



Life as Non-Proprietary Lessons in Healing of Self and Others

By Daniel Benor, MD, ABIHM, IJHC Editor-in-Chief

Abstract

While healing is generally considered to be a natural process of the body, and varieties of practitioners offer approaches and supports to support and enhance healing, the innate capacities of people to heal themselves and to offer healing to each other are largely ignored. There are numerous factors contributing to this situation. Modern therapeutic modalities offer many specific interventions to promote healing. Antibiotics and surgery are clear examples of successes in this approach. The downside of this approach is that many people have come to rely on others to diagnose and treat their problems and have come to neglect their innate capacities to generate healings in themselves and others through wholistic approaches, addressing body, emotions, mind, relationships with other people and the environment, and spirit. From the practitioners' side of this process, proprietary interests in diagnostics, drugs and therapies lead to strident promotions of these approaches and to ignoring people's wholistic healing abilities. Interesting new approaches, as well as an re-awakening of awareness about complementary/ alternative therapies and other ways of promoting self-healing are being developed that offer people ways to assess and bring healing to themselves and others.

Keywords: self-healing, complementary therapies, alternative therapies, self-healing

introduction

When it comes to healthcare, many will agree that we live in a peculiar world. Some might even call it a crazy world. Conventional medical treatments each address circumscribed parts of our body. Complementary/ alternative therapies, often labeled as Holistic Healing, are often helpful for a broader spectrum of physical, psychological and relational problems with an individual therapist. But with both of these approaches, people have become used to bringing ourselves in to the various therapists to be diagnosed and 'fixed.'

The focus in all of these cases tends to be on present-time issues, with some attention given to residuals of physical and psychological effects of earlier life experiences, particularly from traumas.

Some Complementary/ Alternative therapies are offered with a broader, wholistic perspective, addressing body, emotions, mind, relationships with other people and with the environment, and spirit. These come closer to helping people connect with healing for every level of their being.

Many of the complementary therapy approaches are similar to traditional therapies that have been available as parts of Indigenous and Shamanic interventions. In Indigenous societies and in some wholistic healing approaches, healing is offered not only as symptomatic relief but also as a harmonization of the person in need with every level of their personal being, as well as with their family, community, and ancestral legacies of unresolved wholistic issues. Going further, considering individuals as units (like cells) in the 'body' of their family, community and the world at large, the healing of the individual is seen within wholistic healing frameworks to contribute to the healing of every aspect of the world of which we are a part – very much like the healing of a cell or an organ in a person's body contributes to the healing of the entire organism.

While these therapies with broader effects often come at considerable financial costs, in many cases not covered by conventional healthcare insurance, they are increasingly available to those who can afford them. And growing numbers of insurance policies now offer coverage for a few of these options. However, those without insurance or personal means to pay for Complementary Therapies usually find them unavailable. The CAM community is beginning to address some of these problems of scarcity of healthcare for the under-insured and uninsured (IM4US, web ref.), but this is very far from being more than an early start in a positive direction.

Taking complementary-alternative therapeutic interventions an important step further, there are therapies that can be 'paid forward' by those who receive them. For instance, Gunilla Hamne and Ulf Sandström (2017; 2018) have taught the Trauma Tapping Technique (TTT – derived from Thought Field Therapy, an Energy Psychology approach) to survivors of the Rwanda genocide in 1994. People who had suffered severe post traumatic stress for 10-20 years have been able to recover in as little as a session of 1 hour from the greater part of their traumas. Better yet, they have been able to successfully 'pay their healing forward' to others, so that tens of thousands of people have benefitted. This is a maximization of the benefits of therapist-generated healing interventions. They are now calling this the Peaceful Heart Network, and Sandström and Hamne have taught it in many parts of Africa and in some parts of Europe and North America.

Restoring healthcare to be the responsibility of the individual is a growing trend. Healthy diets, physical fitness, meditation and relaxation techniques are increasing in popularity. In many cases, the contributions of these approaches in preventive care are particularly emphasized. Research has amply demonstrated the value of such preventive care in maintaining health, preventing illness and promoting recuperation from injuries and illnesses (*American Journal of Health Promotion*, web ref; O'Donnell, 2004).

Life often teaches us our deepest and most important healing lessons

Healing is not restricted to the ministrations of a caregiver. Our lessons in life include any and every experience we have, small and large, pleasant and unpleasant, with minor or major impact. Lessons may be initiated by ourselves, by others or by external circumstances.

To the degrees that we are perceptive, self-aware and insightful about the lessons that life bring us, we can learn to behave in ways that maximize our positive experiences and minimize the negative ones. This is learning through experiences of rewards or lack of rewards and of punishments in our life lessons.

This is how, as infants and children, we learn most of what we need to know in life. The feedback we get through direct experiences of successes or failures, and in praises from parents and others for moving in directions that will lead to success or will avoid negative consequences, all serve to guide us in growing up and acculturating to the needs and challenges of life.

And it soon becomes obvious who is more adept and skilled at learning such lessons for themselves, and who is needing more guidance from others to become aware of the steps required towards various goals. Even when we are self-aware and have good observing ego capacities, it may take us several repetitions of negative and positive feedback to our behaviors for us to become effectively aware of the ways that we are acting and relating that contribute to our happiness or unhappiness, our successes and failures, and to those of others. And even those of us who are skilled in self-guided learning can benefit from inputs of others who are more knowledgeable, experienced and skilled.

All of us can also learn from our higher selves – those aspects of our being that know, intuitively and spiritually – the deeper lessons we have come into our current lifetimes to experience and to teach others. Some people, particularly highly sensitive people (HSPs), have the abilities to connect with their inner wisdom and guidance, and are capable of learning much more readily and deeply than the average person (Benor, 2018).

Family and friends teach us further ways to deal with life issues

Close family members and friends, schoolteachers, and others whom we respect may help us with their observations and by sharing their knowledge and life experiences. Such advice is often of a practical nature, such as:

“I think you may be making taking a risk in choosing this university because I just read that their funding for the ecology programs you’re attracted to may be seriously cut back.”

“I know your girlfriend, Sally is a good looking and fun socially, but I’m not impressed with her poor school grades. You’re a bright guy and I think you may end up disappointed in her. On the other hand, you may be seeing positive sides to her personality and to the chemistry between you that I’m in no way aware of, so please take my observations with a big grain of salt!”

In other cases, their observations may be more behavioral or socially based:

“I don’t know whether you noticed this, but I’m also not impressed with Sally’s flirting with other guys at the party.”

“The university you chose has a good ecology academic program, but one of my co-workers’ kids was disappointed in that program because it’s mostly focused on theory, and you’re a hands-on person and might do better in a program with more active teaching and field experience.”

And within the wholistic spectrum of life experiences, addressing body, emotions, mind, relationships and spirit, there may be more broad issues that strike chords and resonate with observers and people they advise.

“You’re not responding to Bob’s obvious interest in you. I understand your concerns that although he’s a very good-hearted, down to earth kind of guy, he might not share your depth and breadth of awarenesses about broader and long-term issues that light your fires and aspirations for improving this world we live in. But I’m impressed that he’s a good listener and a very caring person. I think he can hear and learn to appreciate your interests and concerns. He might be a helpful counterbalance to your tendency to get diverted into wishful thinking and over-enthusiasm for plans for social change and spiritual awakenings that turn out to be impractical.”

Healing inputs such as these may be particularly meaningful to us, as they both come from people we value and trust, and are parts of ongoing relationships that constitute aspects of our life lessons within our families and communities.

There are times, however, when the challenges in our lives may be so great, and/or our personal resources, as well as the resources of our support community, may be inadequate for dealing with more difficult or traumatic experiences. We may then turn to the professional counselors and therapists for assistance.

Formal therapies can teach us specialized skills and provide supports to deal with challenges along our path

There are countless varieties of therapies available to help us learn to deal better with our life issues, large and small. Many of these professional caregivers specialize in particular types of life problems and/or in particular segments of the population, such as children, adults, couples or other subcategories. In many cases there are also differences between therapies and therapists as to how narrow or broad their focus is within the remit of their practices.

- Generalist therapists may focus on any problem a client presents.
- Varieties of specialist therapists may focus more narrowly, on cognitive and behavioral aspects of problems presented by the person who comes to them for help.
- Some psychologists and social workers will include the interactions between clients and their therapists as staging grounds for learning to appreciate and develop better social and psychological awarenesses, as well as to explore and deepen our capacities to trust others to help us and be there for us in a time of need.
- Hypnotherapists and others who deal with unconscious psychological issues will help clients access their unconscious memories and to strengthen their intents to achieve chosen goals.
- Other therapies may be more wholistic, addressing broader aspects of our being and of our relationships.
- Some therapists may introduce clients to doorways into bioenergetic and healing consciousness, through projection of therapist energies
- Others help clients connect with their personal, intuitive insights through client muscle testing that allows the unconscious mind to speak.
- And some therapists have the capacities to touch in the intuitive and spiritual dimensions, which can provide deeper and broader insights into the meanings and lessons of our life experiences, as well as modeling for us ways we can open to our own, personal spiritual awarenesses.

A lot of thought, care, studies, practice and continued education are invested in developing, teaching and promoting these therapeutic approaches. This also commonly involves ongoing instructor supervision over novice practitioners until they achieve acceptable and approved standards of practice, with continuing education and periodic reviews and upgrades in practice as these become available.

It is not surprising that the developers and teachers of therapeutic methods such as these, or of any other sorts, have strong proprietary interests in developing, teaching and maintaining appropriate standards for using their methods.

Having invested time, efforts and money in their development, there are also incentives to keep control over their skills and to maximize their returns on their investments. A part of proprietary protectionism also includes restrictions that only designated, approved instructors are licensed to teach these methodologies.

While this is all well and good within the model of capitalism, it also tends to limit availability of many beneficial therapies to those who have the financial means to afford them. Major portions of the population who are in lower socioeconomic groups have much more limited, if any, opportunities to benefit from these therapies.

Comparing lessons from our personal and social experiences with those from therapy and life often teaches the broader and deeper lessons

Therapies of many sorts tend, to varying degrees, to be narrowly focused and problem-oriented. This narrowing of focus may be helpful and successful, as in karate, in focusing our energies more narrowly and therefore more effectively on limited portions of a problem. With successes in these circumscribed efforts, there are also the benefits of increased confidence in our capacity to deal with further challenges. On the other hand, by narrowing our focus we may ignore important aspects of our lives that are nevertheless linked to the issues we want to address, and sometimes vital to the full resolution of what we are addressing. For instance,

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) often focuses on our cognitive understanding of the challenges we are facing, but in many cases tends to ignore emotional aspects of our issues.
- Psychoanalysis, at the opposite side of this psychotherapeutic polarity, may focus on our emotional states and reactions based on earlier life emotional experiences, and on the patient's responses to interactions with the therapist. But psychoanalysis does not address practical issues of today or promote alterations in behaviors.
- Conventional medical practice prescribes medications for physical and psychological symptoms but ignores underlying emotional, relational and spiritual issues that may be contributing to or causing the problems.
- Spiritual counseling within religious settings may over-focus on religious and spiritual beliefs and practices, to the exclusion of cognitive, emotional and relational issues.

This is by no means to say that therapies with circumscribed approaches are of no value. All of these interventions can be significantly helpful, particularly with circumscribed problems that can be dealt with through focused interventions.

Life lessons can also be specific to addressing challenging issues, but are often much broader in their scope and sometimes in their effects, as well.

'Clara,' 12 years-old, was blessed with the presence of her grandmother living in her home. Granny was a very loving, caring and accepting woman. Her warmth and supportiveness were all the more impressive to those in the family who knew of the major life challenges she had survived herself. She miraculously escaped as a teenager from a Middle-Eastern warzone, the sole survivor in her family after everyone else was killed in a sectarian bombing. Despite these horrendous traumas – or perhaps because of them, out of learning from these horrors what she didn't ever want to see again in her life - she was always warm, considerate, patient and kind to everyone.

Clara's parents were both very caring and devoted to their family, but their ways of showing their love were through providing a safe, stable and prosperous home for their four children and Granny. Clara never knew the lack of anything material, but was unable to find emotional support or understanding from her parents when she was upset.

Her grandmother helped Clara deal with many typical anxieties, worries, stresses and traumas, particularly during her teen years. These were supportive and corrective experiences on a deeper, secondary level as well, as Clara came to trust that she would be able to find someone to help her in times of stress and need, and that she could learn to deal with life challenges of many sorts.

Clara's meta-lesson, that help can be found to deal with stress and life challenges, is an invaluable asset. When we haven't experienced having supports and gaining mastery in dealing with difficult problems we may often be left with meta-anxieties and doubts about our competence to cope in life.

These are the “OMG!” and “I’m sinking in these deep waters!” reactions that can often discombobulate and paralyze us, when in reality there are actually resources reasonably and readily available for advice, guidance and assistance in dealing with our difficulties – if we only look for them and ask for the help we need.

Equally important are the meta-lessons we learn about the value of our helping others in need. When we have had supports and come through our difficult times successfully, we can follow these examples and respond to the needs of others with similar supports.

This is the beauty of the work that Gunilla Hamne and Ulf Sandström are doing. By getting the people they help to pay it forward, the benefits of their interventions are multiplied many times over. More importantly, these benefits reach countless people who desperately need them and who have close to zero prospects of help from any other sources.

I also resonate personally and professionally with these added value benefits of TTT therapy. My own psychotherapy practice is based in what are called ‘tapping therapies,’ which include varieties of Energy Psychology (EP) approaches (ACEP, web ref.). I have also adapted elements from Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) to combine with the EP. These are blended in approaches I call Transformative Wholistic Reintegration (TWR), AKA WHEE: Wholistic Hybrid derived from EMDR and EFT (Benor, Web ref).

TWR/ WHEE involves alternating left and right side tapping anywhere on the body, unrelated to acupuncture points. Affirmations are used for:

- Identifying your relevant feelings
- Focusing your mind on the problem(s) being addressed
- Counteracting the negativity of the problems being addressed by refocusing your mind on positive thoughts and feelings

TWR/ WHEE can help to reduce post traumatic stress residues of anxieties, anger, temper outbursts, triggering of trauma memories, depression, insomnia, cravings for food and addictive substances, and more. It also very helpful for reducing and eliminating physical pains of all sorts.

The simplicity of TWR/ WHEE readily lends itself to paying it forward, as well. Apps are available for various problems, including a free app for general anxieties (TWR, web ref.)

Prospects for the future

This trauma work that is being paid forward has been spreading in various parts of Africa and other parts of the world. Energy Psychology has been used in the footsteps of various natural catastrophes like Hurricane Katarina, the latest earthquake in Nepal, and fires in California

There may soon be places for such approaches in other parts of the world as well.

- In the US, for instance, there is the serious prospect of major rollbacks in social welfare healthcare for physical and psychological problems. President Trump is about to appoint a very conservative judge to the Supreme Court, who will tip the balance in legislation of policy changes to seriously reduce these benefits for those on limited incomes. These unfortunate people will have few if any alternatives for dealing with trauma and stresses.
- Global warming is creating conditions for new sorts of disasters. Canada has experienced unprecedentedly serious forest fires in British Columbia for a number of years, and similar fires are now raging in northern Ontario. Forest fires out of control are also burning again in California and now in Sweden.

- We may bring great benefits to many who are going to be in need of trauma releases if we can replicate these approaches of paying forward the benefits of our therapeutic interventions globally.

Many people have replaced the sacred dream with a dream of fame and fortune, power, and Facebook likes. Meanwhile we are facing global crises – from climate change to species extinction to war, famine, and disease – all of which are calling us to dream a new dream for ourselves and the world.

- Alberto Villoldo
The Heart of the Shaman

References

- Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology (ACEP) <https://www.energypsych.org>
The American Journal of Health Promotion (AJHP) <http://journals.sagepub.com/home/ahp/>
 CBC-TV. (2014). The Beetles are Coming, Saturday, August 23, 2014. Beetle destruction in BC. <http://www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/features/beetle-destruction-in-bc>
 Benor, Daniel. <http://danielbenor.com>
 Hamne, Gunilla and Sandström, Ulf. (2017). Shift a nervous system – and you shift the world! *International J. Healing and Caring* 17(3), 1-13.
 Hamne, Gunilla and Sandström, Ulf. (2018). Peaceful Heart Network founders talk about how they began using tapping to help refugees and other genocide and war survivors heal. Those they have taught have been able to help others spread the use of these powerful methods. Talk given at the 20th International Energy Psychology Conference <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zP41MSkz37U>
 More at <http://peacefulheart.se/>
 IM4US IM4US, web ref. Integrative Medicine for the Underserved Conference: *Justice & Equity in Policy and Practice*. June 21-23, 2018. George Washington University, Washington, D.C. <https://im4us.org/>
 O'Donnell, Michael. (2004). Health-Promotion Behaviors That Promote Self-Healing. *Journal of alternative and complementary medicine* (New York, N.Y.). 10 Suppl 1. S49-60. 10.1089/1075553042245809.
 TWR: Transformative Wholistic Reintegration <http://twrap.com>.

Daniel J. Benor, MD, Editor-in-Chief, IJHC

Dr. Benor has edited the IJHC for 17 years. He is author of *Seven Minutes to Pain Relief; of Healing Research, Volumes I-III* and of many articles on wholistic healing. He offers Wholistic Healing with the method called TWR/ WHEE locally in Guelph, ON, Canada and worldwide via phone and Skype.

Contact:

IJHC – www.ijhc.org
 TWR/ WHEE method and book - <http://twarapp.com>
db@danielbenor.com



TERMS OF USE

The International Journal of Healing and Caring On Line is distributed electronically as an open access journal, available at no charge. You may choose to print your downloaded copy of this article or any other article for relaxed reading.

We encourage you to share this article with friends and colleagues.

The International Journal of Healing and Caring

P.O. Box 1021

Guelph, ON N1H 6N1 Canada

Phone (609) 714-1885 (US)

Email: center@ijhc.org Website: <http://www.ijhc.org>

Copyright © 2018 IJHC. All rights reserved.

[DISCLAIMER](#)