



# Practitioner Support

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## Discussion on Healing Crisis

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“Healing Crisis” is a common term in Energy Medicine, referring to physical symptoms that a person experiences during an illness or after an injury that are serious enough to merit the person to stop, rest, get help, and take time to recover. Sometimes a ‘healing crisis’ is exactly what brings clients to us as Energy Practitioners, be it Reiki, Healing Touch or Massage Therapists. While not common, it can also happen after an energy or massage therapy session when toxins are released from the body - sometimes resulting in uncomfortable symptoms that can surprise both practitioner and recipient.

In the Healing Touch Professional Association (HTPA) Let’s Chat call on November 29, 2014, we talked casually about this topic and stories were shared – some of which are included later in this article. This term ‘Healing Crisis’ is discussed so causally and with ease among energy practitioners’ as reality, I wondered if there was practical and/or scientific support for this term and my assumptive definition of it. I began a simple research project pulling various energy related books out one by one, expecting to find this term defined clearly and often. I was a little surprised that I was unable to find ‘Healing Crisis’ in the index section from

any book on my bookshelf. However, the Internet was filled with links by the thousand.

I found this at: Healing Crisis Defined<sup>1</sup>

A healing crisis is when symptoms from diseases and toxins that are released during a detoxification process manifest themselves. Also known as “Herxheimer Reaction”, a healing crisis occurs when toxins stored in the body are released at a faster rate than can be properly eliminated. The more toxic one’s body is, the more severe the detoxification and the more intense the reaction. A healing crisis is characterized by a temporary increase in symptoms during a cleansing or detoxification process. Such symptoms may be mild or severe, depending on the body’s original toxicity, but are definitely temporary. They can occur immediately, within several days, or even several weeks of a cleansing program.

Another link offered that a “Healing Crisis” happens anytime your body is healing. This can be triggered from a range of activities - from natural cures such as energy healing therapy to just an initiation of improved diet, starting an exercise program, or attending a life changing training!

According to Dr. John Whitman Ray, founder of Body Electronics *“the symptoms will begin from within out, in reverse order chronologically as to how the symptoms have appeared, tempered by the intensity of the trauma. The individual will have the opportunity to re-experience each trauma, both physiological and psychological, beginning with the trauma of least severity. Hence, long forgotten illness symptoms may suddenly flare up again in the form of a Herxheimer’s reaction.”*<sup>2</sup>

This led me to look up Herxheimer Reaction and I found this very simplistic explanation: Herxheimer Reaction . . . occurs when the body tries to eliminate toxins at a faster rate than they can be properly disposed of.<sup>3</sup>

There were several other websites that contained interesting information, some around elimination diets and toxicity cleansing, and another that discusses possible symptoms of a “healing crisis” from a Reiki perspective. I have included links to these at the end of the article.

While these blogs and articles are interesting and support much of what I casually understand about a Healing Crisis, I was not sure the sources were valid. I went to my local County library and learned how to navigate more reliable resources. These included published articles in health and parenting magazines.



Author Melissa L Block discusses in her article “Don’t Worry, Mom – I’m just Growing in Mothering”<sup>4</sup> that “*symptoms are not illness; rather, they are signs that the healing process is beginning. When we suppress symptoms — when we interrupt what Dr. Phillip Incao calls the healing crisis — we prevent our children’s bodies from healing.*” She also says, “*Treating illness is not about eradicating a microbe or feeling better right away, but about gently guiding the body back to its natural balance point so that it can heal itself.*” While this article focused on children and in particular that parents almost immediately reach for over the counter or prescription drugs to alleviate symptoms, I appreciated how the author encouraged parents to consider that the body has its own wisdom.

In conclusion, my informal research found numerous references to “Healing Crisis” in a variety of sources. All have a slightly different slant on just what the term means. For example: Dr. James Gordon in *A Natural Prescription for Better Health* said “*In Chinese medicine, a chronic disease must become acute before it can be healed. This is what is known as a healing crisis.*”<sup>5</sup>

What I learned and hope to have shared with you is the desire to have my own clear definition of Healing Crisis, and to be prepared to describe it to clients when I mention this term.

Please join our monthly conversations on the last Monday of every month. €

#### Resources:

- [www.healthhomehappy.com/2012/04/what-is-a-healing-crisis.html](http://www.healthhomehappy.com/2012/04/what-is-a-healing-crisis.html)
- [www.globalhealingcenter.com/natural-health/what-is-a-healing-crisis](http://www.globalhealingcenter.com/natural-health/what-is-a-healing-crisis)
- [reikiinmedicine.org/clinical-practice/healing-crisis-what-is-it](http://reikiinmedicine.org/clinical-practice/healing-crisis-what-is-it)

#### References:

1. Healing Crisis Defined <http://www.the-natural-path.com/healing-crisis-article.html>
2. <http://www.enaturalhealthcures.com/healing-crisis-symptoms.html>
3. [http://austinburg.com/Your%20Health/herxheimer\\_reaction.htm](http://austinburg.com/Your%20Health/herxheimer_reaction.htm)
4. Mothering Jul/Aug 2003, Issue 119, p32-41
5. A Natural Prescription for Better Health August 2, 2001, Dr. James Gordon

Below are a few personal stories about Healing Crisis shared on the HTPA Let’s Chat conversation, November 29, 2014.

About a year after I took my first Healing Touch class I gave a session to my 88 year-old mother. She had complained that her left hip was hurting. Her doctor said that x-rays showed she had fallen and broken her back a couple of times in the past few years.

Two days after I gave her a 45 minute Healing Touch session on my new treatment table she went into the hospital for about ten days because she was unable to walk. My mother and my father both thought that I “caused” her hospitalization, intense pain and debilitation. I was afraid that somehow our healing session had caused her problem.

Thank goodness I talked to my Healing Touch mentor who explained that my mother had experienced what is called a healing crisis. The good news is that two weeks after her healing session my mother felt fine. My belief is that without the healing session my mother would have continued her gradual physical decline and increased pain until she was disabled. Her back and legs remained pain free for two years.

When I received acupuncture I experienced something similar to a healing crisis. I called my acupuncturist three hours after my acupuncture session and wanted to know what she did to me. When she asked what was happening I explained that I was experiencing about twenty minutes of every major illness I had ever had in reverse order - including the intense pain of a ruptured appendix.

My acupuncturist was excited to hear what I was experiencing and said that it is called the “Law of Cure”. She said that what I described was the textbook example used in teaching acupuncture.

Early in my mentorship, I had a new acquaintance call me to ask for a Healing Touch session. She explained that she had recently gone to a free clinic for a female exam and had been shocked and “slammed” by a “quick and dirty” diagnosis of cervical cancer. She was recently divorced, had no health insurance and few financial resources. She responded very well to the HT session. However, as she was leaving, she referred to a mild headache she felt coming on that reminded her of past migraines. Indeed, a full-blown three-day migraine enveloped her. I was so concerned that I had caused this, and questioned the technique I used, and wondered if the sequence had overwhelmed her. The ‘rest of the story’ was months in coming back to me during which time my client was able to get family support and insurance coverage. In a casual conversation my client shared all she had been through and wondered if it would have been possible without the rest her body had during her three day withdrawal while recovering from the migraine.