

Surgery as Vision Quest

by Janna Moll, MSN, HTCP/I, SEM and Lori Colvin

Following the August 2009 Healing Touch Worldwide Conference in Denver, I had the opportunity to attend Janna Moll's post conference workshop, Energy Medicine in Surgery. It was a day of exploring the integration of energy healing with allopathic protocols within surgical environments. Topics included pre-surgery and post-surgery sessions with the surgical client, surgical intention, client affirmations and how to navigate in the distinct culture within the protocols of the hospital, including the pre-operative (pre-op) area, the operating room and the post-operative (post-op) area. The day culminated with a field trip to a hospital at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus where the group donned scrubs to tour the surgical suites with some of the surgical nursing team. It was an invaluable opportunity, especially for those with no prior surgical experience to actually walk in the pre-op, OR and post-op areas.

Janna, a Healing Touch Certified Practitioner and Instructor, describes her work with surgical clients as the support of a vision quest: an initiation process where one enters a trial, learns about one's self, and transforms. The surgery process takes the client to a place of letting go so that they may move into a new place of being. "Surgery asks you to step off into the unknown," notes Janna. "You are vulnerable, you give up control."

The energy practitioner can provide an engaged, connecting presence for the client through each phase of a surgical vision quest. The stages of a vision quest align with the surgical process as follows:

Preparation or Instruction

The first stage of the vision quest is Preparation or Instruction. This is when the surgical client needs to obtain the necessary pre-approvals from the hospital, surgeon and anesthesiologist for the energy practitioner to participate.

During this stage Janna schedules two pre-surgery sessions with her surgical clients. Some of the questions she and the client explore are:

- What does this surgery represent to you?
- What are your concerns and questions?
- What is your intention for its outcome?
- What issues or patterns underlie your condition?
- Of what are you willing to let go?
- What will you carry forward?

In the first pre-surgery session Janna also assigns homework, asking clients to describe in multi-sensory detail their 'perfect place' – a place special to them where they are happy, safe, and loved. She lets them know that she will meet them at their perfect place during the surgery.

Departure or Severance

After preparation the vision quest proceeds to the Departure or Severance stage. The clients leave the safety and comfort of home to begin their journey. At this point the surgical client and the energy practitioner enter the domain of the hospital, with its own culture and protocols, for pre-op.

Janna's approach is to respectfully integrate her practice with that of the allopathic members of the surgical team. She starts with the pre-op nurses, introducing herself and clarifying her role in the surgical procedure.

Janna finds that many clients are most anxious during pre-op. "A lot of my role at this point is permission-giving -- that they can go into that place of vulnerability." She holds the space for them, showing them "this is exactly where you need to be" and reminds them of their goals or desired outcomes of surgery.

Initiation or Trial

The next stage of the vision quest is Initiation or Trial. This is the sacred space of in-between, the place of transformation for the client. In this space the surgical client's inner work weaves

with the practitioner's energy work, so that both can infuse the surgical procedure.

Throughout the surgery Janna serves as a calming presence, talking to the client if requested or necessary, meeting them in their 'perfect place' to remind them of their desired outcome. "I energetically monitor and balance the client and continually communicate with them," says Janna. "I assist in keeping their heart rate and blood pressure stable."

The atmosphere in the operating room can vary from the routine to the profane to the sacred. Janna recalls a hysterectomy that she attended which was a profound experience for all who were there. It began with the client asking the surgeon, who had Healing Touch training, to pray with her. The surgeon took the client's hand and held it as Janna said a short prayer about how the surgery would go and asking that the team be guided and nurtured through the process. The client had written an affirmation as a prayer to her uterus, which she asked Janna to read out loud as she was being sedated. Janna read her client's words of gratitude, thanking her uterus for its service, thanking it for the beautiful children it had given her, for the lessons it supplied her. "By the time I finished reading the prayer my client was under and almost everyone else was moved to tears." The surgery proceeded and when the uterus was removed, the surgeon held it up and said, "Here it is," honoring it, and then setting it aside.

Return or Incorporation

After the initiation or transformation stage, there is the Return or Incorporation. The client releases old ways of being and begins a new life - applying their new vision. This is the post-op phase of surgery, where the energy practitioner eases the client's return to consciousness.

"I again calm and talk to the client, reminding them to breathe deeply," says Janna. "I keep the energy field open to ease pain and maintain the integrity of the client."

She monitors their increasing awareness and any pain or distress they are experiencing. "They may need to be given permission to have their pain addressed, as many clients today do not want to take pain medication unless necessary," she adds. Yet it is essential at this point to control the pain to aid in the body's healing.

After the client leaves the hospital, Janna offers two post-surgery sessions to continue assisting the client with their healing. The sessions include balancing, incorporating energies as

appropriate and clearing the client of any energy congestion concerning pain and anesthesia. She also checks in with them regarding the integration of their outcomes into their lives.

Impact of Energy Medicine in Surgery

Janna has found that many surgeons are open to and appreciative of what an energy practitioner can do for their patients. She has provided energy work for 30+ surgeries at 16 different hospitals and has seen first hand the positive results. These include:

- Less blood loss during surgery
- Fewer complications
- More regular heart rate and blood pressure
- Faster recoveries

About the authors:

Janna Moll, MSN, HTCP/I, SEM is the founder and president of Energy Medicine Specialists, a business offering hands-on healing, consulting on accreditation in health care, and advanced coursework for energy medicine practitioners. She is the HTP Ethics Chairperson and an HTP certification reviewer. She presents on various Energy Medicine topics and works closely with holistic physicians. To learn more go to www.EnergyMedicineSpecialists.com or call 303-346-3809.

Lori Colvin is a writer and editor bringing together her personal exploration of subtle energies, spirituality and healing with her professional pursuits. She has been the editor of a monthly community newspaper serving the Windsor Gardens active senior living community in Denver, Colorado, since 2003. She can be reached at 303-388-2435.



Above: one of Janna's classes in scrubs visiting a surgical suite.