

Preface

You hold in your hands a volume that will become an heirloom edition of *Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine*, or a keepsake to be passed on to others. Over nearly forty years Dr. Elmer Green and associates have produced a cogent and integrated body of work that speaks with a novel, stimulating, impactful voice, offering solutions to scientific and practical problems of everyday living. Green has been a seminal thinker, a fore-runner with a coherent vision across the decades. The reprise of Green's work in this volume comprises Volume 10 (three-issues-in-one) of *Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine*.

For those unfamiliar with his work, we recommend reading this volume from beginning to end. For those who wish to consume their dessert first, Section 4 includes a previously unpublished work by Dr. Green written specifically for this issue.

Most of the material in this Volume was written by Green or arose directly out of his work. In his book, *What Really Matters: Searching for Wisdom in America*, Tony Schwartz included a chapter about Dr. Green. His image of Elmer is clarifying:

Green was a scientist who sought to quantify the practical value of meditative states; to prove the inextricable connection between the mind and the body in treating illness; and to provide a measurable technology—biofeedback—for accessing higher states of consciousness. He was also deeply interested in people's capacity to transform their lives in these states. . . .

Green sees no contradiction in his unusual blend of inclinations. He is both down-to-earth and mystical; rigorously objective but also guided by a deep faith in his own intuitive wisdom; systematic and painstaking in his research, yet open-minded, non-doctrinaire and eager to explore phenomena that defied rational understanding. Immensely self-confident, he has rarely sought recognition for his extraordinary body of work. To this day, he seems slightly out ahead even of his own colleagues, yet he never gives the impression that he's in danger of falling off the deep end. He believes he has a larger mission and pursues his interests without regard for their conventional acceptability. . . .

I sought from Green not just his piece of the wisdom puzzle, but some grounding in my own search. Ram Dass, [Michael] Murphy and others talked a great deal about the broader, more open-hearted and selfless perspective that emerged in meditation, and about the unusual powers that could be accessed in these highly focused states. But what exactly was this relaxed, wordless experience, and why was it so elusive? Even after more than a year of daily meditation and several longer retreats, I was unable reliably and predictably to quiet my mind in meditation, or even to know for certain when I approached such a state. I felt hungry for more objective markers, for some evidence that I could gain more predictable, voluntary access to these experiences.

The vehicle for Green's search was biofeedback—a field that he and his wife Alyce helped to invent in the early 1960's. Biofeedback is neither mystical nor subjective. . . . the Greens developed biofeedback as a vehicle to understand self-regulation and self-awareness. . . .

More than virtually anyone I met in my search, Green seemed free of any personal agenda. . . .

Green was not primarily interested in exploring unconscious conflict or the issues of personality development. In both his research and his writing, Green focused instead on finding ways to put biofeedback to practical clinical use, and beyond that, to systematically access deeper levels of wisdom, develop untapped potentials and nurture what he envisioned as a higher self that transcends one's ego, or everyday personality. . . .

In the course of three decades, Green's team at Menninger used biofeedback to teach thousands of patients to overcome illnesses ranging from migraine headaches to high blood pressure to Raynaud's disease. They also carefully documented the remarkable voluntary control that certain highly trained individuals could achieve over their own bodies in focused states of consciousness. Citing the difficulty of getting research grants from traditional funding sources, the Greens did not undertake the sort of classically controlled studies that might have given their work more credibility in the medical and scientific communities. Nonetheless, their clinical and theoretical work at Menninger has served as inspiration for a whole new generation of biofeedback researchers who have begun undertaking controlled studies. The result is that the effectiveness of biofeedback—most notably brainwave feedback has been demonstrated for a variety of illnesses and disorders in which conventional medical treatment falls short.

As you will see, the groundwork for the story that follows was laid soon after Green's high school experience when he met the Teacher who would influence the rest of his life. While studying physics at the University of Minnesota, he was simultaneously studying esoteric thought with the Teacher and his group. From the beginning, Elmer's vision and goal have been to demonstrate human potential for self-regulation and transformation. Along the way he was instrumental in the founding of the Council Grove Conference, the Biofeedback Research Society, and the International Society for the Study of Subtle Energies and Energy Medicine.

We have organized the volume into four sections. Although there are always overlapping themes in the material, we have woven together the major threads of his work, to form a tapestry which is roughly chronological. The first section, Psychophysics, was initiated during his doctoral work in Biopsychology. You will find this thread returns to weave in and out through all his work even to the present.

Section 2 focuses on the Self-Regulation aspect of human potential, with biofeedback as its major underpinning or tool for developing mind-body coordination. This section proceeds from initial discoveries through studies of individuals who had developed special self-regulation skills to procedures by which ordinary individuals can manage and eliminate the major stress-related disorders of our time.

Section 3 of the Volume focuses on the transpersonal, on healing and on transformation. Green's seminal ideas on these topics are interspersed with related scientific observations from diverse fields such as psychiatry and physics (again merging mind and matter), and with other studies emanating directly from his work.

The "Copper Wall" research also included in Section 3 started in Green's mind and planning 40 years before he had the technological resources to actualize it. Both his early scientific training and his early studies in esotericism culminated in this research illuminating aspects of our potential as humans. In the Copper Wall environment, meditative experiences, healing experiences, anomalous electrostatic and electrophysiological correlates, and mind-matter interaction were explored. As will be seen, Green also makes a meaningful but often-ignored distinction between transpersonal and extrapersonal events.

In **Section 4**, written by Green as this Volume was in its final stages of completion, he places his own work in a more global context. Here he brings together major threads from philosophical and psychospiritual lines of thought that connect with his work in human potential and transformation.

Section 5 contains brief letters from colleagues containing personal statements about the effect of Elmer Green and his work on themselves. We have tried to give some idea of the impact that he has had on the world of ideas, on organizations and on individuals who are working in these fields.

In the end, these ideas weave a complex design, forming a map of crystal clarity that may guide us as humans in realizing our connection with the cosmos.

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