Learn to be quiet enough to hear the genuine within yourself so that you can hear it in others.

– Marian Wright Edelman
Dear Readers,

A quote by Lynne McTaggert keeps coming to mind — *A thought isn’t just a thing. A thought is a thing that affects other things.* She seems to indicate that thoughts actually have substance, they are a thing like any other physical thing. I begin to examine my thoughts as if they were real things, not just passing fantasies that only exist in individual mind.

A passage from a well used, and slightly tattered, book on my bookshelf, *Letters of the Scattered Brotherhood*, says — *It may be helpful for you to consider the fact that to permit stupid thoughts to dwell and slip through the mind is as dangerous as to let sharp delicate tools slip through the fingers. The practice of self-examination is recommended... with clean, concentrated thinking that challenges one’s words and deeds during the miniature life of a day.*

I often think that we are far more connected and interconnected that we perceive. My personal experiences certainly seem to validate this.

Physicists explore entanglement. Rupert Sheldrake, biologist, explores morphogenic fields. Others are now exploring meaning fields and consciousness and how they affect our world and the universe at large. They may even be creative forces.

All of this points to the idea that the world we live in is perhaps not what we think it is, that our reality is quite different from what is truly real. A new perception or way of considering the world is not easy because we all have filters and experiences that create our personal worldview. Yet consider the following — space and time might be useful tools but may not really exist, matter consists of more space than physical particles, mind may exist outside the body and might be a process that we both contribute to and draw from. Perhaps, our thoughts may have far the reaching effects Lynne points to.

So, what does this all have to do with Energy Medicine and healing? In our corner of the world as we deal with practices, clients and patients, we often wonder how others can’t conceive of what we do as being valid. How they cannot comprehend or begin to appreciate the benefits that we witness daily. Our worldview has expanded beyond their worldview.
Yet, perhaps our worldview is still quite limited.

I think it is good to be open to new ideas and to explore new avenues. It is good to open to what we might consider impossible, or that might rock our personal world a little and to really stretch.. This is what we are asking those involved in the western medical model to do. This is what we ask of those we talk to about energy healing and those with whom we work.

This fall I invite you to stretch your horizons, to consider new ways of thinking and being, new ideas and approaches.

Personally, I have challenged myself to watch my thoughts, and to weed out those that do not serve.

May you experience wonderful new adventures,

Margaret
Contributors  Sept/Oct 2017

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Thank You!
Energy Magazine’s team, authors and readers will miss you. We wish you the best on your endeavor of obtaining a Master’s of Social Work.
… Maybe a thesis on Energy Medicine’s fit in Social Work…

Lynne Shaner
Past Assistant Editor

Welcome!
Energy Magazine wants to welcome Lindsay Mulligan.
Lindsay is our new Assistant Editor. She has many skills and talents to share that will help the magazine continue to grow and develop.

Lindsay Mulligan
New Assistant Editor
1 | “If you want to effect the physical matter that is your body and the invisible matter that is your mind and your soul,” says Lauren Walker, “the most effective practice you can learn is how to work with your own energy.” With The Energy Medicine Yoga Prescription, she brings you a solution-oriented manual to complement any health regimen—filled with essential insights for well-being, techniques to activate your body’s natural healing intelligence, and a powerful new vision for happiness and wholeness.

Lauren delivers a solution-oriented manual using practices that complement any existing health regimen and helps us uncover the root causes of our physical and psychological health complaints — along with easy-to-learn practices to accelerate our healing.

2 | Written in a gentle and intimate manner, An Invitation to Change through Energy Healing promotes self-growth through self-love—the foundation of spiritual work. Marie Lavin guides the reader to uncover patterns of burdensome thoughts and behaviors that no longer serve them. She supports them as they continue to challenge and change toxic habits. Because the book focuses on the foundations of self-love, the information is timeless. Readers can refer back to the chapters as they begin to practice self-love on every level—physical, emotional and spiritual—uncovering their own inner wisdom and truth.

3 | This book discusses the ways in which science, the touchstone of reliable knowledge in modern society, changed dramatically in the second half of the 20th century, becoming less trustworthy through conflicts of interest and excessive competitiveness. Fraud became common enough that organized efforts to combat it now include a Federal Office of Research Integrity. Competent minority opinions are sometimes thereby suppressed, with the result that policy makers, the media and the public are presented with biased or incomplete information. Evidence tending to challenge established theories is sometimes rejected without addressing its substance.

4 | This DVD explores breakthroughs in the fields of energy medicine, quantum physics, DNA and genetics, and the biochemistry of emotions. We see how the old conventional healthcare models, that have relied on surgery and prescription drugs, are being challenged by a wave of dramatic, non-invasive mind-body and energy-based healing techniques. While many of these techniques are centuries old, they are now generating worldwide studies with remarkable results.

For more information or to purchase these titles click on the title’s image above.
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<td><strong>Lifestyle Medicine Conference 2017</strong>&lt;br&gt;Tucson, AZ&lt;br&gt;lifestylemedicineconference.org</td>
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**Good for the Spirit**

**Essential Energy**
Cyndi Dale

**Going with the Flow—According to the Rules**

Recently a client protested the end of our session.

“We are done in five minutes,” I prompted.

“But I am not finished!” she cried.

“Our hour is almost up,” I added.

“But the last healer I worked with just ‘went with the flow’ until we were finished. She did not charge more money for the extra time, either.”

I am all for going with the flow when there is a flow to be had. To be “in the flow” is to follow the syncopation of the Universe. It is to move in rhythm with a greater process and dance in time with the music that is playing. It is to jot down or speak the words that pop into your mind and jump into the water after your duck-chasing dog—just because.

Flow is a strategy, but so is keeping time, paying for services and following rules. In fact, when we healers establish and maintain our business structure and regulations, we are better able to flow with the cosmic clues that can uplift, soothe and benefit our clients. Running an energy healing business, however, has a built-in challenge. Perception is king, and many people believe that energy healers should be available based on the flow of the client, not the flow of the business.

People inherently understand that there is a spiritual facet to an energy healing business. That is because the two most original models for energy healing are shamanism and religion. I have worked with many indigenous shamans around the world. The template is based on availability. Once, deep in the jungles of the Amazon, an entire family hiked across miles of forest, using a machete to forge a path, to arrive at the shaman’s hut around midnight. The father carried an ill child. The shaman immediately tended to the boy, who rose from his stupor around 5 a.m. ready to eat and play.

In nearly every country I have visited, in fact, shamans are on call 24/7. I once visited a mountaintop in Venezuela that housed hundreds of diviners and healers. You could show up at any time and receive a blessing or fortune-telling. When attending a Sun Dance hosted by a Lakota medicine man, anyone could participate in a sweat lodge any time they were held; some occurred at midnight.

Most religions have followed the same archetype of full-time, as-needed service. God does not decide when He/She/It is available, so neither should a pastor, priest, rabbi or mullah. To the clergy person, late night calls are infamous, as is the need to be accessible on-demand.

While shamans are paid for their services, the payment might be a chicken rather than money. The shaman’s food is often delivered by a group of families rather than purchased by the shaman him- or herself. In general, shamans are sustained by a community rather than individual clients. Along the same lines, the donations made to a religious institution pay for a clergy person’s time. There is not a direct-connect for hour-to-hour service.

The idea that spiritual energy should be freely available to the needy no matter the time—and at little to no direct cost—is an underlying principle often applied to energy businesses.

Linked to this perception is the idea of “going with the flow.” To a client, “going with the flow,” as projected upon an energy professional, implies meeting the client’s desires in terms of time and cost. As a healer however, I rely on “flow” with a capital “F” to deliver my best work. Plain and simple, I need to be open to the mood and movements of the Spirit IN SESSION to deliver messages and healing. We do not fight to swim up river; rather, we let ourselves be carried in the current of grace that is energy.
Although being freely available to the client may work perfectly in other cultures, it does not work well in ours. Most energy healing businesses are based on time units. You teach a class for “X” number of hours and the cost per person is “Y.” The same applies to hourly services. Of course there are services that fall outside of these venues, such as the selling of products.

Business is business. Our clients are not paying for the healing energy, they are paying for our time. We are not supported by our community. For us to show up for an appointment, we must keep a calendar. The modern world simply works that way, and everyone, including our clients, must walk within the lines of practicality.

In fact, who has not learned the lesson of rule-keeping from day one? I remember going off to kindergarten in Huntsville, Alabama, super excited about my new petticoat. I wore it under my dress and could hardly wait to show it off. Eager, I leaped to the front of the class and started twirling around, holding the cloth of my dress up so that everyone could see my tutu. The teacher gasped and made me sit back down, lecturing me that “ladies do not show their underwear.”

So much for my spontaneous breaking of the rules.

When individuals ask for my advice when setting up a new healing business, I fill their heads with regulations. Set your hours, do not give free guidance on the phone, establish clear payment policies and never, never, never go beyond your session time. For long-time healers, I say, keep it up! Sustain the business aspect of your practice for it bolsters the respect for healers everywhere. Someone empowered to say “no” can more freely say “yes” to the flow that seeks to come through during a session.

As Wayne Dyer once shared, “The invisible intelligence that flows through everything in a purposeful fashion is also flowing through you.” It is intelligent to care for self and care for our businesses, leaving even more energy to care for our clients when in service to them.

Cyndi Dale is the author of *The Subtle Body: An Encyclopedia of Your Energetic Anatomy*, and eight other bestselling books on energy healing. She has worked with over 30,000 clients in the past 20 years. To learn more about Cyndi, her work, books and products please visit: www.CyndiDale.com.
Using a Vision Quest to Support your Practice

Across native cultures, there is a practice of questing—of visioning, listening and being filled by the guiding energies of the earth and cosmos. These quests bring energies of clarity, support, guidance and healing — whether it is for body, mind, spirit, the community, the earth, a personal soul journey or the honoring of our ancestors.

The way of the vision quest is unique to the rituals and traditions of the individual that embarks on the quest. In many native cultures, the elders sent the young men and women out into the caves, mountains, rivers or desert to be with the spirit teachers of the earth. These early life quests were clarifying and helped support the individual in knowing his or her path or purpose. They also supported a connection to the spiritual dimension. The time spent in nature was filled with songs, prayers and offerings of herbs or tobacco. There might have been fasting to remove connection to the needs of the physical body, possibly allowing more room for spirit to come in and support the individual. After the individual received the vision or the message, he or she would integrate this wisdom into his or her life.

There are so many different types of vision quests, with their beautiful traditions and cultural dimensions. Generally, the intent of the quest is a sacred clarifying act that uses connection with the spiritual dimensions. The visitation of guides, helpers and spiritual energies can also support the process as does the gifting of vision or visions. Enduring aloneness, quietude and the subjugation to the natural elements outside also play a role in vision questing.

A vision quest can also be used as a tool to help you gain insight for your practice. As Energy Medicine practitioners, we always connect to spirit with our hearts as we do our work. In addition to spirit working through us, spirit also runs through our practice — the sacred container for our work. As you read the following sections, allow the concepts to find a home within you and ask benevolent spirits to arrive in support of your professional vision quest.

I hope that as you read the following aspects of a traditional vision quest, you are fully supported in creating a personalized sacred vision quest that supports your practice — your work’s sacred container.

Working in Time
Traditionally, individuals would go on a vision quest for days at a time. Because working in energy is timeless, do not feel that you have to leave for days. If you can, there is benefit to being away for a length of time and immersing yourself deeply in a devotional, prayerful respite away from the everyday rhythms of your life. However, do not feel constricted by time. You can set an intention that the time you have will perfectly support your visioning.

Answer for yourself, when is the perfect time? How long can I be away?

Selecting a Location
If you can, spend some time outdoors and connect with the sacred nature that is around you. Ask what from the outside is supporting your quest.

If there are aspects of nature that will support you during your time of visioning, connect to these elements of the outdoors in your vision quest ceremony. You might bring water from a nearby stream (or a picture of a stream), a feather that represents the air or a bird — with her great perspective — or a candle to represent the creative fire. Remember that there is the reality you can touch and see, and there is the reality that is beyond. Both are rooted in a reality that you can use in your ceremony.

Answer for yourself, where is the right place? Or, what do I need to bring with me from “the right place”?
Creating Sacred Space
Create your sacred ceremonial space intentionally, reverently and with great love in your heart. Connect and attune with your landscape, either the sacred nature that is literally around you or the sacred nature that you are bringing energetically to your visioning.

Answer for yourself, what is the perfect space for my heart to ask honest questions and where my soul is safe to open to the other worlds? What does it smell like? What does it look like? What are the sounds?

Meeting Your Spirit Guides
Connect with the spirits of nature. How? you might ask. The answer I like to give is: “You ask.” Open your heart, clear your mind, be humble, embrace awe and hold gratitude in your heart. Then, simply ask to be connected with those spirits that will best support your highest good. Wait. Be quiet. Stay open. Be honest in your heart. They will come. Remember, they might not be of animal form or ghostly spirit. There are so many dimensions and so many Spiritual earth-based teachers—the stones are alive, just as are the plants, the rivers, the rain and the wind. When your guides feel close, ask those who are supporting your Highest Good in this moment to stay present with you.

Answer for yourself, what are the qualities of this quiet, heart-open place? Remember that you receive information in many ways—thoughts, body sensations, emotions, voices or messages and visions, to name a few.

Making a Sacred Request and Listening
Once quiet and with your sacred counsel of benevolent guides and helpers, you have the opportunity to make a humble request. This request comes from your heart and your spirit. It arrives out of quietude and introspection. When visioning for your practice, you might start by asking how are you different from your work? What is your practice? What is the energy of your practice? After you create your question, there is a period of waiting for an answer. This practice teaches patience as you wait for the lessons or information that supports the full answer to your question. Many times in your quest, you will find the answer is more than the voices and the vision—check in with your body and see if the physical sensations or emotional feelings are helping to give you clear information or a knowing.

Answer for yourself, what unanswered questions linger in my heart concerning my practice?

Integration and Gratitude
After receiving the energy that is intended for you, it is necessary to allow yourself time to work with the messages from your guidance. Allow yourself space to ask more questions and reflect. Ask yourself if your quest is complete and pay attention to your thoughts and knowings, and how your body and emotions feel to receive the answer. If you feel, in any way, that you need to continue your quest—listen to that message. If you feel ready to close the quest, then do so. Look inward a last time, draw from the well of your gratitude and send honest gratefulness back to the spirits and the Earth that have supported you during your quest.

Answer for yourself, how has my consciousness been elevated around my practice and purpose?

The intent of the vision quest is to gain clarity. I invite you to enter into the sacred process of vision questing to support your practice as you ask deep questions from the honest well of your heart. May you uncover even more of the beauty and depth of your practice.

Amelia Vogler is a specialist in Elemental Energy Healing and mentors holistic practitioners worldwide to deepen their sacred practice. She also moonlights as the Executive Director of the Healing Touch Professional Association supporting Healing Touch practitioners in their advanced education. Her life’s work is seeded by the desire to bring healing to all those that share this beautiful planet. www.AmeliaVogler.com.
How Color Changes the Spectrum of Your Health and Wellbeing

Look around. What colors do you see? Unless you are colorblind, you probably encounter a range of colors in the clothes you wear, the food you eat, the landscape and other items you see on a daily basis. You might feel drawn to some of these colors, while others leave you feeling drained.

Colors influence people, which is why they are used for a variety of purposes from marketing to healing. In fact, color therapy, also known as chromotherapy, was used by ancient civilizations as diverse as the Egyptians, Chinese and Greeks. The modern theory behind color therapy stipulates that the organs and limbs of the body vibrate at certain energies that harmonize with the vibration frequencies of colors. When the body's vibrations change, it can lead to dysfunction or disease. Certain colors help to shift the energy back into balance in order to heal, and this association typically correlates with the chakras.

The therapeutic potential of color does not just begin and end with color therapy. The emotional and physical influences of color provide several potential benefits to your body and mind's wellbeing, which is why you should strive to surround yourself with the right colors in every aspect of your life.

Color Influences Emotions

Green with envy. Red with anger. Feeling blue. Our language is filled with instances of color reflecting emotion—and with color evoking certain emotions. You might also be familiar with the utilization of the psychology of color for marketing due to its ability to connect with certain emotions—the power to stimulate them. The relationship between emotions and color might be an individualized experience. Some authors contend that there is a cultural connection to the meaning of certain colors.

The color choices that you make might also be influenced by your current emotions. In one study, researchers showed videos to participants that were either associated with joy or fear. Afterwards, they were asked to choose an appropriate color using sliders. The researchers found that the participants in general selected brighter colors to match with joy, and these tended to be in the red-yellow spectrum. The participants tended to correlate the fear videos with the cyan-bluish hues.

Colors also have the power to stimulate certain psychological states or actions. For example, red is highly associated with aggression and alertness. It also has the potential to make people anxious. In one study, researchers found that reading words in red type or reading the word red in any color type led to increased stress, ultimately affecting cognitive performance and making it harder for people to read the words. Other colors have the capacity to improve the psychological state.

Using Color to Express Emotions Creates a More Positive Outlook on Life

Color is also a tool for expressing emotions. Art therapy is a great example of the positive psychological effects of harnessing color for emotional exploration and expression. One study looked to see if using color as part of art therapy improved stroke patients' purpose in life, as well as that of their caretakers.

Upon utilizing colors in art therapy, including as a way to express their emotions, both caregivers and patients had improved scores on a Purpose in Life questionnaire. Interestingly, the patients also chose a greater variety of colors, including those that correspond to more positive emotions, to express their emotions later in the process, reflecting the improvement in their emotional state during the therapy sessions.

Harnessing the Power of Color with Light Therapy

Surrounding yourself with color is not the only way to harness its power for your health. The benefits of color might also stem from the light waves. Electromagnetic waves that
are not visible to the human eye have the ability to affect the psychology and physiology of people, such as UV light, Gamma rays, infrared light, microwaves, X-rays and more. Following a similar logic, then it is possible that the waves of light within the visual spectrum would also be able to affect people not just on an emotional or psychological level, but on a physiological level as well.

One way that light waves might provide therapeutic value is through impacting the melatonin and serotonin pathways. Serotonin and melatonin regulate the sleep-wake cycle, as well as heart rate, temperature, blood pressure and more. You have probably heard a lot recently about the negative effects of using blue light items, which is found on digital devices like phones and tablets, at night. This is typically due to their effects on circadian rhythms and sleep patterns. Through utilizing light therapy, it is possible to modulate these important regulators that ensure you get sufficient sleep, as well as regulate many other components of health.

For example, one study found blue-enriched white light helped to keep people awake and improved cognitive performance during the day. Therefore, blue light itself is not bad—it is at what time of day you are exposed to it. Another study looked at the effects of red, green and blue light on heart rate variability, or the time between heartbeats, and autonomic regulation. Heart rate variability has a direct correlation with the efficiency of regulatory systems and overall health. They found that the different colored lights had the capacity to influence heart rate variability in a short period of time.

With so many benefits, it is high time that you focus on what colors you encounter on a daily basis. You might find that some have a negative influence on your health, while others might have a positive effect. It is possible to harness the therapeutic power of colors without specifically engaging in light or color therapy. You simply have to pay attention to your environment and make changes as needed.

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.

References
Many Energy Medicine practitioners play music while they are giving a treatment. Anecdotally, practitioners have indicated that the music helps relax their client. Many of us have also experienced relaxation with music whether it be during a session or playing it for general relaxation in our home or office.

Although the two studies highlighted are older, and their sample size is small, they offer data that validates our experiences and anecdotal information. In these particular studies The Magic Mirror, a solo harp CD by Amie Camie, was used. The effects on the brain surprised one of the researchers as they had expected relaxation, but not changes in the brain.

These studies point to the conclusion that The Magic Mirror in particular produces changes. It may also indicate that music in general may have a greater influence on our clients and ourselves than we had thought. Further studies are needed.

You will find a summary of one of these studies below. A link to the entire study that includes charts and graphs can be found at www.amycamie.com/qeeg-pilot-study-results.html.

A second pilot study, Effect of Music on Psychoneuroimmunological Responses, can be found at www.amycamie.com/saliva-pilot-study.html.

Effects of a Relaxation CD on Stress Factors In Cancer Patients Receiving Chemotherapy as Measured by Quantitative EEG: A Pilot Study

Conducted by William Collins, Ph.D.

According to the American Cancer Society, cancer is the second leading cause of death in the US. In the year 2006 about 1,220,100 new cancer cases will be diagnosed and about 552,200 Americans are expected to die of this disease. Research has shown that stress can compromise the immune system and therefore may become a significant factor for cancer patients (Anderson et al., 1998; Bortemeester & Butzelar, 1999). Music has often been used as a stress-reliever and there is much research to support this as a therapy. This pilot study looked at the effects of a music CD designed to induce relaxation.

Five subjects were enlisted in this study. The data of one subject was determined to be too contaminated, with muscle artifacts, and was therefore removed. That left four subjects. Each subject was given a Quantitative EEG (QEEG) pre and post treatment. After the pre QEEG they were instructed to listen to a music CD (The Magic Mirror relaxation solo harp CD) once a day for ten consecutive days. They were also instructed to fill out a daily questionnaire. At the end of the ten-day listening period, a post QEEG was done.

Indications that can be drawn from this pilot study are:

1. The Magic Mirror relaxation solo harp CD has a significant effect on EEG frequencies
2. The Magic Mirror relaxation solo harp CD has a significant effect on cortical processing of information.
3. The frequencies most affected are the High Beta and Theta.
4. Asymmetry is most often problematic and positively affected cortical processing measure.
5. A general comment that can be made is that The Magic Mirror relaxation solo harp CD calms and quiets the brain resulting in greater ability to focus and process information.

### Table of Results

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Comment on Study:

There are a number of important facts that need to be considered when reviewing the data. The subject EEG data was processed through one of the most reputable databases available. Dr. Thatcher has been published in the most prestigious peer review journals in neurology. Subject EEG is being compared to normative data and only deviation from the norm is considered. Neurological functioning as measured by EEG is approaching normal. The intervening variable (treatment) is The Magic Mirror relaxation solo harp music. By using a normative database, the results are indicating a significant change in critical EEG functions. Subjective reports from the subject’s daily log indicated a daily positive effect of the music. This is subjective whereas the EEG data is not.
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Architecture of the Soul: How the Chakras Handle Energy

We’re all on a journey. Wouldn’t it be nice to have a map?

At the sacred center of each one of us spin seven wheels of vital energy called chakras. Aligned vertically along the energetic core of the body, the chakra system is an organizational structure for how the soul handles its life force. I call it the architecture of the soul. Each chakra is a chamber in the temple of your body that handles a particular kind of energy, much like the different rooms in your home handle distinct energies. If we are going to work with the energy body, we need to understand its basic architecture.

My working definition of a chakra is this: A chakra is an organizational center for the reception, assimilation, storage, and expression of life force energy, or charge.

The chakras manage charge in forms that span the full spectrum of human experience: from your primal instincts, to your emotions, actions, relationships, communication, and vision, on to your highest consciousness. I’ve written extensively about chakra philosophy and psychology, but here let’s look specifically at how the chakras handle this life force, along with exercises for charging and discharging energy, and ultimately balancing the chakras.

The word chakra comes from Sanskrit, the ancient language of India, and literally means wheel or disk. Though this was not a metaphor known to the ancients, these wheels are like the old-fashioned floppy disks we once used in our computers. Each chakra handles a different aspect of programming—such as our relationship program, our language program, or the images stored in memory.

Chakras exist at the meeting point of mind and body, in what is called the subtle body, yet they have a location in the physical body, as seen in the picture Figure 1. Energy is the interface between consciousness and the physical body. Even though they’re not physical, like an organ or bone, the chakras do influence your experience of the physical body. Butterflies in your stomach, a frog in your throat, or an ache in your back can be attributed to the influence of the chakras in those areas.

As portals between the inner and outer world, the chakras are primary gateways for both charging and discharging energy. But as receivers and senders of energy, the chakras are not wide open portals that take everything in or let everything out. Instead, they are intelligent patterns in the body/mind system that filter and check energy as it enters and leaves the body.

Each chakra manages a different kind of energy and...
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Receiving
As a chakra receives energy, it may filter what comes in. The throat chakra, which processes communication, receives the words someone is saying, but may selectively listen, hearing only what the person wants to hear. In the second chakra, we receive sensate experience, but sort out what feels good versus what feels bad. In the crown chakra, we might filter information as it comes in.

Assimilating
Chakras are also the assimilators of energy into the core. They process our experience, information, beliefs, and emotions, much as our digestive system assimilates our food and turns it into nutrients and calories. If we can’t assimilate what we receive, the energy of the chakra slows down, trying to process it, just like a computer chewing on a big file, or a belly trying to digest a Thanksgiving dinner.

Storing
Just as calories can be stored as fat, chakras store energy in the form of body structure, emotions, habits, and memory. If we consider that the patterns that persist in our lives (despite our attempts to avoid...
them) are our psychological complexes, then our life force energy, or “charge,” can be seen as the “glue” of a complex—holding together the beliefs, emotions, actions, habits, strategies, and memories in a self-perpetuating pattern. A more detailed description of how chakras store energy follows below.

**Expressing**
And finally, chakras express energy. We tell somebody what we’re feeling or we take action after planning our strategy. If we can’t express energy through a chakra, we can’t discharge, and that in turn limits what we can take in.

In this complicated sorting process, our chakra patterns contain our habitual defenses. These defenses were once created in order to keep vital energy in and toxic external energy out. Sometimes, however, these defenses keep out the benevolent energies as well, such as a heart chakra that is so defended it can’t take in the love we want. In the same way, if we think what’s inside us is not okay, such as thinking we’re stupid or not trusting our emotions, then the chakras inhibit our self-expression and spontaneity.

If you were around air that smells bad, like a smoky bar or rotting garbage, you would inhibit your breath. The body naturally defends from taking that in. Yet, if you were around such smells all the time, you would develop an unconscious habit of breathing shallowly, and that would gradually become hardwired into your body and breathing patterns, affecting your mental clarity, your digestion, and your immune system. It would become part of your unconscious programming.

If on the other hand, you were carrying a strong emotion at a time when it was either unsafe or inappropriate to let that emotion out, you would defend against the discharge of that emotion. We all do this in situations where getting angry or having a crying jag isn’t a good idea. But if you grew up in
an environment where it never felt safe to express emotion, this habit would also get hardwired into the body. It might be through a holding pattern lodged in the second chakra, which handles emotion, or perhaps a pattern that holds back in the throat chakra, the area of self-expression, or perhaps a pattern that makes you afraid to take action, realm of the third chakra.

The aspect of “assimilation” also applies to how the chakras handle the charge that remains within the body-mind system. If you eat food, are you able to digest that food and make good use of it? If someone gives you love or support, are you able to take that in and remember later that you are loved? If you are learning a new subject, are you able to understand and assimilate what you are learning? Have you ever had a conversation with someone who seemed to be listening, but afterward behaved as if he or she hadn’t heard a word you said? Even if we receive and express energy through our chakras, the ability to keep that charge and turn it into something valuable depends on our ability to assimilate.

Chakras as Storage Pouches
I see the body as a storage battery for energy, which I call “charge.” Chakras can store our experiences, memories, habits, and beliefs—all which have a certain amount of charge. Memories that have strong charge—such as a traumatic memory—consequently store more charge in various parts of the body. This can work positively or negatively. Storing the energy of someone’s love can comfort you in times of despair, or you can store up anger that erupts suddenly when you don’t want it to.

If you think of the vertical core of the body as a great big tube in which energy travels up and down, and you want to store energy in any part of that tube, you would need to create a place to put it. Just as an elevator goes up and down between floors, but doesn’t really store energy (it just lets people on and off at each floor), the core handles the transportation of charge up and down the chakra system, between heaven and earth, mind and body, spirit and matter. But the core is a conduit for charge; it doesn’t store it, except through the chakras. Like a straw, the energy can rise and fall, but unless you create some kind of “storage pouch” along the way, there is no mechanism for keeping energy part way up or down.

So you can think of the chakras as energetic storage pouches along the core of the body, where you find not only gates that defend what passes through, but an energetic “space” to store what is assimilated.

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Excessive and Deficient Chakras
Chakras can heighten charge or diminish energy, much like the capacitors and resistors of electronic equipment. If the habit is to not feel your emotions or your sexuality, the second chakra will constrict to minimize energy at that level. This will create resistance and slow down everything flowing through the
second chakra, maybe even resulting in lower back pain. If the habit is to live in your head, trying to figure things out intellectually, you will “rev up” your higher chakras when faced with a problem, and pull energy out of your lower chakras. Then perhaps the throat chakra constricts to keep that energy in the storage pouch of the head from moving down into the body.

A chakra’s ability to properly assimilate energy depends on a balanced level of charging and discharging. If a chakra is receiving more energy than it can discharge, then it would become “excessively” charged. If your throat chakra were overcharged for example, you would be excessively focused on talking, or maybe the energy would be blocked up in your neck and shoulders. There is lots of “energy” there, but it’s stagnant. There is too much packed inside for it to flow smoothly.

A deficient chakra, by contrast, starts to close down, making a smaller “storage pouch,” or even crimping the tube that runs from Heaven to Earth, blocking the passage up and down. Even when there’s a possibility of taking energy in, it’s not able to do so—there’s simply not enough room to store it. It’s like offering a truckload of furniture to a person living in a small apartment. They literally can’t receive it.

Of course, it’s not always so cut and dried. Some chakras have characteristics of both excess and deficiency at the same time in different aspects of that chakra. For instance, the second chakra, which is said to handle both emotions and sexuality, could show a pattern of someone who is highly sexual and not very emotional, or the reverse, highly emotional and not very sexual. This is simply the way the person attempts to balance his or her charge within that chakra.

Both excess and deficiency in the chakras are a result of a defensive strategy that modulates the energy coming in and out. Excess results from a compensating strategy—meaning we compensate for something we didn’t get enough of, like love or feeling powerful, but we excessively focus on that level. A deficient chakra results from an avoidant strategy. We want to avoid our feelings or avoid taking action.

So you see, there are many aspects to understanding the chakras as managers of energy, with patterns that differ from person to person. It’s not simply a matter of “opening” a chakra, but requires a nuanced understanding of how people have created their defense structure around avoidance or compensation in a particular area. Much like the human face, where the eyes are always above the nose, there are universal aspects to the chakra system, but each person has his or her own unique expression.

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References
2. In the classic texts from which the chakras are described, there are only five elements named: earth, water, fire, air, and ether. No elements are given for the upper two chakras. In my first book, Wheels of Life, I popularized a seven-element system.
As parents, we want nothing more than to see our children healthy and thriving in all areas of life. At a young age, we teach them dental and physical hygiene. As they develop and mature, we teach them first aid techniques to handle emergencies and we encourage healthy eating habits to maintain long-term well-being. We pass on the very best (and sometimes the worst) of what we have learned or observed from our parents and health care providers. Yet inside, many of us recognize that there is still so much more that we do not understand about how healing occurs or ways to help our children work proactively to maintain a state of wellness.

Over the past decade, many parents have moved beyond the conventional health care model to explore how Energy Medicine or subtle energy therapies like Reiki, Healing Touch, yoga, meditation or chakra balancing can help their children maintain higher levels of physical, mental and emotional health. In my work, I specialize in helping parents support their children’s behavior, learning and health challenges with an energy balancing technique known as The Innerlight Method. Parents frequently ask me to help them find a meaningful way to introduce the concept of Energy Medicine to their children before they experience their first session. They also ask me to help empower their children by teaching basic energy balancing techniques so they can take ownership of their own healing experience. In response to these frequent requests, I developed the following five keys to make it easy for parents to help their children add Energy Medicine to their lifetime wellness toolkit.

**Explanation**

It is important to help children understand that we are made of much more than the skin, bones, muscles and organs we can see with our eyes. Explain that every living thing is made of energy, also known as chi or prana. Just like our breath, the field of energy that surrounds and flows through our bodies is usually invisible, but it is essential to sustaining our life. Most children easily relate this to the concept of force fields that are discussed in Star Wars and many superhero comic books. When we think thoughts, streams of energy flow out from us and affect our own health and the wellbeing of others around us. We all have energy centers in our bodies, known as chakras, which store the energy of these thoughts and emotions. Positive thoughts and peaceful emotions raise our energy and contribute to our healing. Negative thoughts and painful emotions lower our energy and can contribute to physical, emotional and spiritual health challenges if they are not identified and released. We are all transmitters of energy and receivers of energy. That is why it is so important to be aware of how our health is affected when we feel certain
Teaching children these fundamental concepts of Energy Medicine for self-care is something that you as a parent can do easily and successfully.

emotions, when we are placed in certain environments or when we spend time around certain people.

**Observation**
Invite your children to take a few days to observe how they feel mentally, emotionally and physically when they are in the presence of someone who vibrates high energy—positive thoughts and peaceful emotions. Ask them to keep a journal and note the people, places and activities that help them feel calm, uplifted, energized and healthy. Next, ask them to make a list of the people, places and activities that vibrate lower energy—critical, negative thoughts or painful emotions. Ask them to compare how they feel after spending time in both settings. I find that most children can immediately intuit the energetic pattern of people who are kind, trustworthy and supportive. They should also be trained to observe how their own energy affects those around them at home and at school. As parents, it is so important to give children permission to avoid sustained contact with people or environments that they perceive negatively impact or lower their energy. This is a critical key to practicing Energy Medicine as a lifetime wellness tool.

**Relaxation**
Achieving a state of relaxation is the next critical step in the practice of Energy Medicine. Children can learn to observe how their energy and sense of well-being have been impacted by their own thoughts and emotions, or by the thoughts and energies they absorb from interacting with others in their environment. Once learned, it is time to help them understand that by relaxing, they can begin to redirect their energy to create a healing effect in the body and mind. There are many wonderful mindfulness, meditation and breathing techniques you can practice with your children to help them learn to relax. My favorite is a super-short relaxation practice known as The 60 Second Fix by Dr. Regalena Melrose. It really only takes 60 seconds!

**Imagination**
In a relaxed state, invite your children to imagine that they can see inside their own body while their eyes are closed. Gently guide them to look at each part of the body from head to toe. They may report seeing bright or dark colors, or they may report feeling a flowing river or stuck balls of energy in different parts of the body. They may simply have a knowing of where energy is blocked without seeing or feeling anything at all. Encourage them to trust their inner knowing. Each person will have his or her own unique imagination or visualization tools that help them identify energies that need to be healed and released. Once the blocked energy or emotions have been identified in the body, ask the child to try to identify the person, place or personal experience where the energy originated. Before clearing and releasing the energy, I always recommend offering a word of forgiveness—of self and all others—setting everyone involved free from the thought forms and emotions that lead to illness and despair.

After sensing the forgiveness ritual is complete, begin the process of clearing the energy. I encourage clients to light a small tea light candle (under adult supervision, of course). Imagine all the lower thought forms and emotions streaming from the head down through the body and out the legs. Imagine all of that energy streaming into the candle and being consumed by the fire. Then imagine the light of the candle streaming up from the tips of the toes and filling the entire body with light, love, peace, health,
courage and any other qualities the child wishes to embody. This entire process can take anywhere from five to 10 minutes depending on how quickly your child is able to access and maintain a relaxed state. Never worry if initial attempts seem fruitless or if your child resists the practice. I encourage you to adopt your own practice and allow your child to observe you practicing Energy Medicine.

Repetition
Daily practice is the key to measurable results. Just as we brush our teeth, shower and wash our hands daily, so must our practice of Energy Medicine become a regular part of our self-care routine. Since it takes approximately 21 days to break a habit and establish a new routine, I strongly encourage you to sustain this daily practice with your children for at least a month before measuring progress.

Respectfully, the field of Energy Medicine is far more expansive than what has been captured in this article. However, I have found that teaching children these fundamental concepts of Energy Medicine for self-care is something that you as a parent can do easily and successfully. Even if you are a complete beginner, you can use the five keys offered in this article to help your children grasp the basic concept of energy techniques and begin to put it into practice. Because children are primarily impacted by their parents’ state of energetic well-being, I highly recommend that you join them in practicing the five keys to keep your own energy at the highest possible level. In a short time, you may be surprised to experience a much greater sense of calm, joy and general well-being in your household as you and your children become your own inner healers.

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I am the daughter of a nuclear physicist. Even my mother, growing up in farm country, saw science played out on a daily basis. As a result, I grew up in a very science-based household. I was taught to question everything and accept very little at face value. As a registered nurse (RN) who started out as a physics major in college, I am thoroughly steeped in the hard sciences. So in 2010 when my best friend and colleague, Michelle, approached me with the idea of Healing Touch, it was all I could do to not spew my Coke. I genuinely thought she had taken a long walk off a short pier and plunged into complete and total lunacy.

For the next year and a half, she was extremely persistent in her appeal to me regarding the benefits of Healing Touch. Over and over, she showed me how to do it — where to place my hands, how to feel the energy moving and when to move to the various hand positions. We even completed Healing Touch on each other and, I have to say, I found it very relaxing. But, beyond that, she lost me. Frankly, it looked like Voodoo. Waving my hands over someone? It looked every bit as scientific as if I had a magic wand, waved it over a person and chanted, “Abracadabra…abracadabra…” However, not wanting to hurt her feelings, as she is my best friend after all, I tried to be polite and enthusiastic.

In time, I became genuinely concerned about Michelle’s reputation and standing on our hospital’s inpatient oncology unit and I felt that I should set her straight on this Healing Touch business. I mean, people started talking. What is she doing? What is that? Is this for real? You have got to be kidding! As you can imagine, I wanted to protect my friend. So, I made it my mission to gently guide her back to her role in Western medicine as an RN.

One day, I was sent to one of our Intensive Care Units (ICU) to administer a chemotherapy regimen to a young man in his early 20s with a very serious illness, deadly, in fact. When I saw him he was barely responsive, nearly comatose and working hard to breathe. He had refused intubation. His RN told me that it was because he did not want to be hooked up to a machine to breathe.

I arrived on the ICU around 11:30 and at 12:00, I began my chemotherapy regimen, medicating him first with 650 mg of IV acetaminophen, 50 mg of IV Benedryl, and 125 mg of IV Solumedrol. These were necessary to mitigate any adverse reactions he might have to the chemotherapy.

At 12:30, his vital signs were Temperature -38.9 C, Pulse -122, Respirations -36, and Blood Pressure -147/97, pretty much what they had been all morning. At this point, I started his first chemotherapy drug.

As time went on, his vital signs changed very little.
Hoax, Hooey or Healing?

There is now a rapidly growing body of research about Healing Touch and other integrative therapies.

He was having no adverse reactions to the chemotherapy. Sitting there with him, I have to say, it was somewhat disconcerting to see how hard he was working to breathe. My heart ached for him; he looked miserable.

At 14:45, I was more than two hours into the regimen. As I sat there, monitoring him, I thought this would be a good time to put this Healing Touch to the test. Right in front of me I have a patient who is a prime candidate for it. I was certain that by doing Healing Touch on him I would finally be able to demonstrate to Michelle that this modality is just as silly and nonsensical as it looks. I would be able to tell her that I tried it on a patient and NOTHING happened! Then, maybe she would put all of this to rest and come back to the real world.

The timing was perfect. My patient was not scheduled to receive any more medications for the next few hours. Nothing was going to change for him. The chemotherapy was not having any effect on him or his vital signs. Everything was status quo.

Just then, the patient’s mother arrived. I told her that I would like to try Healing Touch on her son, carefully explaining what I would be doing with my hands. Not wanting her to think I had totally lost my mind and with professionalism exuding from my pores, I explained the benefits of Healing Touch to her. After countless recitations by Michelle, I could not help but memorize them. I even asked her if she would like to assist me, thinking that the energy being moved by two people would have more of an effect than the energy being moved by only one person. After all, if I was going to dismiss Healing Touch as wishful thinking, then I was going to give it the best possible test I could.

To my surprise, she immediately agreed. She was even genuinely enthusiastic. I think seeing her son in his present condition made her welcome anything that might help him. She put down her belongings and made her way to her son’s bedside. After some preliminary grounding techniques, she mirrored my every move, making sure her hand placements were exactly right. Interestingly, I could actually feel moving sensations between my hands. Thinking it was just the power of suggestion, I tried to dismiss it and continue. Surprisingly, those sensations continued. Not only did they not stop — they changed as the session went on.

All of a sudden, about halfway into our session, the patient started shaking to the point where the bed was noisily thumping. I have to say it was rather alarming. His mother looked at me with a somewhat frightened look on her face, and asked, “Is this normal?” Although I was a bit unsettled myself, as I had never expected or experienced such a response from merely touching someone, I decided to act cool, like I knew what I was doing. I told her the body can have many different kinds of reactions to Healing Touch. It is just the energy moving. We will just keep going. I did not understand what was happening. I thought it might be a reaction to the chemotherapy but, if it was, it was very atypical. I was getting ready to medicate him for the shaking but, within a minute, his shaking calmed and he was still.

It took about an hour to complete the entire session, partly because I was still in a state of shock from what happened, and partly because I wanted to complete a quality Healing Touch session to be able to refute it authoritatively.

Once the session was over, at 15:55, we sat by the bedside and waited for the next set of vital signs. I could not believe what I saw! To my utter astonishment, his vital signs had normalized! I sat there stunned, with my jaw dropped to the floor and my eyes as big as saucers. Was I really seeing this? His temperature was 36.8 C. His blood pressure dropped to 127/82,
his heart rate fell to 96 and most surprisingly of all, his respirations slowed to 22. What in the world just happened? How did this happen? How did this work? What did we just do? His mother was as amazed as I was and she was looking for answers, too. All I could tell her was what Michelle had been telling me all along — “You move the energy and things happen.”

Within the next 30 minutes, the respiratory technician came into the room and looked at him closely. Then she looked at her watch. She looked back at him. She looked at her watch again. She was counting his respirations. Then she turned to me and said, “Huh, what happened?” I told her that his mother and I had just completed a Healing Touch session for him. Not knowing what that was she asked me a number of questions. How did it work? How does it affect the body? How did it work on this patient? I gave as detailed an explanation as I could but, frankly, I had the same questions myself. After telling her all that I could, her only reply to this was, “Wow!”

For the first time, Michelle’s words hit home. I saw, first hand, a very real response to Healing Touch. I mean, he was not faking his vital signs! This was a patient who needed to be intubated and now, after Healing Touch, his respiratory rate was near normal. His blood pressure and heart rate were normal and one could see that he physically looked calmer and more relaxed. He was not working nearly so hard to breathe and his body was much more still. He was finally resting.

For the next six hours, I sat in the room completing my chemotherapy regimen, waiting for his vital signs to revert back to what they were but they did not. In fact, the following morning I called the unit to inquire about him. His RN said his vital signs were still normal and he did not, as yet, have to be intubated!

I was completely blown away! What in the world do I tell Michelle? Where was all the lunacy, silliness, nonsense and spewing of Coke now?! I was humbled and my mind was changed about Healing Touch. Something definitely happened...not only to my patient, but to me as well.

Needless to say, I had to learn more about this modality. Because of its dramatic results on my patient, I made it my mission to gain as much information as I could. I took the Healing Touch Level 1 class. I read as much research as I could find and, at that time, there was not much research available. I reviewed the generation of magnetic fields from electric currents. I read about the body’s biofield, heat signatures and ability to carry an electric current. The more I read, the more I needed to find an answer as to why Healing Touch works.

Fast-forward to 2016. There is now a rapidly growing body of research about Healing Touch and other integrative therapies. We are learning more and more about why they work and the science behind them. The deeper I delve into HT and the various integrative therapies, I come away thinking that we might never be able to explain, fully, why they work. We may have to be satisfied with the conclusion that they do. But, just because science cannot explain everything does not mean that something that works is not valid. Just as science is explaining more and more as the years go by, one day, Healing Touch may be completely scientifically explained...or not. Whatever the case, it works.

Unfortunately, my patient’s story does not have a happy ending. I made one final phone call to the ICU to inquire about him. His RN told me that his vital signs remained normal until the evening of the second day at which time his condition deteriorated rapidly. He finally consented to intubation as a life-saving measure. Sadly, he succumbed to his illness and he died the following morning.

What was amazing to me was that in the midst of the severity of this disease and for at least 24 hours, this patient did not have to be intubated and his vital signs remained stable and normal. He had a time of rest and peace before the end came. As an RN, I was so grateful to be able to give him that!

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This two part series explores nature’s elements of air, fire, water and earth, as foundations of healing rituals designed to invoke, release, cleanse, embody and integrate energy from cross cultural practices. The first article explores ancient energy practices while the second article, appearing in a future issue, applies these principles to modern energy practices.

My troubles were gently soothed as they lay me down in the cool water, on the soft sand under the dappled light by the river’s edge. Each time the water rose and fell, as a breeze touched my skin, a strand of tightness in my muscles washed away, replaced instead by the deep smoothness of a calming balm. The water rocked me and I drifted off, peaceful for the first time since my troubles arrived, sung to sleep with the sound of the lapping water splashing on my skin.

This scene could have taken place long ago or in our own lives just yesterday. The universal quality of being soothed by nature’s elements of air, fire, water and earth are as familiar to us as our own names. We are embedded in the natural world, eating the fruits of trees, bathing in cool water and using fire for warmth and light. How natural it must have been to harness the elements of nature to restore health. Over time, nature’s elements have been used physically and symbolically through ritual in ceremony.

Ancient energy practices involve the pivotal role of water, air, fire and earth in healing systems. Traditional Chinese Medicine Five Rhythms associate elements with seasons, such as water with winter and beginnings or fire with summer and expansion. The Indian Ayurvedic system links earth with the root chakra (Muladhara) at the base of the spinal column and fire with the solar plexus (Manipura) near the stomach acids which burn up our food. Nature’s elements are also found in the First Nations tribes’ instruction about how to nourish mind, body and spirit. The heat of flame and steam of water over hot rocks are used in holy ceremony to remove toxins from mind, body and spirit through sweat lodges. When humans function as part of the natural world there is an alliance that forms, enhancing life for all beings.

Most cultures highlight the four elements previously mentioned as the foundation for their worldview, healing ways and connection to the planet. Other elements are seen as influential by some but not all cultures such as metal, wood, ether, light, star and stone. This article will explore how nature’s elements have influenced healing rituals. First, earth’s elements are described both physically and symbolically, reminding us of our deep ties to nature. Next, five stages of healing rituals are presented, aligning them with nature’s elements. Examples of energy healing practices from the four corners of the world are offered as lessons in connecting back to the root of nature.
The Effects of Nature’s Elements on Personal and Planetary Energy

**Air**, though invisible, is our most vital element. We live in an ocean of air, moving through it without noticing, though we can only live a few minutes without air. Air exerts a pressure of 14.7 pounds per square inch on the earth at sea level, which means a section of the body measuring three by three square inches has 132 pounds of pressure on it. Air is also a transporter, carrying life forms like pollen and seeds from place to place. Movement of air through the wind signals changes in weather and season. Our bodies thrive on air, consuming approximately 2,500 gallons of air each day. However, we breathe more than just oxygen and hydrogen. We breathe the life force itself—chi, prana, ruach (Hebrew for wind, breath, spirit)—bringing the divine into the physical. Air in the body, passing through the lungs and vocal cords, creates sound and words and energy. Symbolically, air is the messenger, orator and scholar. Sandra Ingerman notes, “Tribal people believed the wind was the carrier of messages to life forms across the land.” (Ingerman, 2000) The breath of life is holy. It has a magical, etheric quality like in the saying “it came out of thin air.”

**Fire** and heat in the body and earth keep life new, fresh and in constant motion. Lava ejected from deep in the earth flows to the surface, creating new land. Fire from the sun feeds plants and animals and, in turn, those who consume them. Fire links the earth with human mood, as sunlight lights us physically and emotionally. Heat in the body affects temperature, metabolism and sexuality. Symbolically, fire is the great creator and annihilator. It mediates light and darkness, shape shifting between energy (heat) and form (flame). Fire purifies as it consumes its own fuel and can rebirth itself, like the phoenix rising from the ashes. Like the heat of summer, fire can expand to uncomfortable limits and must be treated with caution and respect as it can increase anger and inflammation physically and emotionally. Fire goes beyond the ordinary in search of excitement and novelty and can manifest instantly, turning desires into reality.

**Water**, our most plentiful element on the surface of the planet and in our bodies, is mandatory for sustaining life. Water feeds the earth through oceans, rain and dew. As a medium of both gentleness and great strength, water smooths away rough edges and over time can dissolve items many times its mass, such as dripping water eroding walls of rock. In our bodies, water brings nutrients to the cells and cleanses toxins. Symbolically, water is associated with emotion reflected in phrases like being as “cold as ice,” “frozen with fear” or “wishy-washy.” Water has been tied to the unconscious, dream material and immortality, such as the elusive fountain of youth.

**Earth** is our home. Called Gaia by the Greeks, she was the Mother Goddess of the planet. As Denise Lynn recounts, “The earliest cultures honored the Earth, which was worshipped as a living, conscious Being who oversaw life in all its phases... The ancient sensibility was one of living with the Earth instead of merely on it.” (Linn, 1995) For humans, the earth element is the physical body proper, housing our emotions, mental space and spirit in form, often without our awareness. Symbolically the earth represents strength, stability, wisdom and power, along with nurturing and healing. It is a compliment to be called “down to earth” or authentic. Earth mothers are seen as giving and comforting, loving with compassion and building bridges between people. However, when taken to an extreme, earth energy can turn into worry or giving to others at one’s own expense, becoming rigid and fixed. It is important to give and receive in balanced measure.

**To heal is to make sound or whole, to restore to health, original integrity or purity.**
Healing Rituals and Nature's Elements Create Wholeness

What are healing rituals? To heal is to make sound or whole, to restore to health, original integrity or purity. When disruptions or troubles weigh us down, we seek to rebalance and reaffirm beauty in life. Rituals were created for this purpose, seeking to turn insanity into sanity. A ritual is defined as an established form for a ceremony, any formal and customarily repeated act or service of acts. Rituals can be personal or communal. According to Sobonfu Somé (2004) (keeper of ritual), in the Dagara West African culture, rituals are simple, inviting spirit and setting intention. She distinguishes between rituals which are flexible and not predictable and ceremony which has known and predictable patterns. A marriage ceremony has predictable patterns, but a forgiveness ritual may be unique to each person and setting, flowing with situational requirements and spiritual unfoldment. Ritual acts frame our need for greeting, eating, loving, blessing, atoning, forgiving, acknowledging, celebrating and welcoming back to the self after suffering a shock or initiation.

Although each culture and time has its own healing rituals, certain themes are found cross culturally. They are invocation, releasing, cleansing, embodying and integrating. Each can be paired with one or more of nature's elements to enhance energy healing practices.

Most healing rituals begin with an invocation, a call for help or to make a request. Ancestors are beckoned, offering gratitude and asking permission for the healing ritual. The breath is used to issue forth a petition in the form of words, chanting or sounds from the mouth. It is more than just speech for it manifests into reality that which was previously silent. The element of air proclaims a message to be heard and answered. Sobonfu Somé's invocation for study is one such example, spoken in her native language from Dagara and then translated into English.

She calls, “Onto the spirit of this land. The spirit of my ancestors...bring us your wisdom, your guidance, bring us your ways; the ancient ways that we have sometimes forgotten. Bring it back into our consciousness, into our mind, our spirit and into our soul. Come and shake those bones in us so we can remember.”

Once permission has been granted for a healing ritual, often what follows is a releasing process. “To release” is from the Latin word relaxare, to relax, bringing relief or deliverance from sorrow, suffering or trouble. It is the state of being freed. When asking for change, a clear space must be created, through a releasing ritual. Fire can be used, as it destroys the past and clears a path for the future. One can light candles, burn paper with writing or symbols for release, or use holy smoke or incense to restore spiritual and physical health. One method used by First Peoples of North America is smudging—applying smoke and fire that has spiritually purifying qualities. According to Mark St. Pierre and Tilda Long Soldier (1995), in the Lakota tradition (and others of the Plains First Nations) dried cedar, sweetgrass and sage are added to burning embers to create smoke. Healers pass smoke over their faces and bodies, along with ritual equipment, followed by smudging the ritual space and others in attendance to release debris and elevate the spiritual atmosphere.

After release comes cleansing. A single person or the entire community can be cleansed from contamination or disease, allowing them to proceed in a spiritually and physically pure state. The element of water is often used for this purpose—from ritual bathing, baptism, sprinkling or pouring of water over the hands, washing the feet or wading in flowing waters. In Russia, water cleansing involves throwing large amounts of water over the head from the crown of the head down, standing outside on the earth with bare feet, allowing the water to flow into the earth. This mimics the action of standing under a waterfall and allows the body and spirit to be cleansed from head to toe. Many holy places around the world are built near rivers, allowing supplicants to use the water for cleansing purposes. It is understood that flowing water takes away that which is no longer needed, whereas standing water is stagnant.
Once the preliminary acts are complete, the essential core of healing emerges with rituals designed to open the person or community to a new reality. This involves the full engagement of the body, mind and spirit, hence the term *embodiment*. Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defines embody as to give a body, incarnate; to deprive of spirituality; to make concrete and perceptible. Interesting to note that the contemporary definition of embodiment removes spirituality from the body. Ancient practices integrate all aspects of life, never separate. The *earth* element most closely resembles the embodiment stage of healing, offering nurturing and growth. Embodiment may take the form of ingesting liquids, herbs or potions to encourage healing, journeying through the spirit body to the upper or lower realms for messages and insights or dancing into a trance state so transformation can manifest.

In the Vedic tradition, static postures and physical movements or asanas are performed to release tension, improve flexibility and maximize flow of energy or prana. Asana—from the Sanskrit word meaning *manner of sitting* and derived from *ās*te or he *sits* — strengthens the musculature, creates balance and promotes optimal flow of nerve energy to organs and glands through a supple spinal column, reducing that which disrupts the mind. Asanas lay the foundation for more advanced yoga practices of meditation and breath work. (Frawley, 1999) The idea is to start with the prana and let it create the asana, much like how a cat has the urge to move, and then stretches, rather than the other way around.

The circle of healing rituals closes with *integration* — uniting and blending or forming into a whole. In order for the learning to move forward, the person or community must be able to carry the lessons gleaned from *nature’s elements* and the healing rituals in a way that makes sense and apply them in everyday practice.

We are the same today as the ancients were before us because we seek to grow and learn to be happy and healthy. There is a prophecy that our world will walk into an advanced age of understanding and peace when the peoples from the four directions of the East, West, North and South share their wisdom as one.

Reflecting upon age-old healing rituals and nature’s elements point us to ways of knowing that are available and effective today. We can adopt these methods in our contemporary world, a topic which will be further explored in part two of this series, when we consider modern energy practices and nature’s elements with healing rituals.

Author Lori Hops can be found at www.DrLoriHops.com.

References
I am an Energy Medicine Practitioner

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What if you could change anything in your life, including your health, simply by training your mind to ask curious questions based in positivity instead of fearful questions filled with worry?

The human mind is capable and powerful. Its influence can be far reaching, stretching into your cellular memory—including the cells of your immune system.

Despite the obvious potential of the mind, humanity continues to align with worry and fear, invading our world and creative abilities with negativity. The addiction to negative thinking may seem impossible to avoid. However, negative thoughts are habit forming. Habits, though obsessive, can be and are broken every day. Dissolving an inclination to think, feel and speak adversely is a practice. A practice that begins with the mind.

Because of this, I firmly believe in mind control. True healing comes from a positive change in perception. Using tools over and over again to break addictions to adverse thoughts (and words) while training your mind to use its incredible power can create a fulfilling life.

Take a few moments right now and remind yourself what you talked about with others today. Was it positive? Was it productive? Or were your words and feelings complaining in nature? Knowing what you tend to think and speak will assist you in controlling unnecessary thoughts and ultimately, feelings.

Despite human thoughts to the contrary, the human mind and body love positivity and naturally believe in positivity’s influence as the universe is a positive place.

One tool for changing habitual thoughts is asking yourself positive “what if” questions such as “What if I have all the energy I need today?” Or “What if I stay calm during the next heated conversation with my partner, colleague, etc.?” The key to using positive “what if” questions is to make them general, so as not to alert the belief system, as most people have negative beliefs. Synthesizing one’s current energy system to align with positive desires that we each deserve and truly want introduces positive vibrations.

A few years back I began to experience knee pain. The pain started in my right knee, making it difficult to do squats in my favorite exercise class. After a while, the pain crept over to my left knee as well. I visited my acupuncturist, began taking helpful supplements and...
tried not to think about it. But every time I exercised, the pain gripped me. In this lifetime, my pain threshold has been high and health issues typically pass quickly through my being. But the knee pain was different.

One evening after returning from exercise class and feeling defeated, I suddenly became aware of my thoughts concerning my knees: “What if I need a total knee replacement?” Wow, I thought to myself. That is a pretty negative thought. Negative thoughts, although not wanted, create a frequency of energy that attracts their likeness or holds us in non-forward moving energy. I immediately asked myself, “What do I really want? What would I like to experience with my knees?” Quickly a new thought raced into my mind. “I want my knees to feel amazing,” I heard myself think. From that moment forward, I began to ask myself a positive question about my knees at various times throughout each day... “What if my knees feel amazing?” I also paid closer attention to my thoughts and replaced fearful questions about my knees with a desired positive question.

I noticed right away that when I asked the question, I really desired an answer. The energy in my body changed. My mood elevated and I felt hopeful.

When energy elevates, we begin to move into new perceptions. I believe all the things in life we really want vibrate in high energy. All the things we wish to avoid vibrate in low energy.

Shifting your approach to a potential or real problem will recalibrate your molecular energy so that you are able to experience a new awareness—an awareness that is accurate and helpful instead of the fearful vibration of energy most people perpetuate, leading to disappointment or a long unnecessary struggle.

Within two weeks of consistent practice asking the new “what if” question and interrupting the negative thoughts, I suddenly remembered what a dear friend had told me ten years prior, “If you ever need expert body work, I know someone who works magic.”

I made an appointment right away with this magical individual, and after my first treatment, the knee pain decreased by 60%. After a few treatments, the pain in both knees completely disappeared.

When our “what if” questions are positive, our energy becomes positive and we literally transform our human experience into a new world full of wonderful answers.

The words mind control may bring up scary thoughts of governments gone rogue, but controlling one’s thoughts and learning how to entertain the mind with healthy words and suggestions could be your greatest tool to creating an amazing life!

Author Marie Manoucherhri can be reached at www.EnergyIntuitive.com.
You may have already read many articles about the wonders of meditation. It has been practiced for millennia and studied formally for more than fifty years. My guess is that many of you already meditate and many others have ruled it out. So why another article? I am a neophyte in Healing Touch (I have taken a Level 1 workshop) but a fairly experienced daily meditator (13 years), as well as a scholar-practitioner. My hope is to bring a little perspective to that question and open the door to the possibilities that meditation brings to those of us who practice Healing Touch and many other healing techniques, both conventional and complementary.

I am a great believer in cross-training at many levels. Having learned a number of techniques, I choose from among them for each of my client sessions and my self-care sessions. You probably do the same. I have been excited about a number of techniques, including Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT, aka “tapping”), Reiki, yoga, hypnosis, meditation and Healing Touch. What I have noticed over the years is that as I add new techniques, layer upon layer, I experience deeper levels of connection with my clients and hear positive feedback from them regarding the depth and effectiveness of the sessions. Additionally, I experience a sense of personal depth—an inner resource that feels expanded and more present in my own life.

I have experienced Healing Touch sessions at the hands of gifted practitioners. My own training in it gave my work a level of deepening that I think comes from additional tools. Yet with all my training in various energy healing modalities, I keep returning to meditation as the basis for all my healing work. Why is this the case?

A number of years ago, I saw various images in popular magazines of brain scans of some sort — usually they were obtained with Functional Magnetic Resonance Imagery (fMRI). The neuroscientific community communicated their excitement about the world-changing understanding that our brains could, in fact, grow. Neurogenesis and neuroplasticity were real and it meant that we were not limited by a set number of brain cells, which we destroy routinely and eternally. One of the consistent themes in the many articles about brain optimization was the importance of the practice of meditation. Meditation seemed to be the foundation and key practice that allowed positive changes to occur.

Once that new understanding percolated through my mind, I realized that I wanted to optimize my brain in whatever ways I could. In my personal life, I began meditating. In my professional life, I often suggested meditation to clients. In my academic life, as I began to explore what was most meaningful for...
Meditation: A Tool to Strengthen Your Life and Practice

Meditation is known for so many, many positive outcomes. Increasing those outcomes in our lives — focus, compassion, self-efficacy, lower blood pressure, lower reactivity, heightened immune response, a sense of well-being, among many others (see References below) — can, I believe, amplify and deepen our other Energy Medicine practices. Have I seen any literature on this notion of amplification? No. But for those of you who have a research bent, I encourage you to formulate some good questions and do the research.

For those of us who are simply interested in increasing the positive aspects of our lives, however, I invite you to start or rekindle your meditation practice. There are so many benefits that occur as a result of meditation that it is challenging to list them all. In addition to the benefits listed above, others associated with meditation include cognitive improvement, psychological improvement, neurological improvement and the reduction of pain (Moore & Malinowski, 2009; Morone et al., 2008; Lykins & Baer, 2009; Lazar et al., 2005).

Regular meditation has also been found to facilitate the development of such positive psychological qualities as increased self-compassion, reflection and well-being as well as lowered negative reactivity (Lykins & Baer, 2009), decreased negative affect, increased positive affect and increased mindfulness and self-awareness (Kemeny et al., 2012). Shonin et al. (2014) found that meditation can contribute to an increased sense of personal agency and well-being.

Exploration of neurological aspects of meditation has been the focus of a number of studies in recent years. Lazar et al. (2005) hypothesized that regular “meditation practice might be associated with changes in the brain’s physical structure” (p. 1893). To test the hypothesis, the authors used Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) to ascertain the thickness of the cerebral cortex of experienced meditators and nonmedi-
the effects of the experience of long-term meditation in the lives of a variety of meditators, a number of themes emerged, including increased equanimity, compassion and acceptance of self and others. Additional themes that emerged include a cultivation and deepening of personal spirituality; a sense of meditation as being connected to the creation of personal life purpose and meaning; and peak spiritual experiences, regardless of spiritual practice or background (Shaner, Kelly, Rockwell, & Curtis, 2015). Participants described the importance of meditation as giving them an anchor during difficult times and being one of the most important aspects of their lives.

Potentially, the regular incorporation of meditation is likely to usher in these transformational, positive effects. I know that has been the case for me. As we deepen our own levels resilience, acceptance and compassion, we can be more present for our loved ones, our clients and ourselves.

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Author Lynne Shaner can be reached at www.EFTPraxis.com.
The mind, body and spirit, in their perfect state, act to support one another. But in our stressed and scattered lives, that perfect state is not always the norm. Attaining a perfect harmony of these three will lead us to peaceful inner balance, allowing us to open to opportunities that are presented and to be our very best selves.

It is important to identify ways in which we can change our thoughts and behavioral patterns to bring our mind, body and spirit into balance. Recognizing patterns that may once have served us, but no longer work, is a critical part of this work.

First let’s address how the mind, body, and spirit fall out of perfect balance. When we are not taking care of ourselves—not paying attention, not listening to our basic needs of hunger and sleep, or becoming overwhelmed by our everyday lives — we tilt off kilter. For example, we lose our balance when we are involved with addictions to alcohol, drugs, food, shopping, gossiping or working. When we are in those addicted states, we become distracted and lose our focus on balance. We may use those addictions because they feel comfortable, often because we have been that way so long that we simply do not know another way to be. It is like wearing old comfortable shoes that may be held together by threads, barely giving us the support we need. We may think those tattered shoes are better than a new pair of shoes that feel stiff and need breaking in. Old patterns feel comfortable and predictable, despite the fact that they are no longer useful. New patterns of thinking or behaving may need the same gradual breaking in before they feel natural and right. But the result is worth the work, many times over.

One common example of a behavior pattern that may no longer serve us is avoidance. We may not want to examine our tendency to procrastinate. It may feel like too much work to change that pattern, in which we conveniently back-burner issues we would rather avoid. Our old pattern allows us to think that we will deal with the issue or task tomorrow. But when tomorrow comes, we feel disappointed in ourselves, often opting to do something that will distract us from that feeling — perhaps focusing on an addiction to gossip or alcohol or food. That distraction is just another pattern that is not serving us.

It takes work to balance our mind, body and spirit. It takes time and patience, and the desire to move to a more peaceful inner harmony. It also helps to identify what behavior and thought patterns need to change.
At its foundation, this work is about self-love. But how do we begin to work on our issues? The first step is to recognize that our behavior and thought patterns are interfering with a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

When we absorb negative self-talk and incorporate it into our thought process, those thoughts become patterns that may not serve us. For example, if someone in authority, a parent, teacher or partner tells us that we are stupid or not worthy and we believe it, those powerful words have a crucial impact on our psyche and can have lasting effects on our thought process. When our thoughts tell us that we are not worthy, it interferes with a balanced, healthy lifestyle that includes healthy thoughts about ourselves. And we may also develop negative patterns of behavior because we feel bad about ourselves. Those patterns may include but are not limited to the addictions listed above. All these behaviors take the focus off going inside to do the hard/heart work of looking at ourselves and discovering why we developed and still use these behaviors as coping mechanisms.

When we are ready to do the hard/heart work, we need to take small, manageable steps to find ways to make the changes.

Can we do this type of healing on our own? Yes, I think it is possible — if we have the information needed to heal ourselves. However, the support of a trained professional, therapist, facilitator, medical doctor or someone who has the ability to heal with words, touch, sound or support systems, medical or otherwise, is important to the healing process. Only you can decide which modalities are best suited for you. Explore alternative healing modalities — you may be pleasantly surprised by what you find.

Part of your success will be in discovering which healing modality works most effectively for you. I believe that all healing modalities serve a purpose. Because we are all unique individuals, our needs are different, and different modalities serve our various needs. For me, it was essential that the healing modality I chose incorporate the physical, emotional and spiritual aspect of healing. This allowed for healing on every level, creating greater balance in my life.

Would the modality I chose work for everyone? I cannot answer that question. I can say that in my own experience, and for the clients that I serve, energy work was and continues to be a powerful healing modality.

As an energy practitioner, I recommend a variety of tools to support clients in maintaining balance in their everyday life. It is not just one tool, but a combination of many tools including diet, exercise and spiritual practice, whatever that means to the individual. While working with clients, I use an intuitive process supporting the mind, body and spirit. Because we are all different, different tools work for different people. For example, one may find being in nature clears out negative energy blocks while others find gardening has an impact on their wellbeing.

How do you find the right practitioner? One way is through a referral process — ask your friends if they have had a positive experience with an energy practitioner. Another way is to do an internet search and ask for a consult with the practitioner. We need to do the work to find the right person. At the same time, I believe we are led to the right practitioner when we are ready to do our hard/heart work. For me it was one internet search that led me to the perfect practitioner.

Reflecting on my own experience, it was energy work that allowed me to better understand the issues that were causing my dis-ease and emotional distress. This understanding allowed me to release the blocks of thought and behavior patterns that were not serving me. A commitment to live a more balanced and healthy life, as well as personal motivation, were the factors that directed me toward this alternative healing modality.

Energy healing was such a perfect fit for me that I found myself compelled to become a practitioner, helping to teach others how to become their best selves — a key to a better balance of mind, body and spirit.

Author Marie Lavin can be reached at www.DivineHealingEnergy.net.
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