





# Exceptional Experiences of Healers

This article is a reprint from

*Energy* magazine™

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Exceptional and non-ordinary experiences, also termed anomalous experiences, have long been associated with healing, occurring in both healers and healees. A few vivid examples:

Journalist Tom Harpur (1995) felt a *"surge of an electric-like current into my hands and up my arms"* as healer Kathryn Kuhlman grasped his hands.

Psychotherapist Sean Haldane (2014) states that, *"I began to see sheets and waves of blue light. . . rising from a client's chest as it heaved up and down, then gave, and he broke into sobbing"* as the client experienced an emotional release.

A nurse healer looked at a patient and *"saw all these angels around [the patient's] bed,"* just before the patient went into cardiac arrest. She saw the patient leave her body and was able to telepathically communicate with the patient, encouraging her to re-enter her body during the resuscitation (Helmsley and Glass, 2002).

Such strange and unusual experiences are common among gifted healers, but are largely unstudied by the academic community, in part due to the complexity of the healing process, which bridges the fields of medicine, physics, psychology and parapsychology (Dossey, 2008).

To learn more about the exceptional experiences of healers, I recently conducted an online survey of 183 Healing Touch (HT) practitioners and students. Participants ranged in age from 25 to 80 years-old, and were distributed across eight countries (90% in USA, 6% in Canada) and 37 states. The participants were fairly well divided between HT students (Levels 1-4, 40%) and HT practitioners/instructors (Level 5 and above, 60%). In the survey, healers rated the frequency of their sensory and non-ordinary experiences, with 37 close-ended questions based on a Likert scale (e.g., "how often do you feel heaviness or congestion in the biofield"), with 6 additional, open-ended questions (e.g., "describe any unusual visual experiences").

Touch sensations were the most frequently reported exceptional experiences. As summed up by one healer, I feel *"all kinds of [touch] sensations, all the time. Electrical, static sensations. Bubbles. Effervesce. Like my hand is over the top of a glass of soda. Rolling waves of all amplitudes. Vibrations."*

When clients had areas of physical pain, healers described feeling *"a zap of pain," "pricks," "bumps"* or *"bubbles"* while moving their hands through that area. Another commonly reported sensation was *"cool air leaks," "energy leaks"* or *"leaks where a wound needs to be closed."*



Feelings of heaviness or congestion were noted around “clogged areas” or in areas with energy “blockage.” Dense areas in the biofield were experienced by some healers as “stickiness.” On rare occasions, healers felt sharp objects in the biofield, such as a “feeling of broken glass when passing my hands over a client with advanced lung disease.”

Relatively few healers reported seeing “auras” or “chakras.” Instead, the most common visual exceptional experiences were seeing “different colors,” “lots of images related to the client’s life,” and nonphysical guides. As one healer noted, “I often ‘see’ colors within

share their most exceptional experiences. The most common experience involved smells and odors associated with deceased relatives/pets of the clients. For example, “Once I smelled burning car tires.” (The client’s mother [deceased] had worked at a tire factory.) Unpleasant odors, “the smell of something rotten,” “acrid sour,” “stale” or “smoke” were noted when healers were clearing “very dense energies” from the client’s biofield.

Despite the unpleasantness, one healer reported, “I know I’m done with an intervention when the smell goes away.” Pleasant odors such as flower smells

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a client’s field, sometimes for a short period, sometimes for an extended period. Sometimes the colors change and/or move.” Another healer reported, “Colors and shapes will often appear in areas of energy disturbance.” Some unusual visual experiences were seeing “orbs” or sparkles, “blue light streaming from the fingertips,” “waves” of energy and dark energies/shadows moving off of clients’ bodies.

The most common auditory experience was a telepathic conversation with a guide or other nonphysical being. Some healers seem to actually hear voices, described by one healer as a “disembodied voice.” Other healers say that, “I don’t actually ‘hear’ it. . . It is more like an intuitive thought.” A variety of unusual sounds were heard during healing sessions including, “crackling energy sounds,” humming and buzzing, music, singing, birds, bells/chimes, mumbling/whispers and “tonal frequencies.” Sometimes both healer and client heard the sound. For example, “while holding. . . a client’s heart chakra, I heard a ‘pop’ which sounded like a balloon. . . exploding. The client also heard this and opened her eyes and asked what that was!” Unusual smells and tastes during Healing Touch were reported as rare or infrequent, but the unusual nature of these sensations prompted many healers to

and perfumes were also reported: “I’ve smelled roses many times,” and “I smelled a beautiful scent (indescribable) while working on a client who passed away shortly afterward.”

What can these observations tell us? The unusual sensations felt by healers may be due to:

1. healer sensitivity to actual physical fields surrounding the client’s body (i.e., biofield) and/or in the healing space;
2. synesthesias, where the healer’s nervous system interprets an unknown stimulus in terms of a particular sense sensation, for example, smelling an odor in response to a complex, magnetic field but with no odorant molecules present; and/or
3. hallucinations, which may be meaningful to healer and/or client, but are not based on any external stimulus.

Occam’s razor states that among competing hypotheses, the one with the fewest assumptions should be selected. Healers sensing actual physical fields would be the simplest hypothesis, although



not a popular one, given current research focus on nonlocal, quantum fields.

What sort of physical fields may be involved? One example would be electrostatic forces. The inventor Nickola Tesla observed that electrostatic forces between two bodies can produce sparks, but also “a sensation like the pricking of a needle” and “streams of feeble light” emanating from the body surface (Martin, 1992).

In the present study, HT practitioners described occasionally:

1. a prickle sensation in their hands while working in the biofield of clients,
2. blue light streaming from their fingertips, and
3. a spark-like sensation while touching their clients—these sensations may be due to electrostatic forces.

As further evidence for electrostatic charge buildup during healing sessions, one practitioner who often works with surgical patients during Pre-Op and Post-Op noted, “My energy work often interferes with the electronic monitoring equipment creating artifacts.” Other physical fields that can produce unusual sensations include weak, complex, magnetic fields; low-level radioactivity; ultrasonic vibrations; and radiofrequencies.

The results of my survey clearly show a richness and consistency in what healers experience. Healer observations are invaluable in providing clues as to how energy healing “works.” €



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