

THE POWER OF INTUITION

CAN “CHANNELING ENERGY” CHANGE YOUR LIFE?
A THERAPIST’S PERSONAL QUEST TO FIND OUT

BY DEBRA BORDEN, L.C.S.W.

KIM KARDASHIAN DOES IT. BRAD AND ANGELINA DO IT as a family. At the Westminster Kennel Club’s annual show, entrants do it with their dogs. They all consult healers. And ordinary folks in record numbers are joining them, seeking healers’ counsel for help with love and life. Chances

are you’ve wondered about it too.

So have I, and I’m a trained psychotherapist. Not knowing my seers from my sensitives, my angels from my guides, I was more skeptical than spiritual when it came to intuitive healing. And yet I confess I was secretly thrilled to be asked



to explore the topic. Here was a guilt-free pass to be frivolous; to play 'What if?'. What if I could communicate with a lost loved one? Heal a long-term illness? What if I could finally achieve that elusive balance I'd been searching for?

WHAT IS INTUITIVE HEALING?

The premise behind intuitive healing (also called energy healing) is that one's own energy can be channeled to heal, primarily by removing "blockages" that are causing distress or disease or by maximizing energy flow. Healers strive to help you create balance in all areas of your life: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. "Opening up" or "redirecting" your energy can lead to more love, less stress or the end of a chronic illness.

Society has always been slow to acclimate to new therapies. Years ago, meditation and yoga seemed outrageous, but they are now mainstream. Psychotherapists now routinely use equine therapy, sand play and mindfulness. Perhaps you've heard of Reiki, an energy therapy that has gained acceptance. With roots in Buddhism, Reiki is now used in mental health and substance abuse centers. All forms of energy healing incorporate a common thread: expanded listening. That's right; the practitioners listen and sometimes hear things. Things you and I don't.

HOW LISTENING EXPANDS

Healers profess to tune into the energy we all emit—and sometimes to the "energy" of people who have died. These are our angels or guides. Judy Toma is an angel therapist in Montclair. "Religions have always had angels; it's nothing new," she says. "Ask for guidance, and you will get answers in the most powerful ways." Toma says to notice the signs: the feather falling in your path pointing you in a direction, or the tingling sensation you get when something (or someone!) is wrong. "Those are your angels telling you what you need to know."

Toma told me by phone that my angels said my juggling act wasn't working and to focus on the most important thing. Hmm, you mean my three jobs as writer, therapist and full-time marketer might be a little much to handle?

Judith Orloff, M.D., is a board-certified psychiatrist, an assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of California-Los Angeles and a famous intuitive seer who says she's used her psychic



powers to aid in police investigations. She practices "expanded awareness" and stresses practice, arguing that the more you focus on your intuitive sense, the sharper you'll be. She maintains that while one "goes" to a healer, it's really a two-way process. The healer clears a healthy path, but you have to be willing to see it and take it.

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—MICHAEL GROSS, M.D.

FREAK ME OUT, PLEASE

My dad died 10 years ago. While I think about him often, I've never imagined him hanging around to guide me. In fact, I get my logical and scientific side from my dad, so even if I were inclined to consider the presence of spirits, I doubt he'd be the one I'd expect to show up. And yet, on a Saturday in June, that all changed.

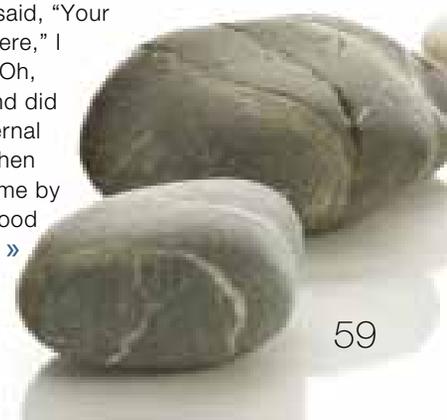
My "mini session" with "Dr. Robert" Kandarian, D.C., was arranged by Deb Peterson, the founder of Wellness Gala, a company that produces wellness events. Twelve years ago, her 7-year-old son developed Tourette's syndrome, experiencing up to 45 tics an hour. After she

consulted every specialist from Columbia to Colombia, a friend insisted she see Kandarian. Within months her son was cured. Eight years later, he remains so. Peterson quickly quit her corporate sales job and became Kandarian's champion.

My mini session? It morphed into a marathon! Either Kandarian was immersed in his work or I needed way more healing than expected. I suspect it was a combination of the two.

Kandarian has a calm and low-key attitude. He sat across from me and took a short history. We explored energy between our hands, which, strangely enough, I did feel. Then, while I was fully clothed, face up on a massage table, he performed a series of sweeping hand movements over my body, occasionally tapping a spot and removing "energy blockages." Once, he emitted breath sounds that were reminiscent of Lamaze breathing. Throughout, he told me things about my family and myself, providing fairly directive advice on everything from my nutrition to my mindset.

I had been warned that Kandarian might freak me out, and I had bravely (foolishly?) responded "Bring it on." When he said, "Your father is here," I thought, "Oh, really?" and did a little internal eye roll. Then he called me by the childhood nickname »



that only my father used and that he had no way of knowing: “Deb-Deb.”
I promptly burst into tears.

WHAT THE DOUBTERS SAY

Scientists attribute the perceived benefits of healers’ ministrations to three psychological phenomena. For each of these, here is the apparent benefit—and the debunkers’ explanation:

» **WISHFUL THINKING.** Hopeful people are positive and upbeat—good things for the mind and body. Stress causes negative physiological effects (the release of cortisol, strain on the heart), so lightness will have an opposite effect.

Skeptics say: It’s the individual’s process and disconnected from any actual practice by the healer.

» **BIAS CONFIRMATION.** This is when you assign meaning to something so that it becomes true for you. Laura lost her mom on 11/11. She states that every day she just happens to look at the clock when the time is 11:11. She believes that her mom is connecting with her.

Skeptics say: Laura probably looks at the clock just as often at 5:02 or 7:33 but doesn’t notice. Believing in a healer may help you feel healed, but not because of anything the healer does.

» **COMMUNAL REINFORCEMENT.** If others believe it, it must be so, the thinking goes. Similarly, the more popular intuitive healing becomes, the more that people believe it must work.

Skeptics say: The fallacy is that popularity equals validity. Exercise belt machines, binding corsets, smoking and cocaine were all once popular, but that didn’t make them wise.

However, despite these doubts, the medical community has never been more welcoming of “holistic” medicine, which by definition acknowledges the role of emotional and spiritual imbalances in disease. Michael Gross, M.D., chief of sports medicine at Hackensack University Medical Center and medical director of the Active Center for Health & Wellness in Hackensack, is a self-described scientist who acknowledges the role of energy (or auras) in healing. “It would be arrogant to dismiss a strategy just because it can’t be traditionally measured,” he says. “Incorporating new and traditional modalities should be a paral-



4 TIPS FOR INTUITIVE HEALING

All of the healers interviewed for this article offered some version of the following tips for tuning in to your own healing energy and guides:

- » 1. **BE SENTIENT.** Pay attention to your feelings and sensory impressions.
- » 2. **STAY IN THE MOMENT.** Don’t regret the past or worry about the future.
- » 3. **FOCUS ON WHAT YOU WANT,** not on what you don’t have.
- » 4. **TRUST WHAT YOU FEEL.** Pause or act accordingly.

Of course, if you have medical concerns, consult a medical professional.

lel process, with ‘complementary’ as the key word.” Dr. Gross cites studies from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on energy fields and blockages that have led to the implementation of Reiki in almost every major cancer center and says that nurses have been trained for years in “healing touch” (manipulating energy fields around the body). “Some of these strategies have been around for hundreds of years,” says Dr. Gross, “and they’ve survived for a reason.”

New York Times bestselling author Bernie Siegel, M.D., recalls patients whose tumors shrank after they received radiation therapy. One problem: By mistake, no radioactive material had been placed in the machine. Patients get better for no known reason, and doctors acknowledge a placebo effect often as high as 20 to 40 percent. Unlike the medical model, Dr. Siegel says, spiritual healing is not problem-based and therefore is not negative in origin. He quotes Mother Teresa: “I won’t attend an anti-war rally, but I will be at the rally for peace.”

DOES THAT LIFE COME IN A LARGE?

Jaye Regincos owns Thought in Motion, a cocoon of positive light and love in Montclair that she calls a “creation boutique.” Imagine going into Sephora for a lipstick, mascara and a blush. At Thought in Motion, you can shop for a relationship,

a career and good health. I’m not kidding. Regincos helps people transform dreams into reality. She says her success rate is 100 percent. I gave her the chance to amend that and she didn’t flinch. “Every single person I’ve worked with has what they want 12 months later.” I left with an icon, an affirmation and a prescription. (No, I’m not telling you what it was for, but let’s just say I expect to be deliriously happy by next summer.)

MY HAPPY MEDIUM?

We live in a sensory-assaulted, nature-deprived world. Quiet reflection and ‘listening’ to our heart, soul or gut have become activities that must be scheduled instead of processes that occur naturally. As a therapist, I help people convert overwhelming confusion into manageable parts; self-healing turns out to be a similar process: settle, notice, trust. It takes some work but seems like simple emotional physics: A spirit in motion stays in motion—not a bad plan.

I believe if you nourish the soul, you nourish the whole. Intuition is our lost inner Sherpa guide, whatever form we assign it, and one can always use a guide. Going forward I will be accessing mine. Perhaps it will be through a professional healer or under a tree in my backyard, holding a rose quartz icon or simply holding onto the sense that someone I love, someone who used to call me Deb-Deb, is nearby. +