

10 Lessons Learned from a Healing Touch Community Event

Reprint from the March/April 2012 issue of Energy Magazine.

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As we drove to Soldier's Field in Chicago on a rainy August morning to volunteer, with 50 other Healing Touch practitioners, for the Welcome Home Celebration for veterans, I felt butterflies in my stomach. I could not imagine soldiers being receptive to gentle Healing Touch. How was I going to explain energy work to men and women who had lived through the cold, hard reality of war?

When we entered the massive stadium, the sight of several rows of wounded soldiers waiting for the opening ceremonies both saddened and motivated me. I was glad to have something tangible to offer that could aid their physical and emotional healing.

As we made our way to the Healing Touch area, we saw a row of six treatment tables set up on a concrete ramp next to an iron railing. A cool, damp breeze blew through the space, bagpipes played on the lower level, and people were everywhere. The setting was the complete opposite from the quiet, peaceful rooms in which I was accustomed to offering Healing Touch.

I took a deep breath. Despite feeling shaky about my skills, having only finished Level 4 about a month ago, I was excited for the event to begin. Within minutes, soldiers started arriving.

The day proved to be an inspiring experience and I learned important lessons that will have a lasting impact on my ability to share and practice Healing Touch.

Ten Community Service Lessons

1. **Do not make assumptions about people's receptivity.**

As one soldier after another, from a 60-year old Vietnam vet to a 20-something Iraq veteran, eagerly got on the table and relaxed into his/her session, my assumptions about soldiers not being receptive to Healing Touch crumbled. I released my judgments and set an intention

for those who could benefit from the work to show up. And they did!

2. **Project confidence.** In the past, I have sometimes shied away from sharing my enthusiasm for Healing Touch for fear of creating unrealistic expectations. During this event, however, I discovered that sharing the benefits of Healing Touch in a confident, enthusiastic way helped the veterans relax and trust that they were in safe hands. Projecting confidence set the stage for healing to occur.

3. **Less is more.** Our time was limited, so we quickly had to choose a maximum of two Healing Touch techniques. Suddenly, the wisdom of "*less is more*" became crystal clear. Focusing on only one technique at a time was liberating. It allowed me to slow down, truly attune to each client, and let the energy flow.

4. **Meet people exactly where they are.** Some of the veterans wanted to talk about their experiences, while others did not. It was wonderful to know that Healing Touch would work regardless of the amount of information shared. All I needed to do was attune to my client, set an intention for the client's highest good, and allow the energy to do its work.

5. **Big changes can occur in a short amount of time.** Although we were limited to 20 minute sessions, every person who got off the table experienced reduction in pain or stress. Perfect conditions were not necessary for healing to occur.

6. **Two on one is profound.** I was surprised at how many veterans commented on the powerful experience of having two practitioners work on them at the same time. My favorite comment came from a young Iraq veteran who said, "*You two have magic hands. You should stick together.*"

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- 7. Perfection is not necessary.** As a recent Level 4 graduate, I was concerned that my skills weren't "*good enough*." In fact, I did forget steps and probably did not always choose the most appropriate technique, but no one seemed to mind and every veteran expressed thanks. I learned that connecting with a client and establishing trust was more important than perfect technique – not that I do not want to keep improving!
- 8. The power of community.** Spending the day with members of the Healing Touch community was inspiring and just plain fun! The warmth, generosity, and caring of the practitioners at our venue was palpable. It was easy to believe that we can accomplish anything when we work together.
- 9. Giving is receiving.** One of the many gifts I received from volunteering was undeniable proof of the resilience of the human spirit. Despite having experienced human behavior at its worst, the veterans were appreciative and

receptive to our loving, heart-centered support.

- 10. Touch is healing.** I am preaching to the choir, but as I witnessed the softening or elimination of pain and stress in one person after another, the power of the work was crystal clear. One veteran summed it up perfectly. "*You don't know what it means to be touched so gently after being at war. It is very healing.*"

I came away from the veteran's event a more confident, motivated practitioner. Throughout the day, I was reminded of the value of suspending judgment, releasing attachment to results, and just doing the work – simply because there are people who are waiting and open to receiving its benefits. The support and love I have received as part of the Healing Touch community is a gift I can now share with the community at large.