

Presidential Address

ENERGY HEALING: *Data, Angels & Magic Feathers*

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Abstract

For centuries, humans have struggled to validate, understand and explain the phenomena of healing. Healing obviously works, sometimes, in some circumstances, for some things—but how? and why?! Various theorists have invoked undiscovered “energies,” non-material spirits, God(s), and quantum or magnetic forces to explain the mechanisms underlying the indisputable reality of healers and their impact on Reality. Ordinary science has been able to disregard healing effects for years due in part to the lack of a unifying theory of mechanism. In this address, ISSSEEM President Jerry Wesch offers a personal observation of the “state of the art” of understanding the healing phenomena that we have gathered to celebrate. Looking at both the scientific data and the traditional wisdom, the discussion ranges through “what we know for sure” and where we might not be so sure at all in our pursuit of the mechanisms or Realities behind the well-documented healing phenomena. Prepare to let go of your favorite scientific and metaphysical “Magic Feathers!” This paper is based on Dr. Wesch’s Presidential Address made at the Thirteenth Annual ISSSEEM Conference, *Return of the Sacred Science: Celebrating the Mysteries of Healing* (June 19-25, 2003).

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It is a daunting task to prepare a speech for an ISSSEEM conference. I have to tell you I procrastinated until Easter Sunday—8 weeks ago—when the minister at Unity in Chicago decides to do his Easter sermon specifically for my benefit. I hate it when he does that—goes right for my immediate issues and pokes them with a sharp stick. Since it was Easter, he was hot for the issue of resurrection and renewal of the Self (Capital S type), new beginnings, corners turned and empowerment through the Christ as an example as a fully realized Being, representing fully realized human capacity. That we all were called to teach, heal and transcend—Go and do likewise—using the Divine powers within. That we are all spiritual beings of unrealized power and knowledge.

When I heard the sermon's idea that people move on in their spiritual evolution by developing a new, wider Story, leaving behind the limits of their Old Story of the Universe, as well as their lives, purpose and possibilities, I was electrified. It stirred me to think about the speech and the theme of moving beyond the First Question—"Does Healing work?" to the next level of discourse, the Second Question—"How does Healing work?" Energy Healing needs a new story. I decided then and there I was going to pursue this idea in the talk. So here we go with my personal attempt to outline the threads of a New Story for the phenomena we call "Energy Healing."

I love stories and one of my all time favorites is the story of the 3 blind sages and the elephant. Remember—the 3 venerable sages, experts in the scriptures of their tradition and seekers of the essence of life, had never encountered an elephant. They had heard about elephants but had only speculation and second hand opinions about their nature and essence. Then they heard the Maharaja was to be in a nearby village with his royal elephants. They were guided there by their students and were allowed access to the largest elephant. The 3 venerable men were allowed to touch the beast, one at his head, one at his side and one at the back. On the way home the one that had been at the front said "I am surprised—I thought the essence of elephant would be strange but I found it to be much like essence of python." The second, who had been at the side of the elephant responded "What! How can you say that! I found essence of elephant to be like essence of a wall!" The third could not contain himself, exclaiming, "You are both crazy! Essence of elephant is very like essence of rope!" They argued for many years, unable to form a New Story, stuck in their own individual assumptions and buttressed by their own experiences.

Now this feels like my experience on the journey to understand energy healing. I have found many wonderful explanations for the essence of energy healing but none of them seem to have captured the whole elephant. Somehow, we have to move beyond the fragmented “OLD” stories about the “why” of energy healing if we are to progress. I have been told human mind is not ready for such knowledge. In fact, when I told the old hillbilly healer woman who was my first teacher that I just wanted to know how everything connected to healing worked, she laughed and said such knowledge would fry me to a crisp, although it would help if I was a lot less dense. . . She meant in Spirit. In the meantime, let’s see if we can get to be less dense before that.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Let me first go back and tell where I am coming from in this whole area we all love. Like all of us, I have the problem of going beyond my personal encounters with the Elephant—the personal experiences that color my understanding. I was a Nebraska farm kid, raised about 250 miles east of here. We were share crop folks, living pretty much year-to-year, dependent on the weather and the landlord. I was a bright kid with immense curiosity and a good Carnegie Foundation Library in my hometown. When I was 10, things changed—I had the first of a series of profound metaphysical experiences. I had an experience of Grace that left me changed. . .

THE BASEBALL STORY

I was coming up to bat in the last inning of a Little League game—1 run behind, 2 outs, and a runner on base. Although I had no religious training at the time, I knew it was good to pray when you were in a tight spot. I prayed the guy up ahead of me would resolve the situation so I wouldn’t have to bat. He walks. As I headed for the plate, I prayed fervently “Oh God, just don’t let me embarrass myself!” On the second or third pitch, things changed—the sound went off and the world became silent and the lights became brighter. This Voice came from over my left shoulder, saying “It’ll be all right—you will hit the ball into right field.” The pitch came in, in slow motion; the ball looked like it was as big as a basketball. I swung and the

line drive went right over the second baseman, rolling to the fence in right center. The world went back to normal, I staggered to first base and turned out on the grass and fell down, laughing until I thought I might wet my pants. Two runs score, game over. I was a hero—but I sure didn't try to tell anybody what had happened for years.

More experiences followed over the years, including one that seemed to indicate profound individualized participation in the big picture of the Universe. I became a permanent believer in non-physical Reality—and prayer.

There really is nothing special in my history (except to me)—national and international surveys suggest 65% of humans have anomalous experiences at some time in their life—The “White Crows” of experience that William James talked about that change us in our view of Reality. His metaphor said that if you want to dis-prove all crows are black, just find one real white one and the argument is over. His was a spiritualist medium named Mrs. Piper who produced convincing experiences for him. I talked about those ubiquitous anomalous phenomena in the 1996 conference. The woo woo is among us constantly—only nobody talks about it much.

Who here has had a life-changer of some type? A powerful psychic experience—a vision or some other encounter with the non-physical world(s)? Felt supported, guided, transformed, healed. . . An encounter with the Elephant or a White Crow that permanently changed your views of how the Universe works.

And how many have had trouble with friends, family or colleagues over trying to talk about or explore these areas of common human experience? Welcome to the club. . .

Remember that experiences of this type are personal. We get *our* experience of the Universe—not the whole thing.

HEALING

Then I encountered healing. I was in a hospital after 5 months of unsuccessful outpatient treatment for back pain. Couldn't put on my socks, bend over or

drive comfortably. On all the usual medications, massage, chiropractic adjustments, biofeedback, self-hypnosis and a lot of Physical Therapy. Finally, I was in the hospital for intense PT and evaluation for possible back surgery. My friend Charline came to see me one evening. She was a professor at the School of Nursing. She asked if she could give me a treatment. I told her she could do anything as long as it didn't hurt.

Then the fun began. She stood at the foot of the bed, put her hands on my feet and began to pray. This hot tingling sensation started up my legs, came together at my tailbone and proceeded up my back. I vibrated and twitched for the next 15 minutes before she opened her eyes, smiled and said she was finished. I said "WHAT did you do to me?!" Then I noticed that I didn't have any pain. I moved around and sat up. I had normal ROM! I was astonished. Charline explained she had learned the healing process in a spiritual group she belonged to and it was like Therapeutic Touch (which at the time, I considered to be a placebo treatment, in spite of my prior experiences), involving transmission of Divine energies through prayer. I had 6 hours of pain free normal movement. I signed myself out of the hospital the next morning. My friend came by my house to treat me for 3 days and I was better. Well, I was pain-free, but I was really disturbed. I was running a comprehensive hospital pain clinic at the time and thought I knew something about pain treatment! Oh well. . . So much for what I thought I knew! New story. This event started a search that is still going on.

Old Story—There are a series of older stories about the collection of phenomena that we generically call energy healing or biofield therapies. Since so many of us have "seen" the Elephant in so many different ways, the explanations are quite varied! Once you get beyond the "There is no story," "It can't exist!" "It is placebo and suggestion—an illusion" and so on. We will have to revisit these, however.

One was the shamanic story (animal spirits or ancestor allies do the healing); another was the priest/priestess prayer story (invoking God, Goddesses, angels or other Divinities who make things happen); another involved occult personal power over the rules of Nature and magic (rituals and talismans to create power for the magician), another the Royal touch (because of the Divine access of the King). Animal Magnetism (whatever that is).

Another model involved spirit interventions of deceased helpful ex-persons—the Brazilian “psychic surgeons” come to mind. Another the transfer of Vitality or Life Force from the healer to the healee. Placebo phenomena—as if we understand that. Reiki intelligent sources of energy. The list is pretty long.

Electromagnetism was in favor for a long time as a way to describe or explain the apparent influence of one person’s intention on the well being of another. Until it became clear that healing was a non-local phenomena and electromagnetic phenomena are not. Oops. . . Some electromagnetic phenomena are involved somehow, however, with good data, for example from the Copper Wall series. And magnets sometimes produce effects like healers—or vice versa.

Most healers posit an Energy or power that comes from people’s hands (Hippocrates saw it this way) or an Energy that comes from God or the Universal or somewhere beyond the human domain that can be directed by human intention. That is why we are called “Subtle Energies” and Energy Medicine. This model has wide favor because it fits the experience of the healers quite well and fits clairvoyant visions of the human being and the process of healing. A energy anatomy with multiple layers often accompanies the model. This basically has been experienced and spoken of as if it is an electromagnetic or fluid phenomena but with an unknown Energy rather than good old fashioned known fields. “Current” flows, things change. Power is involved.

As an important aside, the EXPLANATION is different from the outcome. No matter what the explanation for the phenomena—no matter what we believe the Elephant is, the phenomena of healing continued to exist and work often enough to keep us interested and healthier. Like the saying—“Don’t argue with REALITY—it doesn’t care about your opinions!”

HEALING EXPERIENCE

The experiential description—the personal experienced phenomena—of the healing process is remarkably consistent across eras and cultures. The healee may or may not feel anything but if they do, words like warmth, light, tingling,

and flowing come up. Feeling “loved” is also very common. Remember we have had several conferences with the idea of Love and Healing interconnected. Whatever is the connection between each other and with the Universe that we call love—whatever the mechanisms involved—it will have to be a part of the new story as well. Even if it ultimately is more than a green light that beams from the heart chakra.

The healers also report similar sensation plus often feeling connected to Something outside themselves—that they are not doing the work but they are a channel. Frank Fools Crow, one of the last of the old time Lakota medicine men and healers said it nicely—“I am but a hollow bone through which the Great Spirit does its work. My job is to keep the bone clean.”

Sometimes the healers lose their boundaries and feel merged with the healee, entering profound altered states of consciousness. For persons with clairvoyant “sight” the process looks like rainbows around the body with white/gold/green light or energy jumping all over. Just look at the Alex Grey pictures. This experienced energy anatomy is wide-spread and is often accepted as “real”—that is, having verifiable physical foundations. Listening to folks talk, you would think that meridians, chakras and subtle bodies were as well understood as neurology or cell metabolism. Oh, I forgot—we don’t really understand those either!

Like my mysterious Voice, apparently living thinking non-physical entities show up—outside of the self and our personal ideas, or so it appears. Spirits have been a part of the old story for a long time—actually it is one of the biggest problems for getting us into regular science. Spooky non-local action at a distance via Consciousness and mind over matter are tough but can seem to sneak in via quantum mechanics. But ghosts! Spooks! God! Hard to find in hard core science journals. Our detractors often go ballistic and say we are dragging science back to the Dark Ages. . . The struggle between materialism and human experiences has been going on for a long time.

Witchcraft, devils and evil forces were popular explanations for healing for a while in some parts of the world. Maybe still are. How many of you have encountered that story about healing? Or illness? Remember the movie

“Resurrection”—starring Sam Shepard & Ellen Burstyn, with our own Rosalyn Bruyere as technical advisor? The protagonist's healing gift developed after an NDE . . . Sam Shepard's character, a severely ambivalent atheistic cum fundamentalist, tried to kill her because she would only say she didn't know where the healing came from (and would not say it came from God). I recently asked one of our hospital chaplains what would happen if one of his fellow ministers suddenly began manifesting powerful healing gifts. He thought the church hierarchy might run him or her out of the church. Emotional reactions to healing and how it works are not trivial matters.

Notice that this tack does not deny healing or spirits—both are considered actual parts of Reality—you just need to know whose side you are helping! Both angels and devils are part of the Old Story of how healing works—when it does and when it doesn't. We need to decide what to do with the data of experience. Some of the most widely told healing stories in the world—those of Jesus, for example—often involve casting out demons or spirits as a healing act. We might not want to dismiss these out of hand.

DUMBO

Now the title of the talk—Energy Healing: Data, Angels & Magic Feathers. I picked that title long before I had an outline. I knew we needed to address the scientific state of the field of healing—the data & the old stories about that—and Angels (or God, spirits, etc), another part of the old story—and the possibilities for new or expanded explanations. In order to have new theories of healing, we often need to let go of or significantly modify our previous beliefs in the reasons for things and how they work—leaving room for an expanded understanding of our Self-responsibility.

Now let me remind you of the Magic Feather. Back in the 1950's, Walt Disney made a profound movie about self-esteem and self-empowerment—*Dumbo* the Flying Elephant. You all know the basic story—Dumbo was born with these huge ears and was rejected by everybody but his mother, the clowns and the little mouse. One night, as I remember the story, Dumbo and his mouse friend tried to hide from the teasing in the clowns' tent and fell in a vat of homebrew hooch. Next thing you know, they're waking up in the top of a tall tree

with a hangover! After falling to the ground, the mouse deduces that they must have flown up in the tree via Dumbo's enormous ears! Dumbo can't believe it and their attempts to get him airborne are disastrous.

The flock of crows (here come the crows again) watching the show is amused and finally one of them says, "You can't fly because you don't have a Magic Feather. All birds have 'em. Here, I'll give you one of mine." He plucks a tail feather, hands it to Dumbo and the rest is history—he flies beautifully, until he drops the feather. He is falling like a rock until the mouse convinces him he was doing it himself all along—just in time to prevent a crash. New story. . .

We all probably have our "Magic Feathers" of two kinds. One is our beliefs about how healing works for us—the procedures needed, prayers, crystals, etc. and the limits of our healing.

THE DATA

So why do we need to give up the old stories? Because as scientists (seekers of the TRUTH), we have to keep including all of the data, not just the parts that make sense to us and fit with our current understandings.

While the data is not all in (and there are some very crucial studies to do) here are some of the things we know pretty much for sure—ideas that probably must be in the complete New Story.

Distance doesn't matter. Healing is often a non-local phenomena. As soon as you grasp the implications of this one, the simple "Energy Model" of healing is in deep trouble, as Larry Dossey has pointed out. Energy ideas certainly fit the experiential process of healing and seem to be pretty universal across time and cultures. When my friend Eugenia called my daughter in Seattle (from Chicago) and fixed her endometrial cysts in 30 minutes, I was convinced. The data agrees.

Ed May reported a Russian study of mice being protected from radiation poisoning. Five cages of 10 mice were randomly assigned to 4 healers, with

the 5th cage as a control. After the mice were treated, they were irradiated with a fatal dose of ionizing radiation. By day 19, all the control mice were dead. Seventy-five percent of the experimental group were fine. The cage that did the best—90% survival—were treated from 800 kilometers. Seems to work from a distance without loss of power. Healing is a non-local phenomena—as is psi, prayer and quantum physics.

Historically, orthodox Science has hated any idea of “action at a distance” —calling it “spooky” and considering it impossible. The active Skeptic groups that have been so persistent in denying psi stand on this one.

Kind of target doesn't matter. Humans (and the specialist psychics and healers) have affected living matter from enzymes to whole groups of organisms. They have bent laser beams, disturbed the chance fall of cards and dice and altered the behavior of random number devices and radiation sources. Shamans even seem to produces changes in the weather. If it exists or happens at a macro or micro level, human intention has reached out and touched it with results that often can be or will be measured.

Size of target does not matter. As the Spindrift researchers noted, it was as easy to pray for a whole field of soybeans as it was a petri dish full. IF the healer could get his/her mind around the target clearly enough to see it as a Whole, the results are as significant as for a small healing target. The TM people seem to be able to calm down a whole neighborhood. Remember the “Marharishi Effect?”

Kind of problem doesn't matter. Healers have at some time or place been able to help any kind of human ill you can think of—physical, mental, genetic, congenital, infectious, malignant, benign, emotional—you name it, there is a study or case study that offers the possibility of help. My friend and colleague Eugenia was a research healer at a government Bioenergy Institute in her home Bulgaria. The research team of healers were given 100 congenitally blind persons to work with. Four developed some sight. Gives me chills.

I tell folks that healing is the best general purpose medicine around—and should be tried first, since it has no side-effects or contraindications. Use it on anything and see what happens.

Healing, parapsychology and spiritual knowledge are inseparable in understanding each other and Reality. Healers and the mysterious psi go together with spiritual phenomena. Spiritual practices seem to increase psi, facilitate healing and by tradition, give deeper knowledge of Reality. Data and traditional wisdom are both sources of truth that must be reconciled for a complete New Story to emerge. We will have to integrate the data from both types of exploration—the inner and the outer—if we want a complete picture of how, why and when healing works.

Kind of healer or healing doesn't matter. Native American pipe carriers in a sweat lodge, Siberian or other kinds of shamans on drugs or with drums, Christian prayer groups of all types (except maybe Unitarians who don't believe in such stuff), Buddhists with mantras, TT practitioners, Reiki Masters, Jews in ceremonies, agnostics who visualize melting tumors, college student research subjects—you name it—all humans seem to be able to produce scientifically valid and significant results in healing research. My old hillbilly healer mentor said one time “In time of need, Spirit will use whatever or whoever is available—even you, Dr. Wesch.” She is probably right.

Placebo or Self-healing matters. While mind-body mechanisms can account for much of what we call “placebo,” the option for involvement of “bioenergy” phenomena must be considered. Over-night or instant “placebo” healings of tumors or wounds, for example, strain the limits of known mind-body mechanisms, in my opinion. We probably could profitably review the placebo literature with an eye to healing interactions with mind-body and other effects. Both have roots in belief and imagery about reality.

Love or Emotional bonding does matter. Love (however you define it) and interconnection in some way has something to do with the process. And pairs or groups of people connected to each other seem to produce bigger and more reliable results. When Jean Millay was a graduate student with Stan Krippner many years ago, she noted that training for EEG synchrony increased psi hits in subject pairs. EEG synchrony feels like love. The PEAR data on intentional effects on RNG behavior reports “bonded pairs” produce the largest effects. More than half of psi phenomena (ESP, clairvoyance, apparitions, and stopped clocks) involves persons who have family or emotional connections. We need to include energetic and biological synchrony phenomena in the New Story.

Group focus effects matter. PEAR has documented consistent big fluctuations in their RNG's when mass human attention is aroused. Princess Diana's funeral. The verdict in the OJ case. "When two or more gather in MY NAME . . ." The Maharishi Effect. . . Home team advantage in sports.

Interconnectedness and non-locality are crucial to our understanding. This latter point goes to a variable that deserves a bit of special attention. We are all connected. "Mitakuye Oyasin," the $E = MC^2$ of Lakota theology—"we are all relatives." The Web of Life. General Systems theory. The Force be with you. Remote viewing. Marilyn Schlitz's research on the staring phenomena. The huge database of instances of individuals picking up information about loved ones through dream, vision, voice, inner knowing. A significant percent of us have experienced this phenomena and we don't take it into account in our attempts to talk about the mechanisms of healing. Space (and apparently time) does not make a difference in our ability to connect and know as well as influence.

There is significant resistance—conscious & unconscious—to healing. Charles Tart, in his last visit, discussed the "fear of psi" phenomena which has troubled progress in parapsychology research. Fear, expectations, beliefs and ideas can block healing. The Skeptic groups have taken the need to keep "irrational" phenomena out of the scientific domain to the level of fanatic uproar.

See Dean Radin's review in his book called *The Conscious Universe*. Another author points out a hidden dimension, noting that most aggressive skeptics (sometimes called 'skeptibunkers') are mostly atheists. This is a war—not between science and the data but between competing world views—rational materialism vs. everything else—vitalism, religion(s) or spiritual ideas of any kinds. Their point is that there is nothing here but matter—nothing! Any phenomena that implies otherwise is a lie. This is war for the mind of humanity—and we are on the wrong side—from the skeptics point of view.

Further—there seems to be some kind of resistance from our own unconscious processes. Many interesting studies and well-documented phenomena exist—the Copper Wall series or Dr. Tart's technique for teaching psi, for

example—and it is not being followed up and there is not funding anywhere to do it. Why aren't the NIH institutes falling all over themselves to throw money at healers? Why do even folks who have had healings “forget” the next time they get sick?

Negative healing likely exists. As Larry Dossey points out, there is some evidence that we can do harm with prayer and healing. Remember that shamans were supposed to defeat the enemy as well as find water holes and heal. There is a paradox here that must be explored in any new story—not just dismissed as healing is always good or energy cannot do harm.

Intention is a key. Visualization of a desired future state with some emotional oomph behind it is what works not only in healing but also in mind/body self-regulation. Paradoxically, the directed image apparently must also have a kind of detachment about it to work best, almost as if the idea is put out there and then released to the flow of forces in the Universe. In biofeedback and Autogenic training, we call it “passive volition.” In other settings we might see an active form called “grit,” determination—“I’ll do whatever it takes”—but it starts with the image of the goal and the “feeling” it evokes.

It even seems to be the key to the “Will to Live” or shall I say the “Will to Life”? The “Will to Live” is a specific highlighted situation of the general case that we participate in our lives by our choices and intentions. Get that?

Lawrence LeShan (a psychologist working with the psychosomatic aspects of cancer before he explored and used healing) says the key to enlivening persons facing life threatening illness is to find life plans or dreams that have been set aside and finding emotional equivalents in current time—Things that provide the same emotional “bang” as the dream. Remember the emotion part.

An operational definition for the “Will to Life” is 2 parts:

- 1) The ability to imagine a Future that you want;
- 2) The belief that you can get it to happen.

Our old friends Hope vs. Hopeless and Empowerment vs. Helplessness. Self-efficacy. Optimism vs. pessimism. Goal-direction. Recognize these as positive

characteristics of coping with reality and good mental & physical health? All involve the imagination of future (or current) Reality and the possibilities for achievement of difference. Positive or negative.

Visualization is seen as the royal road to control of Reality, internal and external, (for good or ill) by biofeedback practitioners, wizards, hypnotists, positive thinking advocates, martial artists, artists, gamblers, Jose' Silva's students, pain therapists, salesmen and Jack Nicholas (among others).

Jack says in one of his books, "I never hit a shot, not even in practice, without having a very sharp, in-focus picture of it in my head. It's like a color movie. First I see the ball where I want it to finish . . . then I see the ball going there . . . the next scene shows me making the kind of swing that will turn the previous images into reality. . . . Make sure your movies show a perfect shot. We don't want any horror films of shots flying into sand or water . . ." Like the old joke, "Don't think of a white horse."

More on that later. If you can't imagine it, you probably can't do it. Whatever you imagine seems to begin to bias the probabilities of occurrence.

Consciousness is a central idea but difficult to define. The arguments have been many. . . My first Council Grove Conference in 1975—sort of a "coming out" of the Mystical Closet for me—was focused on the topic "Can there be a science of Consciousness?" I had never considered the idea that scientists would be too interested in such a philosophical issue, except for my old friends the parapsychologists. It is a messy area—gets too close to things like "Soul," God or the existence thereof. And the very nature of Reality—materialism vs. vitalism, for example. What does it mean to be alive? Is the Universe alive? Really messy questions. At least the physicists and the philosophers are perhaps beginning to agree that Consciousness (whatever it is) is a force to be reckoned with in the process of manifestation of physical reality—something like the collapse of the quantum probability matrix? The shamans have said this forever—our minds determine what happens, at least some of the time.

The role of non-human consciousness is the dark side of our speculation about how healing works and a central part of the old story. Ghosts, souls, gods, goddesses, God, the God, angels, spirits, devas. . . all manner of intending,

evolving, ultimate Beings populate the stories we tell about how healing works and why it works or does not. . .

My old hillbilly healer lady had seen the “rainbow body” of many colors since she was a toddler. She also saw spirits—ghosts, angels, dark ones—her life was a mess of relationships. She even half-remembered a UFO encounter as 10-year-old. And she could talk to these beings. Two of them were a constant in her life—she saw them as the ladies in white who helped take care of her in her childhood. There was the problem of learning that nobody else could see them. These beings taught her and protected her—like telling her it was good day to go to the library rather than go home since her father was drinking again.

When she was a teenager, these beings said she could learn to be a healer if she wanted. She loved these beings and said yes. . . Their first instruction was to draw a black dot on the wall next to her bed and sit facing it. She was then to focus on it while breathing slowly until she could lose herself in the dark spot and float through it. Had her own meditation teachers.

When she was older, she was taught how to “see” into the body and know what was wrong in the energy fields, eventually learning to correct them with ease, although she seemed to only follow the guidance of her guardians most of the time. Her own illnesses were often used as learning opportunities. She was at one time guided to visit a Catholic priest in a nearby town who seemed to recognize her abilities and gave her some 1:1 instruction and emotional support about living with this strange kind of perception and Reality. She said once that she was going to write an autobiography called “First Hand Knowledge In A Second Hand World,” referring to her belief that her way of “seeing” the World was a primary reality and most people lived in a narrower perception. She is not the only visionary to understand things this way.

At one point, the guides offered her the opportunity to learn two kinds of healing—one was sending energy to the person in need so that their field could be corrected or strengthened, leading to healthier function. The other healing technique was quicker but dangerous for the healer—she called it “healing by assumption.” She learned this and sometimes got sick from it, one time

reporting testing positive for TB for a few weeks. Cost her a job. Then she was not positive later. Confusing.

I tell this story because there must be others like her out there (or even here in this conference) who are “naturals”—the 21st Century shamans, taught by something Other. Many of us know healing as a side effect of spiritual seeking and practices, others as a result of training but we need to remember it really is a natural human capacity or “gift.” Something given as a part of the extended range of human possibilities, a part of our “survival gear,” like clairvoyance (remote viewing), precognition, ESP and the ability to know when we are being watched. As such, it really is a mystery that points to humans as connected to each other by the subtle realms and to Something beyond.

If we are to come to understand healing and its role in the whole range of human experiences and gifts, we need to move it outside just the narrow context of healthcare. It points to the bigger picture of humanity, our history and our future possibilities. We really need a bigger better Story of Reality.

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