

## **On Curing and Healing**

The other day a client in her early 60's came to my office. She had developed sciatica as a result of frequently picking up and carrying around her grandchild. It was her third visit to my office and her sciatica was almost gone. While I was working on her lower back, she was suddenly transported back to the time of her marriage, which had ended many years ago. She had felt painfully unsupported, undervalued and disrespected by her former husband, the father of her children. She told me how full of himself he had been, inattentive and rude to her – a real pain in the butt! Tears of old hurt and frustration came up. I continued to work on her back as I empathetically listened to her story.

After she got off the table she told me that she has had a particular kind of lower back pain for many years. She had not told me about this pain before. When it first started she tried many things to cure it, nothing helped. So she had learned to live with it, treating it with heat and TLC when it flared up. It was a constant nagging, aching pain that seemed to sit deep within her back at all times. She had resigned herself to living with this pain, and thought it would never leave her. Yet, now for the first time in years it was gone!

In addition to curing the sciatica, what had happened during this particular treatment? Her body had stored the pain of her marriage in her lower back. She had not wanted to leave her husband before her children were grown, so she clenched the muscles of her butt to bear these years, and this tightness caused the pain. As I worked on her lower back, the cells of this part of her body were addressed which activated the memories stored there and released them into her consciousness. Then the emotions of hurt that she had suppressed during the marriage could now safely be felt and expressed. Because I was an active witness to this process, her whole being – body, mind and spirit – felt heard and cared for. My compassion and care touched her deeply. This allowed the trauma to be healed.

Will this kind of pain ever come back? I don't know. What I do know is that the sciatica was cured while this particular trauma of her marriage was healed and she felt whole again.

Our clients often come into our offices in search of a cure. They ask us to take their pain their symptoms away. Fortunately we are often able to help them with that. The symptoms go away, sometimes for a few days, sometimes for a month or even a couple of years. This is good! Yet, there is the possibility of healing.

All humans have a deep longing for healing. Healing comes from 'whole' and we long for wholeness. We yearn for the integration of all our parts, for understanding and loving ourselves, and our lives, even when it is not easy or pretty. When healing occurs, we feel whole, we have a sense of strength and know of our ability to deal with life and find joy in it. Some of our clients don't even know what that feels like, so they just ask for cure of a symptom. And we as practitioners sometimes feel shy about healing, because it is such a personal, intimate process.

How does healing happen in our offices? To heal, a person needs to feel deeply touched. Physical touch helps, and the touch goes beyond that. To be listened to without finding fault with fingers and hands as well as ears, is very significant to healing. The acknowledgment and expression of emotions stored in the body's cells of is an important component of healing. Often the telling of the story and the acknowledgment of its impact helps. Then there is the mystery – the inexplicable, the beauty, the grace – that happens when the time and the place is right for healing.

As bodyworkers we work to cure our client's ailments. In addition, we want to hold the door wide open for the possibility of healing, of becoming whole. We do everything we can to allow this to happen: we touch our clients deeply, physically, emotionally and spiritually, we listen to them with acceptance, we hold a nonjudgmental space for their emotions to come up, and we assist them in understanding the painful events of their lives. Ultimately, we trust in the grace that will lead to healing and to wholeness, because deep down we know that if they heal, we heal with them and the world with us. Isn't that why we do the work we do?

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Ursula Popp, L.Ac., VCST, RC specializes in creating opportunities for healing in her private practice and in her classroom. She has extensive training in Cranio-Sacral Therapy, Acupuncture, Psychology, and various spiritual traditions. She has been teaching internationally for the last 20 years. She has created her own advanced training program in Cranio-Sacral Therapy, and beyond. She is an NCBTMB "Class A" instructor. She can be reached at [ursulampopp@aol.com](mailto:ursulampopp@aol.com) and visited at her website at [www.naturalhealthresourcescenter.org](http://www.naturalhealthresourcescenter.org)