

What my Clients Taught Me



by Wanda Buckner, Ed.D., HTCP

In my previous profession— proposal development and writing—evaluation was a necessary part of every grant and every program. Evaluation told us what worked and what didn't and how we could improve. I wanted this same information from the 100 sessions I documented in preparation for Level 5. So I developed a brief evaluation form to elicit input from clients who saw me for three to five sessions. I offered five free sessions in exchange for completing the evaluation. When clients completed treatment they were asked to rate and comment on their results. Did they get the outcomes they wanted? Were there unexpected benefits? Was the setting conducive to treatment? (I have a home/office and dogs.) Did I talk too much? Were the suggestions for self-care helpful? I learned a lot during those one hundred sessions and I'm still learning! The highlights are below.

It isn't about me.

My first clients sat through a long explanation of my background and how I came to Healing Touch (HT). I felt I had to explain why I thought I could do energy treatments when my doctorate and career was in education. Eventually I realized my clients didn't care where I'd been or what I'd done. Results were what they cared about.

Clients tell me what they want me to know.

I struggled with the forms and ratings. Was I really going to ask people if they were constipated? I certainly couldn't counsel anyone on spiritual well-being. So could I ask them to rate theirs on a scale of 1 to 10? I finally accepted that their ratings raised

issues for them to consider - not me. I instructed my clients to answer only the questions they were comfortable answering. Some clients provided no information and HT still worked. When talk edged into the last half-hour of the appointment, I put the client on the table, ready or not.

The right client finds the right practitioner.

As clients confided in me, I questioned my ability to adequately serve them. I learned that the clients who needed what I had to offer were the ones who came to my door. Conversely, the clients who came to me were the ones from whom I needed to learn.

The magic happens on the table.

When people struggled with situations I had faced, I got hooked! I gave advice. I tried to solve their problems. I wavered on the line between intake, intuition, and counseling. I had time issues. How much intake was enough? How much was too much? With experience, I learned to talk less and listen more; to ask more questions and give fewer answers.

There are always outcomes.

The mandate to be detached from outcomes seemed impossible. If clients didn't get better, they wouldn't come back! On the evaluation, a few clients said the treatments had 25% or less success in addressing the issue about which they were concerned. However, those same clients said the process was still worthwhile and they would do it again. All clients experienced unanticipated benefits. I am thrilled when people experience

instant results. However, I accept that people also heal in ways not obvious to me. Most importantly, I am not responsible for anyone's healing. All healing is truly self-healing.

Accept what happens.

As my Higher Sensory Perception developed, I thought I was imagining things or making them up. In my mind's eye, I saw Archangel Michael holding and comforting some clients. Occasionally, my intuitive self saw and heard people from the client's life apologizing, explaining, comforting. Sometimes I shared words from these scenes and clients confirmed their authenticity. (My mentor assured me these experiences were blessings, not signs of mental instability.)

My experience isn't the client's experience.

When I became distracted during a session, I worried the treatment wouldn't work. When my experience doing HT was wonderful; I assumed the client also had a wonderful experience. Not true. The clients experience was theirs - and mine was mine.

Scope of practice is important.

I viewed clients as peers working collaboratively on their self-identified needs. This did not give me the right to recommend supplements, suggest ways of dealing with difficult people, or advise them on career strategies. Referrals to other professionals helped me remain within my scope of practice.

Healing Touch works.

My clients taught me that HT can relieve pain and alleviate depression and anxiety. During an HT session, people often access deep feelings and integrate intellectual insights. Inner communication may open to resolve emotional and spiritual issues. Clients often feel cradled in the love of the universe. Routinely, clients report feeling calm, a deep relaxation, and peacefulness.

I am now an HT Certified Practitioner with a private practice. I continue to stand in awe of my clients' strength of spirit, inter-

nal resources, and personal wisdom. Although I no longer ask clients to complete a formal evaluation, I continue to learn and grow from my experiences with them. I am deeply grateful for my wonderful "teachers" that grace me with their presence as my clients.

About the author:



Wanda Buckner, Ed.D., HTCP, HTAP, retired from education after 30 years at the school, district, and state levels as a librarian, teacher and administrator. After retirement, she helped fund innovative programs for children through her Proposal Development and Writing business. In 2007, Wanda opened her energy therapy business To Soothe and to Heal. Wanda provides Healing Touch and Aromatherapy to people and their companion animals at her office in Olympia and at Catherine Place in Tacoma, Washington. She also volunteers in Providence Hospital's No One Dies Alone program and on the Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit with her registered Pet Partner®, Sophie.