

What Just Happened?

(A session with Rick Barrett, RPP)

My clients are often at a loss to explain (to themselves and others) what exactly occurred in one of my sessions. Many experience a deep, profound healing and want to share that experience with others. But when they try to articulate what happened, words fail. What comes out sounds either too prosaic or too far out. Most don't even try.

My healing sessions don't easily fit into conventional models. I don't diagnose and I don't treat health problems directly. I am not a doctor. I don't prescribe. I don't "heal" people either—at least not in the usual sense of the word.

"Healing" derives from an Old English word that means "wholeness". And that pretty much describes what I do: I help people rediscover their WHOLENESS. My underlying assumption is that all healing is SELF-HEALING. And all problems—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, relational—are best addressed in a state of wholeness. Your body/mind has an infinitely greater capacity to restore health and vitality than any doctor. Even the greatest surgeon is powerless to "cure" a patient who is not ready to recover.

There is a calm core of unlimited potentiality at the center of our Being. All that we display—actions, emotions, thoughts, structures—are manifestations of that core. It is all too easy to lose contact with our Center and get lost in the many distractions of life. After a while we may so identify with our problems that we forget our True Nature entirely. Just as we forget ourselves in a scary movie, we can get lost in our sufferings.

My job is to facilitate your returning to your Authentic Self. From there, your body/mind can sort out your difficulties much more efficiently than anyone else. I have total trust in the native intelligence of your body/mind. It will always choose the best course given the data it has. Sometimes it may be unwilling to surrender what are obvious harmful patterns because it is still using them to solve an old problem. Returning to Center allows an opportunity to recalibrate from a more neutral state. I will sometimes hold or move body parts in ways that present new options for your intelligent body/mind to consider.

Many problems that do not respond to the invasiveness of drugs and surgery actually do better with this non-directed approach. Think of it as a “rising tide lifts all boats” method. The individual becomes calmer, more centered, and stronger. A by-product of this is the subsiding and resolution of symptoms.

The symptoms are not usually the problem. Of course, if I break my arm I will seek a physician and set it properly. But most of the physical difficulties we encounter are the result of the stresses of how we live our lives. Symptoms are like the red light on your car’s dashboard telling you to “Check Engine!” They alert you that your system is out of balance. If the real problem is neglected or disguised (for example, by suppressing the symptom with drugs) the body/mind will find another way to try to alert you—say, by getting ill.

My approach assumes that the underlying cause of most difficulties is a disruption of the body/mind’s energy. Chinese medicine has long contended that if the body’s vital force (*ch’i*) is robust and flowing smoothly, then good health and longevity are assured. The stresses of our daily lives (work, family, diet, politics, etc.) can block and fragment our energy. This will manifest physically, emotionally, and mentally.

In this energetically fragmented state, we can no longer remember WHOLENESS. This manifests in many stress-related health problems like:

- digestive problems
- acid reflux
- headaches
- sciatica
- back problems
- neck pain
- fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome
- hypertension
- anxiety
- insomnia
- lethargy

Autonomic Nervous System Imbalance

One place we see this disruption is in the autonomic nervous system. This is the part of your nervous system that takes care of the stuff you don’t want to think about all

the time: heart rate, blood pressure, kidney function, digestion, etc. It's divided into two parts.

The *sympathetic nervous system* is the go-go-go part. It's in charge of energy out. Doing. It's what we usually think of when we think we are being "energetic". Playing ball, arguing with the boss, walking to the store, driving a car. The *parasympathetic nervous system* is the part where energy is restored and healing occurs. It is the quiet part, and as such it is easily dismissed as unnecessary. Many of us even feel guilty if we are not "doing enough". We think that *driving* the car is the only important part and lose sight of filling the tank and checking the oil. Consequently, we "cheat" the parasympathetic by pushing ourselves to do more than is healthy. Habits are established in our youth (when responsibilities are fewer) that we are reluctant to break in our maturity. Even our "relaxation" is full of activity. (Even watching tv can tax the nervous system.) We create an artificial state of emergency to trick our bodies to forget they are weary.

The result is autonomic nervous system imbalance. The long-term effect is stress on the body/mind that manifests as dis-ease (see list above). Correcting the problem requires restoring balance. Ideally, we see-saw back and forth between sympathetic and parasympathic, allowing the body/mind to heal itself regularly. Unfortunately, if you are sufficiently out of balance, you not only don't remember the sweet feeling of a fully functioning parasympathetic, but you may even distrust (and fight) it when re-introduced.

Polarity Therapy

Polarity Therapy is a wonderful tool for helping us restore autonomic nervous system balance. It is done fully clothed and usually on a massage table. It is non-invasive. I use my hands to bring your awareness to parts of your body to allow its energy to amplify and flow. Most people experience a deep relaxation and a "letting go from the inside out". The body/mind is allowed to explore new possibilities for how it relates to itself.

We are usually unaware of how much unnecessary tension we hold in our bodies, often from habits established decades ago. This tension is a product of internal conflict

which has a disruptive effect on our energy. It is like driving with the handbrake on. When this tension is released the energy we use to fight ourselves is then available for other uses.

Since every part of our body/mind affects all other parts, releasing one source of disruption helps restore the whole. Our muscles, circulatory system, digestion, urogenital system, and others all respond favorably.

Craniosacral Balancing

The Craniosacral system is one of the most fundamental in the body. It protects and nourishes the brain and spinal cord. Any disruption in its smooth functioning has repercussions throughout the body/mind. Imbalances are corrected by gently cradling the head and sacrum and allowing the various parts of skull and spine to find their optimal relationship to each other, pulsing with a voluptuous rhythm.

The experience of Craniosacral Balancing is like a deep, profound meditation or a healing trance. The body “let’s go” at a fundamental level with powerful, yet subtle changes throughout. There is a “sweetness”, a sense of nurturing, as your body harmonizes at a much higher level.

Each time you experience the heightened state of wholeness that is possible in your body/mind, it becomes that much easier to find it on your own. You transform gradually, according to your comfort, as your body/mind embraces a more optimal way of functioning. Symptoms of dis-ease dissolve as your energy becomes more coherent.

Biosonic Repatterning

Just as we can be disturbed and upset by loud or jarring sounds, so can we be healed by sounds that resonate with a healthy body/mind. This type of healing (created by my Polarity teacher, John Beaulieu) “tunes” the body/mind using tuning forks, singing bowls, and vocal overtones. Your whole body vibrates in resonance to carefully chosen tones to restore wholeness at a very deep level.

T'ai Chi and Posture

I have been teaching t'ai chi for 17 years and have been practicing for over 25. This has given me a familiarity with subtle energies that informs all aspects of my healing practice. It has also given me insight into posture and movement. I have found that many problems respond quickly to minor adjustments in the way we stand and move. While I do also give private t'ai chi lessons, you don't need to devote yourself to its practice to see quick results from these postural adjustments.

Spiritual Counseling

We often experience difficulties as we navigate the waters of spiritual development. As we awaken to in our spiritual evolution, we may collide with existing ways of thinking and being. Polarity uses verbal counseling to locate stuck energy caused by old uninspected patterns of thought and emotion. Bringing them to the light of consciousness can bring about major changes at all levels of our being. My approach is non-ideological. My clients have been rabbis, nuns, and pagans.

Simply put, my job is to restore my clients' ability to heal themselves—physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually. This is done by guiding them to a greater awareness of their wholeness which opens them to a healthier, happier life.

Sessions by appointment.

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