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Healing in Norway

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Healing has been part of traditional folk medicine here, as in all cultures. Healing has also been an important part of the Norwegian Sami culture. Both the medicine of the Sami people and Norwegian folk medicine in general suffered under pressure from the church and the medical profession for several hundred years, but has still survived up to our time. We estimate there are about 50 healers practicing healing full time (in a nation of only 4 million people, with lots of space for each of us), and several hundred healers working part time. Approximately 4 % of the population has visited a healer.

Healing is legal in Norway. We have no legislation directly regulating complementary medicine. Since 1936 there has been a 'quackery law', which restricts anyone other than medical doctors from advertising the ability to treat or cure specific diseases. The law also reserves exclusively for doctors the treatment (including diagnosing or giving advice) of cancer, diabetes, venereal diseases, tuberculosis, dangerous anemias, epidemic diseases, and goiter. It is actually illegal to pray for these people to get well, if the healing of the exclusive condition is the main issue of the prayer. The medical monopoly might, after pressure from the medical lobby, be extended to all "serious disease." At the same time, holistic therapies like healing do not treat isolated symptoms. We treat whole living beings. We now openly receive e.g. people with cancer, but do not promise any effect on specific medically diagnosed disease.

The Norwegian Healers Association was founded in 1994, and has been working to set a minimum standard for healers, and to make healing acceptable as a natural, valuable and health promoting therapy with a rightful place in our society. As in most countries, healing has been ridiculed and generally given a less positive focus in the media. Healing has been seen as mysterious to the larger part of the public, even to healers themselves, and was usually the method they use only when all else had failed. Attitudes are changing, though. Since 1994 the media has begun to express a more positive and open-minded attitude to healing, and we have more and more people consulting healers.

Many are attending healing workshops to awaken their awareness and develop their own healing potentials. There is a growing interest in holistic views on health and disease, and in our self-healing abilities. The biomedical model is increasingly seen as only one of many different paradigms, even in the health sciences. Healing is "taking off" in Norway and will, hopefully in the near future, be acknowledged for what it truly is -- one of the most potent and cost effective health-promoting therapies known on this planet.

Until recently, the medical profession generally showed little interest in healing. In 1997 the Norwegian Medical Association published a report on Alternative Medicine. They stated that, even though healing produces demonstrable effects, the results have to be dismissed because there is no rational (i.e. biomedical) explanation for the effect. "*In the medical profession we want what we do to be both **true** in terms of rationally and logically understandable, and **useful***", (Alternativ behandling 1997). However, Doctors in general practice are usually more open-minded and accepting.

Under public pressure, and following a unanimous request by the Norwegian parliament, the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in April 1997 appointed a Committee to report on various aspects of Alternative Medicine. Their report was published in 1998. Though the committee was dominated by the majority of medical doctors and included no healers, they still concluded that healing was one of the three methods that had some degree of scientific evidence of effects, according to their very strict criteria. (The other two were acupuncture and homeopathy). This was a shocking discovery to many of the members of this Committee, we were told. Their conclusion on healing was that *"The efficacy of healing cannot be dismissed, but no effectuation mechanism is known. The method is deemed conceivably effective, but it is not possible to say anything about the effect on specific diseases or groups of diseases."**. Interesting formulation, I think, but though a great move forward from 1993, when the health authorities proclaimed war on us.

As a result of this report we now practice in peace, and a few healers have even been employed in hospitals and social care institutions. ~~A hospital in Northern Norway has employed a healer. I was myself employed a year, on a project to offer healing at a day center for heroin addicts.~~ The Norwegian Cancer Society appointed an advisory board on complementary medicine three years ago; where I represent the healers. The Cancer Society arranged a major conference on complementary medicine in cancer in March 2000, and one of the lectures was on the benefits of healing to people with cancer.

The Ministry of Health and Social Affairs has recently established a center for studies of alternative medicine under the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Tromsø in Northern Norway. Healers will now have possibilities for research funding from both the Cancer Society and the official Norwegian research council.

I believe that we need to educate researchers from the healing profession, to be able to contribute with our acquired experience and insights and, hopefully, to contribute to the coming birth of a new paradigm in health and medicine.

References

Alternativ behandling. Den norske legeforening, Oslo 1997, page 107 (my translation).

Alternative Medicine; NOU 1998-21: Link to English summary of the report:

<http://odin.dep.no/shd/norsk/publ/utredninger/NOU/030005-020019/index-ved005-b-n-a.html>

The Norwegian Healers Association: www.healing.no

Else Egeland, RN, BS, has been a practicing healer since 1983. She was co-founder of The Norwegian Healers Association in 1994, secretary the first year, and chair from 1995-1999. She is studying for her MD in health science at the University of Bergen. She is engaged in the foundation of a European umbrella organization for healers, and is interested in developing contacts with other healing organizations internationally.

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REPORTS FROM HEALEES IN NORWAY

My experience with healing a severe neck problem **Tove Sivertsen**

After having been through two operations, that did not have the hoped-for results, the doctors told me there was nothing more to do. I suffered from great pain and reduced mobility in both arms. I contacted a healer who had helped my husband when he suffered from back-problems. He improved considerably after a few treatments. My intention of seeing the healer was to regain my energy, both physically and psychologically. This worked out very well. After a short introduction to healing it all seemed less "mystical." After the first healing session I experienced great improvement, my spirit was strengthened, my energy and my strength to live came back. Both my family and I can tell that healing has done me well. After every healing session my quality of life improves, and I gain an inner strength.

My experience with healing: low energy in stomach **Jan Monrad Tangen**

In the summer of 2000 I was diagnosed with stomach cancer. In addition to consulting conventional medical practitioners, I also used several complementary approaches to get the broadest possibly understanding of and insight into my illness and to learn the potential helpful therapies.

In June I had a "prognosis-test" (measuring ohm-resistance in acupuncture points on fingers and toes), and the test indicated a major energy-block in the meridian that passes through my stomach. The measurement showed that the energy level was 35% of normal.

In 1972 I had a so called "bilrot 2" operation, where a part of my stomach and a part of my duodenum were removed, and I assumed that the operation had harmed my meridian system.

I contacted a healer with a clearly defined purpose: could she, with healing, restore the meridian contact and the immune functions of my stomach?

I have received healing approximately once a week over a half year now. During the first healing sessions I had a clear experience of local pain relief. After an operation in August I had local painful areas in my stomach-region, and during healing the pain disappeared momentarily, depending on where the healer moved her hands over the painful areas.

In January I did a new prognosis-test, and this time the energy level of my stomach was approximately 85% of normal.

During this time, when I have received healing weekly, I have gradually developed an ability to sense the flow of energy from the healer's hands to different areas of my body. I have especially been able to follow and sense the energy in the region of my heart, groin and around my head.

During the last weeks I have suffered from sinusitis. During healing the painful areas in my forehead and nose opened up, the sense of pressure has changed and the pain disappeared. I also have had a very concrete sense of the energy flow from the healer's hands.

My experience of healing **Ingrid Markussen**

Before this special healing-experience I had been to a few healing sessions. Two of them were approximately 14 years ago, and three in the autumn of 2000. The healing sessions were very pleasant experiences, and gave me a strong sense of inner peace and well-being.

My mother died a short time before this particular healing-session, and I was strongly affected by this. I wanted to receive healing because, according to previous experience, it had given such a strong feeling of peace and well-being.

Normally the healer had played music during the sessions. She did not do that now, and it took a little while before I relaxed this time. Gradually I became aware of the sounds from the other rooms in the building and from outdoors. The sounds became more distinct, clearer and louder. After a while I started thinking thoughts that I normally don't find natural to reflect over. The thoughts were very concrete, about life, if I should choose for myself to live with my life, or if I should choose myself out of it. Did I wish to take part in the life that happened on the outside, or not? Many of the thoughts were about what I would choose myself away from if I withdrew, and what was valuable to take part in. It is a bit difficult to express exactly what happened, but the thoughts concerned the deeper aspects of life, the meaning of my life and the choice of taking part or not.

After this had been going on for a while, I felt that I made a concrete choice to take part in life. At the moment of this decision something happened that I find difficult to describe in words. Suddenly, I lost control over my body. I could no longer feel my own body, except from hearing my own breathing, which was very deep and heavy. I experienced my body as hovering. At the same moment, something like a rush of fear went through me because this was something I could not control. I made a choice that I wanted to continue with this experience, because I was in a safe place to continue. Immediately an inferno of light started to play under my eyelids. My immediate reaction was to want to protect my eyes against this light. The light had colors of pastel yellow, red, orange and white. The center was large and white, then orange in a broader circle, and the outer circle thin, in red. As I got used to the light it felt more pleasant. It was a quiet place to be in. It was warmth and goodness. I did not want to leave this place. I now had no feeling of reality outside me. *It was only me and the light – warmth – peace – love and the pleasure.*

After a while I sensed that the healer tried to get contact with me. There and then I had no wish to leave this wonderful "place," but I had no control over the healer taking me back to the room. When it was all over I had an unbelievable feeling of pleasure. My body almost "boiled," in some way. My face was warm and hectic, and afterwards my colleagues asked me what on earth I had experienced. I told them about my experience, and I have also told others I have met later.

Since then, I have been able to use this experience in my everyday life. There have been quiet moments where I have remembered this experience. It has given me peace. I also have used it to get to sleep. My sleep has become good and quiet after this, and I fall asleep quickly. After more than two months the impressions still stay clearly in my mind, and I use them often.

Experiences with healing

Lena S.

A couple of years ago I had several treatments at a homeopathic institute. My primary concern was to detect possible food allergies, which I suspected were keeping my body out of balance.

After a few months I had restored my bodily functions and was feeling quite satisfied with my new sense of wellbeing. My homeopath did not share my perspective and commented that although I had regained my physical functions, my emotional state needed attention because my general source of energy was at that point very low. (Needless to say, she has a sensitivity beyond ordinary senses.) I agreed that I had experienced a lack of "lust for life" for some time, but had attributed that state to a busy schedule and regarded my lack of enthusiasm as a natural consequence. Once again she did not share my view and advised me to seek a healer, with to get an emotional "jump-start."

Although I have a traditional academic psychology background, I have always been interested in alternative approaches in understanding the human being and therefore found the idea of healing interesting.

I had no previous knowledge of what a healer actually does and what I was about to experience. One of the first things I learned was that every living being consists of energy. In a human being, this energy is divided into different categories or chakras, each with a different primary function.

In my first session, I was full of anticipation and expected to have a comfortable and soothing experience. Initially, I did not feel anything, but after a little while I grew warmer and felt a strange tingling from my chest and down my body. The tingling sensation changed into a feeling of waves up and down my body, which I found both puzzling and fascinating. After a while I suddenly experienced a deep pressure in my chest area, lasting a couple of seconds. First I became worried, but my healer talked to me in a calming tone of voice and told me to relax, which I gradually managed. After the session I told my healer about the strange pressure on my chest and she informed me that I had a massive block in my hearth chakra, which is connected to general sense of love, enthusiasm, spontaneity and a sense of joy of life. I found this information very interesting and it also made me remember that I had not felt a sense of attraction to or even interest in a man in a long time. My healer commented that any potential man would have a hard time reaching me with the major blockage that my hearth chakra was suffering from.

This was my first encounter with healing. I have had many sessions since, each with a different experience and a different emotional activation. In between the sessions, I underwent further transformations and came in touch with feelings I had forgotten were within me. My emotional state has at times been turmoil - with expressions of anger, sadness and joy at unpredictable times. My healer reassured me all through the process that these kinds of emotional experiences are normal and not to worry about them. I also found myself interested in men again, and experienced infatuation more than once, which is an emotional experience I had not had in years.

It is now six months since I started my healing sessions with a session every third week. My emotional state has undergone a complete transformation. I now feel like a "whole" person. I do not feel dominated by a sense of fatigue, and I experience a new positive attitude towards life. I am still connected to my treatment of healing and regard it as an important aspect of my continually developmental process as a person.

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