



Turn a page.  
Trees will thank you.

The background of the cover is a photograph of a bicycle with white daisies attached to its handlebars. The bicycle is green and is parked outdoors with a blurred green background. In the top left corner, there is an orange circle with white radial lines, containing the word 'Energy' in a white script font. To the right of this circle, the word 'magazine' is written in an orange sans-serif font. Below the title, the tagline 'Sharing Energy - Transforming the World' is written in a grey sans-serif font. In the top right corner, a white box with an orange border contains the text 'May/June 2017 - Issue Ninety-One' in a grey sans-serif font. On the right side of the cover, there is a quote in a white script font, followed by the author's name in a grey sans-serif font.

# Energy magazine

Sharing Energy - Transforming the World

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*Laughter and mirth  
are universal human  
states of being.*

– Lori Chortkoff Hops, PhD





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## Does Being “Spiritual” Help You Be Physically Healthy?

Can our spiritual and religious beliefs affect our health? Research indicates they might—at times, in different ways. An article referenced the definition of spirituality from a panel of experts at the National Institute of Healthcare Research as “the feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors that arise from a search for the sacred,”<sup>1</sup> while religion can be defined as “the commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance; or a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices.”<sup>2</sup> Regardless of whether these feelings and behaviors stem from a particular religion or from the humbling conviction of a greater power, they have the potential to influence health outcomes.

For instance, spirituality may positively affect several aspects of an individual’s life, including having a sense of meaning in life, being at peace with oneself, engaging in compassionate and giving social relationships, and practicing forgiveness.<sup>3</sup> Forgiveness, in particular, is commonly emphasized in several religions, from Christianity to Hinduism.<sup>4</sup> It could then be argued that some of the health benefits of religious practices may be partly due to forgiveness.

Correlation studies have found that forgiveness is positively associated with improved well-being<sup>5</sup> and reduced levels of depression, anxiety and anger.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, forgiveness has also been linked with less negative emotions, fewer reports

of physical ailments, less medication use, reduced fatigue, better sleep quality and fewer physical complaints.<sup>7</sup> Hostility, on the other hand, is associated with harmful health habits (such as smoking, overeating and excessive alcohol consumption) and increased risk of coronary heart disease, reduced social support and prolonged stress response.<sup>8,9,10</sup> Forgiveness may be the antidote to hostility.

One study<sup>4</sup> looking at the relationships between religion, forgiveness, hostility and health found that participants who were more religious were significantly more likely to be forgiving. The study, which consisted of a structural equation analysis of data collected from a national survey of 1,629 participants, also found that greater forgiveness was associated with less hostility, which in turn was associated with greater subjective physical health. Although religion had only a relatively small indirect effect on health, the researchers argued it still has significant positive health consequences.

Prayer is another form of spiritual practice. Direct-contact intercessory prayer has been associated with the clinical improvement of individuals with chronic rheumatoid arthritis, even after one-year follow up.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, among a group of depressed patients, some of whom also suffered with anxiety, it was found that a series of six weekly prayer intervention sessions resulted in less depression and anxiety, more optimism and greater levels of spiritual experience than did the pre-prayer measures.<sup>12</sup> The beneficial effects were still present after one-year follow up.

One potential limitation, however, is the fact that the participants actively sought to be part of the study indicating their liking towards prayer as a healing modality, thus suggesting the placebo effect. While this may hamper the generalization of the findings, it could be argued that individuals who believe in prayer as a means of improving health can adopt this modality as part of treatment to increase chances of success. After all, praying has no side-effects.

As expected, not all science supports the benefits of spiritual practices, particularly when it comes to cardiovascular health. A study conducted with postmenopausal women enrolled in the Women’s Health Initiative Observational Study revealed that a self-reported higher frequency of private spiritual activity was associated with increased cardiovascular risk.<sup>13</sup> However, there are several reasons why that might have been the case.

The study was conducted with a large population of community-dwelling postmenopausal women, including women with history of diabetes, liver disease, dialysis, asthma, emphysema, lupus, Alzheimer’s disease, multiple





sclerosis, Parkinson disease, ALS and some forms of cancer. Furthermore, it measured spirituality/religiosity based on frequency of meditation, prayer or reading of religious texts as opposed to measuring traits characteristic of spiritual individuals, as previous research has done. Finally, the information was collected via self-reported questionnaires and time spent on spiritual practices was reported retrospectively based on the prior year's spiritual/religious activities. The authors also commented on the findings, stating that the prevalence of severe, chronic comorbidities in the participating women was associated with a higher frequency of private spiritual practice likely as a coping mechanism in the face of declining health and advancing age.<sup>13</sup>

If you are wondering whether the health benefits of spirituality go beyond religion, the answer is yes. While both concepts are related, we have seen they have distinct definitions. You do not have to be religious to be spiritual. Elements of spiritual well-being such as meaning, forgiveness, compassion, peace and faith can be found in both spiritual and religious individuals.<sup>3</sup>

A study<sup>1</sup> conducted with 100 highly religious men and women looked at how spiritual well-being influenced physiological measures such as 24h blood pressure (BP), inflammation, fasting glucose and blood lipids. The study examined the possibility that spiritual well-being may be linked to greater church attendance, but it turned out to be unrelated. Instead, it was found that higher spiritual well-being was linked to lower levels on multiple cardiovascular risk factors, suggesting a cardioprotective effect. Specifically, higher spiritual well-being was associated with significantly lower inflammation, fasting glucose, systolic and diastolic BP, as well as greater systolic BP nocturnal dipping.

In the above mentioned study, the constructs measured as part of "spiritual well-being" included dimensions of meaning, peace, faith and additional spiritual concerns, such as connection to a higher power and to others, gratitude, and forgiveness. One may hypothesize that it is through these key characteristics that spirituality exerts its positive functions on physiology, ultimately resulting in improved physical and psychological health.

While the seemingly arcane concept of healing from a disease or fostering health through a spiritual practice may appear esoteric and hard to grasp, science has been elucidating this mystery into measurable outcomes. And while we cannot reduce all constructs into a single variable that can be isolated, studied, measured, then validated or rejected, at least these studies help us understand the role—and power—of believing in something greater than

oneself. This belief results in specific thoughts, feelings and behaviors that are conducive to health, while also optimizing our physiology in salubrious ways. You do not have to be a believer to acknowledge its benefits; but you might want to become one in order to experience them. €



Dr. Deanna Minich is an internationally recognized, cutting-edge wellness and lifestyle medicine expert who has mastered the art of integrating ancient healing traditions with modern science. Her unique "whole self" approach to nutrition looks at physiology, psychology, eating and living within what she calls the "7 Systems of Health." A five-time book author and founder of Food & Spirit, she continues to do detox programs with individuals to help them achieve better health. Her new book is *Whole Detox*, published by HarperCollins in March 2016. For more information, visit [www.DrDeannaMinich.com](http://www.DrDeannaMinich.com).

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# The Twelve Chakra System: Expanded Wisdom and Power

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Cyndi Dale

Everyone knows that there are seven chakras. Right? Yes—and no. Most Western esoteric systems feature seven in-body chakras, but I work with a twelve-chakra system. I find that the additional benefits offered by the five out-of-body chakras, as well as the overall depth of the system, greatly increases the power and effectiveness of a healer. The system also assures incredible benefits to a client. In fact, both parties can gain boosted mystical powers, closer relationships with Nature, increased control of invisible forces and more precise bodily shifts, such as impacting connective tissues, inherited disease patterns and more.

Know, however, that if you want to adopt this system, others might be confused, if not startled. When I explain that I utilize a twelve, instead of seven-chakra system, most people exclaim, “There are only seven chakras!” One argument against a twelve-chakra system? Apparently the ancestors would be horrified, as they originally created a seven-chakra system.

The truth is that there is not a traditional or ancestral chakra structure. The only magic in the number “seven” is that the seven-chakra schematic became popular in the West about one hundred years ago. There are actually dozens of subtle energy systems, which count anywhere between three and nearly unlimited numbers of chakras. As well, depending on cultural

points-of-view, chakras are attributed with differing types of abilities and purposes. Though many cultures agree that there are energy bodies called “chakras,” the perspective about what this means varies depending on where you sit in the world.

The goal of this article is to showcase my twelve-chakra system, which I developed over twenty years ago, based on personal observation and cross-cultural research. At the time, my system was seen as unique. Since my first sharing, the system has been explored in a number of my books, which are sold in over twenty languages, and adopted by healers and intuitives around the world. What began as an almost-insignificant footnote has blossomed into a sort of phenomenon.

There is a reason for the twelve-chakra system’s popularity. It is extremely in-depth, expands the bounds of the human self and codifies unusually powerful energies. Besides expanding the chakra structure, the system also features an energy egg, which adds dimensionally to auric field work, and reveals how the backsides of the chakras differ from the front sides. I will outline these functions shortly. But first, I want to offer a basic definition of a chakra, further explain the reason that the seven-chakra system is so entrenched in the West and present a handful of alternative cross-cultural systems. The latter knowledge will further substantiate the questionability of only adhering





to the rigid Hindu seven-chakra system.

Basically, a chakra is a subtle energy center. Also called a body, organ or node, a chakra converts subtle energy to physical energy and vice versa. Energy is information that vibrates. Everything is made of energy, but generic energy can operate in two forms. Subtle energy is elusive and often immeasurable, usually likened to quantum energy. This means that it moves faster than the speed of light. As such, it has psychic properties and distorts the time-space continuum. Subtle energy can literally disappear before it appears, appear before you need it and do everything else in-between.

their bodies and that these and other subtle structures and energies dictate many aspects of their lives.

*The Serpent Power* was actually one of many interpretations of the East Indian or Hindu chakra system. In particular, it explored a Laya yoga approach based on two tantric works, the *Sat Chakra Nurapana* and the *Paduka Panchakra*. Ironically, Woodroffe actually proposed six in-body chakras, not seven. He envisioned the seventh chakra as outside of the body and a summation of the energetic system, not an actual chakra.

Inclusive of the seventh chakra, Woodroffe's proposal

*Tangible reality is produced by the activities of subtle energy, which form the latticework upon which physical energy organizes.*

Physical energy is measurable in that it can be perceived through the basic five senses. Because it functions within the classical laws of physics, physical energy seems more substantial than subtle energy. Physicality is merely the tip of the iceberg, however. Tangible reality is produced by the activities of subtle energy, which form the latticework upon which physical energy organizes. Because chakras transform one version of energy to another, they are ideal organs through which to manipulate change. You can impact both subtle and physical realities at the same time through subtle energy practices.

Since chakras are difficult to measure, it is only logical to assume that whoever first counted seven chakras might have missed a few. We can also suppose that cultures numbering less than seven chakras "clumped" a few of them together. Truth be told, the main reason that Westerners believe there are seven chakras is due to a book that was published in the early 1900s. Written by Sir John Woodroffe, who used the pen name Arthur Avalon, *The Serpent Power*<sup>1</sup> caused a huge paradigm shift. Westerners were shocked to realize that there are invisible organs in

of the chakras, explained in terms of Hindu names, Western labels, and locations, is as follows:

| Hindu Name  | Western Chakra     | Location           |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Muladhara   | Coccygeal/root     | Coccyx             |
| Svadhithana | Sacral             | Genitals           |
| Manipura    | Navel              | Beneath navel      |
| Anahata     | Solar Plexus/heart | Center of chest    |
| Vishuddha   | Throat             | Neck               |
| Ajna        | Third eye          | Brow               |
| Sahasrara   | Crown              | Crown <sup>2</sup> |

Of course, we would not be discussing a twelve-chakra system if Woodroffe's version really was the original or the only Hindu schematic. It was not. Hindu expert David Gordon White argues that the earliest Hindu source of the chakra system is the *Bhagavata-purana*, which lists six (not seven) locations or sthana: the navel (nabhi), heart (hrt), breast (uras), root of the palate (svatalumula,) between the eyebrows (bhruvoran-



tara), and cranium (murdha.) This framework emerged from the *Kaulajñana-nirṇaya*, the esoteric teaching of the Yogini Kaula School from around the eleventh century BCE. However, additional confusion abounds, since that text actually outlines eight chakras.

In fact, six, seven or eight chakras were not the only norm. Within the Hindu arena, we find that the *Lakṣmi-Tantra* text, dated between the ninth and twelfth centuries CE, cites three centers of visualization and thirty-two additional centers dotted along the body's axis. The *Saiddhantika Sardhatrisatikālottara* devotes a chapter to a circle of channels, the "nadī-cakra," that enable access to supernatural powers. Other texts illuminate the subtle body as an inverted banyan tree or a circle of goddesses, while some of the earliest writings describe chakra systems with nine, eleven or even three sets of sixteen chakras.<sup>3</sup>

Now for the real fun. Let us take a quick trot around the globe, where we will find even more amazing chakra accountings and services. Here are a few highlights, culled from the hundreds I could provide, described in my book, *Llewellyn's Complete Book of Chakras*:<sup>4</sup>

- **Taoism.** This Chinese spiritual system presents twelve major energy centers and three dantiens, vital subtle bodies that circulate energy.
- **Pranic healing.** As per Master Chao, this healing process utilizes eleven major chakras and several secondary chakras. All chakras enable the transfer of vital energy from one person to another.
- **Tree of Life.** The universal phenomenon of a Tree of Life usually showcases ten spheres that form a developmental ladder to Oneness.
- **Yoruba.** This system offers seven orishas, the equivalent of chakras, serving as sanctuaries for helpful gods and goddesses.
- **Zoroastrianism.** One of many ancient Middle Eastern systems, this one offers six emanations

called amesha spentas that link us to animate spirits that permeate our body.

- **Heyschasm.** This contemplative form of Eastern Orthodox Christianity encourages meditation upon four energy centers.
- **Andean Incan.** There are many Andean systems. One presents five energy centers called nawis, in addition to nawis found in the right and left eyes.
- **Incan system.** Along with several Tibetan and modern systems, this one proposes numerous transcendent chakras, found atop the head, as well as chakras in or under the feet.<sup>5</sup>

As you can see, it is not illogical to assume twelve chakras, or any other number for that matter.

So, what is my twelve-chakra system? Let me introduce you.

## The Twelve-Chakra System

In this section, I will first outline the twelve chakras. I will showcase each chakra's physical location and related endocrine gland, vital physical functions and the chakra's overall mission. As well, I will define each chakra's psychic sensitivity. Every chakra vibrates within a specific band of subtle energy, drawing in and emanating its own particular types of psychic data. After that, I will highlight the tasks performed by the five out-of-body chakras and the functions of the backsides of the twelve chakras. As you read about these various functions, focus on the information that is new to you. You can add this knowledge to your healer's tool kit.

### The Twelve Chakras

#### First Chakra

**Location:** Hips/adrenals

**Rules:** Genital organs and adrenals; coccygeal vertebrae; affects some kidney, bladder and excretory functions; skin

**Mission:** Security and survival

**Psychic sensitivity:** Physical empathy



## Second Chakra

*Location:* Sacrum/testes and ovaries

*Rules:* Part of the adrenal system; intestines; parts of kidney function; some aspects of reproductive system; sacral vertebrae and the neurotransmitters determining emotional responses

*Mission:* Feelings and creativity

*Psychic sensitivity:* Feeling empathy

## Third Chakra

*Location:* Solar plexus/pancreas

*Rules:* Pancreatic system; all digestive organs in stomach area, including liver, spleen, gallbladder, stomach, pancreas, and parts of kidney system; lumbar vertebrae

*Mission:* Mentality and life structure

*Psychic sensitivity:* Mental empathy

## Fourth Chakra

*Location:* Chest/heart

*Rules:* Heart and lungs; circulatory and oxygenation systems; breasts; lumbar and thoracic vertebrae

*Mission:* Relationships and healing

*Psychic sensitivity:* Relational empathy

## Fifth Chakra

*Location:* Throat/thyroid

*Rules:* Thyroid gland; larynx; mouth and auditory systems; lymph system; thoracic and cervical vertebrae

*Mission:* Communication and guidance

*Psychic sensitivity:* Clairaudience

## Sixth Chakra

*Location:* Brow/pituitary

*Rules:* Pituitary gland; parts of hypothalamus; visual and olfactory systems; memory storage; some problems with ears and sinus

*Mission:* Self-image and strategy

*Psychic sensitivity:* Clairvoyance

## Seventh Chakra

*Location:* Top of the head/pineal

*Rules:* Pineal gland; parts of hypothalamus; higher learning and cognitive brain systems; parts of immune system

*Mission:* Purpose and spirituality

*Psychic sensitivity:* Prophecy

## Eighth Chakra

*Location:* One-to-two inches over the head/thymus

*Rules:* Thymus (immune system); memory retrieval functions; aspects of central nervous system; thalamus

*Mission:* Karma and universal linkages

*Psychic sensitivity:* Shamanism—all psychic gifts

## Ninth Chakra

*Location:* Arm's length over the head; diaphragm

*Rules:* Diaphragm; corpus callosum and other higher learning centers

*Mission:* Soul programs and plans

*Psychic sensitivity:* Harmony with soul energies

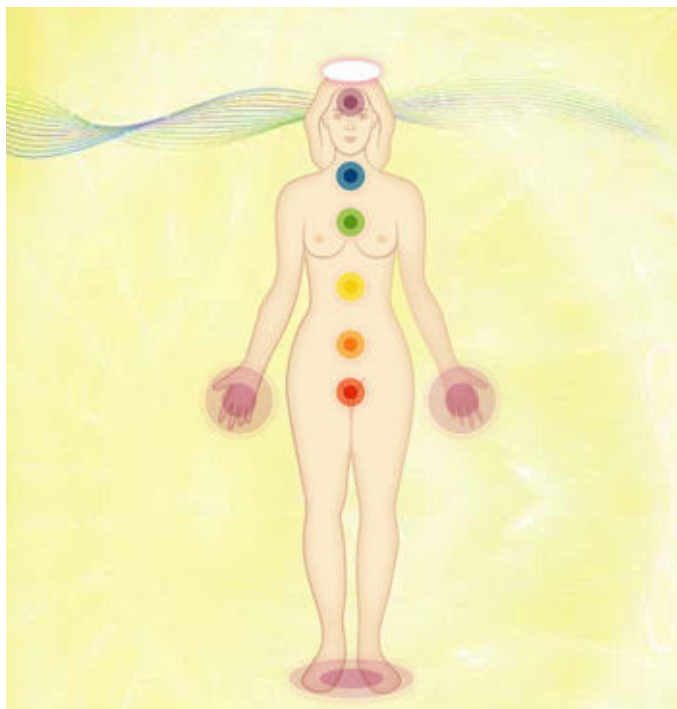
## Tenth Chakra

*Location:* One-to-two feet under the feet, connecting to the ground as if by a cord when we are not standing/bone marrow

*Rules:* Feet, legs and bones

*Mission:* Relationship with legacy and nature

*Psychic sensitivity:* Environmental empathy







### Eleventh Chakra

*Location:* Near outside of auric field with tendrils emanating from this field and wrapping around the hands and the feet/connective tissue

*Rules:* Parts of skin, muscles and connective tissue

*Mission:* Governs natural and supernatural forces and energy conversion

*Psychic sensitivity:* Awareness and command of forces

*Note:* Natural forces are made of elements including the fire, air, water and earth. They can appear like lightning, wind, ocean waves and the energy causing earthquakes. Supernatural forces have names like the “powers” and “virtues” and can be summoned and directed to create magical change. These supernatural forces can create positive or negative effects, depending on the person making the commands.

### Twelfth Chakra

*Location:* Outer bounds of auric field and 32 points in body

*Rules:* Secondary chakric sites, including the knees, elbows, palms and organs; this layer connects to your energy egg (see following description)

*Mission:* Ending of human self, access to energy egg

*Psychic sensitivity:* Unique to you

In regard to the twelfth chakra, one of its most important functions is to manage the energy egg. This egg is known to shamans around the world and serves as a cellular membrane around the cell. This permeable filter determines what can enter our field or be kept out. There are actually three layers to the egg. These layers, described from closest to farthest away from the body, are as follows:

- *Innermost layer:* Affects our physical self and everyday reality.
- *Middle layer:* Runs thought forms and consciousness patterns. Determines what disappears or appears in our lives based on our goals and dreams.
- *Outer layer:* Connects us to the cosmos.

Want to work with the energy egg? Imagine that a client is physically sick and nothing is making a difference. Send energy through the innermost layer into the first chakra, the ultimate manager of physical health. This incoming energy will not only clear and plump up the first chakra, but be distributed throughout the system, as the twelfth chakra connects into the body through 32 secondary points. What if a client is struggling to make sense of a relationship? Enable the flow of energy through the middle layer, which can enable a shift of perspective. What if you need a miracle? That is the territory of the outer layer, which is a conduit to the tips of the heavenly realms.

### The Five Out-of-Body Chakras

In more depth, you can tap into these five additional chakras to perform the following functions:

*Eighth chakra:* Interact with beings of different dimensions and planes of existence. Work through past and future lives and visit parallel or concurrent realities.

*Ninth chakra:* Understand the nature and purpose of your soul and others’ souls. Perceive symbols that describe a person’s unique being.

*Tenth chakra:* Comprehend and clear genealogical issues, work through DNA and epigenetic disorders, activate positive genealogical connections, and connect with all beings and forms from Nature.

*Every chakra vibrates within a specific band of subtle energy, drawing in and emanating its own particular types of psychic data.*



*Eleventh chakra:* Command natural and supernatural forces.

*Twelfth chakra:* Link with the energy egg and gain access to one's unique spiritual gifts.

Think of how helpful it might be to more thoroughly examine clients' potential past life causes of issues, talk with one of their ancestors, command a wind-storm to cleanse bodily microbes or access heavenly energies never before seen. Why would we not work with these additional five chakras, alongside the standard seven?

Take a look at the brief descriptions of the overarching functions of the backside chakras. Know that even though it is hard to picture the backsides of the five out-of-body chakras, the backsides functionally exist.

The easiest way to picture and access the backside of an out-of-body chakra is to focus on its bodily hormone gland. For example, the eighth chakra manifests physically in the thymus. You can work on the front side of this chakra via the front of the thymus area and the backside through the opposite side of the body. Since the ninth chakra bonds into the diaphragm, simply approach the front side diaphragm for the front side chakra and the backside of

*By shifting clients' backside first chakra, you can alter the unconscious and subconscious beliefs affecting their manifesting abilities or physical health.*

How do you work with these out-of-body chakras? No differently than you do the in-body chakras. You can sense a chakra with your hands in the out-of-body vicinity. Use subtle energy techniques to palpate and shape that chakra or to send energy into the body, mind or soul through it. You can also focus your hands or mental energy on a chakra's in-body endocrine location, knowing that any shifts you make within the glandular system will be transferred to the external chakra center.

### **The Backside Chakras**

A vital aspect of my twelve-chakra system is an emphasis on the backsides of the chakras. In general, working with the front side of a chakra affects our everyday lives. Through the backsides, we can interact with the subterranean factors creating concrete reality. For instance, by shifting clients' backside first chakra, you can alter the unconscious and subconscious beliefs affecting their manifesting abilities or physical health. The resulting changes will be powerful and dynamic.

the bodily area for the backside chakra. The eleventh chakra lies in the auric field but also surrounds the hands and the feet. You can therefore connect to the front side of the eleventh chakra by focusing on the palms of the hand or underneath the feet and the backsides can be found on the outside of the hands or the top of the feet.

The tenth chakra interacts with the bone marrow, which makes it more challenging to determine the front versus backside. I simply picture an energetic line of energy flowing downward from my spine. About two feet under my feet, I imagine a ball of light which is my tenth chakra. The part of the chakra facing forward is my front side and that pointing backward is the chakra's backside. As for the twelfth chakra, although it locks into the body through 32 points, it is more heavenly than the other chakras. You can always envision it as a ball of light deep within your heart chamber and work with it from there. The front side of the chakra points forward and the backside is behind you.



Now onto a description of the functions related to the backside chakras.

## Chakric Backsides

*Chakra One, Backside:* Contains the beliefs and experiences related to manifesting, creating and flourishing in physicality.

*Chakra Two, Backside:* Opens to universal energy that can enhance our feelings.

*Chakra Three, Backside:* An intellectual template that organizes the energy for supportive life structures.

*Chakra Four, Backside:* Energy comes into the backside to help realize our heart's desires.

*Chakra Five, Backside:* Receives channeled guidance from beings in other dimensions, as well as aspects of ourselves. This data is passed to the front side for expression.

*Chakra Six, Backside:* Receives knowledge of all the paths that could move us forward.

*Chakra Seven, Backside:* An access point for connecting with beings of Spirit and the energy needed to achieve our spiritual purpose.

*Chakra Eight, Backside:* Accesses bodies of knowledge storing the past, our experiences through time and space, the history of Creation and the history of our own creation.

*Chakra Nine, Backside:* Illuminates the spiritual aspect of our soul's heritage, path and story.

*Chakra Ten, Backside:* Accesses the history of this earth and our own ancestry, as well as beings of Nature.

*Chakra Eleven, Backside:* Enables the command of supernatural and natural forces.

*Chakra Twelve, Backside:* Opens to energies, beings and support from all spiritual realms, known and unknown.

I encourage you to tap into any aspect of the twelve-chakra system to benefit yourself or your clients. And if you discover a few more chakras through your own work? Add these to your medicine bag as well!

To learn more about the 12-chakra system, see Cyndi's book *The Complete Book of Chakra Healing*. €



Author Cyndi Dale can be found at [www.CyndiDale.com](http://www.CyndiDale.com).

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# Spiritist Psychiatric Hospitals in Brazil

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Emma Bragdon, PhD

There are about 50 Spiritist psychiatric hospitals in Brazil, utilizing an integrative approach to recovery and stressing the spiritual alongside physical and emotional therapies that address the true causes of imbalance. Energy passes, similar to other Energy Medicine techniques, are central to the healing and health maintenance. This article briefly describes the Spiritist philosophy, its successes, as well as the treatments. Few people outside Brazil know of these hospitals or the more than 13,000 community centers that also offer Spiritist therapies in Brazil. Brazilian Spiritists have practiced combining psychotherapy with energy therapies to hasten recovery for more than 100 years. Perhaps it is time to export some Spiritist wisdom and practical knowledge to help our ailing mental healthcare system in the United States (USA).

## How Did I Learn?

I am a psychologist by academic training but began my career as a bodyworker and Neo-Reichian therapist. I now direct the Foundation for Energy Therapies, Inc., a charitable organization dedicated to education and research. Energy therapies have been central to my training and my private practice, as well.

From 2001 until 2012 I spent six months of each year in Brazil learning about Spiritist healing protocols by participating in the activities of a Spiritist center

in Abadiania, a village in central Brazil. I also visited other Spiritist centers and Spiritist psychiatric hospitals in many major cities of Brazil as the guest of their professional staff. I was awed and fascinated by the phenomena I witnessed. I saw many people healing from serious physical and mental issues, including cancer and schizophrenia, without the use of conventional medicine's typical tools—physical surgery and drugs—which are risky. I saw a dramatic display of the positive potentials of healing through the use of meditation, prayer, herbal remedies, peer support, study and receiving personal “energy passes” from highly trained healers who perform a version of “laying on of hands,” akin to Energy Medicine practices here in the USA. I wanted to transmit what I learned to others outside Brazil.

Philanthropic donations supported both my travel and documenting what I learned into four books and two documentary films. Throughout this time, I have often wondered, “Are Spiritist therapies a missing piece in our own healthcare system?” So, I continue to try to build bridges between Western medicine and the unique Spiritist way of healing. Integrative Mental Health for You is a division of the Foundation for Energy Therapies created in 2013. It offers online courses for the public and health care providers who want to learn more about an integrative approach to optimal wellness, similar to what Spiritists offer.



I also lead groups of healthcare providers to visit Spiritist centers in Brazil and learn about the effectiveness of the protocols from the practitioners themselves—who are also associate instructors for the week-long seminar. Participants love to meet psychiatrists and medical doctors who are also working as healers and sensitives in community centers and hospitals—not fettered by the limitations of being academically trained scientists.

My personal interest is not to proselytize Spiritism—instead, to facilitate observations and experiences that may inspire making positive changes in healthcare delivery in communities outside Brazil.

up to 40 million people use the services of Spiritist centers in Brazil—about a fifth of the population. The activities include training to become healers as well as classroom study, receiving energy passes, giving and receiving peer counseling, diagnosis by medical intuitives and an unusual treatment that we can liken to exorcism, called “disobsession.” All of these benefits are given for free in the Spiritist centers and people of all ages, sexual orientations, cultural and religious backgrounds are welcomed.

The charge? The centers offer what we would call free complementary healthcare. Even the hospitals are

*Spiritism refers to a philosophy, really a way of life that includes knowledge of how the world of spirits is in meaningful communication with the world of human beings.*

### Spiritism in a Nutshell

Spiritism is a branch of Spiritualism. The word, Spiritism, was created by Allan Kardec, a French academic, who lived in the mid-19th century. Spiritism refers to a philosophy, really a way of life that includes knowledge of how the world of spirits is in meaningful communication with the world of human beings. Most importantly, it stands for a lively and well-organized path of supporting personal and spiritual evolution.

Spiritists take Christ as an ideal model of being, but, unlike conventional Christians, Spiritists also believe in reincarnation and the impact of karma. They also have no priesthood, no churches nor other accoutrements of conventional religion. Early Spiritualists were simply fascinated with the phenomena of séances and spirit communication and were not invested in personal evolution. Spiritism formalized a more serious, disciplined path of life dedicated to becoming more infused with a consciousness like that of Christ—loving and wise, trustworthy and moral. The numbers of people attending Spiritist activities in Brazil is growing rapidly right now. It is estimated that

in a position to offer free services to the financially disadvantaged for a period of almost a month, but otherwise must charge fees.

### Results of Spiritist Healing

*If the spirit is not acknowledged as existing and real, psychiatrists will only pay attention to effect. They will be impeded from divining the root causes and will never cure effectively... New theories—with solid experimental foundation—point at illuminating and unveiling the spirit. But, we need courage, not only to acknowledge these theories, but also to examine them.<sup>3</sup> – J.L. Azevedo, MD*

Even though contemporary research studies are few, unusual successes in healing at the Spiritist centers and hospitals are reported through stories and some academic studies. In April 2004, the President of the Federation for Spiritism in San Paulo (FEESP), Avildo Fioravanti, told me in an interview that FEESP has more than a 90% success rate in helping addicts and the suicidally-depressed to recover normal functioning, without dependence on drug therapy. Social psychologist Canhadas<sup>2</sup> reported in 2001 that 70% of





clients experience great improvement and a definite cure of their problems, including all manner of physical and mental illnesses, at Grupo Noel, a Spiritist center in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Ivan Herve, MD,<sup>3</sup> a psychiatrist, completed a 20-year study in another Spiritist center in Porto Alegre. He reported extraordinary success helping those with profound mental health issues to recover. His study aligns with initial results of a 30+% cure rate documented in the 1930s by Dr. Ferreira<sup>4</sup> in the first Spiritist psychiatric hospital in Uberaba, Brazil.<sup>5</sup>

### Spiritist Treatments and Where to Find Them

There are more than 13,000 Spiritist centers within Brazil and 160 Spiritist community centers in 34 countries outside of Brazil (including 70 in the USA). Few in the USA offer services in English, as most were created by Spanish and Portuguese speakers who immigrated here and wanted to create extensions of their home countries. Whereas 50 Spiritist psychiatric hospitals exist in Brazil, none exist outside the country.

Patients in Spiritist psychiatric hospitals in Brazil can elect to have Spiritist treatments in addition to conventional psychiatric care. Psychiatric medication may be used within the hospital but is not relied on as much as it is in the USA and Europe. Psychotherapy and addiction counseling, various therapies (art, music, gardening and occupational) and outdoor sports are also available. A few of the key practices used for all patients who elect to have Spiritist treatments are laying-on of hands (*passé* in Portuguese), blessed water, prayer and peer support.

Patients with severe problems who are not responding to the above treatments can also have sessions with a medical intuitive (a sensitive person who can see into the subtle and physical bodies through the sixth sense and can articulate perceived problems to benefit the patient and the team of healthcare practitioners attending the patient). These patients may also become the focus of a group of well-trained and gifted sensitives (trained by supervisors to collaborate over decades) who practice “disobsession.” There is no English translation for this word. It involves

sensitives who can first perceive if a person has a spirit attached to them that is generating negative thought forms that the patient believes are his/or her own. Such thoughts might include “Kill yourself” or “Kill so and so” or “You are a terrible person.” These trained sensitives can perceive the spiritual and the psychological relationship that attracted the spirit to connect energetically to the patient—the true cause of imbalances. The sensitives in the group are also trained to help free the patient from the negative “attachments,” a.k.a. “obsessors,” and the obsessive thoughts they transmit.

Each of the Spiritist practitioners donates his/her time at no charge. This can amount from a few hours to more than 40 hours per week—depending on how much time each practitioner wants to donate. They believe that donating their time and attention to help others also benefits their own spiritual evolution as it enhances their communion with our divine source.

### Spiritist Laying-on of Hands

The Spiritist healers who practice the passes are trained at the community centers and then either work at these centers or go as a group to the Spiritist hospitals at an agreed upon time, usually twice each week.

The group serving the hospitals will enter a ward of patients at the psychiatric hospital and those patients who choose to participate sit in rows on chairs or in a circle. The healers know the healing protocol and have been taught to interact minimally with patients who might be highly sensitized or in altered states or extreme states of consciousness. The practitioners are asked to have next to no verbal communication or physical contact with patients within the treatment or outside of treatment. Their interaction is focused simply on the healing work and saying an uplifting prayer before the healing begins and after it is concluded within the whole group setting. Blessed water (also energized by laying on of hands) is made available to patients to drink as part of their healing between sessions.



The actual energy work typically involves circumscribed gestures where the healer passes his or her hands 3 to 6 inches above the body of the patient, starting above the head and passing down the body to below the knees. Treatments last only a few minutes per person, during which each patient remains seated, eyes closed, if possible. One at a time, the practitioners of the healing work stand in back or in front of each patient, giving each recipient about 3-5 minutes of concentrated attention.

Each healer focuses on transmitting Divine energy (e.g., the Holy Spirit, Christ's love or the energies

treatments and the calming influence usually lasts for days after the treatment.

### Are We Ready for This?

About eight years ago, I went to the largest psychiatric hospital in my state in Brattleboro, Vermont to offer my services for free and spoke to two administrators in leadership positions. I wanted to bring the Spiritist style of "laying on of hands" to the patients who were suffering on the locked addictions ward. I had collected a team of trained healthcare providers and ministers who would come with me to offer the kind of treatment we had seen given in the Spiritist

*Not so long ago, Brazil was populated with indigenous cultures that believed in the spiritual realms and were well acquainted with subtle forces of energy.*

coming from highly evolved disembodied spirits or angels) to the patient. To begin, the healer becomes focused, which involves shifting to an inspired state of consciousness whereby the healer perceives himself as a channel through which God's healing energy can flow to the patient. After a prayer to invoke a stream of Divine energy for healing, the dynamic healing then takes place through a continuum of transmission of energy—from the Divine source to the spirit of the incarnate healer and from the healer to the subtle and physical body of the patient.

An observer would see a series of strokes above the body to disperse energies that can lead to imbalance followed by a series of long strokes above the body to enhance the body's self-healing systems. The practitioner sending the pure vibration of compassion and care is considered essential to success. In order to transmit that vibration, the "pass-giver" is continuously involved in "reforma intima" (Portuguese for inner transformation so as to become more loving and wise).

On-site nurses say that patients find peace with the

psychiatric hospital in Porto Alegre, Brazil. We promised to do the healing work in a group for patients who wanted it, under the watchful gaze of the hospital nurses. We promised not to have physical contact with the patients or engage them in conversation or exchange contact information. The hospital refused the offer. No explanation was given other than "it's too unusual."

In Brazil the culture is more receptive to the philosophy and practices of Spiritism. Not so long ago, Brazil was populated with indigenous cultures that believed in the spiritual realms and were well acquainted with subtle forces of energy. When slaves were brought from Africa, they, too, had similar beliefs. The colonists from Europe intermarried with these cultures. Thus the cultures acknowledging subtle bodies and interacting in powerful ways with the spirits began to blend with the more Christian culture of the Europeans. As a result, healthcare practices in Brazil to this day often intermix conventional biomedical care with homeopathy, energy work, use of herbs and accessing the wisdom and love of spirits in a more integrative approach to health maintenance.

The Vermont hospital's response to me might be an indication of how far away our conventional care systems are from bridging to a more integrative approach to mental health care. Despite recent research findings regarding the positive impact of prayer, meditation and laying on of hands, it appears as if there are still very few ways of bringing Energy Medicine practices into psychiatric care in most of our U.S.-based institutions. Hopefully, we will continue to build bridges and construct a practical application of spirituality and energy work in mental health care in the future. €



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# Moving Energy Through Laughter Yoga

Lori Chortkoff Hops, PhD

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**C***hugga, chugga, chugga, chugga, choo-choo!* yelled the class members in unison. The chorus reverberated off the walls as feet in colorful socks shuffled through the space, hands trying to hold the shoulders of the person in front of them, snaking like a train with bodies stretching to catch up with the ever-changing rhythm of the leader. People were smiling and laughing. Many were breathless, sometimes collapsing forward in the weakness that accompanies deep laughter and joy. This was not a rowdy kindergarten class or playful scouting activity, but a group of adults who had come together for the serious purpose of having fun. Welcome to Laughter Yoga.

## What is Laughter Yoga?

Steeped in thousands of years' tradition originating in India, yoga, from the Sanskrit root "yuj," means to get hold of, yoke, integrate and harmonize. Yoga has many faces. Some of the more commonly known are breath work or pranayama, body postures or poses known as asanas, and acts of devotion and selflessness called karma yoga. Yoga purifies mind, body and spirit, connecting all together in a seamless whole. This is accomplished by harnessing universal cosmic energy or prana, that flows into the body through the breath. The breath is the key to good health, especially through deep exhalations, ridding the body of stale oxygen and energy.

Laughter yoga is a recent addition to the family of yoga practices, coined by the founder Dr. Madan Kataria of Mumbai, India in 1995. It combines the age-old health benefits of deep breathing, coupled with laughter-inducing exercises and meditative quiet. Laughter comes easily to most people, naturally creating long exhalations without having to think about or practice doing so. Dr. Kataria started his laughter groups by telling jokes in order to help his patients improve their chronic health problems, but soon found that humor is very personal: what one finds funny, another may not, or may even react with offense. Humor is learned and based on culture, whereas laughter is inborn and universal. Kataria quickly discovered when he and his patients acted playfully while laughing, rather than telling jokes, his patients responded with health and well-being, and enjoyed themselves. Even faked laughter worked, for he found that the body did not differentiate between a real laugh and one that was simulated. The body still created health producing effects.

I first learned about laughter yoga in March 2010 by attending Dr. Gulshan Sethi's class on the therapeutic effects of laughter at an integrative mental health conference. Dr. Sethi, a cardiothoracic surgeon and professor at the University of Arizona, utilized laughter yoga as a means to help with his own health concerns. Despite the great health benefits of laughter,



he cautioned not to try laughter yoga if a person had poor health including: a recent operation, hernia, intractable heart failure, intractable angina or if not cleared by a medical professional. Laughter yoga is not for everyone, so refrain from trying it if you are not comfortable for whatever reason.

### How Laughter Heals

#### Laughter and the Physical Body

Laughter is the supreme lung cleanser. One deep laugh forces air out of the lungs using a brisk movement of the diaphragm. This gust creates a longer

upon teasing and ridicule creates stress and tension, which is the opposite of joy and safety. Laughter's best side is enhanced by social settings filled with acceptance, openness and emotional warmth.

#### Laughter Yoga and the Energy Body

Laughter yoga classes are unique to each teacher, club and culture, but all include the core elements of breathing, clapping, chanting, smiling, laughing, moving, imagining and playfulness. Each class is a group activity, encouraging nearly constant eye contact with others, laughing deeply from the belly for no reason and adopting a childlike playfulness.

## *Laughter and mirth are universal human states of being.*

exhalation than inhalation, ridding the lungs of excess moisture, equipping the body with extra oxygen for good health and reducing the chance of lung infections. Laughter enhances the immune system, decreasing stress hormones and increasing natural killer cell activity. In the presence of laughter, the body readily supplies pain killing endorphins and decreases stress-related cortisol. The muscles relax and blood circulation is increased. This leads to a calm, clear mental state, decreasing anxiety and depression, and fostering relaxation and well-being. In order to receive the optimal health benefits of laughter, it must last continuously for at least 10 to 15 minutes, which often does not happen spontaneously in daily life. It is said that adults laugh on average 12-15 times a day, whereas young children laugh on average 300-400 times a day.

#### Laughter and Others

Laughter and mirth are universal human states of being. Regardless of language or dialect and across time, people produce laughter and instantly recognize laughter in others. Laughter is also catchy. If you see or hear someone deeply laugh from the belly, it is hard to be serious. Soon you too are smiling and maybe laughing without reason. You cannot help but feel the joy and the body responds with good health. However, not all laughter is created equal. Laughter based

Each portion of laughter yoga stimulates energy healing. All activity moves energy, which can be seen from multiple points of view, depending upon the culture, history, perspective and education of the observer. For instance, breathing is a physical action that has mind, body and spirit components. A deep breath affects the physical lungs and blood circulation, brings oxygen to the brain, opens the heart, moves chi or life force energy through the lung meridian and spreads prana throughout. Mind, body and spirit are fed.

Here are some more examples of energy movement with laughter yoga:

**Clapping** with open palms together stimulates energy points on the hands that connect to the entire body. These points are recognized by many healing traditions, including reflexology, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Tsalagi (Cherokee) system and the Five Elements in the Tibetan system (space, wind, fire, water and earth). See Dale, C. (2009) for more information.

**Chanting** creates vibrations in the throat, vocal chords and lungs, activating the throat chakra. Chakras ("wheels of light" in Sanskrit) spin subtle energy near glands and vital organs, moving prana



to balance the system. The throat chakra, associated with communication, is like a chimney for the other chakras, collecting and releasing prana from chakras above and below the neck. Chanting positive affirmations, such as “very good” which is often repeated in laughter yoga classes, sends messages of safety and good cheer to mind, body and spirit. When chanted as a group, the space vibrates in harmonious rhythms to which the body resonates.

**Smiling** with others promotes bonding and enhances social communication by providing emotional warmth.

**Moving** and stretching the body circulates lymph, blood and other fluids, and warms the muscles. Subtle energies such as chi or prana are stimulated, clearing blockages and interacting with the electromagnetic field around and interpenetrating the body.

**Imagining or Visualization** uses the mind’s eye to create images or stories. The third eye chakra (in between the eyebrows) opens where imagination and dreaming take place. Information from beyond the self enters through the crown chakra (above the head) and is projected outward through the third eye into space. Creative energies can then be made manifest through thoughts, feelings and actions.

**Playfulness** is open, creative, in the moment and fun. A childlike wonder ensues as the heart chakra, known for love and compassion, exudes joy. This freedom is described by Eden Energy Medicine founder Donna Eden as an attribute of the “strange flows,” known for jumping from spot to spot over the body, carrying good vibes everywhere they land.

**Laughing** produces all the effects described above.

### Try it for yourself

If you want to learn more, you can join in-person and online laughter yoga clubs. The official web site for Dr. Kataria’s Laughter Yoga University is [www.laughteryoga.org](http://www.laughteryoga.org). Laughter yoga classes are typically offered at

no charge, but check with your local club for more information. If you cannot or do not want to meet in person, you can meet every day for at least 15 minutes online via Skype with various laughter clubs all over the world. Another organization, the National American School of Laughter Yoga ([www.Laughteryogaamerica.com](http://www.Laughteryogaamerica.com)), holds an annual Laughter Conference. Mark your calendars for the first Sunday of May, celebrating World Laughter Day. Keep laughing and remember the wise words of Joel Goodman, “seven days without a laugh makes one weak.”



Author Lori Chortkoff Hops can be found at [www.DrLoriHops.com](http://www.DrLoriHops.com)

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# The Global Coherence Initiative: The Science of Interconnectivity

Rollin McCraty, PhD

Worldwide, an increasing number of people are experiencing mounting concerns about political upheaval, terrorism, extreme weather and other negative effects of climate change, shortages of energy, food and water, food and product safety, and economic instability. These concerns are creating a growing sense of urgency that we must change old structures that no longer serve humanity and the environment. Many people sense the current extreme polarization in society and chaos in so many of its institutions indicates we are on the threshold of a new era of social, spiritual and cultural evolution.<sup>1</sup>

We at the Global Coherence Initiative (GCI) believe humankind has reached a point in its consciousness that the evolution toward more interconnected, inclusive and cooperative social, economic and cultural systems is accelerating worldwide. That is precisely why GCI was created. This science-based, co-creative initiative was established to help facilitate a shift in global consciousness from instability and discord to balance, cooperation and enduring peace by uniting people globally in heart-focused care and intention. More than 200,000 people in 154 nations are involved with the initiative, which was launched in 2008 by HeartMath Institute, a nonprofit research and education organization.

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Among GCI's areas of research is the science of interconnectivity, in which we are exploring the dynamic relationship between both human consciousness and Earth's energetic systems, and between people and other living systems such as trees and forests.

In addition to conducting research, GCI employs several strategies aimed at increasing personal, social and global coherence. For example, we maintain an internet-based network that connects people worldwide who want to participate in helping to shift global consciousness. GCI members receive regular updates that inform them where to direct their energetic contributions of heart-focused care and intention, often to areas of unrest or where natural disasters have struck.

## Rise of the Field View of Reality

Classical physics conceived of reality as elementary building blocks made up of solid objects, separated by empty space. This view continues to be most people's view of reality, including scientists. With the discovery of radioactivity and electromagnetic fields and the development of modern quantum physics, whose validity in the understanding of elementary particles, atoms and molecules was fully established in the last century, a new view of reality has emerged.

In this new reality, especially in light of the experi-



mental confirmation of *entanglement*, physical objects cannot be understood or observed in isolation, but rather must be viewed as part of a holistic web of interconnectedness in which fields and relationships are pivotal.<sup>2</sup>

From this new perspective, the worldview shifts away from seeing the world only from the outside and interacting mechanistically to a participative, field-connected viewpoint in which there are no clear boundaries between nonmaterial fields and the physical world.

degree, mental health and behavior.<sup>7</sup> Data from solar and geomagnetic field detectors and human nervous-system activity, as reflected in brain waves and heart rate variability (HRV), show that human physiological rhythms and collective behaviors are synchronized with solar and geomagnetic activity. Disruptions in these fields can create adverse effects while other solar and magnetic indices are correlated with improved HRV and mental and emotional states. This likely is the result of a coupling between the human brain, cardiovascular and nervous systems, and reso-

*... our attitudes, emotions and intentions are not limited to the space inside our bodies, but they also can affect the mental and emotional states (consciousness) of others.*

Early 20th century biologists like Paul Weiss and Alexander Gurwitsch proposed that “biological fields” play a crucial role in the development of organisms and that human beings have, in addition to a solid physical body, a field component reaching out beyond the body’s boundaries. This is a view that most prescientific cultures embraced.<sup>3</sup> More recently, biophysics has shown that all living organisms are indeed permeated and surrounded by a weak electromagnetic field composed of optical photons and radio, microwave and extremely low frequencies.<sup>3,4</sup>

Based on experimental evidence indicating the existence of bioelectromagnetic fields, or *biofields*, new biophysical models have been developed that view human existence as multidimensional. Among the models is one with several levels of nonmaterial field organisms that have the field-related aspects of our thoughts, emotions and intuitions.<sup>2,5,6</sup>

Heliobiology is the branch of science that studies how solar and geomagnetic activity affect living organisms, especially humans. The majority of research in this field to date has focused on how magnetic field disturbances affect physiological health and, to a lesser

nating geomagnetic frequencies called Schumann resonances, which occur in the earth-ionosphere resonant cavity, and other ultralow frequencies called field-line resonances.<sup>1</sup>

There is growing evidence suggesting that magnetic fields, in addition to serving as a protective shield, also help to synchronize, energize and nonlocally interconnect living systems. The evidence suggests these fields act as carriers of biologically relevant and patterned information, which is embedded in the field and is distributed to all other living systems.<sup>8-10</sup> This implies that our attitudes, emotions and intentions are not limited to the space inside our bodies, but that they also can affect the mental and emotional states (consciousness) of others. This broadens our view of what interconnectivity means and how coherent, cooperative intent can be intentionally utilized to shape the future of the world in which we live.

GCI is hearing from an increasing number of people in all walks of life and cultures that they are developing new sensitivities that are enabling them to perceive the subtle energy fields around their bodies. The most common reports are related to the percep-



tion of an “energy” (like a subtle wind) flowing in and out of the heart area and hands or the perception of this energy flowing between people, trees and plants. If we can successfully help to cultivate people’s competence in perceiving their own biofields and the “frequency pitch” of the fields they are radiating, as well as the biofields of other people, and then this becomes accepted by society, it would be an enormous advancement in collective consciousness. It certainly could have a positive effect on the quality of human relationships and society once people truly “know” that we are not fully isolated from each other, but rather that we are interconnected and entangled with one another. We not only would have to accept responsibility for how our thoughts and emotions affect us, but also for what we are “feeding the field” and how that affects others.

An important aspect of that research is the Global Coherence Monitoring System (GCMS), a global network of magnetometers. The GCMS is a globally distributed network of ultrasensitive magnetic field detectors specifically designed to measure the magnetic resonances in the earth-ionosphere cavity, as well as resonances that are generated by the vibrations of the earth’s geomagnetic field lines and ultralow frequencies that occur in the earth’s magnetic field. Many of these magnetic frequencies occur in the same range as human physiological frequencies such as those of the human brain and cardiovascular systems. This network is providing a significant research tool to explore not only the effects of solar and geomagnetic disturbances on human health and consciousness, but also the interconnectivity of human beings with each other and with the earth’s magnetic field environment.

### **Magnetic Fields Carry Information**

In the same way that electromagnetic fields are used by cell phones (or any other communication device) to transmit information between the phone and the cell tower, we have found that biological systems work the same way.<sup>11</sup> Building on these findings, one of our hypotheses is that the earth’s magnetic fields also act as carriers of biologically relevant informa-

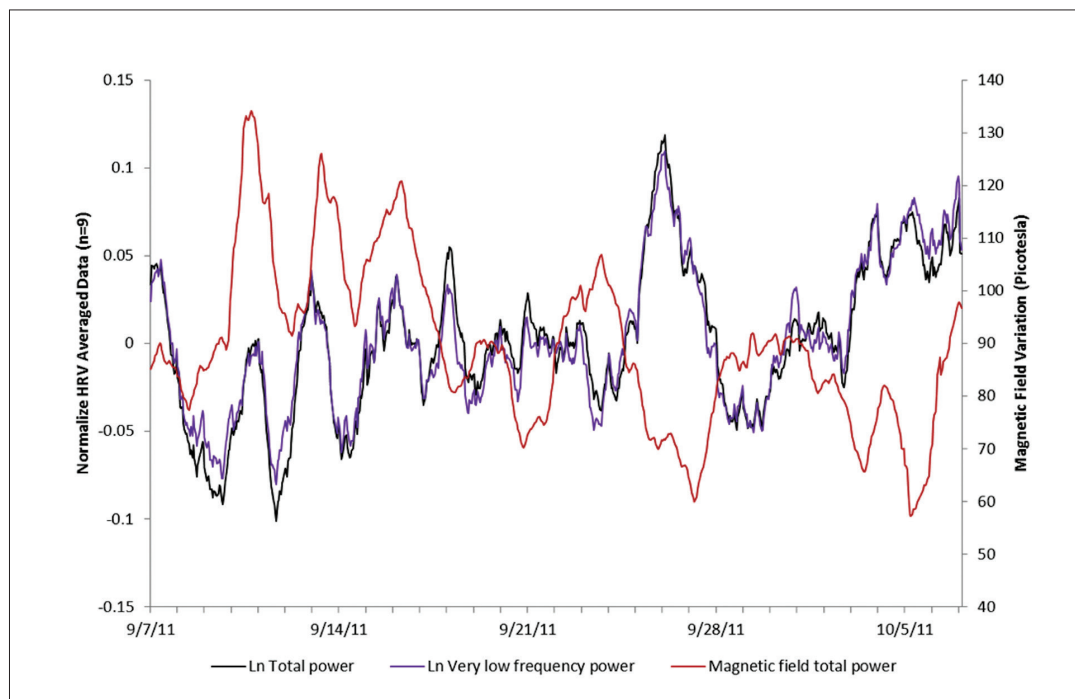
tion that can connect all living systems that are embedded within the field, which in this case is all living systems on Earth. As an extension of this hypothesis, we also suggest that we not only are receivers of biologically relevant information, but additionally, that we can feed information into a “global field environment.”

There is experimental evidence that human bioemotional energy can have a subtle, but significant and scientifically measurable nonlocal effect on people, events and organic matter.<sup>8,12-16</sup> For example, Steve Morris studied the effect of heart coherence in a group setting with people trained in maintaining states of heart coherence for several minutes and found that they could promote an increase in the coherence of untrained participants who were unaware of the experiment’s goal.<sup>17</sup>

In one of our studies in which continuous HRV recordings were obtained from 10 participants for 30 consecutive days, we found some surprising and unexpected results. Our findings emerged after time-synchronizing and removing all circadian rhythms from the HRV time series data. We found that participants’ HRV rhythms synchronized with each other across the 30-day period even though all participants simply went about their days normally and were in separate locations across California. (Figure 1).

### **Heart Coherence**

Our past research identified a psychophysiological state known as *heart coherence* that is the underpinning of optimal function.<sup>18,19</sup> Practical techniques, tools and technologies, frequently referred to as the HeartMath System, have been developed that help people shift into and maintain a state of heart coherence. The HeartMath System empowers people to better manage stress, increase performance and connect with a deeper self-awareness and intuitive intelligence.<sup>18-20</sup> Improvements in cognitive performance, focus, effectiveness, self-responsibility and social cohesion through use of the HeartMath System have been demonstrated in youth and adult populations.<sup>18,19,21-24</sup>



**Figure 1:** Shows the averaged time-synchronized HRV data from participants located in separate locations across California over a 30-day period. The rhythms for the HRV total power (black), very-low-frequency power (blue) and the time-varying magnetic-field-strength power (red) are shown for the 30-day period. This suggested that the participants were synchronizing to an external signal, and a significant correlation was found between the group's HRV indices and the measures of the earth's time-varying magnetic-field data across the 30-day period. To follow up and confirm these profound findings, an international study with 104 participants in five countries was conducted. The findings of the second study confirmed and extended the results of the first and indicate human heart rhythms are synchronized on a global scale, not only with each other, but also with the earth's energetic systems. (Manuscripts on this are in preparation).

At the individual level, a person's level of heart coherence can be assessed by monitoring the rhythmic patterns reflected in the individual's heart rate variability—the beat-to-beat changes in heart rate. Positive emotions such as love, appreciation and compassion tend to generate a heart-rhythm pattern that is more ordered and coherent, whereas negative emotions such as anxiety, anger and fear generate a disordered, incoherent heart-rhythm pattern. Ongoing feelings of impatience, frustration, irritation, worry or blame are associated with incoherent HRV rhythms, indicating that the body's inner rhythms are out of sync.<sup>18</sup>

Studies, by HeartMath and other entities, have found

that the combination of using HeartMath's heart-rhythm coherence-monitoring technology (emWave® and Inner Balance®) to promote skill acquisition and its mental and emotion self-regulation techniques are highly successful at reducing stress, anxiety, anger, chronic pain, fatigue and burnout as well as many other stress-related conditions.<sup>18,19,21-24</sup>

As more and more people increase their personal coherence and ability to self-regulate, they benefit themselves and others because their hearts' magnetic fields, which are radiated out into the local magnetic-field environment, become more coherent (Figure 2).





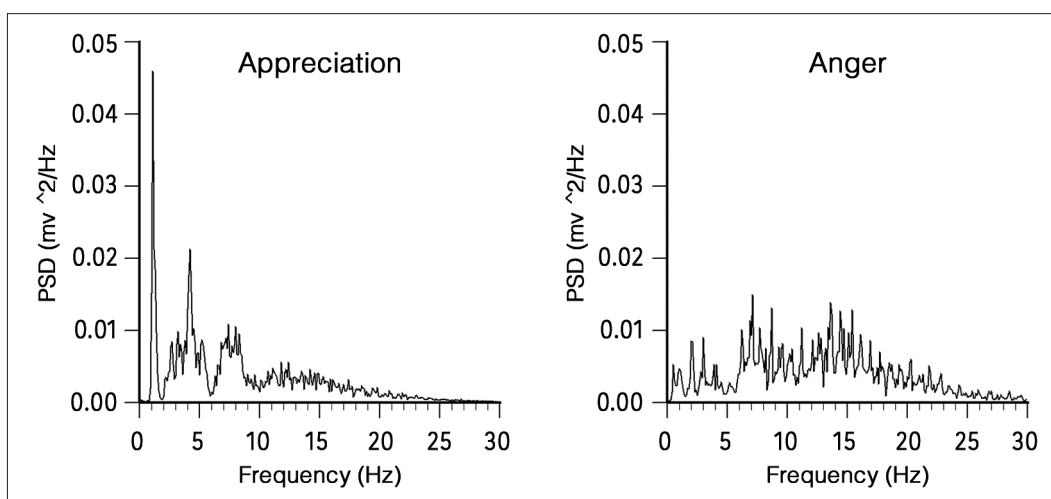
There is some preliminary data that suggests being in a heart-coherent state strengthens and stabilizes the coupling and transfer of bidirectional information between individuals and the planetary magnetic fields. We believe that as greater numbers of people in any social group (family, team and community) increase their overall personal coherence, they help to establish a more coherent standing wave at the group level and this wave is reinforced and amplified through collective coherent intention and actions. This “group field” then makes it easier for people in the group to sustain their coherence and self-regulatory capacity and lift their consciousness, which over time is reflected in increased and sustained social coherence.

### Global Coherence

If living systems are indeed interconnected and communicate with each other via biological and electromagnetic fields, it stands to reason that humans can work together in co-creative relationships to consciously increase the coherence in the global field environment, which in turn distributes this information

to all living systems within the field. Every individual contributes to the global field environment, and each person’s attitudes, intentions and emotional experiences count. This is empowering for many individuals who often feel overwhelmed by current conflicts on the planet and negative predictions about the future. This helps them realize that their actions can make a difference and that by increasing their own coherence, they can become “coherence builders” and contribute to the shift that many now perceive to be occurring. Of course, the idea is not new that shared intentions can influence others at a distance. Such ideas have been the subject of numerous studies that have looked at the effects of prayer, meditation and groups sending intentions in various experimental contexts.<sup>15,25-27</sup>

Our basic hypothesis is that when enough individuals and social groups increase their collective coherence, a more coherent standing reference wave is created and amplified in the global field environment and this will help lift individual, social and global conscious-



**Figure 2.** ECG spectra during different emotional states. The above graphs show the average power spectra of 12 individual 10-second epochs of ECG data, which reflect information patterns contained in the electromagnetic field radiated by the heart. The graph on the left is an example of a spectrum obtained during a period of high heart-rhythm coherence generated during a sustained heartfelt experience of appreciation. The graph on the right depicts a spectrum associated with a disordered heart rhythm generated during feelings of anger.



ness. In time, as more and more individuals become increasingly self-regulated and aligned with who they truly are and their conscious awareness grows, their personal coherence increases, in turn increasing social coherence, which is reflected in greater cooperation and effective co-creative initiatives that benefit society and the planet. This will become increasingly apparent as countries adopt a more coherent and inclusive planetary view. This planetary view will be critical for meaningfully and successfully addressing social and economic oppression, wars, cultural intolerance, crime and disregard for the environment. €



Author Rollin McCraty can be found at [www.HeartMath.org](http://www.HeartMath.org).

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# Color Healing with Rays of Light: Using Color to Enrich Our Lives

Anna Champagne

Color surrounds us in all aspects of our lives—in the clothing we wear, the paint on the walls, the furnishings in our homes and offices, the food we eat, trees, flowers and bodies of water in nature and so much more. We are always influenced by color in some way, even when we are not aware of it. Lack of color effects us by making us feel tired or sad on a grey day, while a bouquet of flowers brings us joy and green lawns or forests allow us to breathe easier and feel calmer. Some colors we choose—like the flowers in our garden, the sheets on our bed or our clothing. Others we do not, like the dull grey steel of buildings in a congested city. We are instantly drawn to colors that inspire feelings of peacefulness such as a blue sky or the ocean. Others may irritate us, like bright red under artificial lighting.

Color is what we perceive from the visible spectrum of sunlight. Light comes to us from the sun in the form of electromagnetic waves of energy. The light in the visible portion of the electromagnetic spectrum contains colors from red (the longest wavelength) to violet (the shortest wavelength). Each color is a specific frequency of waves of energy, thus color is a form of energy.

We are energetic beings. Colors are energetic frequencies of light so our bodies respond to color. As an energetic healing modality, color can affect people

at every level of their being. The informed use of color frequencies supports the balancing of our health—mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

Color has been used for centuries in many energy systems and therapies. Ancient Eastern teachings speak of seven major energy centers in the body called chakras. These correspond to the rainbow spectrum, from red at the base of the spine, through orange in our sacral area, yellow at the solar plexus, green at the heart, blue at the throat, indigo at the third eye (brow) and violet at the crown.

The chakras are associated with the major endocrine glands in the body as well as certain states of consciousness or expression. An example of this is the chakra located at the throat area, which correlates to communication, speaking our truth and the thyroid, all of which are represented and influenced by the color blue. Imbalances and blockages of the energy flow in our body, mind and emotions can cause symptoms of illness and disease. Using color can help to balance the energy in the chakras which can then positively affect body systems.

There are many recent scientific studies linking the beneficial effects of color with our physiological as well as emotional and psychological states of health. Dr. Jacob Liberman discusses this at length in his bril-

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liant book, *Light: Medicine of the Future*, where he lists numerous scientific discoveries. One of these is from the research of the Russian scientist S.V. Krakov who found that the color red stimulated the autonomic portion of the nervous system, while blue stimulated the parasympathetic portion. Some common therapeutic uses of color in medical treatments are blue light for jaundice and arthritis and red light to stop migraines. Full spectrum lighting is used to treat SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) and to help children in classrooms focus better, improving academic achievement and behavior.

I studied with Dr. Liberman and personally experienced his technology of using colored lights to

My system of working with colors or rays of light corresponds to emotional qualities or states of consciousness such as love, compassion, courage, clarity and wisdom. When we focus on a specific color and allow it into our energy field, it can reinforce the energy pattern of the specific quality that we want in our lives. The hierarchy of Divine Beings and Angels can help with this process as well. For example, we can call forth Archangel Michael on the blue ray to reinforce protection, faith, expression of truth, power and divine will.

In my years of experience as a professional textile artist, holistic educator and healer, I have observed the effects of color on people's energy fields while wear-

*As light enters the brain, it stimulates the hypothalamus which regulates certain activities of the autonomic nervous system and governs the pituitary gland.*

influence vision and health. He asserts that the relationship between light and health begins in the eyes and describes the body as a "living photocell." As light enters the brain, it stimulates the hypothalamus which regulates certain activities of the autonomic nervous system and governs the pituitary gland. The hypothalamus shares the light information with the pineal gland, which René Descartes refers to as the seat of the soul. The pineal in turn regulates many more vital functions by linking the nervous and endocrine systems. The way these systems function influences our emotional well-being.

Additionally, there are esoteric systems and spiritual teachings which relate color to aspects of consciousness including Goethe's Theory of Colours, Rudolph Steiner's philosophy of Anthroposophy, Blavatsky's doctrine of Theosophy and concept of the Seven Rays, and most recently The Temple of the Presence which expands upon the Seven Rays with teachings of the I AM Presence, Ascended Masters and Angels.

ing silk scarves that I hand paint in rich jewel tones. I have listened to clients share how they feel when wearing them. While exhibiting at holistic conscious living shows like Whole Health, New Life and Body, Mind, Spirit Expos around the country, I witnessed how my silk scarves were affecting people physically and emotionally. First, there was the aspect of the silk fabric itself, with silk being the highest vibration of natural fiber and very soft to the touch. Add to that the pure rich colors that I applied to the silks with dyes and the positive intentions I held while creating the scarves. I was excited to discover that I had a tangible way to educate people about color and energy in the form of my colorful silk scarves.

At shows I empower people to choose a scarf to which they are most drawn. When a scarf is chosen from my display, I drape it around the person's neck and shoulders, allowing the silk to flow down the front of his/her body over the heart (chakra) area. What happens next is fascinating and even magical—which I call activation. People will have a strong





positive feeling. A big smile usually comes across their faces, their energy looks brighter and the colors in the silk seem to come alive and more vibrant. Many are surprised that they can feel the colors' effects. They describe some of their experiences as feeling lighter, warmer, calmer, cooler or more energized and happy. It is beautiful to witness the transformation. In my experience, the frequencies of multiple colors in the silk interact with the frequencies in their energy field, creating a resonance that enhances and heals.

Then as a test we try on some contrasting colors. If they have chosen blues and greens, I may pick yellows and pinks to give them a sense of how those colors feel. It is always fun to see their surprise when they realize there is a difference. People usually did not know they could be that sensitive to the energies of color.

The pure color tones in my silks create a higher vibrational energy, with the corresponding divine and emotional qualities referenced by the color. The energetic expression of these qualities then entrains or changes the vibrational energies of one's energy system, such as transforming anxiety to tranquility or sadness to joy. Entrainment in this case means that a vibrating energy pattern will change its frequency to match the dominant field interacting with it.

In my booth at a show I might have several people trying on silks, learning about the effects of color and energy by observing the difference that a certain group of colors can make on a person. I have had people come running over saying, "You have to buy that one!" meaning that they could tell which silk was the "right one" for that person. This positive energy radiates to others. I can go into a store or a meeting and people will perk up and happily say, "Beautiful colors!" or "I love your scarf!" We innately want to feel better and colors greatly affect our emotions.

I have also worked with people individually in color energy healing sessions. As I drape a variety of colored silks over them, they experience different feelings, sensations, thoughts or even memories. Healing can be dramatic, tangible and influential to their well-

being. One client experienced a physical heaviness lift off her shoulders as she tried on a scarf—even the weight of the fabric felt lighter as compared to one in a slightly different color. She told me later that she keeps this scarf at her job to relieve stress from her shoulders while she works at her desk. Another client was a man who had recently lost his wife, the love of his life. After putting on a silk scarf in pinks and violets, he felt a comforting energy around his heart and a healing of his emotions.

Colors can also affect our concepts about ourselves. One client came to my city to work with a business mentor. She tried on silks and chose one in the hues most comfortable for everyday wear, plus one that had richer, deeper, more powerful colors to exemplify the person that she wanted to become. She planned to wear this when following her mentor's suggestions for the next steps to take in her business and to elicit more confidence and support for clear direction to move forward. Other people wear my hand-dyed, silk meditation shawls to create an energetic cocoon while meditating, making it easier to access higher states of consciousness.

By aligning ourselves with divine qualities of a certain color or ray of light, we can be comforted and uplifted as we go through our days filled with responsibilities and duties. We can do something as simple as take a moment of silence before an important meeting, where we visualize an ocean blue to calm our nerves, a deeper, darker blue to help us focus our thoughts and speak our truth and a golden ray of wisdom to inspire us. Also, as we get into our cars, we can imagine a blue light encircling our vehicles to protect us as we travel. By becoming aware of the colors that surround us and choosing the ones that support us on our day-to-day journeys through life, we create a wonderful opportunity to bring more of heaven to earth. €



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# A Nurse-Managed Healing Touch Clinic at a Veterans Administration Medical Center

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In today's changing healthcare environment, consumers and providers are seeking the integration of Complementary and Integrative Health (CIH) modalities into traditional healthcare settings (Anderson et al, 2016). The use of complementary therapies has grown exponentially over the past few years for improved health and well-being, relief of chronic disease symptoms and associated side effects of conventional medical therapies. According to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and the National Institutes of Health's National Center of Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH), more than 30 percent of adults use some type of alternative or complementary treatment such as herbal and dietary supplements, deep breathing, tai-chi, yoga, acupuncture and massage therapy (<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/integrative-health>). Healthcare consumers are seeking complementary treatments for a variety of ailments, including pain, chronic fatigue and mental health illnesses.

In addition, consumers are looking for options to manage their healthcare concerns and want to play a more active role in their management (Swengros et al, 2014). As health delivery systems are trying to respond to metrics that demand increased efficiency, safety and customer satisfaction, they are more willing to try new approaches to meet patients' demands in healthcare services that include CIH. NCCIH de-

fines alternative therapies as non-mainstream therapies that are used instead of conventional medical therapy; whereas, complementary therapies are used in conjunction with mainstream treatment to improve patients' health and well-being (NCCIH; Eschiti 2007). Bringing conventional and complementary treatment modalities together in a coordinated way is the definition of integrative care (<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/integrative-health>). Integrative care seeks to restore and maintain health and wellness across a person's lifespan by providing the best care that is least invasive and most economical (Rakel, 2012).

Among the post combat Veteran population, there is a significant increase in episodes of chronic pain, insomnia, depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The high prevalence of these conditions ultimately leads to chronic disease, mental and physical debilitation, polypharmacy and adverse events that, over time, lead to long-term high personal, healthcare and societal costs (Khusid and Vythilingam, 2016). The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is therefore looking at developing and incorporating integrative therapies that are safer, noninvasive and non-pharmacologic to provide holistic care to Veterans suffering from post-deployment mental and physical symptoms. The VA has set a strategic goal to provide Veterans with personalized, proactive and patient-driven healthcare that prioritizes Veterans





and their values and partners with them to create a strategy to optimize their health and well-being (VHA 2013-2018 Strategic Plan). The VA recognizes that in order to achieve health and wellness a holistic approach, that moves beyond traditional approaches and places Veterans and their preferences at the center of care, is needed. In light of Veterans' growing interest in non-traditional health care options, the VA is responding by making CIH options available.

The Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago has embraced the concept of integrating CIH into its care delivery model and offers such programs as

tion and expansion of a Healing Touch clinic within the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center.

### Background

Energy-based and hands-on healing interventions have been used in many cultures around the world throughout history (Anderson and Taylor, 2011; Maville, Bowen and Benham, 2008; Eschiti, 2007). Rooted in the ancient Eastern cultures, these complementary therapies are now gaining momentum in mainstream medicine. In 2001, the National Center for Complementary Therapy and Alternative Medicine referred to these therapies as "bio-field therapies." According

## *The Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago has embraced the concept of integrating Complementary and Integrative Health into its care delivery model.*

yoga, mindfulness based meditation, biofeedback, acupuncture and Healing Touch through its Whole Health program. These programs are well marketed to Veterans and employees throughout the facility via posters, newsletters and emails. Electronic consults are available for providers to refer Veterans to any of these modalities. Utilization of these services is contingent upon Veteran and provider knowledge, awareness and perceptions of the CIH modalities being offered.

Healing Touch is a CIH modality that is an evidence-based, bio-field therapy used in a variety of clinical settings, such as pain centers, pre-operative and post anesthesia recovery and cancer centers. The reported benefits of Healing Touch include decreased pain, depression and anxiety symptoms, as well as increased feelings of relaxation and a sense of overall well-being (Anderson, and Taylor, 2011; Eschiti, 2007; Wilkinson, et.al., 2002). This modality has increasingly been accepted among Veterans, nurses and providers at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center as a safe, non-pharmacologic complementary therapy that fits well within the VA's patient-centered care model. The purpose of this article is to discuss the implementa-

tion to the Healing Touch Worldwide Foundation, Healing Touch is a bio-field therapy that utilizes an "intention-based" and "hand-mediated" heart-centered approach to healing.

In addition to the physical dimension, human beings have spiritual and energetic dimensions that must be taken into account during the healing process (Aghabati, Mohammadi, & Pour Esmail, 2008). In a healthy individual, energy flows evenly through a symmetrical and balanced energy field. However, any disturbance in the energy field can lead to disease (dis-ease). The goal of Healing Touch is to restore balance in the energy system and allow clients the opportunity to self-heal. Healing Touch non-invasively affects the human energy system, thus clearing, energizing and balancing the human and environmental energy fields. Once these imbalances and disturbances in the energy field are cleared, the energy channels are able to resume their task of integrating the body, mind and spirit to restore health and promote healing.

Healing Touch was developed in the 1980s by Janet Mentgen, a Registered Nurse, who blended her



energy healing skills with her knowledge of ancient healing practices, as well as with the healing theories of energy healers such as Brugh Joy and Barbara Brennan (Dowd et al, 2006). Healing Touch Program (HTP) is a peer-reviewed program that consists of five levels of training. Endorsed by the American Holistic Nurses Association (AHNA) and the Canadian Holistic Nurses Association (CHNA) HTP is an accredited provider of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission of Accreditation. (<http://www.healingtouchprogram.com/about/endorsements-accreditations>). Multiple studies have shown that Healing Touch may decrease pain and anxiety and improve quality of life in various patient populations. Due to growing popularity and ease of delivery, this modality is being used more frequently within hospital environments.

The role of Healing Touch practitioners is to facilitate self-healing by grounding themselves before beginning a session. (Anderson and Taylor, 2011). The practitioner then assesses the client's energy field and notes any areas of energetic congestion or blockage. She/he sets an intention for the highest good of the client and utilizes various hand techniques that consist of either light on or off the body touch to help connect, open and balance the client's energy field and energy centers.

Research studies have been conducted that show the effectiveness of Healing Touch in both chronic and acute pain management, symptom management and comfort measures for patients undergoing cancer treatment and end of life care (Wardell and Weymouth, 2004) as well as PTSD, depression, anxiety and insomnia. Therefore Healing Touch is a simple treatment modality that can benefit Veterans who have a wide range of health care concerns.

## Conceptual Framework

According to nursing theorist, Jean Watson, "Healing Touch is an example of an intentional caring-healing modality grounded in an ethics, philosophy, values and consciousness consistent with my original Theory of Human Caring and Transpersonal Caring...they

both work from an energetic framework of Universal Love as the basis of all healing and caring-healing relationships." ([www.WatsonCaringScience.org](http://www.WatsonCaringScience.org)). As many of our Veterans suffer from PTSD, anxiety, pain and a lack of support systems, they can benefit from this caring relationship that is in alignment with the goal of forming working partnerships with our Veterans by providing exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

## Implementation

Healing Touch was initially introduced at the Jesse Brown VA in 2007 by a Palliative Care Nurse Practitioner after learning about it during a pain conference. She then introduced it to the staff during an interdisciplinary Pain Awareness presentation. Staff were intrigued by the results and wanted to learn more. Hence, approval was received from leadership and grant funding was obtained to bring training to Jesse Brown VA. The first Healing Touch Level 1 class was offered in 2009 and since then, 148 staff have completed the Level 1 training and several others have moved on to complete Levels 2 and 3. There are currently three staff who have completed Level 4 training and two who have completed Level 5.

In 2011 a weekly clinic was established with four, one-hour appointment slots staffed by the Nurse Practitioner (NP) who introduced Healing Touch to the facility. The clinic's goal was to target all Veterans and employees who presented to the clinic via provider or self-referral. An electronic consult was also established for providers to formally refer Veterans to the clinic with various diagnoses including PTSD, military sexual trauma (MST), pain, anxiety and depression.

Over time, the Healing Touch clinic became very successful and experienced an increase in referrals. As a result, wait times for new clinic appointments as well as follow up appointments increased making it difficult to meet demands. Due to this increased demand, facility leadership supported the opening of a second clinic for follow up visits. However, because of limited resources and space availability, only one half-day clinic with six appointment slots every third Friday of the month could be started. The follow-up



clinic operates with two rooms and is staffed by two nurses trained as a Healing Touch Practitioner (Level 5) and an HTP-Apprentice (Level 4) respectively.

### Clinic Visits

Clients who present for their initial Healing Touch visit are often those who feel their current pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical treatments are not providing adequate relief of their symptoms and are looking for an alternative therapy. In addition, they may feel they are prescribed too many medications and are concerned about medication side effects. Often providers, who are familiar with energy therapy and believe in its merit, will refer clients. Client expectations at the initial visit vary based on their understanding of and prior experiences with integrative therapies. Generally, there are two types of clients who present—those who have no idea what to expect from a treatment session and those who have past experiences in complementary therapies and/or may be energetically sensitive themselves.

During the first visit, the Healing Touch provider assesses the client's level of understanding, level of interest and engagement. Based upon this assessment, the Veteran is educated about what to expect during the session and the potential benefits of therapy are discussed. After obtaining verbal consent from the client, an intake form is completed to get an overall understanding of the client's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual status. Client questions are answered at any time throughout the HT session. Based on the baseline assessment and chief complaint, the Healing Touch provider helps the client set goals for the session. Remaining fully clothed, the client then lies on the treatment table for a session. The provider

assesses for any energetic imbalances in the client's bio-field and then grounds and attunes to the client through light touch. Healing Touch techniques are chosen based upon the provider's assessments and intuition. After the session, the client's bio-field is re-assessed and feedback is obtained from the client.

Client responses vary widely immediately after a treatment session. The majority of clients verbalize a feeling of relaxation and sense of well-being. Some clients indicate they feel "different." Many clients verbalize a reduction in their presenting symptoms. The session is reviewed with the client and a plan is developed for client self-care activities at home such as exercise, journaling and meditation. Some Healing Touch techniques that the client can perform on him/herself at home are also taught. The client is then offered an invitation to return for a follow-up visit. After the treatment, the provider documents the session in the electronic medical record.

During follow-up visits, the clients goals from their previous session are reviewed and new goals are established, if necessary. Clients' self-care homework is also reviewed and any barriers or successes are discussed. They are then energetically reassessed and treated based on the assessment and their primary concern for that visit. Clients are offered continued support and Healing Touch therapy based on mutually set short-term and long-term goals. They are then reassigned homework for self-care management. Repeat appointments are offered and scheduled based on client need and appointment availability.

### Challenges and Lessons Learned

Healing Touch has served a great need for the Veterans at Jesse Brown VA as a complementary therapy to their conventional treatment plans. However, there have been some challenges and limitations such as dedicated space and staff availability. The once a week, initial clinic is held in the bereavement room of the Emergency Department and is not available any other day. The monthly follow-up clinic utilizes two exam rooms in one of the outpatient clinics late on a Friday afternoon when clinic traffic has slowed down

*The majority of clients verbalize a feeling of relaxation and sense of well-being.*





Treatment tables cannot be accommodated in the clinic exam rooms, so exam tables have to be utilized, which are shorter in length and not as comfortable as treatment tables. Due to the lack of dedicated space, the Healing Touch providers have little place to store treatment tables and related equipment.

Though we have more than 100 trained staff, it is difficult for them to be released to help in the Healing Touch clinic due to the workload demands in other patient care areas. Therefore, there are currently only three dedicated staff who practice in the clinic and two to three additional staff who help on occasion. In retrospect, it would have been beneficial if a protocol had been established that would have allowed staff to actively participate in Healing Touch activities in the clinic after training. Another problem is the lack of ancillary support staff to make appointments and reminder phone calls. The providers have to make follow-up appointments and send reminder letters themselves which can be time consuming. Because the demand for initial consults and follow up visits has surpassed the number of available clinic slots, there is a pressing need for an expansion of services.

## Future Growth and Expansion

As the demand continues to grow, it would be beneficial to have more dedicated Healing Touch providers available to meet those needs. There is still much work to be done, particularly through educating the medical staff and Veterans about the benefits of Healing Touch for relief of chronic disease symptoms. The current practice has successfully demonstrated improvement in symptoms and quality of life for Veterans by alleviating anxiety, decreasing pain and pain medication use, and promoting relaxation using a caring, holistic and non-invasive approach.

There continues to be a struggle in expanding the program and streamlining Healing Touch care with routine medical care of the Veterans. With support from the integrative medicine community, Healing Touch can certainly gain a well-deserved permanent place at any Veteran's facility. In order to serve more Veterans and enhance quality of care, it will be necessary to expand the current program by addressing the following:

1. Better education of the medical staff and providers.
2. Better marketing of the HT program.
3. Incorporation of Healing Touch into the patient's plan of care.
4. Patient education about the program by the providers.
5. Additional release time for trained staff.
6. Dedicated clinic space.
7. Additional clinic time slots.
8. Ancillary support staff to help market our program, make appointments, make reminder phone calls and mail appointment letters.

In addition to resources, the Healing Touch clinic would benefit from research projects that can help validate the efficacy and efficiency of its efforts.

The World Health Organization (1983) defines "health" as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." Kemper et.al, (2011) reported that mind-body modalities reduce stress, improve mental health, mood, compassion, calmness and sleep. In implementing Healing Touch, we can easily track measurable healthcare outcomes such as pain, anxiety, depression, fatigue and quality of life parameters. This modality holds a great deal of potential in filling the care gaps that cannot be filled by conventional medicine. Our future goals are to expand Healing Touch to all areas of the hospital, including inpatient areas, and conduct research studies which can in turn provide a valuable contribution to our organization's shift toward enhancing integrative patient-centered care in all dimensions. €



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# The Energy Behind Fertility

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Nancy Mae, MA, MS, MIM

When we talk about the topic of fertility, we are really speaking about an energetic system that begets life. Everything is energy—our physical bodies, our thoughts, other people's ideas, the electronics we use and the clothes we wear. Even our desire to have a child is energy. Without energy, we would not exist. The wonderful thing about energy is that you can learn to harness it for fertility. Since all the systems in the human body are connected on some level, harnessing energy for fertility is about becoming energetically balanced as a whole, for you and your future child.

One way I like to talk about energy as it relates to fertility is by talking about the information centers in your body where energy flows. Chakras, as these energy centers are called, can give you a great amount of information about what might be out of balance when something is not quite right with your physical health or personal life.

Along your spine there is a column of energy, running from your tailbone to the crown of your head, and this is where the seven main chakras reside. One of the ways that the energy flows through the channel into different areas of your body is through the chakras that act like waterwheels. In fact, chakra is Sanskrit for the word "wheel."

Working with the energy of the chakras is a powerful way to bring yourself into wholeness for fertility and beyond. Each of the seven main chakras has its own purpose and is associated with certain types of energy. The seven chakras include the:

- First chakra – Located at the base of your tailbone and associated with the color red. It is about security, finances, safety, home and your connection with the earth. In essence, it is about survival.
- Second chakra – Located just below your naval and associated with the color orange. It is the seat of sexuality, emotions and pleasure.
- Third chakra – Located in the solar plexus region and associated with the color yellow. It is about personal power, will and self-esteem.
- Fourth chakra – Located in the heart area and associated with the color green. It is about the affinity for self and others, forgiveness and love.
- Fifth chakra – Located in the throat area and associated with the color blue. It is about communication, self-expression and creativity.
- Sixth chakra – Located between your eyebrows





and associated with the color indigo. It is the seat of imagination and intuition.

- Seventh chakra – Located at the crown of your head and associated with the colors violet and white. It is about knowledge, understanding, trust, wisdom and spiritual connection.

In order to work with the chakras and balance them for wholeness and fertility, it is advantageous to become aware of things that could potentially be affecting your energy as it relates to fertility. With only five percent of your brain used in conscious thought

is most likely some residue remaining in your energetic space.

3. Solar plexus chakra: Your belief and other people's beliefs about how your conception, pregnancy and birth should occur. One thing about being human is that we tend to put a good amount of weight on what others think about us. When we internalize this, it can lead to low self-esteem and a pattern of changing yourself for others.
4. Heart chakra: Unresolved grief from past miscarriages, childhood trauma or loss of a loved one.

*Many times things happen that cause energy to get stuck or stagnant or leave an energetic imprint, thus affecting fertility.*

and the other 95 percent in the unconscious realm, it behooves you to become more conscious of what could be affecting fertility. In order to bring in a child, you want your energy flowing optimally—for you and the new life you are creating.

Many times things happen that cause energy to get stuck or stagnant or leave an energetic imprint, thus affecting fertility. In my practice, I see many energetic issues that influence fertility; things you may not have ever considered may be impacting your ability to conceive. Here are seven common energetic issues that can affect fertility, each associated with one of the seven main chakras in your body.

1. Root chakra: A less-than-positive relationship with your body. When you are not happy with your body, it is hard to feel safe and secure in the world.
2. Sacral chakra: Energetic residue from past intimate partners. When you are intimate with another person you exchange energy. Unless you have done work to separate these energies, there

Grief in the heart can act as a barrier to new opportunities, like a baby.

5. Throat chakra: Engaging in gossip. Gossip is one form of communication and it happens to have a lower energy. If you are wondering if you are gossiping about someone, I invite you to ask yourself if you would say this directly to the person you are talking about. If not, then it is probably gossip. Gossiping lowers your energy, and when trying to bring in a baby, a higher energy level is best.
6. Brow chakra: Doubting that your body can conceive, carry a pregnancy and birth a child. Doubt is the distortion of the sixth chakra. When you do not believe you can do something, you tend to unknowingly draw that energy toward you.
7. Crown chakra: Too much doing—not enough being. Slowing down enough to connect with yourself is important when you want to bring in a child.

To create an optimal atmosphere for conception,





energy needs to flow unimpeded. By altering the energy around these energetic issues, you allow more movement in your chakras and entire energy system, leading to a more conducive environment for conception. With simple energetic tools, you can learn to release the stagnant energy potentially impeding a healthy conception and beyond.

Here are five simple energetic tools to help you alter your energy for wholeness and fertility.

1. Shift what you say to yourself. Be mindful of what you tell yourself and do what you can to start shifting how you relate to those thoughts. Energy follows thought. Become an advocate for yourself.
2. Use an energetic elevator. Put any thoughts, ideas or beliefs that do not work for you into an energetic elevator at least four feet in front of you. When you are ready, push the button to have the elevator take the energy into the center of the earth. The electrical potential of the earth will recycle the excess energy from the contents of the elevator.
3. Create closure. Behaviors and events from the past can influence your fertility. It is helpful to have closure with these issues. Perhaps write a letter or create a memory box to have closure with an event. You can also write about what makes you want to behave in a certain unhealthy manner so that you can retire it from your repertoire.
4. Slow down. Even a small bit of slowing down can make a huge difference. Take some time to be in nature, take a bath or meditate. Slowing down helps you come into present time, which in turn helps you to ground. The only way your spirit can be fully grounded in your body is when you are in present time and the only way your energetic systems can be in the best working order is when you are grounded. In slowing down, there is also an element of self-love. We live in such a fast-paced culture that slowing down is often frowned upon. There is a fear of turning inward, of con-

necting with oneself. We forget that putting on our own oxygen mask is an act of self-love. When we slow down and ground, the physical body relaxes—which is important when you want to get pregnant.

5. Balance the energy in your chakras on a daily basis. Keeping in mind that energy follows thought, here is an easy way to do this: Focus on your tailbone area for at least 10 seconds, then sense, visualize or intend filling the first chakra area with the color red. For the second chakra, focus on the area just below your naval for at least ten seconds—then fill that area with the color orange. For the third chakra, focus on the solar plexus region for at least 10 seconds—then fill that area with the color yellow. For the fourth chakra, focus on the heart area for at least 10 seconds—then fill that area with the color green. For the fifth chakra, focus on your throat area for at least 10 seconds—then fill that area with the color of a blue ocean. For the sixth chakra, focus on the area between your eyebrows for at least 10 seconds—then fill that area with the color indigo, the color of a clear night sky. For the seventh chakra, focus on the crown of your head for at least 10 seconds—then fill that area with the color violet or white. That's it!

Learning how energy affects fertility and shifting this energy may prove to be the key to bringing in your future child. I invite you to become more aware of what you say to yourself, the choices you make, what needs closure in your life and when you allow yourself to slow down—all things that are important and about which to take note when you yearn for a healthy fertility journey. ☺



Author Nancy Mae can be found at [www.NancyMae.com](http://www.NancyMae.com).



# Leadership in Palliative Care: Eyes on the Prize

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Diane E. Meier, MD, Director of Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC)

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A few years ago, I was trying to do and be everything at once. I was a clinician with a primary care geriatrics practice; an in-patient palliative care consultation attending physician; a researcher on the impact of hospital palliative care; the leader of an academic medical school-based palliative care program; a teacher of fellows, residents and medical students; and Director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care. Just typing all this makes me feel tired. In 2009, the strains and impossibilities of doing all these things led me to take my first sabbatical. I went to Washington, DC, to spend a year as a Health and Aging Policy Fellow, working both on the Senate's HELP Committee and at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

In addition to appreciation for the deep commitment, expertise and sheer intellect of our so-called "government bureaucrats," the biggest benefit I got from taking this year away from my job was time to reflect. Time to think about what gave me the greatest sense of accomplishment and joy in my work. Time to realize that trying to do everything was a sure recipe for doing nothing well. Time to realize that what brought me the most satisfaction was trying to solve the puzzle of making the health care system work for my patients, and to realize that—if I disciplined myself to focus on it—I could make a contribution. In other words, time to figure out, among

the many things I could be doing with my one life, what is my highest and best use. The result was my decision to work full-time at the Center to Advance Palliative Care and give up all of my other roles and responsibilities. It took me a long time to listen to my inner voice and do what mattered most to me instead of what other people expected me to do—something that I have heard many of my patients say they wished they had done earlier in their lives.

Fascinated by the levers of social transformation and intensely curious about how to influence the incredible complexity and perversity of our health care system, I studied other effective social change efforts. The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids and ACT UP—two prominent social movements that created a new equilibrium in the U.S.—particularly caught my eye. The former moved us from "there's nothing we can do about cigarette smoking" to a country with among the lowest smoking rates in the developed world. And ACT UP moved the country from hopelessness and helplessness in the face of an AIDS epidemic killing tens of thousands of people annually to what is now a manageable chronic illness. Each of these initiatives required sustained and multi-sector changes, and each had to overcome powerful and well-resourced political opposition.

How did these profound changes take place? The





relatively new field of social entrepreneurship has produced what I have found to be the most informative literature about the how of effective social change. Social entrepreneurs straddle the space between government policy and direct service to solve a problem.

Consider advance care planning as an example—in the past, patients had little to no input over their medical care during serious illness—and where things need to be—routinely asking patients what is most important to them and recommending treatments aligned with their priorities. In 2016, Medicare began reimbursement for advance care planning, in which

3. Stabilizing and building a supportive ecosystem (training, law, regulation, payment) around the new equilibrium to sustain and extend its benefit across society.

Successful political advocacy in support of advance care planning required evidence of its impact, scalability and acceptability to the public. A series of social entrepreneurs worked for decades to produce that evidence and build the supportive national ecosystem that, finally, enabled the new legislation. These included exemplars like Susan Tolle—who led the development and scaling of POLST—and Bud

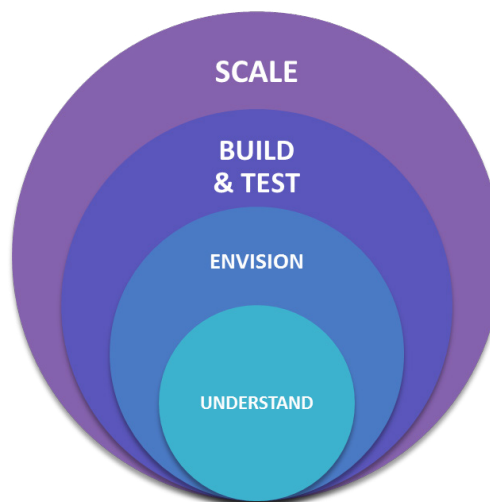
*The relatively new field of social entrepreneurship has produced what I have found to be the most informative literature about the how of effective social change.*

providers initiate, document and bill for advance care planning conversations. How did this happen? The work required to routinize advance care planning required both social advocacy (such as lobbying Congress and CMS by a number of organizations) and social entrepreneurship (development, testing and refining a solution that can change the status quo and create a new equilibrium). I recommend a recent (short!) book on this framework, titled *Getting Beyond Better: How Social Entrepreneurship Works*.

The central characteristics of this process include:

1. Naming of a stable but inherently unjust equilibrium that causes (in our example of advance care planning) suffering of seriously ill people who lack the means or influence to effect change;
2. Development, testing, refining, and scaling of a solution that shifts away from the old equilibrium (doctor knows best) to a new steady state (patients have a right to determine what is done with their own bodies) that fundamentally challenges the old status quo;

Hammes—who led the development and scaling of Respecting Choices.



The core principles of social entrepreneurship is a framework involving 4 stages, as graphically depicted above:

1. **Understand** the current equilibrium and what keeps it that way—a process of appreciative inquiry, and listening to key stakeholders, both



those invested in the way things have always been done, as well as those who want change;

2. Envision what success would look like, in order to strategize backwards from that goal;
3. **Build**, test and modify a model or prototype until it demonstrates the impact sought (“success”) in a measurable, quantifiable and systemic manner; and
4. **Scaleability** of the solution, or the ability to widely replicate it at the lowest possible opportunity cost.

If you read about the history of POLST and Respecting Choices, you will see each of these stages articulated. Application of this framework to scaling advance care planning required:

1. Understanding why things are so broken (e.g., lack of training, perverse financial incentives);
2. A vision for a new equilibrium (medical care begins with, and is always in orbit around, the priorities and concerns of the patient and the family);

3. Building a prototype model, and testing and modifying it (advance care planning via POLST first in Oregon, now across states and care settings, and via Respecting Choices initially in LaCrosse, WI, now with international uptake) along with investment in research, education and training; and
4. Scalability via technical assistance, on-line and in-person training, train-the-trainer approaches, coaching, regulatory and accreditation requirements, and changes in payment policy.

Leadership is required from all of us in the field, each of us focused on our own highest and best use—towards the goal of co-creation with patients, families and clinicians to achieve the goal of the right care for the right person at the right time and in the right-place, every time. €



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