

## In the beginning ...

In the beginning, there was holistic healing, a vast discipline that includes the laying on of hands, a spiritual connection, nutritional know-how, herbs, and an empathetic bedside manner. As the march of science progressed, these methods were replaced with penicillin, the heart transplant and the neurologist ~ wondrous developments all ~ while the ancient arts were relegated to the dusty shelves of the healthcare attic.

Skepticism is easy. Unlike other evolutionary processes that have replaced what has been with what is, holistic healing remains and has even gained a cautious nod of merit from

many respected modern medical institutions. By any other name, and there are many: holistic, alternative, integrative, therapeutic and more, these therapies seek to integrate the mind, body and spirit for a total, organic approach to healthcare. Our newsletter this issue addresses the some of the mysteries of healing through the ages.

Sincerely,



### Special Healing Gifts: A True Story

*Related by Michael Newell, RN, BSN,  
President & CEO of LifeSpan Care  
Management*

Several years ago I was working as an Adjunct Clinical Instructor for the Gloucester County College Nursing program. This particular semester I had two sections in a nursing facility in Camden County. I had two different groups, one on Thursday and Friday, and the other on Saturday and Sunday.

Most of the patients/residents were sent there from the hospital for recovery from surgery or strokes. They were elderly and needed a lot of nursing care. There were also many with wounds. One resident, Tom, was in his mid 50s and had suffered a stroke with paralysis and flaccidity of his right side. He was also a diabetic. He had come from home with a sacral decubitus so large that you could put both fists in his wound at the time the semester started.

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### A Taste of Your Own Medicine

A 2000 study in the Annals of Internal Medicine (not the kind of publication one would confuse with Mad Magazine) showed that in 23 studies, 57% of cases that were subjected to "distance healing" (prayer or healing touch) indicated a positive effect in which recovery was accelerated and/or pain alleviated.

According to the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, this kind of "outside the box" thinking is a legitimate course to pursue, comprised as it is of a "group of diverse medical and health care systems, practices, and products that are not generally considered part of conventional medicine." Used in concert with traditional medical practices, Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) is a safe and effective way to pursue healthcare goals, a list of which was compiled by The United States Department of Health & Human Services in 2007:

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## CAM Therapies Included in the 2007 National Health Interview Survey

Acupuncture\*  
Ayurveda\*  
Biofeedback\*  
Chelation therapy\*  
Chiropractic or osteopathic manipulation\*  
Deep breathing exercises  
Diet-based therapies

- Atkins diet
- Macrobiotic diet
- Ornish diet
- Pritikin diet
- South Beach diet
- Vegetarian diet
- Zone diet

Energy healing therapy/Reiki\*  
Guided imagery  
Homeopathic treatment  
Hypnosis\*  
Massage\*  
Meditation  
Movement therapies

- Alexander technique
- Feldenkreis
- Pilates
- Trager psychophysical integration

Natural products (nonvitamin and nonmineral, such as herbs and other products from plants, enzymes, etc.)  
Naturopathy\*  
Progressive relaxation  
Qi gong  
Tai chi  
Traditional healers\*

- Botanica
- Curandero
- Espiritista
- Hierbero or Yerbera
- Native American healer/Medicine man
- Shaman
- Sobador

Yoga

An asterisk (\*) indicates a practitioner-based therapy. For definitions of any of these therapies, see the full report (PDF) or contact the NCCAM Clearinghouse. Shamanism is as old as time and encompasses many cultures and practices, but centers on the belief that divine

intervention must be employed in healing. India was the birthplace of Yoga, the precepts of which were first written down in 500 BC by a philosopher who thought that spiritual and physical evolution are a package deal and that one cannot proceed without the other. China's Han Dynasty, which flourished from 206 AD through 220 AD, saw the popularization of massage and exercise as a way to prevent disease. The Old and New Testaments are filled with examples of faith based healing, not the least of which is Lazarus who was raised from the dead.

From time immemorial, French and English kings performed "Divine Touch," a rite in which cures were believed to be dispensed from on high through the ruler's close connection with the divine. Queen Anne of Britain (1165-1714) and Louis XVI of France (1638- 1715) were the last monarchs to claim to possess the ability - it may well be that the Enlightenment and the birth of democratic feeling laid to waste any notion that an individual - however exalted - had an exclusive conduit to God.

Perhaps the most notorious healer of modern times was the nefarious Rasputin, a debauched Siberian Monk who weaseled his way into the good graces of the Romanov family with his seemingly miraculous ability to provide comfort to the Tsarevich. Tsar Nicholas II and his wife, after five daughters, finally had their longed for heir, a baby boy named Alexei. Months after his birth, it became apparent that Alexei was a hemophiliac, a personal tragedy for the family and a crisis for the 300 year old dynasty, for without an heir, the crown would pass to other hands. Rasputin wrangled an invitation to an audience with the Tsarina and, in a moment of crisis, saved young Alexei from certain death. Again and again Rasputin rescued the boy from the grave, simply by speaking with him; once even dispensing aid over the phone. Hundreds of witnesses, doctors among them, witnessed these events and there are a multitude of books containing first hand accounts of their veracity. Ironically, their relationship with the drunk and profligate Rasputin would do much to bring down the empire; they were all murdered in the Bolshevik revolution in 1918.

Far from disappearing, alternative therapies seem to be gaining credence in these dark, economically challenging, medically confusing times, and it seems that there must be something to it, that healing must include a spiritual dimension of some kind if only that, as the Roman statesman Seneca said, "The wish for healing has always been half of health," and that the wish, unlike so much of what goes on in the world every day, is in our own hands. ♥

## *"Healing" - continued from page 1*

a Clinotron™ bed and it was a two-person job to give him his AM care and change his dressing.

The nursing home appointed a nurse who did all the wounds on the entire floor. I assigned a student to this resident, and each week, two new students worked with the patient. Tom was a diabetic, getting tube feedings, with a Foley catheter. I had the students calculate how many calories he received each day, and what caloric intake was required for wound healing. Since he was a diabetic, the number of calories he could tolerate was limited. Suffice it to say that the number of calories required to heal such a wound far exceeded the number of calories he received from his tube feedings and supplements. Sometimes, the wound was not dressed twice a day as prescribed; I could tell this because the dressing was initialed and dated.

I had little hope that Tom's future would be anything but grim, but as the semester unfolded and I saw the wound over time, Tom's condition improved. I gradually realized that the wound care nurse, who was Filipina (I'll call her Juji) and rarely spoke to me or anyone else that she did not know, must be the reason why Tom was improving so dramatically. I approached her and asked her to give the students a short seminar on the use of the wound care products that she was using. She reluctantly agreed, but it turned out that the nurse educator of the facility wanted to do the presentation. She did it, and the students were (justifiably) bored.

I later approached Juji, whining (a little) because she did not give the wound care presentation. She looked guilty and reached her hand out to mine, and as she touched my little finger I felt an electric pulse travel from my finger up my arm and shoulder to the back of my neck. It was like a white light, more like a shock than a pulse. Being a cool customer (nursing instructors must be cool at all times) I waited for a time when I could speak to her alone. I cornered her and said, "I know your secret. I know why Tom is getting better even though it makes no sense. You have a healing touch." She was surprised and anxious, protesting that what I said was not true. She could see I was not accepting her denial, and then relented, saying, "Well, the patient has to be open to it."

I know there are a lot of nurses who have similar secrets. They are healers, but have no venue in which to practice their arts, and are uncomfortable with anyone other than the patient knowing it. True healers are too powerful for those of us in the mainstream who are skeptics, who might be a little too quick to accuse others of quackery or sorcery or worse. After all, even gifted healers throughout history such as Buddha, Christ and Mohammed famously admonished those who had been healed to keep the secret to themselves.

LifeSpan Care Management is instituting a list of nurse healers so that we can offer our clients an extra resource for clients and families who wish to explore options that are not

offered in mainstream medicine. We will interview all candidates who feel they have special gifts that they wish to offer and check the credentials of nurses who have holistic certifications. We will offer this referral service to our clients who wish to explore an alternative or complementary healing service. ♥

*If you feel you have special healing gifts, please contact our office. We would like to work with you to offer your special services in an accepting environment.*

## Websites We Love

[nccam.nih.gov](http://nccam.nih.gov) The National Center for Complimentary and Alternative Medicine is the federal government's agency for scientific research on the diverse medical and health care systems, practices, and products that are not generally considered part of conventional medicine. They sponsor and conduct research using scientific methods and their website is a gold mine of information.

[www.drweil.com](http://www.drweil.com) Dr. Weil is a medical doctor who started a foundation to explore and disseminate information about alternative therapies of all kinds. He is focused on empowering people to make the right healthcare choices for the right reasons.

[nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/complementaryandalternativemedicine.html](http://nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/complementaryandalternativemedicine.html)

A service of the United States National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health, this website is a gigantic clearinghouse of information as gathered by other government agencies and health-related organizations.

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