

CONSCIOUSNESS AND HEALING

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The spirit is the master, imagination the tool, and the body the plastic material . . . The power of the imagination is a great factor in medicine. It may produce diseases in man and in animals, and it may cure them . . . Ills of the body may be cured by remedies or by the power of the spirit acting through the soul.

—Paracelsus, Father of Modern Medicine

Consciousness: *the state of being characterized by sensation, emotion, volition and thought.*

Healing: *tending to restore a state of normalcy or health.*

—Websters New Collegiate Dictionary

The articles in this issue deal with various facets of the relationship between consciousness and healing. Some of these facets are philosophical in nature. Others represent results from specific scientific investigations and are more empirical in nature. Some are humorous; some technical. The nature of the far-flung connection between consciousness and healing seems to sparkle wherever life is found.

Day by day we find new intimations of consciousness where none were noticed before—the *consciousness* of cells, of trees, of rocks, the atom, the Planet. These new awarenesses seem to spring full-blown wherever consciousness reaches out to better connect with the world around us. Nor are these matters of mere analogical thinking. Random event generators around the planet, for example, show sudden rare changes that are complementary with large planetary mind-events, such as those that occurred with “9/11.”

Day by day we open to “new” aspects of age-old phenomenon of healing. Most healers seem to emphasize a process of “coming into union,” or connection, as part of the healing event. Healing may result from changes in the way we think, or from direct experience of sharing of energy with another in work and play. Mental and spiritual processes are beginning to return to medicine as new, young physicians come into the field, and as experienced clinicians and researchers continue to learn, reexamine and grow into greater wholeness.

T. M. Srinivasan who served as Presidential guiding light for ISSSEEM during 2001-02 presents his Presidential Address *Healing and Consciousness: From Relativity to Reality* as our first selection. “Srini” helps us tour aspects of relativity and quantum physics that are relevant to our topic. He smiles at one point suggesting, “We may define healing as a temporary state of ease; movement from one unstable state to another unstable state is termed healing.” He rachets up the light, allowing us to glimpse why the experience of Consciousness is most accurately noted to be “objective,” while measurable entities are actually best construed as “subjective.” And in the end he reminds us of the old saying that the healer’s role is to amuse the patient while Nature—or more so Consciousness—cures the body of any illness.

In an Invited Address to ISSSEEM 2002 conference attendees, *I Want to Be a Nobody and Have Nothing to Offer You*, Bernie Siegel raises the lights again a notch with a presentation that helps readers surround themselves with the sort of spiritual humor that punctures egoic bubbles of limiting social self-conception. Humor, a state of consciousness built on surprise and novelty, is long known to promote wholeness and healing as we look again at our values and beliefs through new eyes.

John Ives, in *Evaluating Unusual Claims and Devices Using a Team Approach: A Case Study*, helps us to consider factors in evaluating controversy surrounding the development of “Digital Biology.” Digital biology allows detection and storage of an electromagnetic signal of a given substance, e.g., aspirin, that has been dissolved in water. The stored signal can be communicated over the internet, and impressed electromagnetically upon a quantity of water. This so-treated water then assumes the characteristics of the original sample of dissolved substance. A division of the Department of Defense became involved in a highly-controlled attempt to replicate this exciting paradigm developed by

Jacques Benveniste. A surprise ending to the team's endeavor leaves many questions unanswered, especially those concerning "person effects" in complementary and alternative medicine.

In *The Effect of Zero Magnetic Fields on Initial Growth of Rice* Shigemi Sasaki and Tiejun Miao provide a provocative inquiry into how very weak extremely low frequency (ELF) electromagnetic fields may affect biological systems. They propose a connection between a zero magnetic field (ZMF), produced by cancellation of magnetic fluxes around a noninductive coil, and early growth rates of rice seedlings. Presence or absence of the ZMF field, as well as presence or absence of sunlight provided separate control conditions and conclusions. The authors suggest involvement of vital energy Qi as a factor in observed results.

Toni Bunnell studied *The Effect of "Healing with Intent" on Peak Expiratory Flow Rates in Asthmatics*. Significant improvement in breathing efficiency was observed in asthmatic own-control participants, both following one brief treatment and also at one-week follow-up. If results such as these continue to be sustained on replication, it would seem possible to rather easily combine this complementary approach with standard treatment.

Finally, on the cover of this issue, Juliet Wood shares with us her vision of *Arbol de la Vida*, the Tree of Life, an alchemical symbol associated with healing, and with human and planetary consciousness. The Tree of Life alludes at once to the spiritual point of balance, the mystery of equilibrium, the secret of immortality, the essence of wholeness and health. It is sometimes portrayed as comprised of four woods in one, symbolizing the four directions or points of creation coming together, the final fusion of dualistic concepts, beyond good and evil. Here we see its fullness arising from and surrounded by the primordial foam as it springs into being and energizes all elements of creation.

