S.V.S. first came to us with the complaints of dyspepsia, acidity, low BP, headache, vertigo, constipation, burning in the body, lumbar ache, myalgic pains in limbs and

severe anaemia. She was given indicated remedies chiefly for her anaemic condition. During the course of treatment in Dec'97 she complained of pain in the neck more on the left side extending to the left shoulder due to excessive exertion. A previous dose of *Arnica 200* had not improved her neck pains. She was then given a single dose of *Lachananthus 1M* on 19/12/97 which was repeated on 30/12/97. Boerricke states about *Lachananthus*, "Neck drawn over to one side, rheumatism of neck, stiffness of neck, pain in neck as if dislocated". After *Lachananthus* she reported only occasional neck pain on 12/01/98 which did not occur thereafter though she is still under treatment for her severe anaemia.

Dr. D.E. Mistry, editor NAMAHA is a surgeon cum homoeopath, also editing a homoeopathic journal the Clinical Case Recorder.

The power of music

Ms. Marie Carlsson

Editor's note

Everybody feels that music heals. But nobody knows how. This experiential article opens the window a little. Through the Bonny method of guided imagery and music the author explores the deep effects on the inner being. Music ceases to be the domain of artists alone and glides into the field of medicine.

This article opens new vistas in the field of healing....

“An ear of mind withdrawn from the outward's rhyme
Discovered the seed-sounds of the eternal Word,
The rhythm and music heard that built the worlds,
And seized in things the bodiless Will to be. (1) “

The origin of creation is sound. Music or harmony is the source and origin of nature (2). It is life itself. Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, Sufi Master and poet, says,

“All day and night, music,
a quiet, bright
reedsong. If it
fades, we fade” (3).

Music is beauty. It can lead us into the mystical state beyond words. Helen Bonny (1985), a music therapist and founder of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM), describes music as,

“the language of immediacy” (4). She says,

“Music as a medium of the moment can be an ‘opener of the doors of perception’” (5).

At that moment,

“you break the barriers of limitation into All-That-Is” (6). The Mother says,

“ music is one of the methods of inner opening and one of the most powerful” (7).

Since words cannot truly express the experience of music, to make the written words of these pages come alive, feel free to resonate with your own experiences of music. Let yourself be with the music that takes you beyond, the music of your heart. The Mother says,

“The role of music lies in helping the consciousness to uplift itself towards the spiritual heights” (8).

Themes

In the field of music therapy, the inherent qualities of music are used to facilitate transformation and growth. The *Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM)* is a music therapy method developed by

Dr. Helen Bonny in the 1970's. She (2002) says, GIM is

“a process of listening to classical music in a deeply relaxed state of consciousness to stimulate imagery, feelings, memories that lead the client to psychological and spiritual transformation” (9).

In the first part, the GIM method will be introduced. This is followed by a presentation of a study of experiences of energy and light, evoked during the music journey of the GIM session.

The seeds of this study are found in my own GIM experiences of energy and light. Experiences that have had a profound and transformational effect, as well as led me to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. When patients started to have similar experiences, a question based on the therapeutic process in a clinical setting, emerged: How does the experience of energy and/or light influence the person/the experience of the person? To answer this question, 140 experiences of energy and/or light were explored.

The Bonny method

In the *Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM)*, western classical music is used to facilitate healing and growth. Grounded in her own mystical experience while playing the violin, Bonny was inspired to find a way for others to be ‘infused’ (10) by music in a similar way. Participating in a research project at *Maryland Psychiatric Research Center*, in which the clinical applications of mind-altering drugs were explored, Bonny enhanced her knowledge of the holding and expanding effects of music on the consciousness of a person, as well as its healing potential. Out of this work, the GIM method developed. Today, the method is practiced in several countries, i.e. the US, Canada, Australia, Germany and Sweden.

The GIM session

In an encounter with music, the state of listening influences the experience. Lamb says,

“Music jealously guards her deepest secrets. She yields them only to those who listen with full concentration. To these she extends a life-nourishing embrace” (11).

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The GIM experience starts with a relaxation of the body. The intention of the relaxation is to help the person to let go of the body and mind, and open up for a deeper and more focused state of listening. The journey into a receptive and altered state of consciousness begins. The Mother says,

“the best way of listening is to be like a still mirror and very concentrated, very silent” (12).

After the relaxation, the traveller moves into a state of visualization. An image is either introduced by the therapist or emerges naturally from within the person. While the person is experiencing and exploring the imagery, the music is introduced.

With the music as a companion and guide, the inner journey of the traveller expands. By letting the richness of the music fully enter one's awareness and by exploring the imagery, emotions, memories that are evoked, the experience deepens and develops. When music touches the deeper aspects of one's being, the core and inherent nature of the music can be revealed and experienced. The Mother says,

“If you listen well and let yourself go, you move on and glide, glide into a psychic consciousness.... One can easily glide within it and climb back to the psychic origin of music” (13).

The effect of music listening as used during the GIM session is described by Bonny and Savary. They say,

“Music listened to in altered states of consciousness can bring out things in you that nothing or no one has ever previously elicited. Many describe the experience as full of insight; others find a healing force; some let the music take them to unexplored provinces of the psyche; while for others it provides a heightened awareness to their ordinary world” (14).

During the music journey, the traveller communicates his/her experiences to the therapist.

Western classical music is rich in harmony, melody, rhythm, timbre, dynamics, tension and resolution. It is holding. Like a mother, it can soothe, rock and reassure the traveller about the safety and beauty of existence. It may also stimulate the person to explore and uncover unknown areas of consciousness. At the beginning of a piece, the music introduces a mood or a feeling. Through a development of the various elements of the music, the mood is altered and a complex musical elaboration takes place. This melodic and harmonic complexity supports and encourages the person to move deeper and explore the secrets of the inner realm. He/she may connect with memories and deep feelings, work through inner conflicts and tension, expand into transpersonal realms etc. As the music moves towards resolution, the traveller is guided towards reaching an inner state of resolution of the experience that is currently explored. A transformation, a new understanding or perspective emerges. Through this exploration

and expansion, the core of one's being may shine through and be experienced. The music moves the person to the depths, where a taste of the Divine is offered.

"I caught the echoes of a word supreme
And metred the rhythm-beats of infinity
And listened through music for the
eternal Voice (15)."

The music that is used during GIM consists of a sequence of classical works. After the session is completed, a verbal dialogue usually takes place between the traveller and the therapist for a process of integration to begin.

GIM therapy has been shown to enhance —

"self-understanding, therapeutic goals and spiritual transformation" (16).

In this process of growth, experiences of a transpersonal nature play an important role. In the next section, the experiences of energy and light are explored. As an exploration based on clinical work, I hope it will also offer a glimpse into the nature of GIM experiences.

The influence of experiences of energy and/ or light

The material of this study is based on 140 experiences of energy/light of four people: three clients and myself. Each experience has been explored separately, asking the question: How does the experience of energy and/or light influence the person/the experience of the person? During a GIM session, the therapist writes down the experience of the traveller, expressed during the journey in the music. The experiences of energy/light are based on these written transcripts.

In exploring the question mentioned above, patterns emerged, i.e. the energy/light influences the body of the person. Each pattern (category) will be presented, followed by a selection of examples. In some cases, only the part of the experience that exemplifies the specific category is presented. At other times, a larger extent of the experience is introduced, to offer a greater context. While reading, you may ask yourself the question: Isn't category two a natural consequence of the experience expressed in number three? That may very well be true. This exploration focuses only on the person's expression of his/her experience at that moment in time. An experience may also fit in more than one category at the same time.

I am now opening a door to experiences that are precious to the owners. Let us tread the territory with gracious and thoughtful steps.

How does the experience of energy and/or light influence the person, the experience of the person?

1. Energy/light influences the body

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Sometimes, the energy/light influences the subtle energies of the body. At other times, a more concrete change in the physical body is described.

"Yellow energy is coming in, re-arranging my whole body ..."

"Red energy from earth is coming up my feet and legs. The energy is working to get through the belly, pelvis area. It is stuck there. It's working on it. I'm taking off my clothes at the same time. The energy moves up. It is locked at the top of the head. There's a lid. Red energy is trying to break through it. A wooden lid. I try to get it off with my hands. It needs fire to burn it."

"It's like I'm in a cave and I can expand and then go up to the surface. Energy is working on me, helping my body to be a container. When the energy came up to my head, it opened the lid without force."

"A big cross with a very powerful energy is coming down from the sky.... I'm in the big, big cross. I'm floating in it and it's floating in me. I can feel the energy of the cross within me. It's like it's getting the other energy out [the existing energy of the body] and this energy in. It's totally changing something."

"A person came — Jesus.... He is putting his hands on my right arm and leg healing them. I feel energy from his hands. He wants me to let him in. I'll try."

"Jesus is becoming a part of me and I become bigger, because his field [energy field] is larger. He is still working on different parts of my body, because the vibration of his energy is higher."

"I feel the energy going through a barrier, that I have between my legs and feet."

"Energy is moving from underneath. The goddess says: 'Just go into it.' It is all around me, the different colors and sounds, too. I'm bigger and it is all in my body. I'm slowly expanding. All the water and all the landscapes are in my body. Outer space, too."

"I'm being hooked up to the bigger mind [purple energy] through a spiral — to re-charge my body and mind — to keep myself on that high level."

"There is gold pouring into my body. Light all around too — a white light. I notice that my body is different. Many layers of myself. Not bodies. I don't know what it is."

"Pain in my shoulders and back. Light is entering my whole body — chi or... 'You are not supposed to be scared of the darkness. You are to take in the light.' It feels good in the body. The light will heal me. It feels warm in my whole body. The heavy load on my shoulders is gone."

"Everything is red — a red light. It comes in waves. Into the body, too. It is warm. My body feels more flexible."

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"I'm lying down in the air somehow. I'm big. Yellow energy coming into my body. I don't really experience boundaries of my body. It's really beautiful."

"The intense light is coming over and over again. It creates heat. It is re-fuelling me, charging my batteries."

When the energy/light enters the experience, the body sometimes becomes more tense. As the energy continues to flow, the body relaxes.

"Here is the light again. A warm and comfortable energy. It is a re-fuelling of energy. Oh, what a light! Tension in my back and the jaws. The light is creating the tension. It is not an uncomfortable light. Now I'm relaxed."

"I'm in a green light. It is sometimes changing into blue. It feels warm in the body, like electricity. Especially in the right side of my body. I was tense like hell for a while. It felt like my right leg became longer, but now it is relaxed. It is pulsating in my fingers. It almost hurts. My whole arm is pulsating. It's almost burning.... An intense light. It gives me energy. I feel lighter."

"The light is flowing into my stomach and chest, down into the feet. Electricity. A white, blue, light — blue light. Pretty cold. The body is becoming more stiff. It gives me tension. I'm tense all over. It has changed color now; yellow, golden. Warm and nice. I'm more relaxed. I have had a pressure over my eyes. It is almost gone now. Now the energy is more red. Like a bed of live coal. The intensity is shifting. It's easing the pressure."

"Everything is light. But it felt sad and heavy. It felt like my head was going to explode. I feel it in my head and back. The light can take away the discomfort. The pain disappeared."

2. The energy/light influences the emotions

"Light is entering my whole body — chi or ... Light, like a laser beam, is entering my body. It is cutting away the bitterness. It doesn't work. The light is not giving up. The light is insisting. I have the bitterness in my hand, like a small, shrivelled up orange with eyes. Let's see if he can be happy. It is getting more round. It is not bitter now, mostly surprised. It has become a small child. Someone says, 'It can grow.' The child is happy. I feel confident, peaceful."

"He [Jesus] is putting his hands on my right arm and leg healing them. I feel energy from his hands....Calm and peaceful. It is really me. I feel my body, walking. The reason why I'm so peaceful is that there is nothing in my body stopping the energy — so simple."

"The light is going through me. It feels good. I'm starting to feel calm. The light is going through everything. The heaviness disappears. Calmness in my whole body."

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"Many different kinds of energy are entering me through the head. It melted all the frozen within. It gave me strength. Courage, too — a clear blue light. Trust — a golden light. Peaceful in my body."

"There is a golden light in the room. It feels like I have come home, where I'm supposed to be. I feel a longing. [Rafael, the guide says:] 'You have to give in to your feeling of longing. You can't always let it go.' I experience an inner knowing. It will work out fine."

"I'm in a big hall. Golden light. It is going through my whole body. I feel calm and peaceful. I rest and gain strength."

"Energy... blue, purple and white. I'm wrapped in the colors. White light within me. Now the blue color is entering me. I become calm. Now the purple... spiritual power. Light and calm and purple. Happiness deep into my stomach. Deep happiness, peace. The feeling is growing. Both the happiness and the peace."

"The light is all around me. It feels secure. It is all around. It is not disappearing. It seems like it will stay around me, even when I go back [to an ordinary state of consciousness]. It is there. I just don't see it."

"Here is the light again. A warm and comfortable energy. It is a re-fuelling of energy. Oh, what a light!... Almost a little bit sad. Sadness, melancholy."

3. An expansion of consciousness

"I don't know what happened. She and the man are all energy. The castle is golden. She can sense everything, at the same time she is nothing — particles, vibrations. She is still there, sensing. In a similar way, the castle is there, but it is nothing. Ohhh, I feel what she is feeling — heat, vibrations. Hard to describe. I can see 'the heat'. I'm the heat.... Energy is continuing to flow into my legs and thighs.... I'm in the heat. I am no one and at the same time I am everything."

"I'm just in yellow energy flying — in a different sphere, a different world. It's empty space, very calm and peaceful, above everything. She [the Goddess] is showing me this. I'm alone there, but everything is there at the same time. I become everything.... I don't exist as a person, but I'm still every small particle. I want to know why I'm here. There is energy in waves and I'm part of it — dancing, movement, alive. I feel like I'm ... outside of my body and being everything in the air.... I was sucked into the globe of light. Like 'Now it's time you see it'. It [the force] peeled off everything from me. It feels light. There's nothing left — just empty space. Because there is nothing there stopping anything, energy can just come in.... The force, the energy, was so strong, that everything disappeared. Then again, there is the flow of energy."

"Red energy is coming in through my head. The music is so beautiful. All around me, flowers are starting to grow. Energy is pouring out of my body spreading all around. The energy is Her [the Goddess'] grace. It is now expanding, wide, all over and I'm not really a person anymore. I'm part of the energy."

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"Fire is coming out of the crystal. I was burned up. I don't know what's left. I only see a spiral of energy in the place where I was left. It's moving up and down... a spiral. I guess that's me. There are more spirals like this one. I'm moving with the others. The Goddess is bringing the energy — spiral, me — up into her arms. I can feel the energy in my body, the energy of the spiral. She says, 'You are my mini-spirit. The latest born.' Her immense power made this mini-spirit grow, made my body big and then small, normal again filled up my body. It became stronger when it was filled up. My body is now filled with this divine energy."

"It feels like everything is energy. [The guide says,] 'When it is difficult, come back to this state.' I can come back to this state."

"I am a bubble of light. I'm ascending, becoming like a soap-bubble, but with warm light. It feels good. I don't see where we are going, but I feel secure."

"It is a strength to be a part of the tree. It feels right to be a piece of bark. Now it feels like the light and the tree are one. I'm part of everything. Everything is connected."

4. Further knowledge

"I'm going down to the centre of the earth. I'm being massaged by the energy. The voice [of the red energy spirit] says, 'Just keep centered.' I balance myself. I see red energy going out. Warm energy. Red vibrations. To carry out the mission, I need to be balanced. I need to be there and stay close to myself."

"A light is wrapped around both me [the tree] and the bird. The light says, 'I will take care of both you and the bird.' I need to trust it but I don't have the courage. I know that it can help, but I still don't have the courage. The light says, that I need to ask for help, but I still don't have the courage. I asked the light for help.... Whatever happens, I will have the strength."

"A great light is coming from somewhere. It is telling us, that we can't go on like this. 'Of course, the head needs to be part of it, the heart and the stomach, too.' The head doesn't want to, but it is coming closer, because it has great respect for the light.... The light says, 'For you to be whole, you need all three of them.'"

"I fill up with red energy.... The red energy spirit says, 'Stay in touch with me, otherwise you will burn out.'"

"I am the energy and the channel [in the body]. So I can choose to flow or not. I'm flowing down into myself. I can choose where I'm going to flow down to. I'm learning how to do it. I need to be the energy. Then I can use the energy to go into myself. Then energy will flow there."

"It feels secure at the same time. It is probably because of the light. But it is sad. The light said, 'But I have told you, that I will take care of you. Trust me.' I need to let go."

5. Knowledge about some aspect of life/reality

"I fill up with red energy. I see the beauty. I get it out into the landscape. The music is interconnected with nature. Beauty is the source of everything."

"The music is the energy that makes this process happen, from the base chakra up to the diamond, to the mouth. The music is the energy, movement, that makes this happen. The music is also the diamond. I'm looking for the core of music. I'm waiting and waiting.... I see the energy as a spiral. A red spiral. The music has the shape of a spiral. The music is the spiral."

6. Different qualities of energy

By experiencing the energy/light as deeply as possible, a greater knowing of the specific quality of that energy is sometimes gained.

"The purple energy is the mind power, directing. A strong mind directing this energy to the earth.... It is so intense. It creates upheaval.... It hurts to be re-organized in accordance to the purple, divine mind power."

"Purple all around. She [the Goddess] says, 'It is one of the finest instruments.' Without this organization, there would be no earth, no people or anything. This is the heart of things; earth, systems, organization."

"The energy is very pure. It also has a quality of being like a sword. A wonderful, sharp edge quality."

"I saw the yellow energy and the black energy intertwined. Then I was moving in the black energy. When I expand beyond the black and yellow energy, they become the same. As long as I can expand, they can be the same."

7. A transformation

"The whole cave was blown into pieces. It's no longer dark in the cave. The light did it! We are still in the water. The light is making the old woman curious. She is getting up from the water. The girl is saving me."

"Something special is about to happen. I'm supervising it, making sure everything goes as it is supposed to. People are sitting down, meditating. There is a big cross coming down into the cathedral. A big, yellow cross. I'm taking in the energy. The cathedral is blown to pieces by this power. The cathedral can't hold the power. The energy is spreading throughout the world."

"I see the circle — the sacred space — again. The energy is flowing through. They are holding hands, strengthening the circle even more. The energy becomes so strong. The red

spirit is part of the circle. The boundaries of the rocks went out. So much power! It boomed out, so that the rocks spread all over. They are sitting there without their rocks. They don't need the sacred space any longer."

"Something wants to come out of the egg. A beam of light is going through the egg. The light is working on it, to help it come out. A lot of things are coming out of the egg. Tears."

8. A guide

"Now I'm going down into the earth. There is a tunnel of light. I'm following the light. I'm moving towards dark aspects."

"There is a rock wall down there. The girl is pushing on the wall and it's turning. I begin to follow the light, going faster and faster."

"The light from the last session is entering the pool of water.... She is trying to get on the light.... A yellow path is created. She is riding on the path [light].... In front is a cross. It is the leader of the path."

9. An image holding great meaning for the person

"The energy is transformed into a child. It turns golden. The child becomes one with me — one with my heart."

10. Transforms a part of creation

"I have just been through this totally new organization; my body, other people, every thing on earth. The mind [the purple energy] was that strong and organized itself in the most perfect way. It changed everything completely. I can feel that change in myself and in everything else on earth. I saw earth with a powerful purple energy."

Conclusion

"The Divine calls the soul to the joy of the rising Light" (17)

The combination of relaxation, imagery and music offers a means for inner opening, exploration and transformation to occur. By moving the person towards the depth and core of being, the music opens paths to inner states of Beauty and the touch of the Divine.

In the therapeutic process of GIM, experiences of energy and light were found to influence the traveller in the following ways:

1. The energy/light influences the body.

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2. The energy/light influences the inner state of the person, i.e. the emotions.
3. The person experiences an expansion of consciousness, identifying with the energy/light.
4. The energy/light influences the person to gain further knowledge of him/herself.
5. The energy/light influences the person to gain general knowledge about some aspect of life/reality.
6. The energy influences the person to explore and experience different qualities of energy.
7. The power of the energy/light enters the imagery of the person, and creates a change, a transformation, of his/her experience.
8. The energy/light functions as a guide, bringing the person's process of exploration forward.
9. The energy/light changes into an image, that holds great meaning for the person.
10. The energy/light transforms a part of creation, not only within the traveller, but also externally.

Through the experiences of energy and light, doors into new dimensions were opened for the travellers. Transformation occurred and world views were expanded and, in two cases, radically changed. The beauty, inherent nature and origin of the music provided the space and state for these experiences to be born.

Through grace, our personal paths towards growth and transformation continue to unfold. The Mother's words lead the way:

"Let Thy Light be in me like a Fire that makes all alive; let Thy divine Love penetrate me." (18)

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Marie Carlsson has done her masters in Music therapy and is a practising therapist. She is also a Reiki master.

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Alternative therapies

An interview of Sundarajan by Monica

HEAL THYSELF...

As I move into the depths of my being, guided by the healer to let go of conscious control and let myself descend into the hidden subconscious, I am only aware of the utter sincerity in the voice that guides me. Feeling a 100% trust, I let myself be and soon another sense of being engulfs me. I look at myself in the mirror later and find myself different. A day passes...something has changed. I am not the same person.

What is it that creates this change?

Is it the healer?

Is it him/her who is so strong?

Or is it the trust and resolve with which I walk into the Centre?

There is a certain certitude in me that if there is to be a solution for the body and its ailments, it is to be found here, in alternative therapies. But they are not magicians. There is no magic pill the healer can pop in and I will be healed. It is a process of healing that takes into account who I am in as complete a way as possible. It runs parallel to what I want to be...it is 'holistic' as it involves the whole of me. My instincts and more than anything else, my need for growth into a healthier being, is all an intrinsic part of the process.

The healer and I work together.

This is an interview with one such healer, to try and understand the science of healing. Being an intellectual, I wanted to understand what was happening.

M: *Tell us how the Centre evolved...*

S: This Centre was started in 2003 by Akhilandeshwari and myself. Akhila's father, who was a professor in English, was also an expert in *āsanas*. He was a naturopath and gave homoeopathic medicines to people who needed it. Along with these skills, he helped people around him through counselling to a happier life. So Akhila had wanted to become a healer since childhood.

We were initiated into Reiki by a grandmaster named Shanti, from Switzerland. Then courses in *Prāṇic healing* were introduced by Mr. Krishnan Veerappan. However, my full healing capacities unfolded after a head accident. My mother, who had been a guiding force in my life, had passed away. While driving to the hospital in a two-wheeler in Bangalore, I sustained a head injury that changed me. Hannah, a craniosacral therapist, realigned my spine and also taught me how to do the same for others. I then discovered that I could help other people to heal. Then somebody told us about a method called Neurotherapy that could make the lame walk and the blind see. We were very interested but did not want to leave Puducherry to learn it. So I told my friend, "If the Mother wants me to learn Neurotherapy, a teacher will come

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here". And sure enough, Mr. Ramachandran came. Later, Akhila and I went to learn it from the master himself, Dr. Lajpat Rai Mehra (ND). Dr. Mehra is a remarkable man. He is a natural healer. He has developed a method of pressing certain areas of the body in a particular way to generate life-saving substances that regenerate, replenish and rebalance the body, bringing back health. Through this method, he has managed to relieve symptoms and sufferings in cancer patients, Parkinson's disease, stroke victims and treat certain genetic abnormalities, etc. He has, since we met, visited our Centre in Puducherry many times, to heal people and teach others. We are also working with ozone, crystals, colours, visualisation and hypnotherapy.

The people who came to us initially were those who had not found relief anywhere. Since then, hundreds of cases have passed through the Centre. They have come from Puducherry, other parts of India and abroad. Many return, not for healing any more, but to learn and express their gratitude.

M: *What is your understanding of the body in the light of alternative therapies?*

S: The body is an expression of our inner reality and corresponding emotions. Also, it reflects our inner balance in outer life.

M: *What do you mean by 'inner'?*

S: 'Inner' is whatever we think and feel and which creates chemical changes in the body, affecting its balance and functioning.

M: *Please explain what you mean by 'affecting the balance'!*

S: Our thinking is reactionary. We either react positively or negatively to impacts from our surroundings. Anger, jealousy, domination, revenge... these are classified as negative as they create negative emotions which lead to a hole in the aura (*etheric sheath surrounding the physical body*) of the person. Love, generosity, selflessness, compassion...are positive for they enhance the energy level of the aura and therefore of the body.

M: *How do you view 'disease'?*

S: The word itself means *disease*...not at ease. Not in balance. It means when there is a hole in the aura, the etheric sheath, so there is a gap in the defence mechanism of the body allowing negative formations to enter and *that* creates a disease in the respective organ. Therefore disease is basically a manifestation of negative formations of energy. For example anger or a continuous irritation in the system can create a hole in the aura, especially in the *hārā* line (around the stomach)...a major entry point for any energy.

Have you ever experienced a draining of energy from the stomach? That is energy draining from the *hārā* . When this happens constantly and continuously, erosion

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takes place in the stomach walls and its capacity reduces. This leads to acidity and indigestion.

A healer goes to the inner cause and works on it. This helps the patient to recover. Healers are only facilitators. They make you aware of the cause and help the patient to work it out. But it is important for the patient to *work on him or herself* and change the pattern of thinking. There has to be a 'will to change' in the patient. Then the effect of healing is stronger and long-lasting.

M: *How does the Centre for Alternative Therapies deal with the diseases that people come with?*

S: When a person walks into the clinic with a complaint:

1. We probe to discover the intention of the patient — just how serious is the person to get cured? Curiosity is not encouraged.
2. We engage in dialogue with this person. During the conversation we quietly do a *prāṇic* diagnosis and explore the aura of the person. This tells us more about the patient. Through this we are able to judge whether there is a possibility of healing through us.
3. Once we accept a patient, we decide on the modality of treatment after a conversation with the person. (Hence you can see that the person is always deeply involved in his/her own healing).

M: *What are the various therapies that are offered at the Centre for Alternative Therapies?*

S: We are trained in Craniosacral therapy, Neurotherapy, Hypnotherapy, Reiki, *Prāṇic healing*, Breathing techniques, Visualisation, Quantum touch. Any one or a combination is used for a person. (see Appendix)

Finally, I would like to say that with any system the most important part of the healing process is the will and intention of the healer. If the will and intention is clear, then the healing takes place spontaneously and for that the rapport and trust with the patient are important. The intention is relief for the patient.

Relief also comes through channelling right or positive energies to the patient. This leads them to making correct decisions and to be ready for the healing. It also results in meeting the right doctors for treatment. In essence the mindset of the patient changes and that attracts the right opportunity for healing.

Appendix

Craniosacral therapy

Craniosacral therapy (also called CST, cranial osteopathy, Craniosacral bodywork) is a method of complementary or alternative medicine used by physical therapists, massage therapists, naturopaths, chiropractors and osteopaths. A craniosacral therapy session

involves the therapist placing their hands on the patient, which they believe allows them to tune into what they call the craniosacral system (1). By gently working with the spine, the skull and its cranial sutures, diaphragms and fascia, the restrictions of the nerve passages are eased and the movement of CSF through the spinal cord is optimised. Through this process, it is held that misaligned bones can be restored to their proper position. Craniosacral therapists use this therapy to treat mental stress, neck and back pain, migraines, TMJ Syndrome and chronic pain conditions such as fibromyalgia (2, 3, 4).

History

Cranial osteopathy was originated by a physician, William Sutherland, D.O. (1873-1954), who studied under the founder of osteopathy, Andrew Taylor Still, at the first *American School of Osteopathy* (now *A. T. Still University*) in 1898-1900. While examining a disarticulated skull, Sutherland was struck by the idea that the cranial sutures of the temporal bones where they meet the parietal bones were, “*beveled, like the gills of a fish, indicating articular mobility for a respiratory mechanism* (5).” The idea that the bones of the skull could move was contrary to contemporary anatomical belief.

Sutherland stated that the dural membranes act as ‘guy-wires’ for the movement of the cranial bones, holding tension for the opposite motion. He used the term *reciprocal tension membrane system* (RTM) to describe the three Cartesian axes held in reciprocal tension, or tensegrity, creating a cyclic movement of inhalation and exhalation of the cranium. He called this breathing movement the *primary respiratory mechanism*, and later described its origin as the ‘Breath of Life’ (6), from the *Book of Genesis* (2:7). This was an acknowledgement of the vital force as a fundamental aspect of osteopathic philosophy.

The RTM as described by Sutherland includes the spinal dura, with an attachment to the sacrum. After his observation of the cranial mechanism, Sutherland stated that the sacrum moves synchronously with the cranial bones. Sutherland began to teach this work to other osteopaths from about the 1930s, and tirelessly continued to do so until his death. His work was at first largely rejected by the mainstream osteopathic profession as it challenged some of the closely-held beliefs amongst practitioners of the time.

In the 1940s the *American School of Osteopathy* started a postgraduate course called ‘Osteopathy in the Cranial Field’ directed by Sutherland, and was followed by other schools. This new branch of practice became known as ‘Cranial osteopathy’. As knowledge of this form of treatment began to spread, Sutherland trained more teachers to meet the demand, notably Dr.(s) Viola Frymann, Edna Lay, Howard Lippincott, Anne Wales, Chester Handy and Rollin Becker.

The *Cranial Academy* was established in the US in 1947 and continues to teach DOs, MDs, and dentists “an expansion of the general principles of osteopathy (7)” including a special understanding of the central nervous system and primary respiration.

Towards the end of his life, Sutherland believed that he began to sense a ‘power’ which generated corrections from inside his clients’ bodies without the influence of external

forces applied by him as the therapist. Similar to *Qi* and *Prāṇa*, this contact with what he perceived to be the 'Breath of Life' changed his entire treatment focus to one of spiritual reverence and subtle touch (8). This spiritual approach to the work has come to be known as both 'biodynamic' craniosacral therapy and 'biodynamic' osteopathy, and has had further contributions from practitioners such as Becker and James Jealous (*biodynamic osteopathy*), and Franklyn Sills (*biodynamic craniosacral therapy*). The biodynamic approach acknowledges that embryological forces direct the embryonic cells to create the shape of the body and places importance on recognising these formative patterns for maximum therapeutic benefit, as this enhances the ability of the patient to access their health as an expression of the original intention of their existence.

In 1953 Sutherland established the *Sutherland Cranial Teaching Foundation* as a way of providing continuity for his teaching (9).

From 1975 to 1983, the osteopathic physician, John E. Upledger and neurophysiologist and histologist, Ernest W. Retzlaff worked at *Michigan State University* as clinical researchers and professors. They set up a team of anatomists, physiologists, biophysicists and bioengineers to investigate the pulse he had observed and further study Sutherland's theory of cranial bone movement. Upledger and Retzlaff went on to publish their results, which they interpreted as support for both the concept of cranial bone movement and the concept of a cranial rhythm (10, 11, 12). Later reviews have concluded that there is insufficient support for the principles of craniosacral therapy.

Upledger developed his own treatment style, and when he started to teach his work to a group of students who were not osteopaths, he generated the term 'Craniosacral therapy', based on the corresponding movement between the cranium and sacrum. Craniosacral therapists often (although not exclusively) work more directly with the emotional and psychological aspects of the patient than osteopaths working in the cranial field. The *Upledger Institute*, formed in 1987, has many international affiliates (13), united by Upledger's *International Association of Healthcare Practitioners* (14).

The *Craniosacral Therapy Association of the UK* (CSTA) was established in 1989 to promote and regulate craniosacral therapists from various UK colleges (15). Graduates from the *College of Craniosacral Therapy* who had their own register later became eligible for registration with the CSTA. The *Craniosacral Therapy Association of North America* was founded in 1998 for the recognition, registration, and as a referral service for certified craniosacral therapists and students (16). The *Craniosacral Therapy Association of Australia* was established in 2004 (17).

Neurotherapy

Neurotherapy (NT) is a medicine-less, manipulative, alternative therapy.

Its founder Lajpatrai Mehra believes that the body suffers from ailments because the biochemical balance of acids, alkalies, hormones, enzymes, antigens, antibodies is disturbed in the human system. Neurotherapy restores this disturbed biochemical balance by stimulating the various organs to function normally in order to produce the

required chemicals in optimum quantities. In Neurotherapy, pressure is applied to stop the flow of blood to a specific region of the body mainly with the feet and occasionally with hands for a particular duration (6 seconds to 40 seconds.) and then released, so that blood flows with a greater force to activate or deactivate the correlated nerves/glands/organs. This may be repeated as per the requirements of the patient, so as to maintain homeostasis of the body's biochemical forces, which in turn restores health.

The name 'neurotherapy' was given to this way of treating diseases only in 1976 after years of healing thousands of people since 1943. In 1999 it was renamed as Dr. Lajpatrai Mehra's Neurotherapy to honour him.

Neurotherapy is effective in treating asthma, arthritis, colds, injuries, hormonal imbalances, mental disorders, menstrual disorders, sterility, heart disease, multiple sclerosis, skin, digestive disorders, etc.

The diet and lifestyle have also to be looked after.

The premise

Hormones secreted from the hypothalamus and pituitary act on a specific target endocrine gland. This gland in turn secretes specific hormones. When hormones in the blood reach their desired levels, the hypothalamus and pituitary stop secretion of the corresponding stimulating hormone to that gland. This is known as a 'negative feedback'. The pituitary gland can stimulate all the endocrine glands except the thymus, the parathyroids and the medulla part of the adrenal glands. It controls the thyroids, both the adrenal cortices, ovaries, and the testes. Whenever there is a deficiency of a particular hormone, NT can stimulate the pituitary or hypothalamus to secrete a stimulating hormone for that gland in order to correct the deficiency.

An interesting thing is that every chemical in the body is produced at two or more than two places, so that the person does not die because of deficiency of a particular chemical. For example, 85% of erythropoietin (a hormone that stimulates RBC formation) is produced in the kidneys. Low oxygen in the blood stimulates its production. When both the kidneys do not function properly, the liver starts producing this chemical.

Another interesting physiological fact is that our brain has 100 billion neurons and the spinal cord 100 million neurons. 12 main types of chemicals are secreted by them. If these chemicals are not formed properly, diseases like Parkinson's develop. NT then activates the nervous system of the intestines (*the enteric nervous system*) to compensate for the deficiency.

Maintenance of the acid-base balance is a very important factor in good health. The normal *ph* of the blood is between 7.36 and 7.44. If the digestive system functions normally, the acid-base balance is maintained. In most cases, according to NT, diseases are created by a disturbance of this balance. When it is corrected, the patient gets healed.

Advocates of Neurotherapy believe that a part of the ascending colon is *alkaline* and the portion from the middle of the transverse colon and the descending colon is *acidic*. They also believe that the right kidney *filters 80% alkali and 20% acid* and that the left kidney *filters 80% acid and 20% alkali*. Similarly, it is also assumed that the right ovary *produces progesterone* and the left ovary *produces oestrogen*.

When T-Memory cells of the thymus gland do not work properly, it produces antibodies against the body's own proteins/cells. For example, if the proteins of the synovial membrane of the joints enter the blood, the thymus will form antibodies against these proteins. These antibodies then affect the synovial membrane of the joints and cause arthritis. This is called *autoimmunity*. Allopathic medicine treats this with steroids to suppress the production of antibodies. Neurotherapy acts by stimulating the adrenal cortex to produce the required steroids in the right quantity automatically, and therefore does not have any side-effects.

It is known that 85% of the cholesterol is consumed by the liver for converting it into bile salts for the digestion of fats while 15% of the cholesterol is consumed by the adrenal cortices, ovaries and testes for preparing corticoids, oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone. All the other hormones are glycoprotein or simple protein in nature. It is also known that during the digestion of food, the intestines produce an amino acid called tyrosine which is used to produce Triiodothyronine (T3) and Thyroxine (T4) of the thyroid gland, epinephrine and norepinephrine of the adrenal medulla. Health disorders may occur due to improper digestion and absorption because the patient does not assimilate amino acids, minerals and vitamins from his diet. NT is based on setting of the navel in order to digest the food properly. If digestion and absorption are normal, then there will be no shortage of substrates like essential amino acids, minerals and vitamins and the patient will be relieved of most ailments.

Hypnotherapy

Hypnotherapy is therapy that is undertaken with a subject in hypnosis. The word 'hypnosis' (from the Greek *hypnos*, 'sleep') is an abbreviation of James Braid's (1843) term 'neuro-hypnotism', meaning 'sleep of the nervous system'.

A person who is hypnotised displays certain unusual characteristics and propensities, compared with a non-hypnotised subject, most notably hyper-suggestibility, which some authorities have considered a *sine qua non* of hypnosis. For example, Clark L. Hull, probably the first major empirical researcher in the field, wrote,

"If a subject, after submitting to the hypnotic procedure, shows no genuine increase in susceptibility to any suggestions whatever, there seems no point in calling him hypnotised [...]" (C.L. Hull, *Hypnosis & Suggestion*, 1933: 392).

Hypnotherapy is often applied in order to modify a subject's behaviour, emotional content, and attitudes, as well as a wide range of conditions including dysfunctional habits, anxiety, stress-related illness, pain management, and personal development.

History

Precursors of hypnotherapy have been seen in the sleep temples and mystery religions of ancient Graeco-Roman society, though analogies are often tenuous. Some parallels can be drawn between hypnotism and the trance-inducing rituals common to most preliterate societies.

In the mid-18th century, when Franz Anton Mesmer introduced the concepts and techniques of 'animal magnetism', Mesmerism became an influential school of esoteric therapy and important mesmerists like James Esdaile and John Elliotson helped maintain its popularity in medicine until the end of the 19th century when it experienced a kind of resurgence in the work of Jean-Martin Charcot, the father of modern neurology.

In the 1840s, the Scottish physician James Braid pioneered the concept of hypnotism as an opposing tradition to Mesmerism, based upon basic psychological and physiological mechanisms rather than the occult theories of animal magnetism. Braid's work had limited influence in the UK but in France his ideas were developed into a more sophisticated psychological treatment. Hippolyte Bernheim began as a sceptic but became converted to the importance of hypnotism by observing the work of the celebrated country doctor Ambroise-Auguste Liébeault who rejected the theory of Mesmer and followed Abbé Faria. Emile Coué, a former clinical assistant to Liébeault, proposed a more collaborative and educational alternative to hypnosis called 'conscious autosuggestion' which became very popular as a form of self-help in the 1920s.

In the mid to late 1880s the American medical surgeon-physician, Rufus Osgood Mason supported the idea of the use of hypnosis for 'Therapeutic Applications', and wrote articles and authored a book on this as a concept. He was also a supporter of early parapsychology and psychical research.

An important rivalry and debate developed between the Salpêtrière school of Charcot, which focused on physiological phenomena induced by Mesmeric practices, and the Nancy school of Bernheim which placed more emphasis upon psychology and verbal suggestion, following the later writings of Braid. However, Charcot's ideas on hypnosis were almost entirely discredited and Bernheim's school effectively won the debate, becoming the most significant precursor of modern psychological hypnotism.

Sigmund Freud was originally a proponent of hypnotherapy. He travelled to France to study hypnosis with the two great teachers of his day: Charcot at the Salpêtrière and Bernheim. Freud wrote several articles on hypnotherapy and translated two of Bernheim's books on the subject from French into German. He originally employed hypnotherapy with a small number of clients in the 1890s. By about 1905, he had largely abandoned the procedure in favour of his newly-developed 'free association' or 'talking' technique. However, Freud's description of the basic rule of free association still bears a striking resemblance to certain modern methods of hypnotic induction. Struggling with the great expense of time required for psychoanalysis to be successful, Freud later suggested that it might be combined with hypnotic suggestion once more in an attempt to hasten the outcome of treatment:

“It is very probable, too, that the application of our therapy to numbers will compel us to alloy the pure gold of analysis plentifully with the copper of direct suggestion.” (S. Freud, *Lines of Advance in Psychoanalytic Therapy*, 1919).

Evidence for hypnotherapy

In 1892, the *British Medical Association* (BMA) commissioned a team of doctors to undertake an extensive evaluation of the nature and effects of hypnotherapy. They reported,

“The Committee, having completed such investigation of hypnotism as time permitted, have to report that they have satisfied themselves of the genuineness of the hypnotic state.” (*British Medical Journal*, 1892). They added,

“The Committee are of opinion that as a therapeutic agent hypnotism is frequently effective in relieving pain, procuring sleep, and alleviating many functional ailments [i.e., psycho-somatic complaints and anxiety disorders].” (Ibid.)

This report was approved by the general council of the BMA, thereby forming BMA policy and rendering hypnotherapy a form of ‘orthodox’, as opposed to complementary or alternative, medicine.

Subsequent research on hypnotherapy has tended to highlight three main areas in which its efficacy as a treatment has been demonstrated,

1. Anxiety.
2. Insomnia.
3. Pain management.
4. Psychosomatic disorders, i.e., stress-related illness.

Hypnotherapy has many other applications but research into its effectiveness has tended to focus upon these issues. More mixed results have been obtained for its efficacy in relation to the treatment of addictions, an area where high relapse is found common with most treatments.

In 1955 the *Psychological Medicine Group* of the BMA commissioned a subcommittee, led by Prof. T. Ferguson Rodger, to deliver a second, and more comprehensive, report on hypnosis. The subcommittee consulted several experts on hypnosis from various fields, including the eminent neurologist Prof. W. Russell Brain, and the psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion. After two years of study and research, its final report was published in the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ), under the title ‘Medical use of Hypnotism’. The terms of reference were:

“To consider the uses of hypnotism, its relation to medical practice in the present day, the advisability of giving encouragement to research into its nature and application, and the lines upon which such research might be organised.” (*British Medical Journal*, 1955)

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This was a much more thorough and extensive report and constituted one of the most significant documents in the history of hypnotherapy research. With regard to efficacy, it concluded from a systematic review of available research that,

“The Subcommittee is satisfied after consideration of the available evidence that hypnotism is of value and may be the treatment of choice in some cases of so-called psycho-somatic disorder and *Psychoneurosis*. It may also be of value for revealing unrecognised motives and conflicts in such conditions. As a treatment, in the opinion of the Subcommittee it has proved its ability to remove symptoms and to alter morbid habits of thought and behaviour [...]”

“In addition to the treatment of psychiatric disabilities, there is a place for hypnotism in the production of anaesthesia or analgesia for surgical and dental operations, and in suitable subjects it is an effective method of relieving pain in childbirth without altering the normal course of labour.” (‘Medical use of hypnosis’, *British Medical Journal*, April 1955)

Soon afterwards, in 1958, the *American Medical Association* (AMA) commissioned a similar (though more terse) report which endorses the 1955 BMA report and concludes,

“That the use of hypnosis has a recognized place in the medical armamentarium and is a useful technique in the treatment of certain illnesses when employed by qualified medical and dental personnel.” (‘Medical use of hypnosis’, *JAMA*, 1958)

Again, the *AMA council* approved this report rendering hypnotherapy an orthodox treatment,

“The *Reference Committee on Hygiene, Public Health, and Industrial Health* approved the report and commended the *Council on Mental Health* for its work. The *House of Delegates* adopted the Reference Committee report.” [...] (AMA Proceedings, *JAMA*, September 1958: 57)

In 1995 the *National Institute for Health* (NIH) in the US, established a Technology Assessment Conference that compiled an official statement entitled ‘Integration of Behavioral & Relaxation Approaches into the Treatment of Chronic Pain & Insomnia’. This is an extensive report that includes a statement on the existing research in relation to hypnotherapy for chronic pain. It concludes that:

“The evidence supporting the effectiveness of hypnosis in alleviating chronic pain associated with cancer seems strong. In addition, the panel was presented with other data suggesting the effectiveness of hypnosis in other chronic pain conditions, which include irritable bowel syndrome, oral mucositis [pain and swelling of the mucus membrane], temporomandibular disorders [jaw pain], and tension headaches.” (NIH, 1995)

Indian restriction

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, vide its letter no. R.14015/25/96-

U&H(R) (Pt.) dated 25 November 2003, has very categorically stated that hypnotherapy is a recognised mode of therapy in India to be practiced by only appropriately trained personnel.

Some techniques

Age regression — by returning to an earlier ego-state, the patient can regain qualities they once had, but have lost. Remembering an earlier, healthier, ego-state can increase the patients' strength and confidence.

Revivification — remembering past experiences can contribute to therapy. For example, the hypnotist may ask, "have you ever been in trance?" and then find it easier to revive the previous experience than attempt inducing a new state.

Guided imagery — a method by which the subject is given a new relaxing and beneficial experience.

Parts therapy — a method pioneered by Charles Tebbetts to identify conflicting parts that are damaging the wellbeing of clients; then help those parts negotiate with each other through the therapist to bring about a resolution.

Confusion — a method developed by Milton H. Erickson in which the subject is more likely to be receptive to indirect suggestion due to an altered state of confusion.

Repetition — the more an idea is repeated the more likely it is to be accepted and acted upon by the patient.

Direct suggestion — suggesting directly , "You feel safe and secure".

Indirect suggestion — using an 'interspersal' technique and other means to cause effect.

Mental state — people are more receptive when relaxed, sleeping or in a trance.

Hypnoanalysis — the client recalls moments from his/her past, confronting them and releasing associated emotions; similar to psychoanalysis.

Post-hypnotic suggestion — a suggestion is conveyed after the trance has ended. "When you re-awaken you will feel refreshed and happy!"

Visualisation — being told to imagine or visualise a desired outcome seems to make it more likely to actually occur.

S: Generally our day-to-day activities are governed by past impressions which are recorded in our subconscious memory. To change the patterns of our lives, we have to change our past impressions. We have to reach down to the subconscious and change the mindset. At the *Centre for Alternative Therapies*, the healer mediates and creates a connection between the higher self and the disturbing patterns in the patient. Where the patient participates is in his ability to face those fears that splurge up as a result. Thereby he allows himself to be healed in the disturbing part.

Reiki

Mikao Usui originated Reiki in 1922 after a twenty-one day retreat on Mount Kurama, involving meditation, fasting and prayer (18). Usui said that by mystical revelation he had gained the knowledge and spiritual power to apply and attune others to what is called Reiki.

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In April 1922, Usui moved to Tokyo and founded the *Usui Reiki Ryoho Gakkai* (*Usui Reiki Healing Society*) (19).

Usui was an admirer of the literary works of Emperor Meiji, and, in the process of developing his Reiki system, summarised some of the emperor's works into a set of ethical principles, which later became known as the Reiki Principles — *Gokai* in Japanese. Many Reiki teachers and practitioners aim to abide by these five principles (20), one translation of which is:

“The secret method of inviting good fortune,

The marvellous medicine for all sickness,

Just for today:

Do not be angry

Do not worry

Be grateful

Work with integrity

Be kind to others.

Every morning and every night, sit in the Gassho position [hands held palm-to-palm] and speak these words out loud in your heart.

For the evolution of body and soul, Usui Reiki Ryoho(21).”

Usui taught over 2,000 students to use Reiki. Sixteen of his students continued their training to reach the *Shinpiden* level, equivalent to the Western third degree, or master level (22). Usui died in 1926.

After Usui's death, Chujiro Hayashi, a former student of Usui, left the *Usui Reiki Ryoho Gakkai* and formed his own association. Hayashi simplified the Reiki teachings, stressing physical healing and using a more codified and simpler set of Reiki techniques (23).

Hayashi initiated and trained Hawayo Takata (24), who travelled widely in the USA, practising Reiki and teaching the first two levels to others (25).

Takata stressed the importance of charging money for Reiki treatments and teachings. In 1976, Takata began teaching the *Shinpiden* stage and introduced the term *Reiki master* for this level (26). She also fixed a price of \$10,000 for the master training.

Takata died in 1979 (27), by which time she had trained 22 Reiki masters (28). Almost all Reiki taught outside Japan can be attributed to her work (29).

Teachings

Reiki teachings claim that there is an inexhaustible, universal 'life-force' or 'spiritual energy' (30, 31) that can be used to induce a healing effect (32). Believers say that anyone can gain access to this energy (33) by means of an *attunement* process (34) carried out by a Reiki master (35).

Reiki is described by adherents as a holistic therapy which brings about healing on physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels (36). The belief is that the energy will

flow through the practitioner's hands whenever the hands are placed on, or held near a potential recipient, who is clothed (37). Some teachings stress the importance of the practitioner's *intention* or presence in this process, while others claim that the energy is drawn by the recipient's injury to *activate or enhance the natural healing processes* (38). Going further, there is a belief that the energy is 'intelligent' (39), making diagnosis unnecessary.

A second level of training, including another initiation, is said to equip the practitioner to perform Reiki treatments from a distance (40). This method, it is stated, involves the use of special symbols to form a temporary connection between the practitioner and recipient, regardless of location, and then to send the Reiki energy (41). Techniques are also taught whereby Reiki can be sent to a specific point in time, either in the past or the future (42).

Practice

Whole body treatment

In a typical whole-body Reiki treatment (43), the practitioner asks the recipient to lie down, usually on a massage table, and relax. Loose, comfortable clothing is usually worn during the treatment. The practitioner might take a few moments to enter a calm or meditative state of mind and mentally prepare for the treatment (44) that is usually carried out without any unnecessary talking (45).

The treatment proceeds with the practitioner placing his hands on the recipient in various positions. However, practitioners may use a non-touching technique, where the hands are held a few centimeters away from the recipient's body, for some or all of the positions. The hands are usually kept still for 3 to 5 minutes before moving to the next position. Overall, the hand positions usually give a general coverage of the head, the front and back of the torso, the knees and feet. Between 12 and 20 positions are used, with the whole treatment lasting 45 to 90 minutes (46).

Some practitioners use a fixed set of hand positions. Others use their intuition to guide them as to where treatment is needed (47), sometimes starting the treatment with a 'scan' of the recipient to find such areas. The intuitive approach might also lead to individual positions being treated for much shorter or longer periods of time.

It is reported that the recipient often feels warmth or tingling in the area being treated, even when a non-touching approach is being used. A state of deep relaxation, combined with a general feeling of wellbeing, is usually the most noticeable immediate effect of the treatment, although emotional releases can also occur (48). As the Reiki treatment is said to be stimulating natural healing processes, instantaneous 'cures' of specific health problems are *not* usually observed. A series of three or more treatments, typically at intervals of 1 to 7 days, are usually recommended if a chronic condition is being addressed (49). Regular treatments, on an ongoing basis, can be used with the aim of maintaining wellbeing. The interval between such treatments is typically in the range of 1 to 4 weeks, except in the case of *self-treatment* when daily practice is required (50).

Localised treatment

Localised Reiki treatments involve the practitioner's hands being held on or near a *specific* part of the body. Recent injuries are usually treated in this way (51), with the site of injury being targeted. There is great variation in the duration of such treatments, though 20 minutes might be typical.

Some practitioners use localised treatments for certain ailments, and some publications have tabulated appropriate hand positions (52). However, other practitioners prefer to use the whole body treatment for all chronic conditions, on the grounds that it has a more holistic effect (53). Another approach is to give a whole body treatment first, followed by localised treatment (54).

Training

The teaching of Reiki outside Japan is commonly divided into three levels, or degrees (55).

First degree

The first degree Reiki course (56) teaches the basic theories and procedures. Four 'attunements' are given to the student by the teacher (57). Students learn hand placement positions on the recipient's body that are thought to be most conducive to the process in a whole body treatment (58). Having completed the first degree course, the participant can treat himself and others with Reiki. The course duration is typically two days, although this varies widely (59).

Second degree

In the second degree Reiki course (60), the student learns the use of three symbols which are said to enhance the strength and distance over which the effect can be exerted (61). Another attunement is given, which is said to further increase the capacity for Reiki to flow through the student, as well as empowering the use of the symbols (62). Having completed the second level, the student can work without being physically present with the recipient (63). The three symbols taught at level 2 are as follows: *Cho Ku Rei*, a symbol used to increase the power of the healing; *Sei Hei Ki*, a symbol generally used for emotional healing; and *Hon Sha Ze Sho Nen*, a symbol used for distance healing. These symbols have other uses, but these are the primary uses taught today.

Third degree or master training

Through the third degree, or 'master training' (64), the student becomes a Reiki Master. (In Reiki terminology, the word 'master' does not imply spiritual enlightenment.) One or more attunements are carried out and the student learns a further master-level symbol (65). Having completed the master training, the new Reiki master can attune other people to Reiki and teach the three degrees of Reiki. The duration of the master training can be anything from a day to a year or more, depending on the school and philosophy of the Reiki master giving the training.

Variations

There is much variation in training methods, speed and costs. There is no accreditation body for Reiki, or any regulation of the practice. Reiki courses can even be taken over

the Internet. Some traditionalists maintain that any method that teaches Reiki 'quickly' cannot yield as strong an effect, because there is no substitute for experience and patient mastery of the art (66).

Scientific research

The strongest research conducted as of 2008 has failed to demonstrate that Reiki is an effective treatment for any condition. This systematic review assessed this evidence base, finding nine studies which fit their selection criteria (67). A modified *Jadad score* of methodological quality was used, taking into account the difficulty of blinding practitioners. Non-randomised studies were excluded and, as the potential for intentional or unintentional bias in such studies was large, the results were rendered uninterpretable. Overall, the methodological quality of the evidence base was found wanting, with even high-ranking studies failing fully to control for placebo effects and most studies suffering "methodological flaws such as small sample size, inadequate study design and poor reporting(68)." As trials with such flaws are known to be likely to show exaggerated treatment effects, there is insufficient evidence to indicate that Reiki is effective as sole or adjuvant therapy for any medical condition, or that it has any benefits beyond possible placebo effects (69, 70).

Benefits

- . Heals cause and eliminates effect of the imbalance.
- . Does not conflict with religious beliefs.
- . Is an alternative, natural healing and helping method.
- . Can be combined with other healing methods.
- . Minimises feelings of helplessness when faced with a crisis situation.
- . Releases accumulated daily stress.
- . Lasts a lifetime.
- . Promotes from within qualities of loving, caring, growing, compassion, trusting, self-actualising, goodwill, peace and serenity.
- . Is an intelligent energy which goes to the areas of greatest need.
- . Reiki starts to flow when you touch something: it's always on.

Prāṇic healing

Prāṇic healing is an ancient science and art that has been adapted and systematised by the founder of modern Prāṇic healing, Choa Kok Sui. It has been used to heal countless people. The principle is simple. We know that every living being possesses the inborn ability to heal itself. Prāṇic healing simply enhances this healing process by utilising the energy of life. This energy is called '*Prāṇa*' (life-force) in Sanskrit.

For those who are on a quest for spirituality, Prāṇic healing can help too. Prāṇic healing goes beyond just mental or physical or even emotional healing. It provides the right training and scope for those who are interested in spiritual practices, and offers a structured platform for achieving illumination through soul-realisation and later, God realisation.

To promote health and the knowledge of PrDKic healing, 17 *Pranic Healing Foundations* have been set up in 10 states across India along with active Pranic Healers Associations and Pranic Healing Centres in many other states. All *Pranic Healing Foundations* in India are affiliated to the *All India Yoga Vidya Pranic Healing Foundations Trust*, which was set up in Bangalore in 1996 by Master Choa Kok Sui.

The *All India Yoga Vidya Pranic Healing Foundations Trust* is in turn linked to the *World Pranic Healing Foundation, Inc.* in Manila, Philippines — the organisation that oversees the promotion of PrDKic healing throughout the developing world.

Breathing techniques

There is a saying that goes, 'Life is breath and breath is life'. So long as there is breath in the body there is life.

Our physical health, mental balance and emotional stability are all affected by the manner in which we breathe. When we breathe well our respiratory system works at its best, by using the full capacity of our lungs. There is a remarkable improvement in digestive, circulation and eliminative process. This improves our state of mind and physically we feel better. The quality of breathing also affects the functioning of all the systems of the body and the quality of life.

Improper breathing is the root cause of a number of illnesses. People get habituated to their usual breathing, become droopy and lazy which they consider as normal. Good breathing techniques have many benefits. A good breath is slow, full, deep and rhythmic. It:

- . Improves the sleep pattern
- . Aids in calming the mind, nerves and emotion.
- . Improves all mental processes including concentration and memory.
- . Releases tension.
- . Supplies more oxygen to the body cells and so the blood is purified.
- . Helps to overcome tiredness and rejuvenate energy.

When we breathe in or inhale, oxygen is absorbed in. As we breathe out or exhale waste-products are thrown out in the form of carbon dioxide.

Prāṇāyāma and clinical breathing exercises are used for different diseases.

Visualisation

Creative visualisation refers to the practice of seeking to affect the outer world via changing one's thoughts (71). Creative visualisation is the basic technique underlying positive thinking (72) and is frequently used by athletes to enhance their performance (73, 74). The concept originally arose in the US with the nineteenth century 'New

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Thought' movement. One of the first to practice the technique of creative visualisation was Wallace Wattles (1860–1911), who wrote *The Science of Getting Rich* (75).

It is a tool anyone can use to help foster healing. By providing positive pictures (creative imagery) and self-suggestion, visualisation can change emotions that subsequently have a physical effect on the body.

One can create every positive feeling through right visualisation. This may help in providing relief. Sounds simple, but does it work? Can what we think actually have an effect on healing?

Bodies do react to the thoughts we have. Our psychological/emotional state affects the endocrine system. For example, the emotion of fear is related to adrenaline. If no feeling of fear exists, there is no adrenaline and the same applies in reverse — no adrenaline, no fear. They work in relationship to each other. Wherever a thought goes, there is a body chemical reaction.

Quantum touch

“Perhaps one of the most important lessons he teaches us is that everyone has the innate ability to help himself and others. It is not the ‘practitioner’ who is the healer, but the person receiving the energy. Only we can heal ourselves, just as only we can digest our own food.”

— Richard

Gordon

Everything vibrates. When two things vibrate at different frequencies, there is a tendency for the vibrations to come together. Most often, the slower vibration will rise to match the faster frequency. There are many kinds of examples of entrainment: over time, similarly tuned electric oscillators will match frequencies; disembodied animal hearts when placed near each other and kept alive in a lab will all beat in unison; and when women share a dormitory, over months they will often start menstruating at the same time.

Quantum touch uses resonance and entrainment to facilitate healing. The practitioner learns to raise his or her vibration and create a high level of energy. If that energy-field is placed around an area of pain, stress, inflammation or disease, that part of the body will entrain to the higher frequency and allow one's own biological intelligence to do whatever healing it deems necessary.

When the practitioner holds a high vibrational field of life-force energy around an affected area, she or he facilitates healing through the process of resonance and entrainment.

Quantum touch actually provides healing energy for the practitioner as well as for the person seeking healing. Using Quantum touch breathing and body awareness exercises, the practitioner can hold an extraordinarily high vibration, influencing the person in

need of healing to match the vibration of the practitioner. The practitioner will not become drained from doing the work. Most often, the practitioner feels emotionally uplifted as a result!

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The Gift of Healing

Barbara Ann Brennan

Editor's note:

This passage, taken from the book 'Light Emerging', speaks of the why and how of illness as seen from the energetic perspective. Barbara Ann Brennan, following an advanced degree in atmospheric physics from the University of Wisconsin, worked as a research scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. Trained in bioenergetic and core energetic therapy at the Institute for Psychophysical Synthesis and at the Community of the Whole Person in Washington. Her first book, 'Hands of Light', is recognised as one of the primary texts for alternative healing in our time.

The gift of healing rests within everyone. It is not a gift given only to a few. It is your birthright as much as it is mine. Everyone can receive healing and everyone can learn to heal. Everyone can give healing to themselves and to others.

You already give yourself healing, even though you may not call it that. What is the first thing you do when you hurt yourself? You usually touch the hurt part of your body. You may even grab it to help stop the pain. This physical instinct also sends healing energy to the hurt part. If you relax and keep your hands on the injury longer than you normally would, you will find an even deeper healing taking place. Every mother touches, holds, kisses or caresses her children when they are in pain. She does the same for her other loved ones. If you take these simple reactions and begin to study them, you will find that when you touch someone whom you love very much, there will be a stronger effect than if you are touching someone you don't know. Most likely you have given your touch a special essence — the essence of the love you have for that person. You see you knew healing all the time but were unaware of it.

When you are joyful, happy, energized or in any other kind of good mood, your touch will be more pleasant to others than when you are in a bad mood. The energy within a bad mood touch is not the same as that within a joyous one. How you are in any given moment is expressed through your energy. When you learn to regulate your moods and therefore the nature of your energy and your energy flow, you will soon be using your energy for healing. That is what healers do. They simply learn to perceive and regulate their energy in order to utilize it for healing.

These personal everyday experiences, which I'm sure have taken place since we were cave dwellers, have grown into the basis of laying on of hands healing. It has been around as long as there have been human beings. The ancients were aware of healing power coming from hands. Each culture explored and utilized this power from within the framework of its knowledge and traditions. In his book, *Future Science*, John White lists ninety-seven different cultures over the face of the globe, each of which has its own

name to refer to the healing or life energy fields. Life energy fields have been known in China and India for over five thousand years.

I call the life energy that surrounds and interpenetrates everything the universal energy field or UEF. I call the life energy associated with human beings the human energy field or HEF. It is more commonly known as the human aura.

Perceiving and regulating the HEF

Many people can perceive the human energy field and everyone can learn how to perceive it. In fact, we already do so — maybe not consciously, maybe disregarding it or maybe calling it something else. For example, you know when someone is staring at you when you are not looking because you feel it; or you immediately like a stranger to whom you are introduced and know that you will get along fine; or you have a vague sense that something good is going to happen and it does. You are sensing the human energy field with the use of what I call Higher Sense Perception (HSP). HSP simply refers to our senses expanded beyond the normal ranges we are used to, sometimes referred to as the sixth sense. Other terms used for this ability are: clairvoyance or being able to see meaningful things others cannot; clairsaudience or being able to hear things others cannot; and clairsentience or being able to feel things others cannot.

I have been developing, studying and utilizing HSP for many years. I have found more specific ways to differentiate between the types of HSP. It includes all our normal five senses — sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell — as well as additional senses. One of these senses, our intuition, is a vague sense of knowing, such as knowing that something good is going to happen but you don't know what it is. Another example of intuition is when you know someone is going to call — you may even know who it is — but you don't know exactly what it is about.

Another of these senses is what I call direct knowing. This sense gives us complete and specific direct information. For example, we know a certain person is going to call, when they are going to call and what they are going to say. Or, if asked a question about something that we think we know nothing about, we know both the overall concept and the specifics of the answer. Usually with direct knowing, we don't know how we know the information. We simply know it.

Another higher sense is our ability to sense our own and each other's emotions. We know what each other is feeling, even though we may not communicate it in words. We simply pick up the energy of the other person's feelings.

I distinguish between the sense of feelings and the sense of love. So another high sense is our ability to sense love. Sensing love includes a much deeper connectedness to others than does the sensing of the other emotions. It is in a category of its own.

In addition to our five senses of sight, sound, taste, smell and touch, we have intuition, direct knowing, the sense of emotions and the sense of love. When all of these senses function, we are able to become fully aware of being here now.

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Our senses serve our awareness and our awareness brings us into the present. Being in the present is an experience that many people achieve through meditation. This state of being is a doorway out of the bounds of time and space that limit us. Meditation quiets and clears the mind for high sensitivity.

HSP rests within the range of very subtle information that our brains normally filter out as unimportant. Consider the analogy of listening to music. When the music is loud, it is more difficult to hear the softer notes within it. If you turn down the volume, the softer notes and subtler nuances become meaningful. You can hear rhythms within the rhythms. The same is true of HSP and the human energy field. You can learn to turn down the internal noise in your head and pay attention to the softer rhythms and subtler nuances of life. When you practice this for some time, you find that these subtler rhythms are the foundations of your moment-to-moment experience of life itself. They are connected to the powerful life energy with which we all function.

Put your hand on your child's knee next time he or she bumps it. Let yourself feel your love for your child. Your hand will get hot. Why? Because the healing energy of your energy field is flowing from your hand and helping the knee heal. You will feel the healing energy as heat, pulses or an electric like tingling. This type of perception is called the kinesthetic sense. You are perceiving the human energy field kinesthetically, through touch.

Since you can perceive the human energy field, you can learn to interact with it and regulate it with your intent. Try changing the energy flow through your body by following these instructions. You can do it next time you feel tired or strained.

Lie down and imagine the nice pleasant sun inside the solar plexus (stomach area) of your body. Pretty soon, you will feel much better and your stomach will feel warm. Probably even your breathing will slow down as you begin to relax more. If you want to expand this relaxation to include your spirit, remember a wonderful religious or spiritual experience you have had, perhaps as a child. Remember that special, wonderful time when you knew that God (whatever that means personally to you) existed and that being alive was a most natural and holy experience — so natural that it wasn't a concern. You didn't give God a second thought. Let yourself float into that experience and be held peacefully in the arms of the Creator. By doing this, you have changed your energy flow. You have put yourself into a powerful healing state. Feel your energy now. Do you like it?

The relaxed healing state you feel corresponds to your energy field as it becomes more coherent, as well as to a slowing down of your brain waves. They can be measured with an electroencephalograph or EEG. It will probably show that your brain is in alpha rhythm, about 8 Hz or cycles per second, which is known to be a healing state. A magnetic field detector would show that your energy field is pulsating at 7.8 to 8 Hz. This is a very natural energy state for everyone.

Most likely, as a child, in a very natural unplanned way, you let yourself go fully into whatever was at hand. That is what you still do, in those wonderful moments of creative

abandon when you have given over to the life energy that flows out of you from an internal source. Then the colors are brighter, the tastes sweeter, the air more fragrant and sounds around you create a symphony. You are not the exception; everyone has these experiences.

Perhaps your best ideas come when you are not even thinking about a solution to a problem. You're trekking in the woods or watching a beautiful sunset and suddenly it's there. It has emerged from deep within you. Or you look into the eyes of a tiny baby and see wonder and you are filled with the wonder of the mystery of life. Again, the feelings have emerged from deep within you. They have come from a deep inner fountain that I call the central core of your being. It is from this deep inner source that your light emerges. It is your divine inner spark.

Tapping the creative healing energies

All people can learn to tap into this deeper source within them. It takes practice to release the creative energies at will. The process is more one of getting inner obstacles out of the way than one of pulling up the creative energies. Once the blocks are gone, creativity flows up from deep inside like an artesian well. Any artist or writer knows the struggle to get over the creative or writer's block. Once the block is cleared, the painting or writing flows like a stream. It happens to scientists trying to solve problems. All the data are put into the rational mind. The rational mind struggles to find the answer but cannot. After a good sleep, some dreams and some right-brain activity, the answer is simply there. The creative force has been released by an internal process of letting go, getting out of the way and allowing energy to flow.

The creative force is also released in times of crisis. It is then that we walk into the heroic. Everyone has heard of great feats being accomplished under crisis conditions, like a man lifting a car off a loved one after an accident. Or the mother who gets a strong urge to return home and arrives in time to save her children from danger.

The release of this creative force brings us to mastery in whatever is at hand. The process of healing is a process of releasing our creative force for the mastery of health and well-being. In fact, from my point of view and as we shall see in this book, much of illness is a result of blocking the natural flow of an individual's creative energies.

Why we block our creative energy

As we go through the painful experiences of our lives, we automatically try not to feel the pain. We have done this since childhood. We cut off our physical pain by withdrawing our consciousness from the part of our body that is in pain. We cut off our mental and emotional anguish by tensing our muscles and repressing it into our unconscious. To keep it depressed in the unconscious (or sometimes just below the level of our conscious awareness), we create all kinds of distractions in our lives that take our attention away from it. We may keep ourselves very busy and become workaholics. Or we take the opposite route to couch-potato heaven. Lots of us become addicted to drugs, cigarettes, chocolate or alcohol. Many of us become addicted to being perfect, to being

the best or the worst. We project our problems onto someone else and worry about them rather than trying to solve our own problems. We either misdirect or depress great amounts of energy in order to keep ourselves from feeling pain, including what we feel in the moment and being who we are in the moment. We think it works. We think that we can get away with not feeling or being who we are, but it doesn't work. The price is great, but we even deny that there is a price. The price is our life.

We think the only possible way to stop all this pain is to stop the energy flow that contains the pain. There are specific energy flows that contain physical pain, emotional pain and mental pain. Unfortunately, this energy flow also contains everything else. Pain is only part of it. When we stop the negative experience of pain, anger or fear of any negative situation, we also stop the positive experience, including the physical, emotional and mental aspects of that experience.

We may not even be aware of this process, because by the time we have reached the age of reason, we do it habitually. We wall off our wounds. By walling off our wounds, we also wall off our connection to our deeper center or core. Since the creative process comes from the creative core within us, we have also walled off our creative process. We have literally walled off the deeper part of ourselves from our conscious awareness and our exterior life.

Frozen psychic time conglomerates

The pain we have repressed started very early in our childhood, many times even before birth, in the womb. Each time since early childhood when we stopped the flow of energy in a painful event, we froze that event in both energy and time. That is what we call a block in our auric field. Since the auric field is composed of energy-consciousness, a block is frozen energy-consciousness. The part of our psyche associated with that event also froze in the moment we stopped the pain. That part of our psyche remains frozen until we thaw it out. It does not mature as we do. If the event happened when we were one year old, that part of our psyche is still age one.

It will continue to be one year old and act as a one-year-old person when evoked. It will not mature until it is healed by getting enough energy into the block to thaw it and initiate the maturation process.

We are full of such energy-consciousness time blocks. How long, in any given day, does one human being act out of the adult self? Not long. We are continually interacting with each other from different frozen psychic time blocks. In any intense interaction, in one minute each person could be experiencing reality with the inner adult and in the next, either or both people could have switched to an aspect of the wounded child of a particular age. This constant switching from one aspect of internal consciousness to another is what makes communication so difficult.

A powerful aspect of such frozen psychic time blocks is that they coagulate together according to like energy, forming a frozen psychic time conglomerate. For example, the energy may be of the nature of abandonment. Consider a man in middle-age named Joe.

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(He's really a fictional character, but his story illustrates those of many people I've worked with. To illustrate what happens at birth and can continue to build throughout life, I'm going to use Joe throughout this chapter. He could be any of us).

When Joe was born, he was disconnected from his mother because she had a rough time in labor and was given anesthesia. He was separated again when he was a one-year-old and his mother went to the hospital to have another baby. From these two life experiences, the child, who loves his mother very much, expects abandonment from the one he loves most. Whenever any degree of abandonment happens later in life, it is experienced with the same force of devastation as the first time.

From such deep trauma, we form an image conclusion. An image conclusion is based on experience — in this case, the experience of abandonment. It is based on child's logic that states, "If I love, I will be abandoned." This image conclusion then colors all similar situations. Obviously, one-year-old Joe is not conscious of having such an opinion. Instead, it is unconsciously held in his belief system and is carried throughout life. In terms of the psyche, the two early events also directly connect to an event when Joe was ten and his mother left on vacation. When any similar event occurs in his life, his reaction will be from the standpoint of the image conclusion rather than the immediate situation. This causes all kinds of emotional reactions that are over exaggerated given the present situation.

As we will see in later chapters, our image conclusions initiate our personal behavior, which actually tends to re-create traumas similar to the original one. Thus, Joe would have a lot to do with creating a situation where, for example, he is abandoned by a wife or girlfriend. His actions, based on his unconscious negative expectations, have helped set up the situation. Since he unconsciously expects to be abandoned, he will treat his wife or girlfriend like someone who would abandon him. He may place excessive demands on her to prove her love or even accuse her of planning to abandon him. This unconscious behavior will provoke her and actually help push her out the door. The real, deeper issue is that in treating himself as if he deserved to be abandoned, he has actually abandoned himself.

As we shall see, we should never under-estimate the power of our image conclusions. Finding our images holds the key to the transformation process into health and happiness. We are full of such images, around which our frozen psychic time conglomerates assemble. We all have a lot of clearing to do.

Frozen psychic time blocks coagulate around like energy that composes an image, which confuses someone who thinks these experiences should be as separate emotionally as they are in time. It doesn't work that way. Each smaller segment of the frozen psychic time conglomerate is composed of the energy-consciousness that was frozen during a particular past experience. But like experiences are directly connected no matter how much time may have elapsed between them.

Through healing work, one of the small frozen psychic time blocks is released. The increased energy released into the auric field then, in turn, automatically starts releasing

the other, small segments of the time conglomerate because they are of like energy. Going back to Joe's story, as each time block is released, he experiences it as if it were happening to him right now. Thus, he may be experiencing pain from when he was thirty years old and as soon as that pain is released, he suddenly finds himself to be ten years old. Soon the ten-year-old becomes a one-year-old.

Once these pieces of the human psyche that have not matured with the rest of the personality are released, they begin a rapid maturation process. This process can take from a few minutes up to a couple of years, depending on how deep, strong and pervasive the frozen energy-consciousness was.

As these energies integrate evenly through-out the HEF and are released back into the creative process of an individual's life, whole life changes occur. Joe's life begins to restructure itself from the new consciousness that is now active in the creative process. He will no longer abandon himself in an unconscious effort to get taken care of. Instead, he will abide with himself, because he now believes that he is worthy of and can create companionship. Once he has developed this new relationship with himself, he will attract a girlfriend who does not carry the energy of abandonment. Thus the new relationship will be a stable one in this area. Of course it may take several practice runs before the "right woman" comes along.

Pain from past lives

A great deal of "past life" research has been done, both through literature search and through hypnotic regression. This research traces the origin of most chronic psychological pain back through previous life experiences. One extensive account is in Roger Woolger's *Other Lives, Other Selves*. In his past life regression therapy, Dr. Woolger finds that once a client has relived and cleared the pain from a past life experience, they are able to clear similar present life circumstances that other types of therapy could not touch.

Past lives are also held within our frozen psychic time conglomerates. They also attract and connect with each other by similar energy. They are not separated by time, so they are directly connected to events in this lifetime as well as other lifetimes. It takes a bit more energy to break into a frozen event from a past life because it has been there longer and is covered with more debris, but it can be done in healing sessions. It happens automatically when the person is ready.

According to my observations of the human energy field during healing sessions, past life traumas always underlie the chronic present-day problems that are difficult to resolve. When traumas from this life are cleared to a certain extent through laying on of hands healing, the past life trauma that is buried under them arises to the surface to be cleared. This type of healing work is very effective in transforming a client's life as well as his or her physical condition. Great changes always occur as a result of releasing past life trauma through hands-on healing. In this work, it is always important for the client to clearly relate past life work to present life situations, so that the entire conglomerate is released and is not used to avoid the issues of this life.

The origin of pain – your original wound

The origin of pain, from my perspective, is even deeper than energy blocked from personal pain or the phenomena called past lives. It comes from the belief that each of us is separate; separate from everyone else and separate from God. Many of us believe that in order to be individual, we must be separate. As a result, we separate ourselves from everything, including our own families, friends, groups, nations and the earth. This belief in separation is experienced as fear and out of fear, all other negative emotions arise.

Once we have created these negative emotions, we separate ourselves from them. This process of separating goes on creating more pain and illusion until the negative feedback loop is broken or reversed in personal process work. How to reverse this vicious cycle to create more and more pleasure and clarity in our lives is what this book is about. The key is love and connectedness to all that there is.

Love is the experience of being connected to God and to everything else. God is everywhere, in everything. God is above us, below us, all around us and within us. The divine spark of God is uniquely individual in each of us. It is God individually manifested. We experience it as our inner fountainhead or the core of our being. The more we are connected to God outside of ourselves, the more we are connected to and bring forth the individuality of the God within. When we are connected to the universal God and the individual God within, we are completely safe and free.

The creation of the mask self to mask our original pain

When we are born, we are still very connected to great spiritual wisdom and power through our core. This connection to our core and therefore to spiritual wisdom and power gives the feeling of complete safety and wonder. During the maturation process, this connection slowly fades. It is replaced by parental voices intended to protect us and make us safe. They speak of right and wrong, of good and bad, how to make decisions and how to act or react in any given situation.

As the connection to the core fades, our child psyche tries desperately to replace the original innate wisdom with a functioning ego. Unfortunately, the overlay or internalized parental voices can never really do the job. Instead, what is produced is a mask self.

The mask self is our first attempt to right ourselves. With it, we attempt to express who we are in a positive way that is also acceptable to a world that we are afraid will reject us. We present our mask self to the world according to our beliefs of what we think the world says is right, so that we can be accepted and feel safe. The mask self strives for connection with others because that is the 'right' thing to do. But it cannot accomplish deep connection because it denies the true nature of the personality. It denies our fear and our negative feelings.

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We put our best into the creation of this mask, but it doesn't work. The mask never succeeds in producing the internal feeling of safety for which we strive. In fact, it produces the internal feeling of an impostor because we are trying to prove we are good and we aren't good all the time. We feel like fakes and we become more afraid. So we try harder. We use the best in us to prove that we are good (again, according to internalized parental voices). This produces more fear, especially because we can't keep it up all the time, more feeling of fakery, more fear, in a building cycle.

The intention of the mask is to protect us from an assumed hostile world by proving that we are good. The intention of the mask is pretense and denial. It denies that its purpose is to cover up pain and anger, because it denies that pain and anger exist within the personality. The mask's intent is to protect the self by not taking responsibility for any negative actions, thoughts or deeds.

From the perspective of our mask, pain and anger exist only outside the personality. We don't take any responsibility. Anything negative that happens must be somebody else's fault. We blame them. That means it must be somebody else that is angry or in pain.

The only way to maintain this masquerade is to always try to prove that we are the good ones. Inside, we resent the constant pressure we place on ourselves to be good. We try to go by the rules. Or if we don't, we try to prove we are right and they are wrong.

We resent having to live according to some-body else's rules. It's a lot of work. We just want to do what we feel like doing. We get tired, we get angry, we don't care, we blurt out negative complaints and accusations. We hurt people. The energy that we have held in with the mask twists, pushes, leaks and strikes out at others. And of course we deny that as well, since our intent is to maintain security by proving we are the good ones.

Somewhere inside, we enjoy lashing out. Letting out the energy is a relief, even if it isn't clear and straight, even if we are not acting responsibly when we do it. There is a part of us that enjoys dumping our negativity on someone else. This is called negative pleasure. Its origin is in the lower self.

Negative pleasure and the lower self

I'm sure you can remember feeling the pleasure in some negative action you have done. Any energy movement, negative or positive, is pleasurable. These actions carry pleasure because they are releases of energy that have been stored up inside. If you experience pain when the energy first begins to move, it will always soon be followed by pleasure, because as you release the pain, you also release the creative force, which is always experienced as pleasure.

Negative pleasure originates in our lower self. Our lower self is the part of us that has forgotten who we are. It is the part of our psyche that believes in a separated, negative world and acts accordingly. The lower self is not in denial of negativity. It enjoys it. It has the intention to have negative pleasure.

Since the lower self is not in denial of negativity as the mask is, it is more honest than the mask self. The lower self is truthful about its negative intent. It doesn't pretend to be nice. It is not nice. It puts itself first and makes no bones about it. It says, "I care about me, not you." It cannot care both about itself and about another because of its world of separation. It enjoys negative pleasure and wants more of it. It knows about the pain within the personality and it has no intention whatsoever of feeling that pain.

The intention of the lower self is to maintain separation and to do anything it wants to do and to not feel pain.

The higher self

Of course, during the maturation process, not all our psyche is separated from the core. Part of us is clear and loving without any struggle. It is directly connected to our individual divinity within. It is full of wisdom, love and courage. It has connection to great creative power. It is the facilitator of all the good that has been created in our lives. It is the part of us that has not forgotten who we are.

Wherever there is peace, joy and fulfillment in your life, that is where your higher self has expressed itself through the creative principle. If you wonder what is meant by 'who you really are' or your 'true self,' look to these areas of your life. They are an expression of your true self.

Never take a negative area of your life to be an expression of your true self. Negative areas of your life are expressions of who you are not. They are examples of how you have blocked the expression of your true self.

The intention of the higher self is for truth, communion, respect, individuality, clear self-awareness and union with the Creator.

The importance of intention

The major difference between the higher self, the lower self and the mask self is found in the foundation of underlying intent upon which each is based and in the quality of energy present in any interaction that results from the underlying intent.

What is so confusing about a lot of human interactions is that they are different according to the intent behind them. The words that we speak can come from any of the three places of intent — our higher self, lower self or mask self. The words themselves may say one thing but mean another. The higher self means it when it says, "We are friends." The mask self means, "We are friends as long as I am the good one and you must never challenge the illusion that I am the good one." The lower self says, "We are friends only to the degree I allow. After that, watch out! Don't tread too closely because I will use you to get what I want and to avoid my pain. If you get too close to me or my pain or try to stop me from getting what I want, I will get rid of you." (In this case, get rid of means anything that it takes to stop the person. It might mean simply not talking

to them or overpowering them in an argument or a power play or it may go as far as getting rid of them physically).

Defending or denying your original wound creates more pain

The more our actions that arise out of the core are distorted by the mask, the more we must justify our actions by blame. The more we deny the existence of our lower self, the more we de-power ourselves. Denial holds back the power of the creative source within us. This creates a greater and greater cycle of pain and helplessness. The larger this vicious cycle of pain and helplessness gets, the greater the original pain or wound appears to be. It becomes covered with illusory pain of such imagined intensity that we become unconsciously terrified of it and will stop at nothing to defend ourselves against experiencing it. In our imagination, it becomes complete torture and annihilation. The more we justify staying away from it and not healing it, the more completely the original wound is buried and is not at all what we think it to be.

From my experience as a healer and teacher, I have concluded that we create much more pain and illness in our lives and bodies by avoiding the original wound through our habitual defense patterns than the original wound created in the first place.

Our habitual defense system

In my experience, the way we constantly distort our energy field into our habitual defense system causes more pain and illness in ourselves than any other cause.

When I describe the human energy field later in the book, we will see how this avoidance creates dysfunction in our fields, which then creates disease in our bodies. Our habitual defense patterns can be seen in our energy fields as an energetic defense system. Our energetic defense system is our habitual pattern of distortion in our fields, to which we retreat over and over again. It correlates with the mask self.

The more we succeed in holding the pain and anger down inside through this defense system, the more our positive feelings are also held down inside. We get dull. Life doesn't go the way we expected — it gets mundane and boring. Eros dies. We get caught in habitual vicious cycles and are unable to create what we long for in life. This also takes a toll on our body. We begin to lose faith in life.

Through our habitual process of walling out the pain, we also habitually wall out our deeper core. We have forgotten what it feels like. We have forgotten our essence. We have forgotten who we are. We have lost contact with our essential energies with which we create our lives. It is as if we expect ourselves to create our lives the way we want them to be, when we don't know who the "we" is that is wanting.

The road back to the original wound

The only way to remember who we are, to create our lives the way we want them, to create health and to feel safe, is to connect fully once again with our core. There is only

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one way to do this. We find and observe our images and release the frozen psychic time conglomerates associated with them, so that we can go to the source of all images, our original wound. We must uncover our original wound. To do this means going through our defense system and clearing the negative feelings and all the layers of imagined pain around the original wound. Once we reach our original wound, all of life is different and we heal ourselves and our life. This is the transformation process.

There are many techniques to find the original wound. Regression using autosuggestion and using body posturing are two. Both of these techniques are taught in the classes during the training program at the Barbara Brennan School of Healing. By using these techniques, we are able to help students go to their original wounds together.

In one particular group exercise, the students let go of their defenses by taking the body posture that expresses what they think their wound is. To find the posture of their wound, they need only to bring their attention to the major emotional issues and pain they have now in their life and let their body react to them. This technique works because the pain is connected by like energy in the psychic frozen time conglomerate.

By intensifying their bodies' reaction and by keeping their attention focused inward, the students' pain is brought out and becomes progressively clearer. The result is always a roomful of very vulnerable people in pain. Their twisted and distorted postures clearly show their pain. Sometimes people stand on one leg with the other leg and both arms twisted up in front. Many have their heads bowed, while others lie on the floor curled up like small children.

In this exercise it becomes clear that the pain around present life issues is indeed the same as the pain experienced earlier in life. As the present pain is brought out, it also releases the older pain. To do this, the students continue posturing, while maintaining an intent to constantly focus inward and backward in time to the original wound.

They automatically regress, layer by layer, through the pain associated with the image around the wound. Even though this pain is strong and frightening, it is basically illusory because it is based on the illusion held in the image. To explain what I mean by illusory pain, let us look back at our example of ten-year-old Joe, who is devastated when his mother goes away for a week's vacation. That is the way he feels, but it is not that situation that really devastates him.

By continuing to traverse through the illusory pain that is coagulated around their original wound, the students eventually go into their original wound. As they sink closer to the original wound, they are surprised that their pain decreases.

Once they are in their original wound, we ask them to keep its posture while moving close to another person, in order to make contact with another wounded human being. This always brings a reverence into the room. Everyone is wounded. Everyone is equal. The contact with each other creates a great deal of love in the room.

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After the exercise is complete and it is time for sharing, interesting discoveries come forth. Students are usually surprised to see that their wound is not at all what they thought. They find that most of their pain comes not from the original wound itself but from defending the original wound. Very early on in their lives, they began defending against what they expected life to bring them according to their early image conclusion. Every time they defended against that image conclusion, they added more energy to their psychic frozen time conglomerate. Each time this was done, the illusion of the pain got bigger until they lost track of what the pain really was. All that was left was some unknown terrifying pain that was unbearable.

The most profound part of this exercise, according to the students, is to see how much time and energy we waste throughout our lives in defending our original wound. The deepest pain is self-betrayal. By doing this exercise, students can feel their very early decision to not act upon the truth of who they are, not to acknowledge and live by who they are. They can see that they made that decision time and time again. Throughout their lives, until it become an unconscious habit. That is a regular part of their defense system.

This experience gives them great freedom and an entirely different outlook on life. Life becomes a constant challenge to live by the truth and not betray the self. The greatest challenge in life is to stay connected to and express the core of our being, no matter what circumstances we find ourselves in.

This pain is not just in a few people — it exists in all of humanity to varying degrees. Some people are more aware of their pain than others.

The human condition: living in dualism

Each day we express our core to a certain degree. The degree of our expression is directly proportional to how firmly and clearly we are connected to and allow our core essence to come forth. The areas of our lives that flow smoothly, without problems and satisfy us fully, are those where we are directly connected to our core. Energies that come uninhibited directly from the core create great human works and great human lives. Energies that come uninhibited directly from the core create great health. They are the expression of our higher selves, the part of us with which we are born and that never loses its connection to the core.

We are usually quite shy about this part of us. Most of the time we do not show how much we care, how much we love and how much we long for in life. We cover it, we label it, we squelch it to a 'reasonable' degree of expression (according to internalized parental voices) and settle for less. This is 'appropriate' behavior or so we believe.

Sometimes when we are not vigilant we let go and out comes the creative force! A sudden act of kindness or expression of love or friendship that happens before we think about it is an expression of this core essence. A moment of close connection is made and love is released.

Then, not being able to tolerate the light and love, we become shy and pull away. It takes only a few seconds for us to catch ourselves in embarrassment and close off a bit. A sudden fear emerges seemingly from nowhere that says, "Oh, maybe I did the wrong thing." That is the parental voice speaking, replacing the core. Under it lies the defense. It really means, "If you don't stop this energy flow, you will probably feel everything, including the pain that I am burying for you." So we stop the flow of our life-force, we contain it and dampen it. We bring ourselves back to the 'normal' level of 'safety' where we won't rock any boats — least of all our own.

This is the human condition. We live in the duality of choice, no matter what our life circumstances. Each moment we choose to say yes to a balanced, powerful and safe undefendedness that brings about our full experience of life or we choose to say no. In our no, we defend against true balanced life experience and block out our aliveness.

Most of us choose to kill some of our aliveness most of the time. Why? Because unconsciously, we know that to let the life-force flow would knock loose the old pain and we are afraid of it. We don't know how to handle it. So we retreat from the defense and go back to the old, seemingly adequate mask definitions of who we are. The internalized parental voices of the mask get stronger and we continue to retreat: "Who did you think you were any-way? God?" "Do you really think you can change things?" "Come on, be realistic! People don't change. Settle for what you have." "You're greedy." "You never appreciate what you have." Or "If your parents had only treated you better. . ." "If your husband hadn't done that. . ." "If only you would have been born more beautiful. . ." And so on! There are a million ways the mask can speak to keep you in your place. To a certain extent, it keeps you from feeling your pain. But in the long run, it creates more pain and eventually disease.

Illness comes from shrouding and disconnecting a part of ourselves from the core of our being. As we disconnect, we forget who we really are and live our lives according to our forgetting — that is, according to our mask, our lower self and our defense system. Healing is remembering who we truly are. It is reconnecting to our core in the areas of our psyche where we have disconnected from it and living accordingly.

To the exact degree we suppress our positive energies, we also suppress our creativity and our ability to maintain a healthful life or to heal ourselves.

It is the work of each of us to reconnect to our core and to heal ourselves.

The spiritual purpose of the original wound

We might ask, what is the cause or purpose of the original wound? The original wound is created by the fading of the connection between the newborn and its deeper spiritual wisdom within its core. Why, from the evolutionary perspective of humankind, would this take place? The answer lies in the difference between the core connection in early life and the connection gained through life experience. The early connection to the core is unconscious. The connections to the core that are made during the process of living are conscious. Adults' connection to their core, which is brought about through life

experience, creates conscious awareness of their inner divinity. Adults become aware that they are a spark of divine light in the universe. They are localized divinity. This evolutionary process creates more conscious awareness in our species. We are finding out that we are co-creators of the universe. The purpose of incarnation is the creation of awareness of self as divine co-creator of the universe.

Following our longing leads to our life task

Each of us longs to be, to understand and to express ourselves. This longing is the inner light that leads us along our evolutionary path. Taken to the personal level, this means that each of us is born with a life task to reconnect to the core of our being. In order to do this, we must remove the blocks between our conscious awareness and our core. This is called our personal life task. As we accomplish this, the release of our creative energies brings forth gifts from the core that we first receive and then share with the world. The gifts we give to the world bring about the accomplishment of our life task in the world. This world task unfolds only as we release our creative energies from our core. Thus we can accomplish what we wish to do in the world only by attending to our personal transformation process.

We are all wounded healers

We are all wounded healers. We are all very reluctant to become undefended, to become unveiled and to show what we have inside, whether it is positive or negative. We hesitate to show the pain or the wound that we each carry in our own way. We hide it in shame. We think we are the only ones or that our pain is more despicable than anyone else's. It is just very difficult for us, unless we feel very safe. This is our human condition. It will take time for all of us to come out. And it will take a lot of love. Let's all give each other plenty of space, time and loving affirmation. It is through this wound that we are all learning how to love. This internal wound we all carry is our greatest teacher. Let us recognize who we truly are inside. We are our beautiful core essence, despite the layers of pain and anger shrouding us. We are each individually unique and it is great that that is the way it is. Let us become wounded healers, helping each other to share the truth of our inner being.

We can find ourselves within a benign, abundant, life-supporting universe that is holy. We are carried in the arms of the universe. We are surrounded by a universal health field that supports and sustains life. We can reach out and connect to it. We can be and indeed are always, nourished by it. We are of it and it is of us. The divine mystery of life is within us and it is all around us.

You are your healer

It is you and only you who will heal yourself. You are completely capable of that. The process of healing a personal illness is, in fact, an act of personal empowerment. It is a personal journey, a rite of passage, designed by yourself as one of the greatest learning tools you will ever encounter. Your healing journey will, of course, include a

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consideration and use of all the best tools modern medicine can offer you, as well as the best tools holistic healing can offer you.

From a deeper perspective, illness is caused by unfulfilled longing. The deeper the illness, the deeper the longing. It is a message that somehow, somewhere, you have forgotten who you are and what your purpose is. You have forgotten and disconnected from the purpose of your creative energy, from your core. Your illness is the symptom: the disease represents your unfulfilled longing. So above all else, use your illness to set yourself free to do what you have always wanted to do, to be who you have always wanted to be, to manifest and express who you already are from your deepest, broadest and highest reality.

If indeed you have discovered yourself to be ill, prepare yourself for change, expect your deepest longing to surface and to be brought to fruition. Prepare yourself to finally stop running and turn and face the tiger within you, whatever that means to you in a very personal way. I suggest the best place to start to find the meaning of your illness is to ask yourself: "What is it that I have longed for and not yet succeeded in creating in my life?" I suggest that you will eventually find a direct link between this unfulfilled longing and your illness.

It is within this fundamental picture of health and healing that you can regain your health. I speak here not just of the health of your physical body, because that is actually secondary, but of the health of the spirit, the health of the soul. It is within this framework or metaphor of reality that all life and health issues can be dealt with. For life in the physical is to be lived in love, to develop our higher qualities and to become one with the divine. No matter what the circumstances of your life right now, that is what life is about. No matter what the pain, the problem or the disease, it is a teacher. It is a teacher of love and a teacher that reminds you that you are divine. It is the process of your Light Emerging.

Courtesy: Barbara Ann Brennan. Light Emerging. New York; Bantam Books, 1993, pp.3 - 12.

Barbara Ann Brennan is the founder and director of the Barbara Brennan School of Healing in East Hampton, Long Island.

Idealistic vision of a Healing Centre

Dr. Vallath Nandini

Abstract

This article tries to describe healing inputs at different levels of human existence (broadly based on Panca koṣa). It visualizes a healing centre where the entire spectrum of healing and wellbeing on physical, vital, emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels are addressed. The journey towards this vision and possible challenges on the way are also discussed in the text.

Introduction

Healthcare usually reflects the cultural values and distilled wisdom of each civilization. Indian culture is rich, value-based and rooted in philosophy. With our exclusive background, extensive knowledge-base and experienced personnel in all different medical systems, both ancient and modern, the health-providers of India are in a unique position to integrate the finest aspects of each and pioneer a superior system of healthcare.

Background

The science and art of holistic healing is ancient and stems back thousands of years. Its origins are thought to be from India and China with the civilizations' primary medical requirements assumed by Ayurvedic, Tibetan and Chinese medicine. In the field of health-care, the Indian legacy has been Ayurveda and yoga. The principles of these systems are universally applicable and recognition is evident by their renaissance all over the world.

The resurgence of such systems is also due to perceived imperfections in modern medical practice, which has not acknowledged various non-physical aspects of health in its understanding of human existence.

Major scientific advancements in the nine-teenth century in Western society, such as the discovery of pathogens and antibiotics, decreased the popularity of traditional healing systems and brought modern medicine to the forefront.

After this, modern medicine maintained its position by analytical research and the accumulation of detailed information on the structural basis of the human body, various pathological states and therapeutic measures. Pharmacological protocols were developed in an attempt to prevent and control pathological states by modifying physiological processes, for example increase or decrease of vasomotor tone, cardiac contractility, rhythms, receptor activities, gland secretions, smooth muscle tone (bronchial, etc.), metabolic parameters, neurotransmitter / hormonal activities, etc. All this knowledge has been very successful in handling acute pathological states.

Advances in surgical techniques and knowledge acquired in genetics and endocrinology have further reinforced the position of modern medicine as the primary healing system. Many Indians took up modern medicine as they believed it had a great deal to do with healing.

What is lacking?

Over the years, it has slowly dawned on us that the knowledge, skills and training acquired in modern medicine are so skewed and inadequate to comfort or control illnesses that real cure seems a distant dream. A focus on the physical dimensions of health and diseases, for example symptom relief, normalising investigational results and providing a larger quantity of life in a compromised life-shell, have all become tangential to the purpose of healing. Sincere medical practitioners and the patient population often experience the frustrating incompleteness of treatment protocols.

After entirely exhausting the 'how?' questions, we are now asking 'why?' and searching for the answer. Is it because modern medicine based its information on sources where the fine web of human intelligence or consciousness did not exist, had been lost or destroyed (e.g. animal experiments, dead bodies and *in vitro* studies)?

Looking back

Looking back to the ancient systems of medicine, we see that they looked beyond the body in understanding unhealthy states and designing healing techniques. Their concept viewed human existence at various levels: body, energy, mind, intelligence and soul. Doctors were also philosophers. They used environment, nature, diet, lifestyle changes, patterns of touch, sound and thought-processes along with nature-based medications for healing. The purpose of medical practice, and for that matter life itself, was to pave the way for enlightenment and spiritual growth — keeping the body healthy facilitated this purpose.

Evidence

Today, yet again, 'consciousness' has made its presence felt in all studies concerning the physical and physiological worlds. In a process of reassessment, with the changing and expanding vision, we have become sensitive to the interconnectivity of micro and macrocosm.

The trends of modern medical research, though scattered, have clearly begun to acknowledge human existence beyond mere physical terms and the field has widened its horizons to accommodate this old wisdom.

- Psychoneuroimmunology is one of the most active fields where the relation, co-operation and modulation of the functions of the central nervous system, immune system and psyche are being studied (1, 2). Psycho-biology is bringing out evidence of the influence of emotions and thoughts over the healing environment within.

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- Neurobiological studies are looking at the physiology of different levels of consciousness (3).
- The definitive influence of communication in symptom-management is being universally perceived (4, 5).
- Studies on the effects of *yoga* on physiological and pathological states are revealing much information related to 'relaxation response' of human physiology (as opposed to the 'stress arousal response') (6, 7).
- Massage, aroma, colours, humour and music therapy, which work beyond the physical structure, are being widely used as approved aids for healing physical disorders (8).
- The healing potential of spirituality is now included in the curricula of medical residency programmes (9).
- Physicians are accepting and at times recommending alternative systems of medicine as never before (10, 11).

Medicine is clearly altering, modifying and expanding its understanding of the healing spectrum from health to illness. Is it not time for reductionist thinking and the whole system to strike a harmonious balance now?

A coherent pattern needs to be created with these chaotic research themes and practical applications need to be designed for providing an optimal level of healthcare.

The ideological basis

Perhaps it is not enough that this healing centre covers just disease management or physical health maintenance by providing a range of different systems of medicine. As attitudes and mental patterns play such an integral role, the environment and facilities of this centre should provide healing inputs at subtler levels too.

The venture: objectives and vision

- To inspire holistic living, bring in a multi-dimensional inter connective vision into existing and future healthcare and refine integrated healthcare as a competent, cost effective and attractive speciality.
- The themes: positive health, value education, discipline, awareness, inspiration, joy, transformation and healing.
- Atmosphere and core-values: love, compassion, competence and integrity.
- It will integrate modern medical knowledge with other healing inputs and provide an optimal healing environment.
- It will network with physicians from modern medical, Ayurvedic, yogic, naturopathic and homoeopathic backgrounds who firmly believe in the concept of optimal integration.
- It will staff a committed and mature team who are in alignment with the aims of the centre.
- It will recognize each individual at body, energy, emotional, intellectual and bliss levels. It will strive to provide care at all these levels.

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- Besides the physical aims of recovery, other goals will be reinforcing values, self-awareness, discipline, joy and transformation. This is to be achieved through methods which inculcate optimism and dynamism, and will be experienced by the perception of peace, contentment, empathy, clarity and higher energy levels amongst all participants.
- The patient will be an active participant in his or her healing process. This empowerment will be through education, information on the nature of his health, role of emotions, habitat, lifestyle and mental attitude and also by assisting in notional correction, interpretation of life-events and inspiring a purpose for existence with further development of the awakened spirit.
- The economics of the centre will provide a steady base for the support and reinforcement of the core values.
- The centre will be an expression of the abundance and beauty of nature and a working model for a simple and harmonious existence.
- It will assist everyone to experience love, peace and joy and, in realising that, help all to find their true nature.
- The aim is to achieve these ends subtly; without being loud or preachy. The core-values are to be experienced not advertised.

Possible healing inputs at different levels of human existence (12)

At body level

State-of-the-art integrated medical and surgical facilities, habitat and lifestyle evaluation, nutritional education, nature walks, gentle exercise, touch, massage, naturopathy, yogasanas, etc.

At energy-flow level

Guided relaxation, controlled breathing techniques, *yoga*, *pañcakarmas*, *kriyās*, *prāṇāyāmas*, music, sunshine, laughter, correction of circadian rhythms, hobbies, mindfulness for stress reduction, acupressure, etc.

At emotional level

Structured psychotherapy, inspiring a healthy code of conduct, music, massage, image visualisation, psycho-social support groups for individuals, families or groups, prayer, chanting, creative arts, pet therapy, egoless service and any intervention that evokes, recognises, attenuates, sublimates and dissipates suppressed emotions.

At intellectual level

Education and information about the relevant details of illness and available therapies, self-discipline, time management, cognitive behavioural therapy, improving problem-solving skills, encouraging life-assessment with purpose, self-awareness, notional corrections, goal-setting, philosophical inputs etc.

At bliss level

Methods of *pratyāhāra*, music, *yoga* and meditation.

Commitments

All patients will benefit from integrated healing. Depending on their stage of seeking help, they will be provided acute, rehabilitative or preventive care. Patients will be given information about all the possible holistic inputs useful to them and educated about possible contributory factors for their diet, lifestyle and daily discipline. Psychological

help, behavioural therapy and problem-solving skills will be part of this care. As life is a series of experiences, assistance should be given to make each experience fruitful and fulfilling.

A minimum common programme will be established as a framework, keeping a larger vision in mind. Specific programmes concerning each patient have to be designed upon this, with the coordinated efforts of a concerned team of physicians and therapists.

Other healthy, imaginative and energizing inputs such as painting, clay-modelling, reading, storytelling, puppetry, games, swimming, gardening, theme-based discussions, music, kite-flying, sports, documentaries, movies, nature walks, treks, etc. should be offered at the centre. They will provide opportunities for the human soul to awaken, refresh, rejuvenate and lighten up. A selection of the specific set of activities and inputs will be done by the patient based on his nature.

Personnel

The quality of care will depend greatly on the team providing it and the manner in which it is provided. Their philosophy will influence every aspect of care.

Therefore all members of staff should understand and be in alignment with the theme, core-values and objectives of the centre. Each member should aspire to understand and act to their full potential. They should strive to develop an innate mental attitude to understand the fluid interconnectivity of thoughts and health and furthermore facilitate positive attitudes in others.

An orientation programme on the concept may be initially needed for each member and reinforcement programmes may be designed for maintaining this ideology. Listening and communication skills will require emphasis in all interactions. The staff will comprise:

- Competent physicians and nursing staff from the respective allopathic specialties, along with yoga/ naturopathic therapists, traditional medical therapists (Ayurveda, homoeopathy).
- Psychologists and cognitive behavioural therapists: psychological interactions must be integrated at all levels and not limited to fixed hours of exposure. Besides the specialists, all members of the staff need to be familiar with the basic principles of emotional and cognitive support.
- Massage, music therapists, nutritionists, social workers, other activity group leaders etc.
- Visiting teachers in spirituality and value education.
- Interesting, insightful, engaging and humorous storytellers.
- Infrastructural staff, financial advisers, accounts supervisors, computer-related and managerial staff.

The centre will need to slowly evolve a system for achieving the right mental attitude in its team to provide a healthy healing environment. This cannot be achieved through rules and codes of conduct but by invoking natural thought-patterns and

communication amongst the staff. These factors have to come from a genuine desire and sincerity from within.

Research

Research in the centre can look at answers to the following questions:

To what degree can one

- refine present healthcare and inspire wholesome living?
- identify, assess, qualify and quantify contribution of non-physical correlations to physical healing?
- safely integrate all aspects from the different streams of healthcare?

Challenges

- The transition from a fundamentally mechanical model of biology and health to one that is fluid, interconnected and multi-dimensional.
- Creating a working atmosphere in a manner by which all perceive love, serenity, respect and freedom in the very environment and carry over this attitude to their daily lives.
- Bringing together competent professionals who are inspired and in alignment with the concept of integration of mind, body and spirit.
- As it is a relatively new concept, honest communication, clear recording and continuous assessment of the experiences will be needed for the safe integration of different streams.
- Some staff may not understand or acquire the capabilities to deal with the various deeper concerns of patients.
- Many patients and families may not be ready to explore beyond more superficial levels.
- There are concerns regarding insurance coverage and medico-legal implications in the present scenario.

Hospitals at present have rigid systems that make it difficult to integrate this holistic scenario. The culture and practice of the medical mainstream, set patterns of work in institutions, the reward system, funding mechanisms, insurance coverage, etc. do not appear to be in alignment with these new conceptual developments.

There may be a need, at least in the beginning, for certain centres to be specifically designed, with an inspired staff in order to practise the healing art in its entirety, so that an impressive beginning can be made in practising integrated care.

Also there needs to be agreement for everyone regarding the vision, expectations and provision of supportive communications within the organisation. Skills may need repeated reinforcement.

The centre should concern itself with the health, wellbeing, awareness, communication skills and development of its entire staff so that they remain secure, inspired and motivated to act to their full potential.

Is the vision too idealistic?

Many of the inputs mentioned above are individually popular themes in management and popular sciences and, to some extent, in holistic medical centres. But when taken together as a modification of the whole healthcare, the task does appear challenging. Is the vision too idealistic in the context of our growing cynicism and scepticism? Are we really ready to imbibe the holistic scenario?

Is it necessary to simultaneously create awareness amongst healthcare providers about the positive influences of including the soul in our system, and within the community in instilling the benefits of a wholesome life? Would it be sufficient to begin with simple steps involving humanising healthcare attitudes and facilities within our present healthcare set-up? Or should it start even earlier with a reinforcement of value education at home and schools right up to ethical and interactive inputs within medical training? How is this to be done?

Let us open our minds and hearts and pray for the necessary wisdom, courage, vision, humility, patience and grace needed to facilitate, create and maintain a healing environment that supports inspiration, joy and transformation of the soul.

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Dr. Vallath Nandini is Associate Professor in the Department of Anaesthesiology, St John's National Academy of Health Sciences, John Nagar, Bangalore.

Dancing the elements with Wu Tao

Michelle Locke

Editor's note

Among the ways of living in balance with the self is an ancient path connected to the spirit called Tao. From it originate many ways according to the people who walk the inner journey. One such method is Wu Tao. A means of dancing yourself back into wholeness....

Wu Tao is a healing dance modality that balances life energy. Created by Australian dancer and natural therapist Michelle Locke, *Wu Tao* is proving to be a potent healing therapy suitable for many people including children and the elderly. It is currently being used successfully to treat patients with dementia and other cognitive disorders in Australia.

Wu Tao dance brings together a number of components that create a powerful energetic change within the body/mind. The dance form is a specific set of choreographed movements set to music that stimulate and open the meridians (channels that *Qi* energy flows through). Doing the dances assists in increasing the flow of *Qi* and unblocking areas of stagnant energy in the body. Refining and perfecting the movements of the dance helps to increase the natural flow of energy.

To encourage energy to flow freely, the dance technique is based on softness in the knees, elbows and other joints, with the movements flowing from one position to the next. The *hara* (belly) is brought into awareness and engaged through deep breathing, and core strength is developed. The spine is encouraged to be fluid and flexible, the head and neck relaxed, and the lower body is grounded and balanced.

When *Qi* is flowing correctly, there are a numerous benefits. A person will have greater amounts of physical and mental energy, resulting in increased stamina, vitality and strength. He/she will feel more balanced and even their response to difficult emotional states will improve. Due to their lifestyle, Westerners have significant levels of stress and toxicity which causes energy to be stagnant, particularly in the liver. When energy is unblocked and its flow is normalised, a person will feel positive, energised and less stressed.

Within the context of the *Wu Tao* dance form, there's lots of room for self-expression. On occasions, emotions will surface and these can be expressed through the dance. At other times, a person may be engaged in a particular situation or aspect of their life-journey that desires release. All these things can be taken into the dance and expressed through *Wu Tao*.

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Wu Tao uses creative visualisation to connect to the energy and quality of each dance. This frees up stuck emotions and energy in the body. The focus in *Wu Tao* is very much on the dance movement, which enables you to feel and express emotions as they arise. There is no need to get caught up in a story or emotional drama. Rather expression through this dance helps you to move back into a natural connection with life energy. Energetic changes happen more quickly when awareness stays grounded within the body and the energy is allowed to move freely without being limited or controlled by the mind.

Wu Tao dance is an active and dynamic form of meditation. Meditation is the act of quietening the mind and allowing the stillness and peaceful nature within to arise. While the mind is focused on the creative images and the body is engaged in embodying these images, there is less room for the mind to chatter! Over time, as a person deepens into the dance process, the mind begins to relinquish its hold.

Embodying positive emotional states such as gratitude has a healing effect on the body/mind. As we have more of these kinds of thoughts that flow on through our emotional state to the body, we create connections between cells that encourage healing, a stronger immune system and increased energy. *Wu Tao* helps us to embody these higher thought processes. The brain then begins to re-wire itself and the cells of the body start to rejuvenate and harness the life energy efficiently.

Energetically, when we have embodied the highest qualities of each of the elements, we have embodied Life, as it is meant to be lived through us. It isn't normal for us to resist change. Change is natural and normal. When we align ourselves with the correct way of flowing with the energy, we begin to experience safety, trust, joy and balance in our lives. This is normal!

The elements

The Air element (metal in Chinese medicine), is related to the organs lung and large intestine and the season of autumn. It relates to how well we are able to deal with the past, release what no longer serves us, and open to a new life and the present moment. Through the lungs we take in life energy in the breath. As we breathe out, we release old energy that is no longer useful to our body. The large intestine has a similar function in that it's the organ through which we eliminate our waste. Unbalanced, the energy in this element reduces our capacity to let go and release what doesn't serve us. It can keep us looking backward into the past, grasping and holding on and manifest as symptoms of unresolved sadness, grief and depression. We cannot look forward into the future without it being shadowed by the past. Sadness tints our perception and our bodies can be closed to receiving and welcoming our greater good.

These manifestations occur at a cellular level. They can cause a whole range of physical symptoms such as breathing problems, asthma, reduced immunity and intestinal problems. However, when we embody the higher aspect of this energy, that of 'release and transformation', the body begins to reflect a whole different way of being. It is natural for things to change form, just like leaves change colour and drop from the tree in autumn. When we allow change to occur, when we flow with it, even embrace it, we

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become one with the energy of Life in this manifestation. Our bodies and every cell in our body is then able to do what they are meant to do. They can release energy or experience that it is old and no longer useful and stay open and welcoming to new enlivening energy and experience. Emotionally, we can maintain equilibrium while still allowing ourselves the full expression of our grief and sadness (which are the natural emotions that arise with change).

The Water element corresponds to the kidney and bladder organs, the season of winter and the emotion of fear. It is responsible for building and storing our energy or *Qi*. We unbalance this element when we waste our energy by working too hard, not getting enough sleep, rest and leisure time, and generally not respecting our need to balance our active masculine with the more passive feminine. The Water element is the deepest *Yin* time and like winter, it is the time to hibernate, build our energy resources, rest and dream.

Out of balance, this energy is driven, yet exhausted and running on an empty tank. It manifests fears and phobias, both conscious and unconscious, which can play out as a nagging unrest with life, lack of motivation, and control issues.

When we honour this energy in our bodies we manifest a different story. We rest when we need to. We tune into our dreams and deepest desires and feel safe enough to allow them to germinate in the fertile ground of our inner world. We take time to imagine and fantasise about what we desire to create. We are able to be still in the void of non-doing and await the spring rains of energy to awaken us. Physically our body rejuvenates itself during this period, rebuilding our structure and beliefs into forms that serve our highest Self and increase our potential.

Wood is the next element in the cycle. It relates to the season of spring and governs the liver and gall bladder in our body. In balance, the wood element gives us the raw vital energy to create and express our potential and purpose into the world. In *Wu Tao* we use the image of the tree. We dance our roots down into the earth so that we are grounded and can be nourished by the *Yin* energy of Life. We ourselves grow up as the young plant into the sapling, expressing ourselves into our leaves and branches. We reach for the light of the sun, drawing the *Yang* energy into our being. Through this dance we embody flow, vitality, self-expression and purpose. We also allow ourselves to simply be who we are, without using effort or force, just like the tree.

This element is particularly important for us in Western society, as we tend to live our lives using force, effort and ambition. The nature of the Wood element teaches us that the way to grow into what we are meant to become, is to express ourselves freely and creatively, flow with vitality and be true to our Selves.

Out of balance, this element manifests in the emotions of anger, frustration, depression, irritability, competitiveness and ambition. The energy tends towards blockage and stagnation due to its sensitivity to emotional and physical toxicity. The dance frees up this energy and gives it space to find its natural flowing nature. We then feel positive, purposeful and creative.

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The Fire element follows the Wood. It corresponds to the season of summer and governs the heart. In Chinese medicine the heart houses the spirit, the aspect of consciousness known as *Shen*. If you visualise a fire, even a simple single flame, it is easy to understand why spirit is represented here. The light of our inner nature shines through our eyes, and the Fire energy is what gives rise to our passion, the ability to radiate our essence and to transform the dross of our ego-mind into a true reflection of our spirit. When balanced, the Fire energy illuminates us. We know ourselves as consciousness and our naturally peaceful and joyous nature radiates from our heart.

Out of balance, the fire of our passion can be extinguished leaving us sad and depressed, even suicidal. Or it may burn out of control, destroying everything in its path by inflicting heat, consuming energy and eventually reducing us to nothing. The practice of working with this energy is to maintain equilibrium between our ego mind and spirit, with the mind serving our spirit rather than running the show and threatening our state of internal balance. Out of balance the fire can manifest as egocentricity, mania and anxiety. For all of us, when working with the fire element, we have the opportunity to shed the masks of the ego and allow our true Self to shine through.

When we dance the fire, we shed the illusions we have about ourselves, freeing up our hearts and connecting again with our inner nature and source of real passion. The burdens we carry that cover our joy are surrendered happily to the transforming power of the Fire and we become peaceful again. It is always wonderful to see the smiles erupting and joy shining through people's faces as they dance the Fire dance!

The Earth element is the final element of the five. If any dance was to capture the essence of *Wu Tao* this is the one. The Earth is our physical home. Our bodies reflect it as the home for our spirit. It is the manifestation of life force in form and as such it embodies the feminine principle completely. In all its beauty and wonder, the earth as manifestation of Life Energy invites us to rest and to give thanks for the bounty that Life brings us in all ways. In Chinese medicine it relates to the season of late summer, the time of harvest. Its nature is still and receptive and it teaches us to be open and receive what Life has to offer.

The benefits of embodying this element are profound. A sense of gratitude immediately opens us to Life's gifts in whatever form they present. Gratitude allows space for trust to emerge. Bliss and grace are found in this state. This is where we realise our oneness with Life and can open ourselves completely to her expression through us.

Out of balance, the energy of Earth manifests as worry and obsessive thought as the mind (which feels itself as separate from Life) attempts to control the inflow and outflow of energy. This imbalance shows itself in how we nourish ourselves in all areas. Physically, we may focus on food, taking in too much for our needs or not getting enough depending on our patterns around physical nourishment. Emotionally, we may give ourselves away through unhealthy nurturing of others or not offering enough love and support. Both these patterns come from a sense of deprivation

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of love and energy. Love is what life energy feels like when it flows from our heart and spirit.

The Earth dance is a dance of prayerful gratitude. As we do the simple movement sequence to each direction we surrender to the river of Life and open to receive her gifts, as they flow to us through every opportunity, challenge and manifestation of experience. It is impossible to resist any-thing from this place! A deep sense of peace permeates our whole being and flows into all we do. We are one with the very flow of life energy itself. Harmony and balance are restored to body, mind and soul.

Michelle Locke is the creator of the Wu Tao Dance from Perth, Western Australia.