

# My Best Teachers Come in all Ages, Shapes and Stages

by Walle Adams-Gerds, RN, BA, HTCP



**M**y teachers don't have formal degrees in education. They don't have classrooms of 25 or so students nor do they assign homework or group projects. They don't drive to and from work and they certainly don't have time to serve on committees. My teachers are the patients at Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children.

Over the past year, I have had the incredible opportunity to learn from these wise and wonderful young people – and it all started with the dream of sharing Healing Touch.

My dream became a reality in January 2008 when the doors opened to a room in the hospital specifically designated for Healing Touch. This was a huge shift for this traditional institution, recognized nationally for its Nemours name and internationally for its medically savvy staff. However, integrative therapies were unknown entities and a bit too progressive for the hospital to immediately embrace. So, when I committed to bringing Healing Touch to the patients and their caregivers and presented a proposal to the top administrative board, they were surprised yet curious.

Thankfully, Nursing Administration was completely supportive and proactively voiced the importance of complementary therapies in patient and family-centered care. After much discussion and negotiation, the proposal was accepted, a space assigned,

and the Universe opened the way for Healing Touch at A. I. duPont Hospital in Wilmington, DE. The “student” was ready to do the work.

My first “teachers” were reluctant experts in the field of Oncology and Bone Marrow Transplants. They would visit my HT room with complaints related to chemotherapy and radiation treatments. All ages, all shapes, all stages – but all with one thing in common -- hope in Healing Touch. Never did I detect a moment when they doubted the possibility of healing. Often we would talk during the sessions – sometimes it was about the latest “Dora the Explorer” video they had watched the night before, other times it might have been about how they missed being home for Christmas or out with their teenage friends, or other times my “teacher” would just rest on the table, eyes closed, trusting in my hands and the power of the healing.

As I moved forward in my studies, other “teachers” in the GI and General Pediatrics sought treatment. Magnetic Passes: Hands in Motion and Mind Clearing seemed effective, along with Full Body Connections for those seeking balance and centering. It was not uncommon for these “teachers” to be heavily scheduled with limited time and so I would remember what my Healing Touch mentor taught me... “energy follows intention and if you have a limited amount of time, set the goal (intention) and go for it!”

Most professional work is evaluated with performance reviews. After 100 treatments with my various “teachers,” the evaluations for the Healing Touch program and its practitioner were unanimous in support of the program continuing and expanding. One “teacher” even raised funds from her alma mater (high school) and donated the money to a separate Healing Touch Fund within the hospital for the purpose of growing the program! This has financed a Level 1 Healing Touch class for the hospital staff and the preparation for the Level 6 Instructor Training course.

I am grateful to my “teachers” for their commitment to the success of the Healing Touch Program. Their wisdom and openness are virtues that I strive to honor every day that I am “doing the work.” May it be so.

About the author:

Walle Adams-Gerds, RN, BA, HTCP is a practicing hematology/oncology bone marrow nurse at A. I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, DE. In addition to her nursing shifts, she offers Healing Touch to patients and their caregivers sixteen hours per week, coordinates Healing Touch classes for the hospital, and in April is scheduled to attend Level 6 training to become a Level 1 Healing Touch Instructor. Her vision is to introduce an integrative health care department to the hospital in the near future. She can be reached at walle@verizon.net or (302) 651-4325 (HEAL).