



Essential Energy

Cyndi Dale

The Essence of Healing: Mercy

The theater is so dark I cannot see the popcorn. I am picking one kernel at a time out of the bucket. Usually this doesn't matter - I shovel it in, knowing that the attendants will later sweep up my mess with their shovels. Because of the movie's subject matter, however, I am cautious. I am counting each kernel, remembering a phrase my parents, who grew up in the Depression, used to mutter:

"Eat your peas. There are children in the world who have nothing."

I used to wonder if even the hungriest of the children in India would tolerate those mushy light green peas that plopped out of the Green Giant cans.

I was watching the movie *Les Misérables*, a story about poverty and starvation, loss and cruelty, misery and mercy. Although the ingredients of despair were on the screen in front of me, I was completely entrenched in the characters' sufferings, the ills that healers have committed their hearts to alleviating across time.

I am not writing a review of *Les Mis*. Rather, I feel called to address the antidote to misery presented in the movie, the remedy to the hardships, tragedies, and traumas that you have

devoted yourself to transmute as a Healing Touch professional. For in undertaking the calling of healer, you have decided to enhance the faintest of lights and to light that which is as yet unlit. You have promised to cast hope into the darkness, even when there is no reason to hope, and to believe in goodness, even when faith is irrational.

You have committed to sharing mercy.

I think of the many clients with whom I have worked whose stories are unspeakable. I recall a woman who was sexually abused by every male relative for ten years, starting at age four. I remember the man who lost both his parents and sister in a car accident when he was six years old and was then raised in an orphanage. Sometimes there was food. I think of the elderly man who was born in a concentration camp during the Holocaust - there was no food. Then there are the streams of individuals courageously facing the challenges of life -- lost jobs, cars that quit, addictive family members, mental illnesses, and the stress of the tyranny of details that seems to rule our lives.

It can be hard to stare into the depths of suffering and know what to do, even when you are the "energy expert." Aren't healers supposed to have kit bags full of instruments and pithy sayings, medicines, and miracles? Aren't healers trained to make it "all go away?"

Against all that, what good is mercy?

We do not talk about mercy very often in our culture, not unless we are exposed to a Pentecostal preacher and wooden pews that force us to sit upright and attentive. Mercy is not trendy. It is not "in." I have yet to see a t-shirt with the word "Mercy!" splashed on it, unless perhaps it is a commentary of sorts.

Mercy has not made the front page of the news for a very long time. The last time I heard the word in my daily life was when my youngest son was begging for money for the penultimate tennis shoes and suddenly blurted out, "Have mercy on me! ALL the kids have these shoes but me, mom. You don't want me at the bottom of the totem pole, do you?" As old-fashioned as mercy might be, the need for it is very much alive.

Mercy is compassion showed toward someone we could hurt. It is also an event - for which we are grateful - which provides relief from suffering. In our daily lives, mercy exists when we forgive our parents for the harm caused us or when we forgive



ourselves for the mistakes we made because of childhood wounds. We are merciful when we let someone with only one food item cut in front of us in line, our cart heaped with coupon specials, or when we slip extra money into the Salvation Army bucket.

As energy practitioners, mercy is actually the key to delivering healing. Mercy starts with the way we look at ourselves. Should we really expect the miraculous of ourselves? Should we be holding ourselves to unbelievably high standards? Might we be better served—and of better service—if we humbly ask to be instruments of kindness, and proceed from there.

While listening to our clients, mercy becomes nothing less than gold. We know our own past, after all. We have walked the journey path of being fully human. What mistake haven't we made, at least in thought, if not deed? What pain or hard feeling haven't we experienced? Of what challenge haven't we despaired? We have only to meet another with our own humanity to help them release judgments about themselves, often the very judgments locking in the blocks causing their problems.

When actually performing healing work, no matter the technique, it could be said that mercy is actually the only instrument being applied. Mercy is the steel comprising the sword of truth that insists our client is worthy of love, and therefore, transformation. Mercy is the feather that strokes away their pains, assuring them that they did not deserve the harm caused them—that there are angels with wings just waiting to lift them up.

In the final run, mercy is also that which creates joy and therefore, healing. As Joseph Campbell says, "Find a place inside where's there's joy, and the joy will burn out pain." Mercy is the path to this joy, a Herculean form of love that lifts off the clouds of suffering so we can ooh and awe at the sun beneath. It is at this point that healers can smile, for misery has no power where joy exists. €



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