

Healing is a Lifestyle:

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Healthcare Reform Begins with Healing Touch at Home

I usually wake before sunrise. While still in bed, I administer a Healing Touch technique called the **Self Chakra Connection**. My hands rest on various joints and energy centers in a sequence that begins at my feet and continues up past my head. I keep my hands still at each position until the sensations (which vary from buzzing, prickling, tingling, and/or pulsing) become synchronized into a sense of equilibrium before I move my hands to the next location. A holistic nurse taught me this technique. At the time, my responsibilities as a hospital consultant included assisting clinical teams with process improvement implementations. Now, I work with physicians as a Healing Touch Certified Practitioner in an integrated medical center, teaching and administering this and other techniques. Understanding the impact my energy has on everyone I meet, I consider this morning biofield balancing routine to be as fundamental to healthcare professionalism as personal hygiene and culturally sensitive communication.

After studying over 70 different biofeedback techniques and technologies, I chose to pursue training in Healing Touch because of the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) credentialing. The purpose of the self chakra technique is to connect, open and balance the human energy systems: subtle, electrical, magnetic, biochemical and thermal. None of these terms were part of my formal business school education or my career as a certified public accountant. As healthcare organizations incorporate legislative reform, managing energetic stressors with simple and effective touch techniques can jump start success.

One of the central themes of healthcare reform is the payment shift from volumes to value with value defined as quality divided by cost (value=quality/cost). Self care and energy medicine can reduce costs and improve outcomes by reducing stress. Mental focus and recall improve as stress decreases. Enhanced patient interactions reduce errors. Revenues increase with healthier outcomes. High quality healing happens with daily awareness of and attention to the reduction of stress and the promotion of coherent energy.

Each human body is surrounded by an energetic biofield. Biofields impact each other during physical interactions. Physical health corresponds with the coherency of the biofield. Organizations consist of people. Caregivers operating with coherent biofields around their calm bodies share these qualities with their patients. Healthy biofields resist infection and accelerate healing. Even the most advanced surgical robots and genomic pharmaceuticals are produced and guided by – you guessed it – people. And we humans have personal lives, including relationships with parents, spouses, children, siblings, and neighbors. These people impact us and our biofields, for better or worse, before we even arrive at the workplace where we encounter even more people - our co-workers, mentors and mentees, people serving us and the patients we serve. Hence, many of us feel overwhelmed, anxious or worried for ourselves or loved ones.


How you handle the stress of worry and fatigue dictates whether the central nervous system

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activates sympathetic or parasympathetic responses. Fundamental to healthy biological processes is the balance between stress (sympathetic) and relaxation (parasympathetic). Either you are pumping out stress hormones or you are producing signals and neurochemicals supportive of growth and repair.

I recently heard a hospital system CFO discussing healthcare reform. He emphasized the *ability to tolerate ambiguity* as imperative for success. Keep in mind, most of us initially react to ambiguity as unfamiliar = threat = stress. This reaction causes blood to drain from the brain and flow to the major muscles so that we can fight or flee. That is effective in an environment where the perceived threat is event specific and needs a focused burst of physical power more than mental prowess.

In our healthcare settings, where quality and safety depend on critical thinking skills and coherent decision-making, stress tends to be vague and constant. Based on how you interpret change, the autonomic nervous system decides whether you feel safe or threatened. When you feel threatened, you create a cascade of chemicals in your body meant to help you physically cope with an isolated incident. Those chemicals become poisonous when the 'threat' is mental and chronic and not easily (or appropriately) resolved by fighting or fleeing. The need for ongoing stress reduction skills becomes integral to the high performance necessary to achieve the goal of reform -- transform the delivery of healthcare.

The quality of patient-centered care is directly impacted by the quality of self-care demonstrated by caregivers. Whether we apply financial or clinical criteria to measure the impact of healthcare reform, cost reduction and quality enhancement are inseparable from healthy lifestyles. The future of healthcare can count on at least one constant -- change. What personal care do you practice to prepare yourself to treat others as you navigate change? I start each day with Healing Touch at home. 

Reference List

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