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BOOK REVIEWS

Stephen Larsen, PhD, *The Healing Power of Neurofeedback: The revolutionary lens technique for restoring optimal brain function*, Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press/ Inner Traditions 2006. 432 pp. 19 pp notes, bibliography

Stephen Larsen, Psychology Professor Emeritus at SUNY, chronicles the development of neurofeedback – an electronic feedback of brainwave frequencies that elicits amazing healing responses in people with post-concussion syndromes, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorders, ADHD and more. Larsen focuses largely on the methods developed by Len Ochs, PhD, an innovative explorer in these realms.

The earlier approach of EEG biofeedback entrained the brain rhythms for alpha or theta frequencies, producing relaxation and enhancing meditative states. Ochs discovered that by feeding back to the brain the frequencies that the individual was producing at the moment produced much more rapid and profoundly effective results.

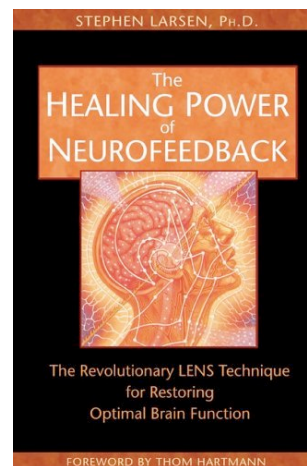
People with brain injuries who suffered chronic headaches, confusional states, emotional lability and instability and people who had long-standing psychological problems that had resisted conventional and unconventional therapies could respond very rapidly to this treatment. The amazing thing is that the feedback stimuli required to produce these changes are very delicate and brief, yet extremely potent. Initially Ochs used stimulation with flashing lights, but he serendipitously discovered that radio frequencies could produce the same changes more gently.

Ochs wisely does not promote neurofeedback as a cure-all, and often recommends this in combination with supportive and explorative psychotherapy, acupuncture and other therapies to help people process the emotional materials that are released by the neurofeedback.

This is an exciting new field that promises to help many people who otherwise are beyond helping within conventional medical care. Larsen's style is both informative and engaging, detailing both the excitement of scientific explorations at the leading edge of treatments for difficult problems, and providing heartwarming stories of dramatic successes in a broad spectrum of people with serious disabilities.

Jane Buckle. *Clinical Aromatherapy: Essential Oils in Practice*, 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 2003. 416 pp \$39.95 84pp Refs

Written to support the use of essential oils in the clinical setting, nurse and author Jane Buckle gives the reader a broad base of researched data from which to apply this complementary therapy. She skillfully discusses the applications of this material to various clinical settings,



specialized treatment plans, and hospital departments, with chapters dedicated to pain and inflammation, cardiology, hospice, oncology, and pediatrics, to name only a few.

While Buckle's expertise is made clear in the material presented in this book, Buckle supplements her recommendations with data from relevant research studies, giving the reader ample quantitative evidence with experiential support. Throughout the book, research for the use of aromatherapy for specifically named maladies is listed in table format, offering a quick compilation for easy reference. Geared specifically to lead the professional aromatherapist through the myriad of applications of aromatic essential oils, this book warrants textbook status in its field.

The book is divided into two sections, the first of which gives the nature of aromatherapy, its historical roots and modern renaissance, and their extensive clinical properties. This overview describes the physical processes by which aromatherapy works, as well as the various methods of applications and rates of absorption. Buckle describes four methods for absorption of essential oils: topical, internal washes or suppositories, oral, and inhalation.

The intention of this book is to offer an integrative approach which complements and supports traditional healthcare. While the focus is on educating the holistic nurse, massage therapist, and other licensed health professional, Buckle also offers a unique method of application of aromatic essential oils geared for the novice. She terms this the 'm' technique consisting of a series of gentle stroking movements, utilizing consistent pressure on the body. This can be easily applied by the layperson. With this technique, patients respond with a reduced heart rate and deep relaxation: "By experiencing each stroke a set number of times, the receiver learns what is going to happen and is lulled into a deep state of relaxation in a very short period of time" (p. 153).

Aromatherapy complements conventional approaches to healthcare, offering a span of application from relaxation to antibacterial properties. Buckle references the Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database of 2002 and summarizes the effectual qualities of the oils. "Essential oils are not just pleasant aromas. Many have specific antibiotic, antiviral, and antifungal properties and have been classified accordingly... In a world where pathogens are mutating faster than synthetic medicines can be created to kill them, essential oils might have a very beneficial role to play. They may even turn out to be the antibiotics of the future" (p. 172).

Another chapter considers the safety concerns of aromatherapy, including toxicity and contraindications. Buckle concludes: "Essentials oils could be important for maintaining antisepsis in operating theaters and for protecting health-care professionals. They are simple to use, considerably less expensive than conventional drugs, have thousands of years of use, have been tested for toxicological effect, have far fewer side effects than conventional drugs, and they smell great!" (p. 193).

The author includes several helpful resources for aromatherapy, including certification programs, safety and health policies and protocols, distributors, useful addresses, databases, and web sites. Virtually every resource available on the subject can be found easily with this book, making it an invaluable and comprehensive aid for the novice, the practitioner, and the researcher within the field.

Throughout the book, Buckle reinforces the need for the *care* in patient care to be reinstated. Simply taking time with the patient to offer gentleness of the 'm' technique or the familiar scent of a favorite fragrance will often place the patient in a great state of reassurance and safety. "Clinical aromatherapy empowers nurses as it allows them to use the art as well as the science of nursing" (p. 119). *Clinical Aromatherapy: Essential Oils in Practice* offers a valued bridge between conventional healthcare and complementary medicine. This is a foundational must read for those with serious intentions for working with aromatherapy.

Book review by Deborah Lallier

Doc Childre and Deborah Rozman. *Transforming Stress: The HeartMath Solution for Relieving Worry, Fatigue, and Tension* Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2005. 152 pp \$12.95 8pp Refs

The HeartMath system of transforming stress takes the reader to new levels of understanding the components of stress and its effects in daily life. This is not only a guidebook with ample instructions for this transformational process, but it is also filled with case studies illustrating what can be expected from this innovative approach. A technique supported by ample research, the HeartMath solutions are not really coping mechanisms, but rather offer the participant the ability to *transform* worry, fatigue, tension and stress into healthy, heartfelt, positive feelings and creative energy.

These simple techniques give participants the ability to take on new direction and glean helpful insights into their individual stressors by changing habitual emotional reactions. The authors describe how these techniques are easily used by the participant to shift the stressful mental and emotional energies into positive, heartfelt feelings: Quick Coherence, Heart Lock-In, Attitude Breathing, and Freeze Frame. These skills are quick, hands-on exercises used in response to immediate stressful and emotional situations. The techniques of Quick Coherence and Heart Lock-In are geared to send the participant's focus directly to heartfelt feelings of appreciation and compassion by shifting the mental and emotional energies to the more stable and coherent frequencies of a positive emotional state. The ongoing practice of these techniques are thought to recharge the emotional energy reserves, align the mind with the heart, and facilitate intuitive perceptions and ideas: "Practicing Quick Coherence several times a day will train you to make inner adjustments fast and develop the intuitive perceptions you need to make better choices" (p. 56). Learning to activate the positive emotional state through the use of each of these techniques brings the participant to a deeper level of inner peace and an increased ability to balance and flow with life.

Childre and Rozman advocate developing 'heart intelligence' as a means of focusing on the natural rhythms and energies of higher emotional functioning and coherence. They use the term to describe the "direct intuitive knowing that manifests in thoughts and emotions that benefit you and others and guide you in the behaviors that smooth your way through life" (p. 21). According to the authors, not only is the heart a place for sentiment, it is also a place of wisdom.

As a person experiences stress, anxiety, or tension, the body initiates the stress responses of the autonomic nervous system. The HeartMath techniques are designed to redirect this response to a calm state of balanced biochemistry. Identifying the stressors in one's life is important in this process. The authors use an approach to assist the individual in compiling this personal emotional information through the use of a "Stress, Emotions, and Physiological Activation" axis (p. 93). This personalized chart begins to identify for the individual those habitual areas of discomfort and stress. High Arousal/High Energy emotions are noted on the upper half of the axis, such as, passion, joy, love, care, anger, fear, worry, and anxiety; while Low Arousal/Low Energy emotions are noted in the lower half. Examples of the low energy emotions include compassion, serenity, contentment, inner balance, hopelessness, depression, despair, and apathy. Those emotions which are considered positive are listed on the right side of the axis; and negative ones on the left. The right side of the axis identifies the high-performance zone; the left side is the low-performance or stress zone.

Understanding how to shift the persistent attitudes around negative emotions is taught with the technique of Attitude Breathing. The authors discuss synchronizing the nervous system activity to better control the emotions. They advocate the use of HeartMath techniques to facilitate a coherent interaction between the three levels of the triune brain, the heart brain, and gut brain. Participants are trained to release those long-standing unproductive attitudes that habitually influence their attitudinal states: "Coherence makes it easier to find a neutral state, and a higher order of objectivity can become available to you" (p. 102).

The use of HeartMath techniques differs from cognitive behavioral therapies in that using these techniques is said to shift the emotions and the physiology during the actual real-time experience.

This 'fast-track' approach begins to break the stress circuitry right in the moment, paving the way for new habits. The authors claim that is the difference between HeartMath and other methods of stress coping skills – like scheduling a massage, a trip to the gym, or a vacation well after the stress is experienced. “Managing your emotions *when you experience stress* rather than after the fact, is what transforms your habitual stress response” (p. 66).

Managing the emotional shift rather than simply a mental shift is the goal of this therapy, clearing the way to being “heart vulnerable [and] in the moment” (p. 121). Learning to be authentic, genuine, and grateful activates the energetic heart as taught through the technique of Freeze Frame. It gives the individual the ability to take time out and evaluate the intentions, motivations and mental/emotional reactions that are occurring. After shifting to a heartfelt emotion, the individual is directed to sense what “would be the most efficient, effective attitude or action that would balance your system and help release stress,” (p. 123) thus activating heart intelligence. Applications for this approach could include creating a state to facilitate a decision or to invite creative ideas.

Other books and tools used by the Institute of HeartMath are listed as well as licensing and trainer certification information. One particularly helpful tool is the Freeze Framer software which is used by the participant to get a direct feedback of the biophysical nature of heart rhythm coherence. This monitor provides objective data of heart rhythm patterns by measuring heart rate variability thus aiding the participant in understanding what heart rhythm coherence feels like..

Several reference pages provide evidence for the usefulness of the HeartMath techniques and ample suggestions for further research.

The overall value of the book is tremendous, particularly those interested in being more consciously involved in the creation of their health. From the layperson to the counselor, the easy to follow techniques can help to generate a higher quality of life and health and support the ability to retake responsibility and control of one's life.

Book review by Deborah Lallier

Martin L. Rossman. *Guided Imagery for Self-Healing: An Essential Resource for Anyone Seeking Wellness*, 2nd. ed. Tiburon, CA: H J Kramer Book, 2000. 280 pp \$14.96 11pp Refs.

Martin Rossman, medical doctor and holistic healthcare pioneer, presents an easy to follow guide with very specific scripts for connecting to the inner wise part of one's being, which he terms the 'Inner Advisor.' Using scripts to dialogue with the mind and body, the meditator gains essential information in support of health and well-being. This book is an invaluable asset to the Intuitive Spiritual Director/Counselor, as well as to the individual in pursuit of self-healing. Rossman's complementary approach provides inner communication, spiritual contact, inspiration, insight, and direction to the professional and layperson alike.

Where the individual is usually familiar with the conscious thoughts and desires prevalent in the left brain, there may not be a balanced brain approach which integrates the unconscious needs and desires experienced in the right brain. Using imagery allows the individual to communicate with the right side of the brain to integrate conflicting thoughts and feelings. “Imagery gives the silent right brain a chance to bring its needs to light and to contribute its special qualities to the healing process” (p. 23). Offering a highly personal form of communication, this inner dialogue enriches the healing process with informative symbols.

Rossman combines the use of basic stress reduction and relaxation techniques with meditation to deepen the imagery experience. Using progressive relaxation as a starting point, his exercises build confidence in one's ability to de-stress the body, thus enabling a more relaxed and pointed focus on the healing concern. As the meditator gains experience in evoking the relaxation response, the techniques become less concentrated on progressive relaxation and more geared to developing a rapport with the mind/body.

The aim of the meditation now becomes to communicate with the Inner Advisor. “An Inner Advisor is a symbolic representation of that inner wisdom and experience... a friendly guide to these valuable unconscious stories, an inner ally who can help you understand yourself more deeply” (p. 83-84). Meeting the advisor requires that you allow yourself to relax fully, go to an inner special place, and simply allow an image of the Inner Advisor to appear.

Other scripts take the meditator to a conversation with symptoms, an inner critic, resistance, or anxiety. Calmly confronting these aspects brings the meditator to an empowered understanding of these ongoing tendencies. Oftentimes, these images have protective intentions which have been initiated by the individual in response to past trauma. He states, “Your purpose is to discover what your unconscious response may have been to a difficult situation so that you can more consciously play a role in your recovery... (then) you have a chance to develop ways to fulfill that purpose that may not require you to be ill at all” (p. 123).

Other scripts are offered to allow the meditator the opportunity to develop a plan of action, to receive an inner progress update, or to use as a preventative wellness strategy. Emphasizing the use of ‘passive will,’ the author advocates a detached focus. “While you image the outcome you desire, you maintain a relaxed, almost detached state of mind. Trying too hard can actually block the effects of your imagery” (p. 172). Reference is given as to how to locate a certified Interactive Imagery practitioner should the meditator require outside help in directing the imagery process.

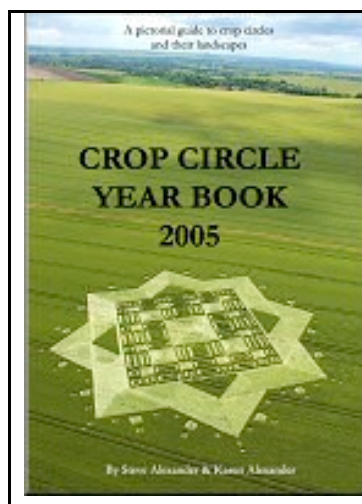
Rossmann considers how imagery also helps “solve practical problems, develop insight into yourself and others, improve your relationships, enhance your self-confidence, and help you reach the goals you have set for yourself” (p. 17). These insights give the meditator self-regulating ability by staying aligned with “feelings, values, purpose, and (a) sense of well-being” (p. 177).

Recognizing the mind/body/spirit interaction, the author offers a variety of terms to denote the spiritual connection, including high self, angel, and spiritual guide, all of which are ways of connecting with inner wisdom and creativity. Rossmann also uses the energy model of stress and speaks of replenishing and revitalizing *chi* in the body. These concepts bridge between energy medicine, spiritual healing, and allopathic healthcare. He devotes an entire chapter to reviewing the past, present, and future application of imagery in healthcare.

Interesting updates in the field of the neuroscience of mind/body healing are presented, including brief synopses of the work of psychoneuroimmunology to explain how images can affect the immune system. Rossmann concludes with several outcome based research studies in support of imagery and offers combined imagery approaches to dealing with specific medical conditions, including stress, pain, addictions, cancer, heart disease and infections. Ample resources are cited for further imagery research .

Rossmann’s experiences with the clinical application of imagery offer a great deal of information to those in pursuit of a more conscious manner of living. Revealing considerable insights into the mind/body connection, these scripts give the reader a substantial advantage in self-care and self-healing. A foundational must read for those desiring a conscious relationship with the inner, wise, and creative self.

Book review by Deborah Lallier



Steve Alexander and Karen Alexander. Crop Circle Year Book 2005, Gosport, Hampshire, UK: Temporary Temple Press 2005. £12.29

The crop circles this year are again breathtaking in their beauty and complexity of designs. These are a challenge to our understanding of the world. There is no way that these enormous creations could be man-made. There are simply too many of them and they appear too quickly to allow for this hypothesis to hold. So far, no one has yet come up with a clear explanation for how they can be created, nor has there been any clarity on who creates them.

The most fascinating aspect of this phenomenon, to this reviewer, are the apparent interactions of the regular investigators of these circles with whatever intelligence is creating them. As the investigators muse upon aspects of their perceived progressions in these designs, and speculate on which way the next ones may appear, the next ones sometimes incorporate elements of these speculations.

View thumbnails of last year's creations at <http://www.temporarytemples.co.uk/shop/pictures.html>.

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