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SCLERODERMA: MY PATH TO HEALING

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Introduction: My scleroderma experience

There are several different types of Scleroderma. I was diagnosed with the most critical variation on this exquisite torture. There are two main types, called Localized and Systemic. Localized forms are Morphea and Linear and they affect only the skin, with no organ involvement. Systemic can affect any part of the body, including skin, blood vessels, and/or internal organs. Each type is classified into three variants: Diffuse, Limited, or Crest syndrome, depending upon the degree and location of the skin involvement. Mine was diagnosed as Systemic Diffuse Scleroderma. This not only involves the hardening and thickening of the skin due to an overproduction of collagen (fibrous tissue) but also involves the hardening of the major internal organs, such as the esophagus, lungs, kidneys, liver and heart, which eventually leads to death.

It took 1-½ years before I was correctly diagnosed, which is quite common for this disease because the early symptoms are typical of a wide variety of diseases. I became ill in July 2001 when I was 42 years old, and was finally correctly diagnosed in February 2002. When I first became ill I had numbness in my forearms and hands. Within a few weeks both my hands and feet began to swell. I also had severe fatigue, terrible headaches, body aches, joint pains, low grade fever, brain fog and an indescribable sick feeling inside.

By January, 2002 the swelling in my extremities had gone down but my skin was rock hard. I thought I could not move my fingers because of the swelling but I soon discovered my hands were frozen in a claw-like position because of my skin. (See photo later on in this article.) This thickening progressed quite rapidly, moving from my hands up my forearms, and from my feet to my calves in just a few months. It then spread across my chest and into my stomach. Within a year's time, it moved all the way up my legs and arms, my entire chest, and the most frightening of all for me, into my face.

This Scleroderma had spread from head to toe and I was completely disabled by 2003. I was unable to walk alone more than ten feet due to all the pain of stretching skin that did not want to bend because it had become rigid. Another part of the pain was caused by this generalized sclerosing (hardening) of tissues, which constricted and narrowed my veins and blood vessels. This process severely compromised my circulation.

With limited circulation, I felt I was freezing all of the time and my hands and feet were usually white or even blue. I had to wear gloves all the time even though I was living in sunny Florida. This was a double-edged sword because I was so cold but at the same time, to have anything touch my body was excruciating. I could barely dress myself, I was unable to zip, button or raise my arms to put a shirt on over my head. My energy was so low that if I managed to take a shower I would be in bed for two days trying to recover from all the energy it took to undress myself, get into the shower, stand to wash myself, bend my head forward and low as possible so my hands could reach to wash my hair, dry myself and dress again. I would be completely exhausted, feeling like I had just run a marathon when all I had done was take a shower.

Amazing as it may seem, I continued to live alone and was determined to manage somehow. I kept a pair of pliers handy to use to grip things. I used kitchen tongs to put on socks, and I could not wear shoes. Fortunately, I had a grocery store right across the street. I could drive a straight line but it was almost impossible to turn the steering wheel. I knew I had no business driving but felt I had no other choice.

I was blessed with good friends who brought me groceries. However, many times I just had to take responsibility for my own care and do it myself. Once I was at the market, I would lean on the cart and could last fifteen minutes at the most. It also was extremely difficult to get in and out of the car. This was quite an ordeal.

Not long after it had spread across my chest and trunk, the sclerosis also had spread into my esophagus, which restricted me from eating solid or dense food. The lining of this vital tube between my mouth and my stomach that most of us take for granted became thick and hard and could not propel the food into my stomach properly. If I happened to eat something that would not go down, it was very painful. The only recourse I had was to throw it up. This happened on a weekly basis.

Oddly, there were a few symptoms that actually had some benefits. This disease changed the pigment of my skin so I always looked like I had a tan. Believe me, it wasn't from sunbathing at the beach! It also stopped the hair from growing on my body so I no longer had to shave my legs or under my arms. I used to joke how it wasn't all bad.

Looking back, I wonder how I ever managed to get through this time, living alone. I had offers from friends and family to move in with them but I didn't want to go that route unless absolutely necessary. In some way, I think it was good because it forced me to keep going and do whatever it took to survive. If someone had been waiting on me, I may have laid in bed and given up.

I also recognize that being forced to ask for help was a big part of my healing process. This was dreadful for me at first but the more I had to do it, the easier it became. I will share below in more detail how I never felt truly safe unless I was alone. I feel sure this was also a driving force to stay by myself no matter how challenging it was.

Discovering and developing my healing path

My path to healing reminds me of putting an extremely challenging puzzle together. It was frustrating, exasperating, all-consuming and at times overwhelming. Many days I would break

down in total hopelessness and throw the whole puzzle on the floor in disgust. Yet somehow through all the sobbing and despair I would eventually pick up the pieces and start over again.

After many years of trial and error, some of the pieces started to fall into place and began making some sense. I started to see past the symptoms and began seeing the big picture. At this present time in 2009 my puzzle is 99% solved and the picture is spectacular. I feel happier and healthier than I have ever been in my entire life and extraordinarily grateful. The missing 1% is some remaining residual hard skin in my hands, which I believe will also return to normal like the rest of me.

In this article I will highlight the therapies that proved to be beneficial and pass on my personal favorite that proved to be miraculous. This amazing technique not only saved my life but completely transformed it. I am now living a peaceful, joyful, very fulfilled life that I never dreamt possible for me. I feel very blessed to have been given this opportunity to share my story and I hope to inspire you or someone you love to persevere in finding your own personal path to healing – not only with scleroderma, but with whatever else may challenge you. I am a living testimonial that it can be done even when traditional medicine disagrees.

It was exactly six years ago this month that I was sent to an Internal Medicine doctor provided by Social Security for a full examination to see if I was eligible for disability benefits. I was actually excited about this appointment because I had been getting the endless roadblocks and obstacles due to our system's backlog for over a year and was thrilled to be making some headway to getting financial help.

I felt pretty confident that I would get the medical documentation that I needed but never in my wildest nightmares expected to hear the words this doctor said to me that day. He started off with, "I am so very sorry to have to tell you this but you are suffering from a horrible, painful, debilitating autoimmune disease for which we have no known cure and at the rate of your progression you will not survive more than two years. I suggest you go be with your loved ones and do whatever you have always wanted to do, perhaps travel to Antarctica."

The last line particularly sticks in my head because I thought, "This doc doesn't know what the hell he is talking about because sending someone with Scleroderma into the Arctic cold is the worst possible choice when I am already suffering terribly from poor circulation causing my extremities to be blue (Raynaud's Syndrome) and feel I am freezing all the time." The other thing that actually struck me as almost funny was the reason for my evaluation that day was because I could no longer support myself and was going broke fast. There was no possible way to swing a vacation, not to mention the fact that I was far too sick and disabled already to ever enjoy such an adventure.

As horrible as I felt, I just didn't buy what he was saying and attempted to argue with him about possible alternative therapies or miracles. His response was, "If this is what you believe, then I am going to write you a script immediately to see a psychiatrist because, honey, you are in major denial and you need to face the facts that you are going to die soon."

Even though I didn't feel like I was afraid to die, I chose not to believe his words. I was going to do whatever it took to prove him wrong. For the first time in my life I felt my stubbornness was going to pay off. I am thrilled to say that it did. It is now six years later and I can honestly say that Scleroderma was by far the best thing that had ever happened to me. This disease experience truly turned out to be the greatest education of my life and I am extremely grateful for my physical, emotional, and spiritual healing that continues to deepen every day.

I need to back up a bit further for the whole story. As I mentioned earlier, I actually started becoming ill in 2001 at the age of 42. At that time I had been a practicing Licensed Massage Therapist for almost sixteen years, and Certified Pilates Instructor for two years. Both jobs kept me very active and I thought I was in the best shape of my life. I'm sure the people that knew me then would tell you that I came across as a wonderfully positive, sweet, loving, giving woman who was very health-conscious and took great pride in caring for her own body and took amazingly great care of her clients.

What they didn't know was that behind close doors I was actually battling very low self-esteem, depression, loneliness, social anxiety, and just never felt like I really belonged in this world. I managed to get by, but it felt to me that everyone else was living and I was merely existing. I often wondered when my turn would come. I certainly had almost everyone fooled because they seemed convinced that I had my act together and I was frequently told that I was one of the happiest people they had ever met.

I felt I should have been an actress because I was able to pull off quite the academy award winning performance on many occasions. One day, after a yoga class, both of my forearms and hands started going numb. I initially thought I must have pinched a nerve and went for acupuncture and massage therapy. The following week I felt like I had a terrible flu. I had aches and pains and the numbness worsened along with terrible swelling of my extremities, excruciating headaches, and severe fatigue, brain fog, and low grade fever.

I had a gut instinct that something was seriously wrong and this wasn't the flu. Within a month I felt like I was dying. I was so extremely ill I had to crawl to get to the bathroom and called for a friend to take me to the emergency room. This is where the mystery got more and more complicated. After four days in the hospital, they suspected possible Lyme disease but had no definitive diagnosis. I was then sent from specialist to specialist for the next year and a half before I was finally diagnosed with systemic diffuse scleroderma. During this time period I saw doctors who specialized in infectious disease, neurology, internal medicine, and rheumatology and was suspected of having everything from lupus, multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gherig's disease), rheumatoid arthritis, lyme disease, cat scratch fever, and even on to AIDS.

Not knowing exactly how to treat me, they prescribed various pain medications, steroids, and a six-week course of IV antibiotics. To put this long ordeal into a nutshell, I discovered with the help of my computer, my friend, and my extremely wise acupuncturist, that I was being poisoned from my silicone breast implants that I naively chose to have put in my body at age 30. I began asking about the possibility of silicone poisoning from day one but every single medical doctor told me that there was absolutely no danger and definitely no correlation to my illness. Thank God I did not give up my instinct because after a great amount of research there was no denying the data in Dr. Frank B. Vasey's book, "The Silicone Breast Implant Controversy" and on the websites and in the journal resources at the end of this article that showed a direct correlation between silicone implants and Scleroderma and other connective tissue diseases.

I finally found a rheumatologist in Tampa, Dr. Vasey, who actually wrote this very book. He was booked four months out for appointments so I had my implants removed before seeing him. After removal and for about a month I thought I was home free. So many of my symptoms were gone and I was feeling more and more like myself. During this time I had also begun a rigorous protocol of detoxifying my body with homeopathic remedies, Chinese herbs, a clean alkaline diet, DNR bath soaks (Developmental Natural Resource, Inc.), acupuncture, lymphatic

drainage, master cleanse fast every three to four months, Juicing, coffee enemas once or twice weekly – which was basically, everything I could find to help rid my body of silicone. I was ecstatic and hugely relieved that I had figured out the mystery illness and I was going to be fine.

Unfortunately, my month of euphoria came to a crashing halt. I believed the silicone was the whole problem and I would be well once I cleansed it from my body. Nothing could have been further from the truth. After all the swelling went down in my arms, hands, calves and feet I discovered my skin was rock hard, extremely painful, and worst of all, my hands became frozen rigid in a claw-like position.

With all the research I had been doing I knew far too well that this was Scleroderma before any doctor confirmed the diagnosis. I was devastated but still was not willing to give up. Sure enough, my opinion was validated by two rheumatologists, both agreeing they had no cure but could offer pain pills, steroids and antidepressants, to help 'manage' my illness. They also offered several other highly toxic drugs as a trial, stating I really had nothing to lose since there was no other option. I knew what they really meant: I was going to die anyway, so what harm could it do to offer myself as a guinea pig to the pharmaceutical companies?

This all went completely against my belief system. The last thing I was going to do was to fill my body with more poisons after I had been working so diligently at cleaning them out! Since I no longer had any medical insurance and I didn't like any of the options offered, I quit going to the traditional doctors in 2003 and continued to investigate every alternative therapy I could find. I was on a mission and could not be stopped.

So the first major piece of the puzzle was the poisoning from silicone, but this was only a piece. Another acupuncturist recommended that I remove all the mercury fillings in my mouth, with hopes of lightening the overall toxic load on my system by eliminating the high levels of mercury found in my body. This is a very expensive procedure that I could no longer afford. By now I had gone through every single penny, including all my savings, cashing in stocks, life insurance, and retirement accounts, and was basically living on credit cards since disability barely covered my mortgage alone.

I had always been responsible with money, so this was hard to accept but I felt I had no choice. I was incredibly fortunate to have some very generous friends and family who also helped throughout. I am eternally grateful to them all. In fact, a few dear friends that were former clients made arrangements with the dentist to go ahead with this costly procedure. So having my mercury fillings removed was the next step. This was no easy task. At this time I could barely open my mouth because the Scleroderma had moved to my face. However, I persisted, as always, hoping that there would eventually be light at the end of the tunnel of suffering and struggling and searching and self-treatments.

I continued with even more detox protocols, along with oral chelation to help clean out the heavy metals. Normally, chelation is done through an IV but my arms were so rock hard a needle could not penetrate my skin! The Scleroderma had completely spread from head to toe. I could barely walk more than ten feet. As I mentioned above, all this made it extremely challenging to dress myself. By then, the disease had also moved into my esophagus, which made it very difficult to swallow solid foods. I was in pain and agony and felt like I had been placed in a body suit that was five times too small for me. I was horrified at what I saw in the mirror. I was watching my body change right before my eyes every day and it seemed like there was nothing I could do to stop it. I was not sure how much longer I could live like this and on many nights I

prayed that I would not wake up in the morning. Just when I was considering ending this misery, another piece of the puzzle was found which gave my fragile spirit a glimpse of new hope.

This next major piece of the puzzle was my being retested for Lyme Disease, as suggested by my brilliant acupuncturist. Sure enough, I tested positive this time. So now my focus changed from the silicone to: "How do I get rid of these stubborn bacteria?" At this same time I was reading a book called "Scleroderma: The Proven Theory that Can Save Your Life," by Henry Scammell, who writes about Dr. McPherson-Brown. Interestingly enough, McPherson-Brown believed that Scleroderma was not an autoimmune disease but that it was caused by L-form bacteria, which is the same form the BB Lyme bacteria have. "Aha!" I thought. Perhaps I can kill off ~~this~~ these bacteria and then be home free! Maybe this is the last missing link."

McPherson-Brown's protocol suggested using low dose antibiotics on a long-term basis, such as minocycline, doxycycline, or tetracycline. Since I was no longer under the care of a doctor, I proceeded to go online and buy them on the Internet. It's amazing what you can get when you are determined. I stayed on the protocol for one and a half years. Doxycycline proved to work best for me. I didn't feel any improvement with the minocycline, and only slightly better energy with the tetracycline. So I decided to use doxycycline, especially since this is what is often used for Lyme Disease.

I was starting to see improvement for a while and was very excited. Number one was that I felt the progression of the scleroderma had stopped at my esophagus, which was confirmed during a trip to the ER. It had become more and more difficult to stand still only a few minutes without my heart racing, shortness of breath, headache and feeling like I was about to pass out. I was very scared that it had spread to my heart and lungs. When I called the rheumatologist who diagnosed me, he said to get to the ER ASAP. After running many tests, it turned out that the skin in my legs had become so hard and thick it was cutting off my blood supply. When I stood, my blood could not get pumped back up to my heart, causing a drop in blood pressure, light-headedness and shortness of breath.

I actually embraced this as fantastic news because my heart and lungs checked out fine. I just couldn't stand still for more than five minutes or I would have to lie down and raise my feet above my head to assist the blood to get to my heart. I remember one of the doctors at the hospital said he had never seen such a severe case of Scleroderma on the outside and not be affecting my internal organs other than my esophagus. He even suggested to keep doing whatever it was that I was doing. This gave me great hope and more inspiration to persevere. and got me another three-day hospital stay. Other than my esophagus, all my organs were indeed good!

I also felt that some of the thickening had begun to soften just a bit in my forearms and the horrible sick feeling was gone on most days, and my low grade fever was finally gone. Then I hit a plateau. At this point I didn't want to be on antibiotics any longer because I personally do not like prescription drugs and I know long-term use of antibiotics can be dangerous and can cause havoc and imbalance to my intestinal flora. So I stopped.

Back to my computer, I came across a protocol using Vitamin C and Sea Salt that sounded hopeful. As synchronicity would have it, I had just ordered a pound of Himalayan Sea Salt. I had read of its wonderful benefits due to its natural, mineral-rich, antibacterial, and energetic properties. So instead of using sodium chloride tablets that this protocol advised, I used 6 grams of Himalayan Sea Salt, along with Vitamin C 4000-6000 mg daily.

I was all too familiar with the herx reaction one gets when killing off bacteria. My understanding is that a herx reaction happens when bacteria are being killed off too rapidly for the body to eliminate them fast enough. For me, it always felt like I had a terrible flu, fever, body aches, lethargy, foggy brain. One thing that always helped me was to clean out with a coffee enema and increase my trace minerals, using Concentrate Trace Mineral Drops, so this sounded like a win-win. I was excited to give this a try. This proved very successful: my foggy head and extreme fatigue cleared up almost immediately. I continue now to take this every day. So at that point, my energy was better and my brain fog was much better but my skin was still rock hard. What next?

The next piece that was significantly helpful was lying in a hyperbaric chamber (where the atmospheric pressure is raised to 2.36 ATA 60 minutes twice a day for seven weeks in the spring of 2004. This was to flood my body with pure oxygen with hopes of eliminating the remaining harmful bacteria. Again, I was very fortunate to have extremely generous friends who made this possible, as this is also a very expensive treatment. After all these treatments were completed, I did feel that the exhausted heavy feeling in my legs improved, and my circulation seemed better. I was able to walk further and stand for longer periods of time, and my overall energy increased even more. Even though my body still felt like it was locked in a suit of armor, I felt much more optimistic again. I was now more determined than ever to solve this puzzle once and for all.

So I continued on my quest and was open to trying just about anything. I stayed faithful to my cleansing and diet, meditation, prayer, visualizations, affirmations etc. There are far too many therapies -and protocols to name them all. Some were more unconventional than others, including one odd-sounding idea of drinking carrot juice, lying naked in the sun, then immediately coming in and eating an organic protein. Did I mention that I am very open-minded? I will say, I don't regret any of the things I explored because each one gave me hope and hope is a very good thing. It kept me going another day. I believe all of these various protocols or even the hope of each one was keeping me from dying but I was still locked up in this body of stone until I came upon the most miraculous discovery of all in 2005.

The most important part of the puzzle

This miraculous discovery is called EFT, which stands for Emotional Freedom Technique. It is, hands down, without a doubt, the most important missing link in my puzzle. Once I started using this tool, everything began to make sense and my true healing began. Up to this point I had concentrated on clearing out my tangible toxins such as Silicone and Lyme bacteria but I had not addressed my underlying emotional toxins, which I now believe are the key to all healing. I strongly believed that an emotional component was present but didn't know what to do about it other than practice affirmations, meditations, visualizations and prayer.

A brief explanation is that EFT is similar to acupuncture except you don't use needles. You simply focus on a specific issue while gently tapping the meridian (bioenergy line) endpoints with your fingertips. The core concept of EFT comes from its discovery statement, which says: "The cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy system." This tapping helps restore the balance in our energy systems and opens up our pathways so our bodies can resume their natural ability to heal.

I first read about this in one of Dr. Mercola's newsletters in early 2005. I already had a strong belief and understanding of the mind/body connection so this piqued my curiosity. I went to the

website to read more and then proceeded to download the free manual. Although you can buy this now at Barnes and Noble for \$15, it is still a free download on the website of Gary Craig, the originator of EFT. As I said before, I consider myself a very open-minded individual but when I first read through the manual I just laughed and thought that there is no way that something this simple could ever work. However, even though I was totally skeptical, I still felt that I had nothing to lose. Besides, what else did I have to do? I was unable to work, basically housebound, and spent most of my time going slowly from my bed to the couch and back again. Why not give this “tapping” a try?

The light bulb first went off when I decided to tap on my coffee addiction. I was quite faithful to a pure diet with the exception of my morning coffee. It was my only vice left and I was not thrilled to give it up but I also felt it was not the best choice since I was having such challenges with my esophagus. I was shocked to find that after following this technique in the manual for less than 30 minutes, my addiction to coffee had completely cleared. I made my organic brew as usual the next day out of habit and ended up pouring it out. I was astounded! I never experienced any withdrawal symptoms such as my relentless headaches that occurred every other time I had attempted to quit. That was almost four years ago and I haven't had any craving whatsoever since then.

Clearing this addiction so easily blew my mind. So I decided that there must be something to this crazy tapping technique. A friend of mine graciously bought me the first set of EFT instructional DVD's and I was hooked. I continued to watch these and eventually progressed through the entire library, tapping along the whole way. I was fortunate to be fairly in tune with my body and had been on a spiritual path since my 20's. My strongly belief in the body/mind connection and my extensive studies on this topic stood me in good stead. Louise Hay's book titled “You Can Heal your Life” was a particularly helpful resource that gave me wonderful insights to the possible emotional reasons behind my physical symptoms. In fact, this is what caused such aggravation for me before I discovered EFT, because I felt I had a good idea of why I was the way I was but I didn't know what to do about it.

I had tried traditional mental health counseling for two years straight before ever becoming ill. So I knew back then something was not right with my life and yes my therapist helped me figure out some of the whys, yet it didn't change how I lived. During these recent years of cleaning my body out physically, I was extremely frustrated and disappointed in myself because I really felt that I logically and spiritually knew better yet my life wasn't working and why was I choosing to create this illness.

The true beauty of EFT is here revealed. I realized it wasn't my fault and I wasn't doing anything wrong. I was just letting my old programs, limiting beliefs and memories in my subconscious mind run my life. I may have logically understood the concepts but when stressed I would fall right back into my default mode and repeat the same old patterns. Now that I had discovered this amazing tool, I began tapping out these old lies and false perceptions, cleared some space for the truth, and my disease began to reverse.

How can I possibly express just how euphoric I was to see these miraculous changes? As I continued to tap, I soon recognized that I had been living in fear most all of my life. I was afraid of mistakes, of hurting others' feelings, of being out of control, of being too good on one hand and of not being good enough on the other. I definitely had 'the disease to please' and basically did not feel safe in this world. I had experienced a lot of rejection, hurt, and abandonment throughout my life and I now feel that I literally built thick skin (Scleroderma) so nobody could ever hurt me again.

Once I was able to clear out these old fears, my hard skin started melting away gradually more and more and after six months a dramatic change was evident. It was like peeling an onion. The layers came off the more I tapped. Here are a few specific examples so you can get a better idea of what I am sharing:

Before EFT, I gave and gave and gave. I didn't know how to say no or hold healthy boundaries for myself. I realize now that I was striving for love and approval. I didn't feel anyone would love me just for me but that I had to earn it by what I could give. I especially did this with men. I thought, perhaps I could give even more, be more generous, more supportive, be a better cook-, a better lover, in better shape (e.g. get-breast implants) and then they would love me - all the classical low self-esteem garbage. These beliefs were sucking the life force right out of me, and my body finally collapsed. I was wonderful at anticipating everyone else's needs yet didn't have a clue what my own were, and certainly didn't know how to get them met. I see how I inherited this 'disease to please' from my mother. She was a very loving, giving, self-sacrificing woman who gave her whole life for her seven kids.

I was the last one, and by then she was suffering from depression. She was overwhelmed and unhappy and used to confide in me when I was too young to be in school with the others. She told me many times that I was not wanted but she would always apologize and say she shouldn't be telling me these things and I would do my best to comfort her. I remember feeling so sad and sorry for her and felt guilty about being another burden. I decided at this young age that I would be the best little girl I could be. She had enough to worry about, so I basically made myself invisible.

I also became aware of how I took on the role of peacemaker and counselor before the age of five in my attempt to help.

Thanks to EFT and being persistent, over time I was able to gradually tap out these old incorrect perceptions about guilt, my need to be perfect, people-pleasing, feeling unimportant and invisible. Although this took time, I did this quite simply and easily, all on my own. Of course I logically knew all this already but I had not been able to truly release these default programs of mine until I tapped.

I worked with the EFT to change my beliefs and feelings about myself. Here are but a few examples of phrases that were helpful in this process of reprogramming:

Even though I

- feel guilty for being born and being another burden, I deeply love and accept myself.
- am afraid if I'm not perfect I will die, I deeply love and accept myself.
- am afraid if I am too perfect or too sweet, I won't be loved, I deeply love and accept myself.
- have to have thick skin so no one can ever hurt me again, I chose to feel safe and protected with healthy normal skin.
- my body had to set boundaries for me because I couldn't, I deeply love and forgive myself and now that I know better I can do better.
- feel unimportant and invisible just like my Mom, I deeply love and myself, I deeply love and accept my Mom, and I choose to break this cycle now.

I now have even more compassion for my mother. She passed on in August 2003. I feel very good about honoring her by breaking this self-sacrificing cycle. I not only thoroughly understand

how important it is to put my own needs first. I am actually doing it! I now see how this is the most loving thing I can do for everyone in my life and it certainly has made a monumental difference in the choices I make now. I now find it much easier to check in with myself before automatically saying yes to everything. I check to see if it works for me and if it is something I want to do. I have a much clearer understanding of my own needs and I'm not afraid to speak up and ask for what I want and- wow does this feel good! I also stopped taking everything personally and recognize that it is not my job to 'fix' anyone.

I believe and truly understand the oneness concept that when I heal, you heal, and ultimately the planet heals. Peace begins with me, is how I choose to live my life. This is incredibly freeing.

This is just one of many significant life changes since practicing EFT. Another core issue I was also able to release that I had already uncovered in traditional therapy was a memory of being molested by some neighborhood kids when I was three or four. The counseling helped me understand why this made it difficult for me to establish any close, intimate relationships. I was now in my late 40's, single, and I had never experienced or ever been close to any true committed relationship. I was great when I was with someone for a while, but would reach a point where my walls always came up. I loved a healthy sex life when I was in a relationship but true intimacy was another story. I never could feel safe unless I was completely alone.

Fortunately, with this technique I was able to tap on all these complex issues quite simply and painlessly until my suit of armor began to dissolve more and more. By 2007 I had fully regained my health. Other than some residual hard skin in my hands, I no longer considered myself sick. I continued to tap and knew I would eventually resolve this remaining issue.

Although the physical healing is quite dramatic (see my *before* and *after* pictures), the emotional transformation is miraculous.



2003
I could barely walk
more than 10 feet.



2007
Most of my hardened skin
had returned to normal,
except for my hands.



2003
This is me doing
my best to smile.

2007



Even though I did most of the tapping on my own, which is certainly not the norm for such a serious illness, I did seek out a practitioner for several sessions when I was stuck, later down the line. I don't remember the particular issues for which I sought help like this. This is how EFT works at times. After tapping and clearing the issue, sometimes you can't even remember what the problem was to begin with. Besides a few private sessions, I should mention that I had signed up for three levels of EFT workshops along with various others that not only helped train me to become a practitioner but also helped with further personal healing.

I also had an incredible experience of working with Gary Craig himself, along with several other gifted Master Practitioners in the fall of 2007. I was honored to be asked to participate in some filming to give my testimonial of my dramatic recovery thus far. Plus, I was fortunate to work four days straight with the best of the best. This took my healing to an even deeper level. It was one of the most amazing experiences of my life.

This is a bit of a blur as well. I recall tapping on just about every negative experience from my past that I could think of. Some were things I had already tapped on myself but the master practitioners helped me uncover some aspects I may have missed. The only really specific thing I can think of now is helping me with a major heartbreak. I had been in love with one man for many years and we continued to have an on and off relationship. I felt very rejected when it always ended the same way. He would tell me that he loved me very much but was not in love with me, something was missing but he didn't know what.

Through this tapping experience I began to see this in a whole new light. I recognized I was trying to find love outside of myself and the only person rejecting me was me. This is when I truly began falling in love with myself for the very first time and began accepting myself fully for who I am. I'm sure this sounds so cliché but it's true. How could anyone fully open their heart to me if my heart was not fully opened? I was able to let go of the blame, hurt and deep rejection of the past and love this man from a new perspective, which in turn took my healing to a deeper level.

During those four intensive days of tapping I gained more range of motion in my hips and knees and I was able to swallow a sandwich for the first time. Previously, bread would always get stuck in my esophagus. Although my hands didn't look any more flexible, they felt completely different. Before this, they felt like plastic prostheses hanging on the ends of my arms but now they felt completely alive and connected to my body. The energy was flowing again and when I closed my eyes my hands felt exactly like they used to. I felt I had my beautiful healthy hands

back. I believe now more than ever I will regain full use of them again. Perhaps when my heart opens fully, so will my hands. Aha! As I write this, I sense more clearing to do. EFT is not always a quick fix but certainly a miraculous process.

It is now 2009 and I am a successful EFT practitioner myself. I am living a life filled with more joy, peace and love than I ever imagined possible. I am so grateful that I can now guide others and teach them how to easily delete their old negative program/beliefs so they too can connect with their magnificent authentic selves and begin living happier and more peaceful lives.

One story in particular is how I was given a perfect opportunity to assist another woman who was also close to death's door, to reverse her Scleroderma in a year's time. This one client alone (now my dear friend) has made this long painful Scleroderma chapter in my life worth every second. I would do it all again. The wisdom and healing I have gained is priceless. This is such a powerful story that this is also going to be featured in Gary Craig's upcoming full-length documentary on EFT and Energy Medicine due out in the summer of 2009.

Helping another person deal with scleroderma

I got a call from Katie in November 2007. I heard this timid, weak, depressed voice say "I think I have what you had." I replied, Scleroderma? She said, "Yes," as she cried. At that moment, I never imagined the beautiful experience that was about to unfold for both Katie and me.

- In our first long conversation we discovered the most uncanny similarities with both of our lives: Both raised in a large Catholic family.
- I have 5 brothers and one sister; Katie has 4 brothers and 1 sister.
- Katie and I are three years apart in age and our birthdays are one week apart.
- We are both single with no children.
- We both live in similar condominium complexes that turn out to be only seven miles apart.
- She also had breast implants and was considering having hers removed as well.
- Believe it or not, this is just the beginning of the similarities.

I realized Katie was too ill to drive so I offered to come over to introduce myself and tell her how EFT was the major contributor to my healing. I will never forget that day when she struggled to open the door. When we looked at each other we both burst into tears. It was exactly like looking into a mirror. I felt I was looking directly at my past and she was looking directly into her future. I doubt she realized this on a conscious level at that moment but she certainly thought we looked a lot alike. We began referring to each other as twin sisters right then.

Once we began talking more, it soon became apparent that our similarities were not just physical. It truly was no surprise to me that we shared many of the same emotional issues as well. I had great confidence that she would reverse this disease once we began tapping to help clear the issues that were keeping her locked in her suit of armor.

I knew Katie was consumed with despair and close to the point of no return that November evening. That smile and graciousness didn't fool me. I had given those very same academy award-winning performances myself. I feel this meeting was definitely divinely inspired and gave Katie a glimpse of hope just in the nick of time.

Whereas I used many different therapies, the two major ones with Katie were EFT and Ho'oponopono, a method derived from Hawaiian traditional healing. I know she also gives credit to 'Bazi' juice that she drinks. I believe that dialysis was a huge blessing for her. I could be wrong but it seemed to me as a great way to detox all the silicone and toxins from her body and gave her fresh clean blood on a regular basis. She did not have to do all the cleanses and detox protocols like I did, We both wonder about this, or was it the fact that she started the emotional clearing much earlier than I did?

Katie not only became my client but also a treasured friend. She certainly went through her own hell and back several times. I was not giving up even when her doctors had and I encouraged her to keep going. She told me that she did not believe this was her time to move on. Together we persevered and continued to use EFT as much as possible. When she was not physically able, I did surrogate tapping for her as well (tapping on myself with the intent to help her).

You can read Katie's testimony below and a more detailed account in a future article. She has miraculously found her path and is healing at record speed. Passing on EFT to Katie and seeing the remarkable results first hand certainly gave me an even greater understanding and appreciation of my own pain and suffering. I would do it all again without any hesitation, knowing what I know now. The depth of my gratitude for this amazing healing opportunity with Katie goes beyond words. Thank You Katie!

Katie's report

I met Ellen and discovered EFT in November, 2007. Like Ellen, I was diagnosed with systemic scleroderma. Similarly to Ellen, this tormenting dis-ease encumbered my skin from head to toe and impacted my esophagus. It progressed into my lower lungs and stiffened my colon and kidneys. In February, 2008, I was rushed to a hospital due to lung, heart and kidney failure. This emergency hospital visit was my first in a string of four hospital stays that year, and the beginning of kidney dialysis, three times per week. I was informed that my kidneys were irreparable and dialysis treatment was a permanent fixture in my life. Like Ellen, doctors told me that I had two months to two years to live. Until I met Ellen, I believed these doctors' predictions. I was severely depressed and I lost hope. Before meeting Ellen, my "life urges" and the will to live had vanished.

As an EFT Practitioner and scleroderma survivor, Ellen proved to be my life line! Ellen and the EFT brought me out of a dark pit of hopelessness and into the healing and recovery zone. Without a doubt, I most strongly believe that Ellen and the EFT facilitated my miraculous, physical restoration. The Scleroderma has almost totally receded from my body. My most recent chest x-rays revealed that it has totally disappeared from my lungs. I'm no longer on kidney dialysis. My heart is in excellent condition. I've gone from wheelchairs and walkers to standing and walking without assistance. I can drive a car now, shower, dress, swallow and feed myself. In just one year's time, there are many more things that I'm physically able to do now. And the excruciating, torturous, physical pain that engulfed me for so long is gone!

I continue to practice EFT and benefit from its healthful qualities. It has dramatically changed my life! I know that divine love intervened the day I met Ellen and began my rehabilitation through her and EFT therapy. I'm also certain, that EFT unequivocally was "the key" to healing my mind, body and spirit and giving me a new life!

In conclusion

I now sometimes wonder if I would have had to do all the other countless treatments and therapies if I had discovered EFT sooner. Perhaps my puzzle could have been solved in an easier way, especially since I witnessed the record speed healing of my client with the same disease and very similar issues.

Even with what I know now, I have no regrets because this was the path that was perfect and right for me. I now live in constant gratitude every day. My life is very good indeed and it just keeps getting better. Whatever your challenge may be, I hope this has inspired you and I trust you will find the healing path that is perfect and right for you. I wish you peace beyond all understanding.

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Web Resources

Clean alkaline diet www.phmiracleliving.com

Emotional Freedom Technique www.emofree.com

Sea salt/Vitamin C protocol www.lymephotos.com; Himalayan Sea Salt

www.americanbluegreen.com

[Silicone breast plant toxicity www.breastimplantawareness.org](http://www.breastimplantawareness.org) www.siliconesurvivors.net

Vitamin C - Life Extension buffered Vitamin C powder

Appendix A: Medical records

Medical records excerpts:

2/18/02 Rheumatology Clinic notes

History Removal of bilateral breast implants (inserted 1990), with notable improvement in symptoms of "diffuse arthralgias, fever, swelling and at times, she states 'I felt like I was dying.' Since that time, she now has more energy. Her swelling has improved some, though her arthralgias do remain."

Physical Examination SKIN: Noted to be tight and was somewhat cyanotic [blue from poor circulation] over the hands, up to the wrist bilaterally. There is also noted to be livedo reticularis (mottled, purple skin discoloration, due to poor circulation) on the upper extremities. Skin was also noted to be tight over the bilateral lower extremities, right foot to the ankle, left foot to the midtibia. MUSCULOSKELETAL: There is noted to be 1+ synovitis [inflammation of the membrane lining a joint, resulting in pain and swelling] of the bilateral wrist and proximal carpal, metacarpal joints. Also noted to be some synovitis of the ankles bilaterally as well as dependent edema of the lower extremities.

ASSESSMENT:

1. Silicone related disorder. Patient with implants out in December, 2001 with improvement in symptoms.
2. Scleroderma, unclear at present whether this is related to silicone-related disease or natural scleroderma.

7/31/02

She is completely disabled

4/12/03

Diagnosis: Systemic Sclerosis

11/24/03

Physical examination: Flexion contractures of the hands, secondary to sclerodactyly. Flexion contractures of the knees, secondary to sclerodactyly. Skin with sclerodactyly, tightening, and thickening involving the face, trunk, proximal and distal upper extremities, proximal and distal lower extremities.

Impression:

1. Diffuse cutaneous systemic scleroderma
2. Secondary Raynaud's phenomenon

2008
After hiking up
a two-mile path in
Dripping Springs,
New Mexico



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