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## USING COMPLEMENTARY ENERGY WORK AND TRADITIONAL THERAPY TO ACHIEVE WELLNESS: Colleen's Story

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### Abstract

After years of being plagued by depression and bipolar disorder and sinking deeper into despair, when Colleen experienced a slight reprieve and expressed a desire to finally “climb out of the hole,” her psychiatrist seized the opportunity. She encouraged Colleen to enlist the help of the author, a Cleveland area complementary energy practitioner, to undertake the ‘soul work’ that years of traditional therapy and anti-depressants had not resolved. With the help of a variety of energy therapies, including EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques), RoHun Therapy (a form of spiritual psychotherapy), Light Journey Work and ongoing breath work, Peggy and Colleen were able to energetically release the ‘black cloud’ that Colleen carried with her. After 11 sessions over the course of nine months, Colleen dramatically improved her life by continuing to use the tools the author introduced in their energy work.

*Colleen's Story* is a courageous account of personal discovery. This article provides a roadmap for using complementary energy therapies in tandem with traditional approaches to bring about ease of suffering and transformation. Most importantly, it was Colleen's ‘commitment to change’ that made the transformation and ongoing journey possible. This heartfelt article will bring hope to many who work with clients challenged by long-standing depression and bipolar disorder which have not been eased by traditional therapy and medication regimens.

Key Words: Emotional Freedom Techniques; Energy Psychology; depression; bipolar disorder

### Introduction

Colleen had been unable to work for several weeks during the Christmas holidays. A woman in her early fifties with two adolescent children, Colleen was in a black hole, feeling overwhelmed. “I shut down and climbed in bed. I wanted to jump off a bridge and stop the world.... I felt I was slipping away and didn't care. My children were my only saving grace.” Yet basic tasks like feeding them and cleaning the house were too much for her.

When I first saw Colleen, she had returned to work, but was unable to focus and was about to be demoted. She didn't enjoy her job, her best friend had just died, she was in the middle of a divorce, and she was having financial difficulties. Overall, she was angry at God.

She was fortunate to have a supportive family, and when her parents came to help her for a few days in January, she began contemplating “getting out of the hole.” That’s when her psychiatrist suggested she call my office.

During the course of our sessions, we primarily used the skills of EFT, RoHun Therapy, Light Journey Work, and breath work, along with occasional Hypnosis, Reiki, and Applied Kinesiology. Colleen had been taking the anti-depressant Wellbutrin for several years (150/mg daily). Six months after our sessions began, her psychiatrist added a mood stabilizer, Lamictal (200 mg/daily), to her regimen to help with the mood swings that were caused by her bipolar disorder. While I treated her, she continued to see her psychiatrist.

## **The hard work of transformation**

*I know the courage, determination and perseverance it takes to face one’s demons. Often progress is made in small steps as we test the waters outside our comfort zone. I’m sharing part of Colleen’s story here because of the power it has in providing hope to others. Colleen is a real person and this is just a small piece of her courageous story of personal discovery.*

Colleen called me asking for guidance. She said she hadn’t reached her full potential and wanted to learn “how to walk into my future.” I could hear both doubt and hope in her voice. Colleen’s psychiatrist had told her that she needed to do some ‘soul work’ and recommended that she see me. Colleen was bipolar and was suffering from depression. She had been to counselors off and on for over 20 years. I was to help her navigate the waters using my skills in complementary energy therapies. We had eleven sessions together.

I made several observations while she filled out the Informed Consent and Medical Release forms at the first session. I perceived a black cloud of energy around her head. (This is typical of what I perceive energetically with people in depression.) She had difficulty looking at me directly and spoke extremely fast. Every comment was about what this person said or that person said. She was unable to think for herself. Colleen was living from her head and not connected to her body. She didn’t care about her physical appearance. She wore black clothing. Her hair was somewhat unkempt. However, I saw beneath the surface a warm, fun-loving, beautiful soul.

Over the course of my time with her, Colleen was to learn how to connect within to her body, to her sense of Self. I began by introducing Colleen to the energy therapy modality called EFT, which helps uncover core issues that keep the client from moving forward. As we stimulated the meridian lines in her body using a tapping procedure, she revealed how her depression started at age twelve with the death of her beloved grandmother. Colleen somehow felt responsible for her death. “I stopped caring and loving myself when I killed the person who loved me. I’ll never have anyone love me like her, so I might as well give up.” Her parents took her to a psychiatrist who put her on Thorazine, which slowed her metabolism and made her feel like she was in “la la land.” She stayed on that drug for roughly one year, gained fifty pounds and slept a lot. (Because she hated the effects of Thorazine, she resisted taking drugs for the next thirty years.) Not understanding how her supposedly loving parents could put her on meds at such a young age, she felt angry and unworthy, and she retreated from life even more. The death of her grandfather a year later reaffirmed her belief that “everyone dies that I love. So why should I care?”

To reduce the intensity of her emotions, we tapped using set-up statements such as “Even though I must be an awful person because my parents put me on drugs at age 12, I deeply and completely accept myself” and “Even though everyone dies that I love, I deeply and profoundly accept myself.” When I heard a generalization, I would gently nudge her belief system by challenging her to be more specific: “Everyone dies? Your mom? Your dad? Everyone?”

Clearly, her life experiences reflected her low self-esteem. We continued tapping as she talked about her failures in school, in relationships, and at work. Ever so slowly, as she was tapping on each issue, she began to release long-hidden emotions and shift her perspective. We then talked about what she loved to do – create, draw, and paint. Using Patricia Carrington’s Choices Method, we tapped for what she did want, including statements such as “Even though I’ve forgotten what it feels like to create and paint, I choose to take the time to paint again.”

Colleen had been living in her head and using tremendous amounts of mental energy to push forward in her daily life. Before ending the two-hour session, I had her sit with her feet on the floor, breathe deeply from her diaphragm, and quiet her mind for sixty seconds. If thoughts came in during that time, I told her to have fun and let them go on a hot air balloon, a train, or whatever method of travel that made her smile. This simple exercise accomplished two goals. First, she began to physically and mentally relax as she took in oxygen, nature’s greatest tranquilizer, through the diaphragmatic breath. Second, as she relaxed, she was learning to stay and be present within her body – in effect, grounding herself. This was vital for her because staying in her body meant she was no longer hiding from herself. Her homework was to practice this sixty-second meditation until no thoughts crossed her mind during that time. She was also instructed to continue tapping when she felt any emotional intensity at work or at home that she needed to release.

Three weeks later, Colleen reported that she had used EFT at work and it helped her to handle difficult co-workers with greater ease. But there was still a part of her that wanted to stay with the familiar feelings of depression because they were comfortable. It had been almost forty years since Colleen had felt any real happiness. When people live in the hole for long periods of time, they don’t have any idea what it would be like to come out and be happy again. It scares them. I gave her a handout called “Symptoms of Inner Peace” by Marcia Emery, Ph.D., from her book *The Intuitive Healer*. This handout gives Colleen a frame of reference for how she might feel when she is happy and at peace.

To begin our work, Colleen grounded herself to minimize distractions and increase her inner awareness. Then, using her imagination, a powerful tool at her disposal, she learned how to connect to her light axis, an energetic connection to universal consciousness, in a technique developed by Sarah Weiss at SpiritHeal Institute in Cleveland. Once she felt the connection, she invited Divine Light to fill her lower pelvis, the area of the first chakra. The Light illuminates, reveals, and heals any issues she may have about basic safety and survival. As this chakra becomes enlightened over time, she will continue to feel less threatened by people and circumstances and feel freer to love and be herself. Next, Colleen placed her focus on her heart and imagined “dropping down” into it. She explored its chambers, noticing what it looked like and how it was feeling. She expressed gratitude for all it does for her all day, every day without complaining, and invited the Light to fill her heart and radiate outward.

From this space of Light, we tapped on issues that began to come up. Colleen had lived with outspoken, controlling people all her life. To maneuver around them, Colleen had felt the need to put on a façade. She knew that she could fool people into thinking she was either Suzy Sunshine, light and bubbly all the time, or Maleficent, the witch in *Sleeping Beauty*. Gradually, she began to fool even herself.

She also discovered that she was manipulating others through her depression. It gave her a great excuse not to be responsible. Hiding under the covers meant she didn’t have to work, take care of her kids, or find a job she enjoyed. The realization that this was a form of manipulation on her part was horrifying for her to admit. She began to see many other areas of her life where she had been irresponsible. She no longer liked the manipulation tactics because they weren’t who she really was.

But to take action and make changes was frightening. We tapped for the part of her that enjoyed the manipulation and the part of her that was uncomfortable with the façade, the part that was responsible and the part of her that wasn’t, the part of her that she knew could be a leader and the part that wanted to be lead. We tapped on negotiating those parts, on being her authentic self, and on being

open to change even if it was scary. We tapped on the beauty of her soul and her desire for emotional freedom. The message coming through for her was to persevere in her desire for change and growth. She was to listen and follow her heart. She left feeling hopeful.

At her third session, she reported that people at work were already noticing that she had more energy and was speaking more clearly. Her eyes looked clearer and brighter. She felt she was more aware of her Self. We spent time working on grounding her in the Divine Light. We tapped on relationship issues until she felt calmer and her perspective shifted to a place of forgiveness and understanding. For homework, I encouraged her to feel her feet solid on the ground and breathe deeply when in conversation at work or with her family.

We also worked on the pace of her speech. It was so fast she could hardly keep up with herself. When we talk fast, it agitates the entire physical body because we are unable to take deep, full breaths. She practiced speaking more slowly and taking breaths between sentences. As she did, she felt more relaxed and clear-headed. This allowed her to stay present in the moment. Colleen also rambled a lot. As she spoke, she worked on keeping her sentences succinct. Any time she began to veer off the topic or speak in run-on sentences, she would pause and breathe before continuing.

In sessions four and five, there was great improvement. I knew she was feeling more grounded because she was noticing her surroundings for the first time and commenting on my office décor. She told me she was smiling a lot and having fun. She enjoyed the daily tapping and missed it when she didn't make time for it.

Yet she was still troubled that so many people in her life were controlling. She felt like a little ant that could be stomped on by everyone. So once again, she sat quietly, breathed, and connected inward to her light axis. I asked her to invite the Divine Light to inform her of why controlling people were surrounding her. In her mind, she saw a roadmap that was leading her toward her authentic self. Controlling people were slinging arrows at her as she walked down the road. She had put armor around herself and saw that it wasn't working.

*Our greatest protection from the arrows of life is to stand in our Light. When we do, our life force energy circulates through our bodies. Our hearts are open to compassion and forgiveness. We feel our emotions and let them go using our breath. We think with greater clarity. We act with greater surety. In other words, we move more fluidly through life's challenges. It takes far more energy to stifle our emotions and hide behind the armor, not to mention how restrictive and uncomfortable it feels, than it does to be open and vulnerable!*

Colleen realized the armor was like a magnet, drawing the arrows to her. So she took it off. Behind it, much to her surprise, she discovered an inner strength that looked like a soft, weeping willow – graceful, bending in the wind. Yet, trepidation filled her as she thought about taking the lead and letting her authentic self shine. Questions ran through her mind, such as “What if I stand on my own two feet and people discover who I am and don't like me?” I admired her courage because Colleen was facing her innermost fears head on. As her fears lessened with tapping, she began to recognize qualities within herself that she wanted to nurture – integrity, humor and intelligence – and we tapped for those. I encouraged her to journal her experiences of these sessions.

Colleen's fifth session was to be her last for several months. Although she still felt hesitant at letting her authentic self shine, she was happy with her progress and did not feel a need to return. I encouraged her to come in for a “tune up” whenever she wanted. Colleen had written of her experiences of our sessions and brought me a copy. Her words summarize beautifully what took place from her perspective over these last two months.

“I came to Peggy in pieces. I was so scared for 40 years that to confront myself would splinter me.

Looking at the hard truths about myself has been freeing! Turning my feelings of total and complete unworthiness into positive feelings has been scary, but fun. In the past, I was irresponsible. I was extremely good at it. It didn't work for me anymore. I am becoming responsible in every area of my life. I want to be a good steward to my children. I want them to see an example in me of a strong, healthy, happy woman. They have been the impetus, but not the reason I am changing today. I see things now that I didn't before: the milky sun, the bare trees against the late winter/early spring sky. It is weird and scary and fun and adventurous and exciting all rolled into one that I chose to change even while I was so down and out.

Meditating has always been something I wanted to do. I do now for sixty seconds every day. Tapping [too] has become a part of my day. I incorporate different words, but I have been saying a combo of these words every day, 'I am a beautiful soul. I am following my heart's desire and I am walking into my destiny, my own destiny.' Peggy, when you said that I could believe that I am a beautiful soul in twenty-five years, or in two days, or in the next moment - it was my choice - well, that resonated inside of me.

I have looked at the good in me, too. That is hard for me because it is unfamiliar. I say out loud that I am very intelligent, creative, and intuitive. I don't know where this new map will lead me. I do know that it is not the physical place, but what is inside of me that is changing and makes the most difference."

Three months later, Colleen came back at the insistence of her family. The black cloud had returned. Things were not coming together in her personal life as she had planned. Her psychiatrist had added 200 mg/daily of Lamictal, in addition to the 150 mg/daily of Wellbutrin. She considered Lamictal a lifesaver because it stabilized her enough so that she could continue to face the truths about herself when working with me.

For the next two sessions, we worked to uncover the sources of her self-sabotaging thoughts using EFT, Hypnosis, Applied Kinesiology, and Reiki. We traced her feelings of fear, shame, and guilt back to specific childhood situations and tapped to release the emotional burdens she was carrying. We tested our work using kinesiology. With each release, she gained a clearer perspective. Gradually, she developed a newfound respect for the perseverance, strength, and determination it had taken to dig the hole for so many years. She chose to use those very same qualities to help her climb out of the hole.

During her last four sessions, she went through the RoHun Purification Process, the first phase in a process of self-enlightenment that was developed by Patricia Hayes at The RoHun Institute at Delphi University in Georgia. The focus in this phase is on clearing the chakras of the faulty thoughts that have attracted self-doubt, pain, confusion, and isolation and that prevent us from living joyfully. People begin to explore who they really are at the deeper soul level.

During this process, Colleen was determined to face the truths she didn't want to see. We brought to the surface her reactive selves – the Angry Self, the Cynical Self, the Resistant Self, the Unworthy Self, the Frightened Self, the Judging Self, the Guilty Self, the Helpless Self – sent love and forgiveness to each one, and released them one by one into the Light. She could see how her reactive selves were harming her, and how her faulty perceptions were also harming the people she loved. As each reactive self was released, she replaced them with healthy, productive thoughts and positive affirmations. At the end of each session, she went to the Healing Temple, a sacred place within her, where she received insight, guidance, and direction.

*Negative thoughts and feelings trapped in the chakras stop us from experiencing our full potential as loving human beings. We develop defense mechanisms, called the reactive selves, to protect us from those feelings that we don't want to see and don't want others to see. Unfortunately, the energy of these reactive selves repels loving experiences and attracts negative ones. During the RoHun sessions, we bring to light our reactive selves and the underlying negative thoughts and feelings. In*

*the Light, we are able to understand, forgive, and release them. According to Patricia Hayes, "When released, [we] are in our true 'loving self' and free to attract loving and positive experiences."*

As a result of these sessions, Colleen was noticeably brighter and happier. She was taking care of her appearance. She had purchased new clothes and wore bright colors that made her feel feminine. She reported feeling more alive - more present in her body and in touch with her emotions - and more loving and accepting of herself. She felt connected to her soul essence which filled her with joy and helped her easily see the beauty around her and in other people.

Colleen has written to me a couple of times since then to let me know how she is doing. She now has dreams, goals, and is open to possibilities. She trusts herself more and knows she has choices. She takes responsibility for her thoughts, decisions, and actions and is ready for success. She has mostly good days and occasional not-so-good days. While tapping was instrumental in getting in touch with her body and her emotions, she told me she uses the deep breathing all the time because it relaxes her almost instantly. She continues to connect with the Light and goes to the Healing Temple often.

Colleen's journey is ongoing. She walks with grace – knowing that each step she takes, whether forward or backward, reveals a deeper learning about her Self – a Divine Being with a Divine Purpose. The following are excerpts from her recent letters:

"I felt discouraged when I didn't feel perfect right away a year ago. When I went into another depression cycle last summer, I had lost hope in life. When I saw you in July, I believed nothing could help me. I was wrong.

Forty years of thick layers are hard to peel away. I see new things about myself and the world around me, every moment of every day. You were right. The joy is out there, if we open our eyes. I am so glad that I pressed on. So many wonderful, impossible, scary, awesome, astounding, life-changing, heart-wrenching, depressing, searching, finding, learning, remembering, discovering, eye-opening things happened to me in 2006.

During the last month, things have been happening at lightening speed at work. Three people have popped up in my work life that are mentoring me. I didn't ask them to. Two of them are high powered, women executives. I have been asked to take on a high profile job. I am excited to do this and be a part of the expansion of the company.

I am using the tools you taught me. The breathing helps me all of the time. I carve out alone time to center myself. I breathe. I am still. I relax. The 'monkey chatter' quiets down. It disappears when I concentrate. It is easier for me to fly up the stream of golden light to the Healing Temple. The view from the Healing Temple looks like Tuscany on a warm, summer day. I take all of the things that are flipping in and out of my brain and roll them up in that golden ball and let them go into the Light. It makes me feel lighter. I feel free. I am not sunshine and light all of time. I feel like I am a work in progress. I guess we all are."

## **Peggy Koelliker - Background**

I began my professional career in 1994 as a CPA in what is now a Big Four accounting firm. In 1999, I became a professional development coach for a nationally-recognized training center teaching communication skills to business executives. As a coach, I discovered for myself, and through my clients, the importance of deep breathing in one's ability to relax. I also learned the importance of quieting the mind and listening to the intuitive voice within to become more effective on the job and in one's personal life.

This fascination with the body's self-healing mechanisms and the untapped powers of the mind led me to explore other energy healing techniques. Beginning in 2000, I studied and obtained numerous

certifications, including Clinical Hypnotherapy, NLP, EFT, RoHun Therapy, Light Journey Work, Usui & Karuna Reiki, Reconnective Healing™, and Spiritual Counseling. I have also studied Chi Lei Qi Gong, Medical Intuition, Shamanism, and Polarity Therapy. Presently, I am pursuing my doctorate degree in RoHun studies at Delphi University.

While it appears unusual that I went from being a CPA to a complementary energy practitioner, the shift brought me into balance within my self - making use of the skills of both my right intuitive brain and my left organizational brain. These are the skills and philosophy I apply to my energy practice -- to bring my clients' energies into balance.

Currently, my clients are a diverse group of people who include business professionals and pregnant mothers-to-be, the physically sick and the depressed, and even those with bipolar disorder, like Colleen. To date, I have worked with about a dozen clients who have bipolar disorder and, of those, one third were willing to do the 'soul work' necessary to experience Colleen's degree of success. The common denominator among all of my clients is the result they seek: to get unstuck and to live their lives with passion and joy. My clients share the desire to have a greater understanding of themselves, this universe, and their place in it. I offer practical, every day tools that work, if used with patience and persistence, to help clients move gracefully through their day with ease and purpose.

## In Summary

Looking back, the turning point for Colleen occurred before she even walked into my office. In January, while in the black hole, she made the decision deep within her psyche that no matter what it took, she was going to change. It was her commitment to change that made the process of transformation possible.

Simply stated by David Feinstein and Donna Eden, "The health of body, mind, and spirit are anchored in the body's energy systems." Balancing the energies will naturally "increase your vitality, effectiveness and joy in living." While the medication was essential in stabilizing Colleen's moods, the energy interventions helped her face her demons and "walk into her future." Although traditional talk therapy may be beneficial, energy psychology, which is "rapidly becoming one of the hottest areas" of what Candace Pert calls the "New Paradigm Medicine," may have greater efficacy on emotions. We are just beginning to understand the world of subtle energy and its impact on our health and well-being. I encourage mental health professionals and energy practitioners to *explore together* this world with openness and curiosity. The truth will be revealed in the results that we get.

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