

Envision the Possibility of Healing

I've recently been working with a client who was in a near fatal head-on bicycle accident. At the emergency room, the doctors diagnosed him with a concussion, told him to take it easy and reassured him he could return to work. He followed their advice.

However, he soon realized that the stress of deadlines, the need to think on his feet, the pace of work and life - things which he handled easily before - were now too much for him. He developed severe headaches, migraines, extreme fatigue, and a lack of emotional well-being. For someone used to handling a very active lifestyle and a demanding job, he found himself at a loss. In the wake of this decreased ability to function, he became concerned and sought the advice of a neurologist.

Not able to detect anything clear on the MRI, the neurologist suggested a mild brain injury, but offered neither a course for healing nor advice for coping with his new condition. Nine weeks after the accident, he decided to take two weeks off of work and in a state of pain and confusion he called my office.

Most of us working in the field of bodywork have encountered clients perhaps with different diagnoses but similar stories of pain or changes in their well-being, that seem to lack either clear origin or clear path to recovery. They have explored the possibilities of standard medicine, often with great benefit, yet often, symptoms persist. What can we, as bodyworkers without advanced degrees or technologies, or lacking experience with the particular injury or pathology, reasonably do? Questioning our competence and skills and perhaps overwhelmed by the needs of our clients, we might wonder what we have to bring to the table. What my 25 years in practice has consistently shown me is the power of healing we have at our, dare I say "finger-tips", in each and every session - our hands!

After two weeks of rest and the first couple of treatments my client's symptoms reduced significantly. His headaches now occur only during times of emotional stress. He has regained his cognitive abilities and become more tolerant of noise, fast paces, and car travel. While he has not fully regained pre-accident functioning, he now relates to his body as a valuable vehicle requiring attention and is willing to honor its needs.

What did I do? Simply, I put my hands on his neck and held it while having a silent conversation with his body. With my hands and fingers, I listened to his body "speak" of the shock from the accident, the cellular sense of fear and insecurity, and the resulting pattern of holding. As his body felt heard, it started to relax and recognize that the accident was only one of its many experiences. Recalling that it was not always dangerous to move, his body led me to work on specific cranial bones but not on others. They too responded to my non-invasive touch and began to find their way back to healthier, freer movement. In subsequent treatments I hope his body will gain more trust in its ability to heal and return to an unrestricted way of being.

I know my particular form of therapy well, yet when I am with a client, my work is informed far more significantly by my client's body than any of my theoretical or

technical expertise. Because I have learned to trust the body's own wisdom, I listen openly and follow its direction. For me, this is exciting work. No session is like another and I am different with each client; but I am constantly curious and amazed at the possibilities of healing innate to the body.

Here is an invitation to you. The next time you work with a client try this: Take a moment before you touch your client and center your awareness in your heart. Let go of any idea of what needs to happen or any set protocol and simply become deeply curious. Then, bringing all of your listenening into your hands gently put them on your client. Listen with an open heart; listen deep and long. What is the body telling you? What are you called to do?

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