

Outpost Exchange
Energetic Medicine
By Maggie Jacobus
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The body is a journal of our life. All experiences—especially traumatic ones—are inscribed in the soft tissue of our anatomy: the 219th time the football player is tackled (and the 218 times before), the fall from a tree at age four, the bike accident at age 20.

The entries are not just physical in this notebook of our lives, but emotional as well: the teasing on the playground in fourth grade, the verbal abuse of a caregiver, the divorce of parents. These experiences, too, are written in the soft tissue of the body.

Even everyday stresses can be recorded if they produce enough stress: the frustrating daily traffic jam or the continuous crunch of work deadlines.

Whether these physical and emotional hurts are consciously recalled or not, the body remembers. “The entire body, every cell, has the capacity for memory,” said Ron Moor, an ordained minister of healing based in Minneapolis, MN. These “memories” or traumas—whether big or small—create energy imbalances. Over time, repeated traumas can create energy blocks, which may result in mental, emotional or physical problems or dis-ease.

“The issues are in the tissues,” said Dr. Gary Lewis, M.D., an integrative family physician practicing in Milwaukee. That’s why Dr. Lewis and a growing number of alternative and integrative medicine and modality practitioners around the country are integrating energy work, also called energetic or vibrational medicine, into their practice.

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Jacobus, Energy Medicine—Add One

Far from being a New Age concept, these modalities that manipulate the body's energy are actually age-old. Techniques such as acupuncture, reiki, homeopathy, aromatherapy, cranial sacral therapy, hands-on healing and some forms of massage, to name a few, have been used in cultures around the world for centuries, even millennia. These practices work on the premise that mind, body and spirit are all interconnected and that treatment of a physical ailment should also address the mental/emotional and spiritual issues attached to the physical problems.

In traditional Western medicine, the “triad of the human body—mind, body, spirit—has been broken into three separate parts, “ stated Jerry Grotzinger, ND, RMT, RPP, a naturopathic doctor and subtle energy therapist specializing in Polarity Therapy and Intuitive and Therapeutic Bodywork in Milwaukee. “Western doctors don't deal with the mind—that's left up to psychotherapists. And they don't deal with the spirit—that's left to the clergy,” Grotzinger said. But practitioners of alternative medicine and modalities believe that these three are inseparable and need to be treated as an integrated whole in order to achieve maximum health benefits.

World-renowned scientists and medical doctors such as Richard Gerber, Herbert Benson and Christiane Northrup have documented hundreds of case studies demonstrating the mind/body/spirit connection and the role of energy in health. In her book “Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom: Creating Physical and Emotional Health and Healing,” Christiane Northrup, M.D. writes, “Humans are made out of energy and sustained by energy. Our bodies are ever-changing, dynamic fields of energy, not static physical structures. They are a hologram in which every part contains information about the whole. We know from quantum physics that at the subatomic level, matter and energy—which can also be called spirit—are interchangeable....We can view our bodies as manifestations of spiritual energy. Our mind and daily thoughts are part of this energy, and they have a well-documented effect on matter and our bodies....The mind/body continuum can be adequately understood only when we appreciate ourselves as an ever-changing energy system that is affected by, and also affects, the energy surrounding it. We don't end at our skins.”

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Jacobus, Energy Medicine—Add Two

Although we can't see this energy, it is a vital part of us. It is our life-force, the essence that makes us alive and keeps us living. The physical and emotional traumas accrued over the course of a lifetime impact this energy.

Barbara Brennan is an author, healer, teacher and physicist who has devoted more than 25 years to researching and exploring the human energy field. She holds a master's degree in atmospheric physics and worked as a researcher with NASA. She explains the impact of trauma on our energy in an article titled, *Healing the Human Energy Field To Harmonize with the Body, Mind and Spirit*. "...I began seeing my clients' auric fields, the human energy fields. I started noticing how the problems in their physical bodies were directly related to their psychologies by looking at the structure and organization of their auric fields. People distorted the auric field through their psychological issues, or, shall we say, psychological defenses. In order not to experience and feel something that is very painful in the past, one changes or blocks the flow in the auric field. Eventually, that affects the physical body and creates disease."

A trained practitioner who works with energy can "read" the body's journal by feeling, seeing or sometimes hearing the individual's energy (also called the auric field or electromagnetic field), and begin to work with the whole individual toward healing.

One modality used to rehabilitate an individual's energy field is massage that incorporates energy work. "Some people aren't that in touch with their physical body, much less other aspects" of themselves, said Jane Albrecht, LMT, NCTMB an integrative massage therapist practicing out of Studio 890 in Elm Grove. "Touching the body helps facilitate energy work. People can feel the physical body more than the energy fields around them. To combine energy work and massage is very powerful."

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Jacobus, Energy Medicine—Add Three

Dr. Northrup cites in her book a study done at the University of Miami on premature babies. Those who were stroked regularly gained weight 49 percent faster than did those of the same weight who weren't stroked. (Both groups of babies were fed exactly the same amount of food.)

According to a number of practitioners interviewed, the client's level of awareness of or even belief in their own energy field doesn't directly correlate to the amount of healing achieved. "Because everything is interconnected—mind, body and spirit—a client can obtain physical healing and not be aware of healing on other levels," Albrecht said. "When we relax and connect with the body, mind and spirit, we can release on whatever level we need to," she added. "The body wants to release, but we don't always allow it to do so."

Bob Burger of Pewaukee is a regular client of Albrecht's. In his fifties, Burger is physically active and believes his sessions with Albrecht help keep him in good condition. "The massage is good maintenance. It's like a car getting a regular lube and oil job." Burger started going to Albrecht one fall as his summer relaxation sports of sailing and golf were coming to an end. His goal was relaxation. But in three treatments, Albrecht also alleviated a foot ailment Burger had had for two years. "I had seen a couple of doctors for this and all they could tell me to do was take ibuprofen and walk slowly in the morning." He also was experiencing a numbness in one hand that concerned him enough to spend \$1200 seeing neurological specialists. No diagnosis was made. However, through massage, the problem was alleviated. When Burger missed several sessions due to the death of his mother, the numbness came back. "I'm convinced the regular visits to Jane have relieved" this problem, he said. In regards to the incorporation of energy work into his sessions, Burger said he believes Albrecht does include it, but doesn't put much stock in it. "I enjoy listening to her talk about it, but I don't recognize it" as the reason for the improved physical health, he said. "I don't mean to be skeptical, I just don't believe in it."

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Jacobus, Energy Medicine—Add Four

Jennifer Poe Paszkiewicz is also Albrecht's client. A psychotherapist in Milwaukee, she had seen various massage therapists for years. "I have problems with my lower back and shoulders. I hold stuff there," she said. This year has been one of transition for Poe Paszkiewicz, including a change in her business and a divorce. "The other therapists were good, but weren't including energy work. Jane has a style that I don't understand, but it works. She leaves me feeling emotionally, physically and spiritually better," she said. "I don't know that people need to be open to the energy work. It's still going to work even if they don't know it's happening," she said.

"The purpose of massage is to release stress and relax the muscles on a physical level. By relaxing, however, you can in turn open up emotions or spiritual aspects," said Victoria Leigh of Abyss Bodywork in Shorewood, who does therapeutic bodywork, energy work and is a Reiki Master. "Something as innocuous as a massage can start a whole journey."

"It's all in the journey," said Grotzinger, the naturopathic doctor. "It's where you get the growth. I'm not talking about physical growth. That happens on its own. The part that takes work is mental—emotional and spiritual growth. This is where energy medicine comes in. All energy modalities work with imbalances in the body beyond physical detection." In fact, Grotzinger and others point out that illness can be read in a person's energy field up to six months before it manifests itself physically, positioning energy work as a cornerstone of preventative medicine. "The purpose of energy medicine is to facilitate the growth process for a person, to open them up to the fullest experience of life. Once a person has had the experience that there is more, the soul is driven. The quest has begun," Grotzinger added.

Diane Herold is a Reiki master, who also practices a form of energy work she calls energy light balancing out of her home in Bay View. While massage therapists may incorporate energy work for added benefit, Herold is all about energy work. "People don't come to me for relaxation. They

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Jacobus, Energy Medicine—Add Five

come to work. To change. To heal. If you want to hang out in the mud, I'm not the person to come see." A soft-spoken, gentle woman, Herold is straight forward in her approach. "I try to take some of the 'air fairness' out of the process and make it as practical and concrete as possible," she said.

"People hold their health and emotional problems energetically in the body in electromagnetic fields. We shape ourselves around these energy patterns. I work with the energy patterns to shift and change them," Herold said. Herold experiences people's compromised energy—their hurts and emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, pain and depression—as dense, dark, slow energy patterns. Much like a weather pattern, when the dense energy meets the higher vibrating positive energy, the dense energy can't stay the way it was. It automatically starts raising its vibrational frequency to meet the lighter vibration. In a sense, it begins to rain. "We wash away the layers, work through the issues, heal the wounds. It takes an incredible amount of energy to hold our emotions, memories and wounds. The energy systems that hold all this begin to shut down. They get blocked off from the life force energy, which enters through the aura, the chakras. When you don't have energy flowing, you start losing vital life vitality," Herold said. "The body requires life force almost as much as it requires nutrients."

Unlike massage or therapeutic touch, Herold does not touch the body, but rather sits a short distance away and focuses on the client's energy and asks questions in her mind. "When I'm putting the questions out there, I'm connecting with a person's soul. The session is guided by the client's inner wisdom, which is how the soul gives information. I don't push change. I don't make someone heal. I simply hold the chakras, the energy fields, and what the soul and inner wisdom do is up to you. I create the space and hold everything. You decide what you want to change and how much."

The client, lying on a massage table, feels relaxed and in a light sleep state. This is the ideal way to access a person's energy, according to Herold. "In this state the inner wisdom is putting the conscious mind out of position, so the body can heal. The conscious mind can get in the way," she said. "When we let other aspects of the mind take over this is where the real healing takes place."

Jacobus, Energy Medicine—Add Six

The goal of this type of work is to expand the personality to become more like the soul. “Some call it evolving spiritually,” she said. “The personality and the soul are two separate levels of the person. The personality has a narrow window of understanding of what’s happening in life. The soul has the big picture. When we learn who we truly are, that’s what becoming our souls is. We can then use all our gifts and talents.”

As with most energy practitioners and doctors, Herold’s clients come to her when they are physically ill. “Physical ill health motivates people to get help. When they can’t find help with allopathic or even other alternative medicine, that’s when they’re ready to start working on other levels,” Herold said.

It was a health matter that drove Jenny Sechler to Dr. Lewis for the first time about five years ago. To address the sinus infections she contracted every winter, Dr. Lewis recommended that she eliminate dairy from her diet, increase fluids...and come once a week for four weeks of energy medicine sessions. “I felt a difference. At first it was just short-term. Then the results were long-term,” Sechler said. Dr. Lewis taught her to work with her own energy. “I didn’t realize how much capability we have in our own body. We can take responsibility for ourselves and enable ourselves,” she said. Sechler is now a nurse practitioner in Dr. Lewis’ office.

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Jacobus, Energy Medicine—Add Seven

“We all have an inner wisdom and can activate it,” said Moor, the Minneapolis-based minister of healing. “We live in a culture that is vastly overstimulated. When we create a sacred space, when we feel safe enough, we will let down enough and can open to our own deeper wisdom. It’s about opening up to our own capacity, to feel the energy. The capacity is there for all of us. There are always skeptics, especially men, because we are used to ignoring pain. It doesn’t matter if we understand it. I don’t understand probably half of what happens on my table,” Moor said. People who experience some form of energy work “at the very least feel relaxed,” Moor said. “And relaxation is healthy. We release stress and become open to the flow of energy. If we just have that, it’s helpful.”

Each of us carries our own personal journal in our body. The diary can be kept locked shut, or we can use the key of energy to release the past and open ourselves to the fullest experience of life.

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