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## AWAKENING THE HEALER WITHIN: EMPOWERING SPIRITUAL HEALING

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### Abstract

Spiritual healing in the past thirty years has evolved from a model in which healers could heal with the instantaneous power of their touch, to a model in which healers facilitate the awakening of a person's inner healer. This shift in the awareness and practice of spiritual healing can today be seen in almost all modalities of energy healing, from a simple laying-on-of-hands to Reiki, bodywork, acupuncture, meditation and guided imagery. It is a change in consciousness from a focus on *the power of the healer* to *the empowerment of the inner healer* that has revolutionized the interface between medicine and holistic health.

### Historical development of spiritual healing

Spiritual healing in the past twenty-five years has evolved from a model in which healers could heal with the instantaneous power of their touch, to a model in which healers facilitate the awakening of a person's inner healer. This shift in the awareness and practice of spiritual healing can today be seen in almost all modalities of energy healing, from a simple laying-on of hands to Reiki, Therapeutic Touch, bodywork, acupuncture, guided imagery and various forms of meditation. This change in consciousness from a focus on the power of the healer to the empowerment of the inner healer has revolutionized the interface between medicine and holistic health.

Renowned healers of Great Britain and the United States practiced a somewhat different model in the last century: Harry Edwards, Gordon Turner, Ambrose and Olga Worrall, Agnes Sanford and others. They were able, through the sheer power of touch, to effect healing changes at a physical level that were often rapid, permanent, and required no additional treatment. People who went to see them were often healed of serious diseases and conditions, such as cancer, back problems and mental illness.

Harry Edwards (1963) felt that spirit guides assisted him as he did his laying-on of hands with forty to one hundred people a day. He placed his hands on each person for several minutes, usually in silence, while others waited their turns. People came to his Spiritual Healing Sanctuary in Surrey, England from all over the world. He was able to cure many chronic diseases, including arthritis and cancer. In addition to laying hands directly on people, Edwards sent distant healing to people who wrote to him for help.

Gordon Turner, a contemporary of Harry Edwards, spoke of an inexhaustible source of energy that flowed through him. He designed and participated in many experiments to measure both the direct and distant effects of his healing energy on people, animals and plants.

Ambrose and Olga Worrall (1965), American healers who were husband and wife, believed they were channeling a universal energy, the source of which is God. Prayer played an important role

in their healing work. After Ambrose passed on, Olga continued her laying-on of hands on Sunday mornings in a Methodist church in Baltimore, Maryland. She would place her hands on each person's head as they came forward to the railing. Usually the healing took place in silence, but sometimes she would whisper a word or two of comfort. Olga had manifested healing abilities by the age of three, when she placed her hands on a person with kidney disease and healed him. She had also been clairvoyant and clairaudient from that age, and was able to see deceased relatives. In her healing ministry as an adult, she would often receive a diagnosis or information that would be helpful to the person receiving the healing. Occasionally, she would speak to the person individually after the service to describe a vision she had of a deceased relative. Edwina Cerutti (1977), the author of several books and articles in the medical field, wrote a biography of Olga Worrall.

Agnes Sanford (1947; 1966; 1969), another American healer, also believed strongly that her healing gift came from God. She would see people individually, and insisted she could tell whom she could work with effectively and who needed to be referred to another healer. She believed, from personal experience, that God's nature is love, and that God is immanent and not just transcendent. In one of her books, she stated, "Learning to live in the Kingdom of Heaven is learning to turn on the light of God within." She had great influence on other healers of her time, including Father Francis MacNutt, a priest who reignited the Roman Catholic charismatic movement.

Agnes Sanford's son, John A. Sanford, the Jungian analyst and Episcopal priest, wrote several books (1977; 1978; 1992) on the inner movement toward wholeness that takes place within the individual psyche. He believed in a healing relationship between body and soul, and felt that this movement was sometimes expressed in both illness and healing. Sanford's book on the healing power of dreams describes how dreams can often be expressions of this process. He believed that dreams could contain information that would be useful in the healing process. This tradition of seeking healing through dreams has a venerable history. In ancient Greece, pilgrims would travel to the temples of Aesclepius, where they would bathe, sleep and find healing through dreams and the treatments that they suggested and foretold.

The psychoanalyst Carl Jung (1984), while not a hands-on healer, believed in the power of the soul's inner journey toward God as an expression of wholeness and healing. He had a great influence on me from the age of eighteen, when I began my studies in Jungian psychology. Jung believed in the obligation of the psychotherapist to point the patient toward his or her inner sources of healing. Dourley (1981), in his comparative study of Carl Jung, and the theologian Paul Tillich, quote Jung as emphasizing, "The medical psychotherapist today must make clear to his more educated patients the foundations of religious experience, and set them on the road to where such experience becomes possible."

All of these healers believed their healing abilities were God-given gifts that could neither be taught nor learned. Their focus was on healing others. Few, if any, ever mentioned self-healing. Several healers, when asked if they used their healing abilities for themselves, said they took an aspirin or went to a doctor when they felt ill.

### **Developing my own healing gifts**

These healers were my role models when I first became involved in spiritual healing as a hands-on healer twenty-five years ago. I read, and reread, every word of their books in an effort to understand why my hands were spontaneously getting hot when I stood next to someone who was ill; why I could feel someone's pain in the same location in my body; why I received information on the origins of the person's illness; why I could feel the emotions someone was struggling with; and why I could feel the presence of each person's soul.

I was a questioning and "reluctant" healer. I had grown up in a Protestant family where no one to my knowledge had any unusual intuitive gifts. I found my encounter with my own healing abilities both wondrous and a bit unnerving. I wanted to use my healing gift with as much integrity as I could.

These other healers all seemed to have to have two things in common: First, an unwavering faith in God or a Higher Power; and second, an ability to channel a limitless supply of healing energy, sometimes without speaking a word. Their books were replete with stories of people healed from serious physical illnesses as well as emotional and mental disturbances. It seemed to me that all they needed to do was to put their hands on someone's head or body and the illness would disappear.

I opened a small private practice in my apartment in New York City in 1976, where I saw people individually for sessions of one hour or more. During the first few years of my practice, many healings took place, sometimes instantaneously. Pain would vanish, tumors would disappear, and necks would unlock after twenty years of immobility. I was able to feel the emotional and spiritual struggles underneath the physical symptoms. I could literally feel the person's pain in my own body, along with the emotions, beliefs and fears associated with it. With an undergraduate degree in Religion but no initial background in counseling, I attempted as best I could to describe to people what I was sensing from them. Most people related in a deep way to what I was describing, and the information seemed to help tremendously in their ability to integrate healing at physical, emotional, mental and spiritual levels.

One of my friends advised me to practice the laying-on of hands, but not to engage people in a discussion of their feelings. He was encouraging me to follow the old model, where a brief hands-on healing was all that seemed needed, and maybe a word or two of encouragement. There were times when I tried this approach, but it never felt right to me. Not only was I spontaneously and intuitively receiving more than a word or two of information, but people genuinely seemed to need to talk about their feelings. I can remember "Claire", a woman in her sixties who had called for a healing. She spent the entire session confessing a secret that she had harbored her entire life. Claire needed someone to hear her confession and help her hold it. Carrying it by herself had become too much for her. I never saw Claire again, but that confession provided her with some peace of mind and heart. Her need to share her burden, even with a stranger, led me to a deeper understanding of the importance of confession as practiced in the Roman Catholic Church.

### **Religious views of spiritual healing**

All world religions place great importance on healing the soul, but few have addressed the issue of physical healing. Christianity was founded on the healings performed by Jesus. There are over forty of them in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The touch of Jesus, or someone touching him, had the power to heal physical disease, mental illness and even raise Lazarus from the dead. Yet healing of illness through touch had all but disappeared from Christianity over the centuries, to be replaced with an emphasis on healing the soul. The Protestant Churches practically outlawed spiritual healing. Dr. Wade Boggs (1956) promoted the thesis of dispensationalism, which explained that the healings performed by Jesus and the apostles were only meant to last until the Christian Church was founded, and once established, these dispensations were withdrawn.

There were, of course, fringe groups like the Pentecostals and Christian Science, and individual faith healers like Aimee Semple McPherson and Katherine Kulmann. They kept the healing tradition alive on the Protestant side, despite the United Lutheran Church in 1962 warning its two and a half million members to steer clear of religious healing.

Morton T. Kelsey (1973), an Episcopal priest, wrote a definitive volume that traced the tradition of Christian healing from ancient to modern times. In the final two chapters, Kelsey makes an argument for the place of spiritual healing in the modern world, and outlines a five-step plan to reintegrate healing into the Christian churches. I discovered his work when I went to graduate school in the mid-1980's to earn my master's degree in pastoral counseling. I was so inspired by his perspective on healing in the modern world that I attended one of his weekend retreats, where I joined him in giving laying-on-of-hands. This opportunity made me aware of how our experience of God, and the community most people associate with a church or temple, can be transported to any location.

Father Francis MacNutt (1974) was one of the first priests to ignite the charismatic renewal in the Roman Catholic Church. In 1967 he discovered the healing work of Agnes Sanford and other Protestant healers. He came to realize that the basic Christian foundation in healing needed to be re-explored in the Roman Catholic Church, and went on to establish a healing ministry.

Father Ralph DiOrio (1981, 1984), another Roman Catholic priest, unexpectedly discovered he had the gift of healing, and joined the charismatic renewal already taking place within the church. During the early years of my work I attended several of his gatherings, where hundreds of people went forward to receive laying-on of hands. Many people were “slain in the spirit” and fell to the floor unconscious. Amazingly, no one ever seemed to get hurt, and many people experienced instantaneous healings from cancer and paralysis. I watched as people got out of wheelchairs, threw down canes, or found they could hear after many years of deafness. Father D’Orio writes of how these healings were followed up and validated with medical exams.

The waters of Lourdes in France are famous for inducing such healings, but most Roman Catholics associate miraculous healings with saints. I once had a former Roman Catholic priest (who was obviously going through his own period of healing) question me with decided skepticism about my healing gift. He did not believe that God still worked through priests, much less lay people, to heal the sick, and outlined for me the view that healing stopped with Jesus and was not active in the modern world.

I obtained my master’s degree in pastoral counseling at an Irish Christian Brother’s college, where I was one of the lay people in the program, and where I was met with a mixture of interest and skepticism among my classmates and teachers. One of the priests thought I was a witch. Another said he also practiced healing touch, but talked about it with only a few people. During the entire three-year clinical program, hands-on healing was never mentioned in any of my classes, nor did I find it discussed in any of my texts. When I wrote my master’s thesis, I decided to outline how I combined pastoral counseling with the laying-on-of-hands, and described its foundation in Christianity. I also compared Carl Jung’s views on the healing of the soul and its journey toward God with the practice of pastoral care and counseling.

### **Further development as a healer**

During the first ten years that I practiced healing, before earning my master’s degree, I had not been aware of the complex history of healing and Christianity. My Protestant background and my undergraduate degree in Religion made me familiar with the Bible and the healings of Jesus in the New Testament. My experience, though, was very personal: As I placed my hands over or upon someone’s body, I could feel the presence of love, the presence of God’s love, move through me and connect with the same presence of love inside the other person. My heart opened, my hands opened, my consciousness opened with the healing energy of this love. I felt as healed by the presence of this love as the person receiving the healing often felt. People would tell me that my hands became hot, that the imprint of my hands remained after I had raised them, that they experienced a sense of peace, wholeness and love.

When rapid healings of a physical nature would happen, they always seemed to contain some kind of emotional or spiritual transformation in the person receiving the healing. I can remember “Dorothy,” a young woman who came to see me with final stage lymph node cancer. She had been told by her medical doctor that the disease was still progressing, despite aggressive treatment, and there was nothing they could do. Dorothy had been told she had about six months to live. She came to see me after two years of coaxing by her psychotherapist, and only when the end looked near. In her first session she was angry, hostile, and frightened, and told me with her arms crossed in front of her that she believed spiritual healing was quackery. I did not take offense, and even suggested to Dorothy that it was acceptable to feel this way, and we could still work together. She agreed to proceed, saying, “I have nothing to lose.” I saw her twice a week for six weeks, and did laying-on-of-hands and guided healing imagery with her. We discussed the fact that her illness had been diagnosed about a year and a half after an angry divorce, and also explored her childhood. After six weeks of healing, Dorothy returned to Sloan Kettering for blood tests, which came back normal. Her physician, thinking that her blood sample must have been mixed up with someone else’s, had the tests redone twice. The tests continued to return as

normal. Finally, her doctor called her in and told her, with great hesitation, that he could find no further indication of lymphoma.

When Dorothy arrived for her next session, she was terribly upset and frightened. She told me that she had spent two years learning how to be ill and preparing to die, and now that she was well, she had no idea how to feel or how to live. In addition, her belief that healing was quackery had been turned upside down. Within a week, Dorothy developed a mass in her breast. When she came back for her next session, I helped her access the anger that I had noticed in her from the beginning. As we talked of her divorce and her difficult childhood, I confronted her over the feelings she was holding in and denying. She became angry with me, got up, and threatened to leave. I told her that she could do that, but first I suggested we do laying-on-of-hands on the mass in her breast. She agreed, and three hours after she returned home, she called me to say the mass had disappeared. It never returned. We continued hands-on healing over the next nine months, and talked about the new life that was now open before her. She needed time to believe that she deserved the healing. Dorothy needed time to experience the love that had opened inside her.

It became obvious to me as the years went by that spiritual healing was much more than I had understood it to be from reading about the great healers. It was not just a matter of laying hands on people, zapping them with energy, and expecting their illnesses to disappear – no matter how powerful the energy of the healer or the faith of the recipient. Each individual is a complex web of emotions, memories, beliefs, genetics and physical health. As I became aware of the importance of this web in the healing process of each person, I realized that people were in need of understanding the larger context of their pain and illness. They needed to explore the effects of their emotions and beliefs on their body. They needed to perceive the role of their illness in their life and relationships. People would come expecting me to have some power over their illness, and I would do my best to empower them to participate in their own healing process. My importance as a healer contributing the healing was secondary to the value of helping people awaken the healer within themselves – their innate, God-given potential, especially the power of love to heal body, mind and spirit.

### **Teaching healing**

My first experience of teaching healing came during the summer that the American Institute for Buddhist Studies opened its doors in Amherst, Massachusetts. My interest in comparative religions had led me to study Buddhism and Hinduism, and I traveled for a month throughout India and Nepal. There is a long tradition of medicine and healing in Tibetan Buddhism, and I was interested in correlations between the spiritual healing that I was practicing and other traditions. Robert Thurman was the director of the newly formed Institute, and when he heard of my interest, he invited me to arrange for several healers to teach a one-day workshop. I asked myself: Could healing be taught? All the great healers said no. They believed healing was a gift bestowed upon certain people. I could not understand their position. Even Jesus instructed his apostles to go out and heal. Olga Worrall, a healer with great natural gifts, had ministers on either side of her when she healed. Was healing just to be done by priests and ministers and “chosen” people?

I looked around to see if any other spiritual healers in New York City were teaching people how to heal themselves or become healers for others. I could find only one: Bryce Bond. Bryce had been a wartime journalist who decided to devote his life to healing after he interviewed Harry Edwards. Bryce Bond became a dear friend and mentor to me as I was starting out. He told me stories about all the great healers, showed me tapes and photographs of them, and regaled me with stories of his own experiences. He was a wonderful and generous human being. He encouraged me to speak before a camera for the first time on his cable television show. He was the only healer in New York at the time who gave classes in spiritual healing, and his classes were focused on healing the emotional components of illness. To my knowledge, he did not actually teach people how to do laying-on of hands.

I knew of only a few other healers in New York: Carmen DeBarrazza, Dean Kraft (1981) and Vincent Ragone. They were all fairly reclusive, did their healing work with individuals, and did not teach self-healing methods or train others to become healers.

I invited Bryce to teach a one-day workshop on healing at the Institute in Amherst. The day before his arrival, he called, saying only that his intuition told him not to come. I was invited to teach the class in his place. I was stunned. I had never taught. I had no idea where to start or what to teach. Once again, I was up against breaking the old model that all the great healers had handed down to me. The old model said healing couldn't be taught.

With a friend's encouragement, I began putting together a class. I wrote out notes about the history of healing in Great Britain, and then decided there had to be some way to help people feel what I felt during a healing. I created a guided process about bringing in the white healing light, opening the heart, and experiencing love. Then came the big question: did I dare pair people up and actually have them place their hands on each other? I had no idea what would happen, but a deep sense of trust led me to want to try.

On the day of the workshop about twenty students arrived. I read from my notes about healing and, as I built up more courage, I guided them through a simple heart opening with imagery of white light. I used white light because of my own experience of tremendous light during a healing, as well as a long tradition of light as symbolic of God's presence in many religions.

At the end of the meditation, people expressed a sense of wonder. Some said they could see the white light, others felt deep emotions as they opened their hearts. I then paired people and showed them how to place their hands on each other's hearts or on locations that needed healing. I guided them once again through a process of opening their hearts to the light and allowing God's healing presence to move through their hearts and hands. The results were wondrous. I watched as smiles appeared and tears rolled down the faces of the healers and those receiving the healings. People seemed to move into a state of bliss that was quiet yet powerful.

When people opened their eyes again, they described their experiences. Several physical healings had taken place in the form of pain relief. Some described healings of deep emotional wounds and memories. Those giving healing felt their hearts open with compassion. Some described their hands filling with heat or tingling. Every person, without exception, had felt the healing energy as a tangible reality. To this day, more than twenty years later, I am still moved by the power of the experience and how I realized, on that one day, that healing could be taught. Healing is, in the best sense of the word, a democratic experience of love and the innate God-given power to heal. We all have the ability to open our hearts to love, our bodies to healing, and our souls to wholeness - whether you are a Christian with Jesus as the inner experience of the healer, or a Buddhist with Buddha as the healer, or from any other religious tradition..

That autumn, a local skills exchange in New York invited me to teach an ongoing weekly class in spiritual healing. I had to analyze what had come to me as a gift. I had not studied with anyone. The spontaneous manifestation of my healing gift had occurred within the old model. In order to teach, I had to break down what I did into understandable and transferable components. I had to find a way to democratize healing, to take it out of the arena of the chosen few. I combined didactic and experiential material from various spiritual traditions that had been helpful to me as a healer, and that I felt would help people access their deepest levels of love and compassion. I began creating guided meditations using different topics and methods: opening the chakras (subtle energy centers) with light and color; forgiveness and heart opening; psychic self-defense; guided healing imagery; and, affirmations and prayer. As I guided students through these meditations, I would walk around the room and lay hands on their hearts, or eyes, or back, depending upon what was needed. The laying-on of hands from me acted as a catalyst for their own inner healing energies to awaken and become manifest.

I found that most students quickly and easily responded to teaching methods that helped them discover within themselves their innate sensitivities, including the ability to love. I began with a

class in Self Healing. While each student is unique, almost all can learn to open their hearts and invite God's healing presence to move through them as love and healing energy.

As word about the class spread, the skills exchange added two more weekly classes, and I found myself teaching three nights a week. The graduates soon requested weekend workshops so they could continue their studies, and I developed curricula for Intermediate Healing and Advanced Healing. There was a real hunger in people to learn about healing, and the classes created enormous interest. These weekly classes eventually developed into a weekend workshop I entitled "Awakening the Healer Within." My intention was to create a format that would allow people to learn to access their innate, God-given healing power, rather than be dependent upon a healer to channel this energy for them. I watched as dozens of students opened to their inner healing power, and long-standing physical and emotional problems were healed. Back problems, migraines, eyesight and hearing improved. One student grew a new vocal cord where the previous one had been removed due to cancer. Healings were happening within these individuals through their own intention and openness to love. The real power lay within them, and I was only there to facilitate the process and create a safe and loving space. I often thought back to Jesus saying, "Your faith has made you whole." In my mind, it wasn't faith in traditional religious beliefs that was helping these students become well. Instead, it seemed to be a willingness to explore the unknown possibility that God could work through each of us, not just through specially chosen individuals.

As the students became increasingly more confident in their ability to heal themselves, they wished to learn how to do laying-on-of-hands with others, and how to develop their deeper intuitive senses as a way to further access inner healing. Weekend workshops developed into ongoing training programs that included medical intuition, spiritual counseling, dreamwork, chakra assessment, and even advanced work in helping people with issues of death and dying. Nurses, doctors, and psychotherapists came to the trainings as a way to integrate the spiritual dimension of healing into already existing practices. Nurses who had studied Therapeutic Touch with Dolores Krieger (1979) would often come to study intuitive development, psychic self-defense, and spiritual counseling.

I soon found students requesting a training program that grew from one year to four years, and became the Touching Spirit® Training Program. Today, the Training exists as four separate trainings: a Professional Training Program for Health Care Professionals; a Self Healing Program; a Teacher Training; and, an Animal Healing Training Program.

### **Healing in the Culture**

Over the past twenty-five years, spiritual healing has evolved from a gift used by a chosen few to a democracy of empowered healers. One of the dictionary definitions of democracy is "the treating of other people as one's equals." The word comes from the Greek *demos* (people) + *kratos* (power, rule).

A variety of hands-on healing methods and schools are now available: Touching Spirit Center, Reiki, Rubenfeld Synergy, Barbara Brennan's school, Rolfing and other bodywork forms, acupuncture schools, intuitive counseling, and spiritual trainings from many different paths, including the Native American, Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

Books and magazines on spiritual healing and energy healing appear everywhere. Radio and television offer interviews with healers, and complementary healing methods are now integrated into American and Western European cultures.

Hospitals and HMOs are offering psychological counseling and programs in stress reduction, and medical doctors are becoming more familiar with holistic health treatments. The director of a large HMO spent three days observing as I did hands-on healing with several of my patients. There is a hand-on healer present in the operating room during cardiac surgery at one of New York City's hospitals.

### **Healing in Modern Churches**

Several years ago, I was invited by the Catholic Health Association to teach a four-hour workshop in hands-on healing to clergy at its annual convention. Six hundred and fifty people signed up. When I entered the ballroom and looked around, I knew that a transformation was taking place in the churches. There were clergy from all denominations, including priests and nuns in habit. I spoke to them about my background as a spiritual healer and took them through a white light and heart opening meditation. I could feel the energy in the room soften, and I could see faces fill with light and smiles. During the second half of the morning, participants paired up to give and receive laying-on of hands. I watched as three hundred and twenty-five pairs of hands reached out to touch the healing spirit of God within each other. The results were wondrous. As partners shared their experiences with each other, I walked over to a priest in his seventies and a woman of the same age. They were both glowing and smiling. She described how she felt heat from his hands and white light flowing through her. Her back felt better almost immediately. I asked the priest if he had ever performed laying-on of hands before, and he said no. "How did it feel?" I inquired. "Wonderful," he responded, as he beamed. He felt God come alive in his own hands and in the healing of his partner's body in a way that he had never before experienced. I felt hope that hands-on healing might be reintegrated into churches of all denominations.

Over the years this possibility has actually come to fruition. Churches all over the United States are offering healing services. Marble Collegiate Church in New York City, the Dutch Reform church of Norman Vincent Peale, first invited me to speak about spiritual healing in the late 1980's during Lent. The following year they asked if I would lead the first hands-on healing service for the congregation. Several hundred people came forward to receive laying-on of hands. The tradition at Marble has continued, and both ministers and lay people are joining together in healing services.

The knowledge and experiences that had once been confined to the world's great religions, their leaders, and only occasionally their members, are becoming available to everyone everywhere.

### **Conclusion**

Spiritual healers today are acting as facilitators to encourage people to become healers in their own right, both for themselves and other people. Many students I have trained are now training other students in the United States and Europe. Fewer and fewer people come into my office looking for my hands to eliminate their pains or illnesses. More and more people come to learn how to awaken the healer within them. They come to experience healing, and to integrate it into their lives through laying-on of hands, healing imagery, meditation, prayer, dreamwork, forgiveness, counseling and love. They want to understand the roles that emotions, beliefs, thoughts, and unresolved relationships play in their health. They take active roles as self healers, making peace with their past, coming to terms with the present, and making healthier choices for the future. They are open to developing a relationship with God or a Higher Power that will allow them to make healing a lifelong process. Once called a "patient," or someone who passively endures suffering, the student of healing has changed from being a passive receiver of energy to an active participant in the healing process. The spiritual healer has become a guide, facilitator, counselor, and teacher along the path of healing.

## **STUDENT EXPERIENCES**

### ***Julia***

During my first week of Elizabeth Stratton's 'Professional Training Program', Elizabeth carried out a chakra scan on me. When she reached my heart chakra, she stated that she felt I had an 'achy heart', and asked "had I had a recent loss or breakup?". I couldn't think of anything significant. She also stated that she felt that I had for some time now been going through a low grade depression. I do not consider myself a depressed person, but I knew what she was



referring to. There was a sadness I felt deep inside me but I was unaware what had been causing it.

Elizabeth later equated the "achy heart" to the fact that I was still mourning the breakup of my parents' marriage and the subsequent segregation of the family. I thought I had buried that hurt long ago! But as she spoke to me I felt old emotions surface and I realised that I still had not truly released them.

The same week Elizabeth did a Laying-on of hands on me. She began by placing her hands at my feet. I could feel the heat emanating from her. I suddenly experienced what felt like a bolt of lightening go straight to my heart, it startled me.

She then placed her hands over my heart chakra. I immediately felt tearful and emotional. I knew something was happening at the heart level. I could feel the chakra opening and blockages being released.

The following days after the healing, emotions continued to surface, particularly relating to my family's breakup. Elizabeth had, I believe, helped open my heart chakra to assist me in releasing the emotions I needed to process, to allow the energy to flow more smoothly through my heart chakra.

Through Elizabeth's laying-on of hands and spiritual counselling and guidance, I have moved closer to accepting my parent's breakup more fully. If she had not made the diagnosis that she did, I would continue to be unaware of the hurt that continued to be present within me from childhood and consequently the low grade depression she spoke of would have persisted. With her help I was able to release these emotions and feel more at peace with myself and my family.

### ***Kimberly***

On April 5th I attended Elizabeth Stratton's Psychic Self Defense seminar. It had been suggested to me that I enroll in one of her programs to develop my own abilities as a healer. I didn't know much about her or her work, and this seminar was an ideal opportunity to learn more. A close friend was also interested, and we went together.

I don't remember what my expectations were, if any; but I know they didn't include my experience that night. April 5th I received my first healing, a spontaneous healing that ended my 30-year history with eating disorders.

During the evening's program a member of Elizabeth's Touching Spirit faculty led the group assembled in meditation. As we were taken through a meditation entitled Finding Your Weak Link, Elizabeth moved through the group giving a basic laying on of hands.

I quickly reached a deeply relaxed state. In the meditation I saw myself as a young girl seated with my mother at our kitchen table. My father appeared at the door; he had come home for lunch. I observed him watching us. I saw and experienced his deep sadness and undeniable regret that I was female, not male. Pain filled my heart. Tears streamed down my face. I had tried throughout my childhood to be a good son to him, desperate for his love, something he simply wasn't able to give me.

Suddenly I felt an unbelievably strong heat at the top of my head, my crown chakra. It was like nothing I had ever experienced before. I realized Elizabeth was standing behind me, her hands over my head. As I adjusted to the sensation of this intense heat at the top of my head, it moved to my lower abdomen, my second chakra. I wondered with a little anxiety where in the world she had her hands. Healing energy was moving through my body to the area I most needed to heal. It was a feeling I will never forget.

My healing process went on as the meditation continued. My pain began to melt away, replaced by my father's pain. I experienced his hidden feelings of guilt and inner despair from the inability to give me what I so clearly craved and demanded on a daily basis -- his unconditional love.

Compassion filled my heart as I acknowledged the anguish of not being able to give your child the love she so naturally and normally expects to find. Again tears ran down my face. I realized in these moments that the love I didn't receive had nothing to do with me. I was released from my pain.

It seemed like a wonderfully insightful evening. On the drive home my friend and I shared our experiences and our thoughts about the seminar. Once home I got ready for bed. As I left the bathroom I paused, confused by a misstep in my nightly ritual. I had omitted turning sideways in front of the mirror and the accompanying frown. I couldn't remember a time when I hadn't ended my day with that disapproving gesture.

I sensed I was somehow different because of the healing I received, but I didn't expect changes in my behavior. Yet changes occurred, and not once since that night when Elizabeth placed her hands over my head have I eaten or refused to eat food with the thought that I'm not deserving.

I have had many further healings. These are some more of the feelings I have during healing: experiencing myself in an environment of safety and love, having feelings of inner peace, a sense of wellbeing both extending to and emanating from the core of my being. In healing I feel connected to a Divine energy in which I know and lovingly accept myself and those around me.

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