

THE HEALING PROCESS

BY DR. CHANDANA BECKER, PHD, MTI, RPP, SEP

From an energetic perspective, health may be viewed as a dynamic and fluid phenomenon. My Polarity Therapy mentor, Pierre Pannetier, taught me that life and health require movement and change. As a Polarity practitioner, I consider health a state of being in which the life energy flows freely and fully. Over three decades of clinical experience has shown me that health is characterized by an ability to adapt and live functionally. To me, responsiveness to one's inner and outer environments is a hallmark of health. While illness may manifest overnight in the wake of a catastrophic event, many imbalances and recurrent or chronic illnesses develop over the course of time. Behavioral repetition or omission over time contributes to the formation of a life style. Getting out of balance can involve a relatively quiet, gradual, insidious decline in health. From the energetic perspective, illness, of any kind, occurs when there is an imbalance in the full, free, flow of the life energy. Chronic illnesses involve relative stagnation, repetition, and inertia in the flow of life energy that underlies the state or condition of the tissues, one's behaviors, and the various levels of one's functioning as a human being. When illness occurs, a crucial question tends to arise: "How do I get well?"

CATALYZING THE HEALING PROCESS

Going Beyond Pain and Longing - If getting ill is generally a process, then getting well most often requires a process too. How do you start that process? What is the catalyst? Pain can serve as a great motivator. Longing to be active and involved in meaningful endeavours can prompt you to find a way. Catalysts spark movement and change. Catalyzing agents come in the form of ideas, substances, people, techniques, regimens, really

Clinical Example #1

CATALYZING

She's young, beautiful, perceptive, intelligent, depressed, attempted suicide, lost her twin to a catastrophic illness in preadolescence, is angry and estranged from her mother, is hopeless, barely speaks above a whisper, is compelled to overwork and to excel, has a history of an eating disorder and stomach ulcers. Oh, this bottle is so full, the cork is so tight. Bottling is dangerous but speaking is painful. How will she trust me enough to speak? I am patient and slow and soft. I listen and wait. I cry with her and for her (from the edge of her energetic boundaries.) I offer her information about the nature of traumatic loss; it makes it easier for her to understand her experience and her symptoms. I reflect her feelings, I do not judge her, she is not alone. I do not place demands upon her. I reorient her to pleasure and fun. I watch and listen for the indicators of shock and high activation. I contain her stories as well as the activation behind the stories - to so slowly discharge the charge bound in her young system. She finds hope, she feels connection, she is more present, she concludes that it is ok for her to have some fun. *The healing process has been catalyzed*

anything that catches your fancy, gives you inspiration, changes your mind or your chemistry, and fans the embers of hope.

Attitude as Catalyst - As a clinician, I've noticed that my conviction, enthusiasm, confidence, appreciation for, and understanding of some specific healing method or pathway frequently ignites or stimulates a reorientation in clients, students, friends, or family members. Sunflowers automatically turn toward the sun. Our innate healing capacity, our design for self-righting and self-regulation sometimes needs to be reminded of its inherent blueprint. Then health calls unto health. There is a resonance with what is good and fitting. Just enough of a shift occurs that the healing process is set into motion. Then the client may simply go her own way.

Receptive Field as Catalyst - Call it sacred space, call it *fung shui*, call it a healing place. There are places, spaces, environments that have a peace, a power, a potency, a welcoming, soothing, kick you in the rump, atmosphere that make it easy to relax, let go, shift, change. Some of these places are beautiful and uplifting, silent and still, rhythmic or pulsatory, natural and sublime, filled with intention, Thy will be done.... As a clinician, I set out to create, live, and work in such a "sacred space". Of course what is on the outside must reflect what is on the inside and vice versa. When you create a receptive field the energy is much more likely to flow to the degree possible.

Questions as Catalyst - I am fond of questions. Two of my favourite catalyzing questions are: "How am I?" and "What do I need for my wellbeing?" I enjoy teaching clients how to ask themselves these questions and then to really pay attention to all the answers that come to them. So often there is layer after layer or multi-facets to the answers. Sensing deeply what is real and true can open the way for something new and fresh to occur. Something is catalyzed; there is a turn, a reorienting toward health, a little more momentum takes place in the flow of life.

SUSTAINING THE HEALING PROCESS

Tending the Hearth - Once the healing process begins it may take off and carry you in its deepening currents. However, more frequently, the healing process must be tended like a hearth. Carry-through, stamina, perseverance, flexibility and discernment of what is needed now and what is needed next, and even the willingness to go back through something you think you were already done with, as well as the capacity to let go of what is no longer needed are all components of an on-going healing process.

Love as Sustainer - How do you keep on keeping on when you are tired, frustrated, or uncertain? So often it is love, a loving connection that keeps us alive and keeps us wanting to live another day, to live and share something precious. How do you have professional boundaries yet love your clients, care for them, see their beauty and health just as they are, serve

them in individualized ways, and purposefully support them to plug into anything and everything that is good for them?

Behavioral Choices as Sustenance - I find that I have to love myself enough to take care of myself. And I have to do this day in and day out. It is a routine, a life style, a self-fulfilling prophecy. I do not teach my clients to live like me. Instead I try to live in the ways that are conducive to my wellbeing and encourage clients to notice what works for them. When something is functional, life-enhancing, brings pleasure or ease, there will automatically be more balance and free flow. I suggest to clients they notice what that is and do it again on purpose. There are hundreds of little choices that contribute to your wellbeing. In any moment you can capitalize on another little choice.

Clinical Example #2

SUSTAINING

He's retired from a profession that regularly exposed him to life threats to self and others. Frequently he finds himself angry, impatient, impulsive, easily stressed and prone to rage or panic. He cries repeatedly in despair and feels guilty for everything. He chronically feels hurt and unappreciated when dear ones resent his unsought advice and attempts to "fix" their lives; then his gut wrenches and his mind races. He longs for close relations, is sure parental neglect and early life losses are the crux of his problems, and he suffers a chronic, severe inflammatory bowel condition with history of surgeries. The healing process (and indeed it required a process) was initiated, then on-going work began in earnest. He learned about energetic boundaries and the importance of respecting others' boundaries. Behavioral changes with interpersonal ramifications included: finding and practicing ways to stop fixing and advising others; listening more to what significant family members are saying; asking more questions and learning how to make diplomatic, assertive requests; making self-care and personal equilibrium his priority; regularly checking-in with his body sensations, impulses, and pace to gauge how he's doing; making special dates with his wife and keeping the peace and promoting the pleasure by refraining from verbal snipping. Sustaining the healing process took a lot on his part. Since I don't read minds (thank goodness), I had to pay close attention to all his cues (the energetic, bodily, verbal, relational information he made available) to properly pace a sustainable process. And I had to ask him plenty of questions about his interests, goals, what is/is not serving him in therapy and in his daily life. *This sustained healing process involved many steps* and by the way, resulted in prevention of bowel flare-ups, significant reduction in steroid medication use, and a general reversal of his initial presenting concerns.

COMPLETING THE HEALING PROCESS

When You're Done, You're Done - How do you know when the healing process is complete? Is that when you die? Is it when you resume functioning at a level as high or higher than before you got ill or out of balance? Is the process over when you run out of insurance coverage? Or when your health care provider says "We can't do anything else for you"? Or when your friends and family say "Alright already, get on with your life"?

Knowing and Embodying Health - What is it in you that knows you are well, fine, fit as a fiddle? How do you know you are alright again? What is it that registers when you have relative balance? How is it that you know when the scales no longer tip? "Ahhhh," you say. You start something new. You have a new beginning. You don't even have to think about it; it's effortless because you are well. Humm, what were the components of that? Could you duplicate it? Could you bottle it? Ok, could you at least do it again if you have to? And could you use what you've experienced for prevention?

Conscious Living - The conscious art of living well relies on our capacity to observe life, to reflect upon it, to learn from it, and to flow as we go. It's a process..... _

Clinical Example #3

COMPLETING

She was broken-hearted. A love relationship of many years was over. Betrayal and the repeated expectation for acceptance and complicity by her lover simply made matters worse. She felt emotional pain and loss; she also felt used, discounted, and rejected. It was difficult for her to focus on much else. Her life roles were emotional care-taker of mother and pleaser of all others before herself, even if it meant going against herself. Now her home, her land, her relationship, a set of mutual friends, a dream was gone. Every time she tried to figure it out intellectually she'd get overwhelmed and would freeze. Every time she went into her emotions she was swept away into a dysfunctional, disintegrating undertow. Whenever she tried to converse with her ex she'd lose her capacity to speak, much less to speak her truth. *We knew her healing process was complete when she said "I have my life back."* But you know, it was an entirely different life, it was her own life, and she now lives it according to what is healthy, good, and respectful for her in conjunction with what works for others.

DR. CHANDANA BECKER, PhD, MTI, RPP, SEP teaches Polarity Therapy and Trauma Healing internationally. She may be contacted at Center For Wellbeing P.O. Box 3698 Fayetteville, AR 72702 USA 479-442-2026 cbeckerphd@aol.com.