

Seasoned

SURVIVAL AND HEALING WITH "TOUCH FOR HEALTH" SUPPORT

(A touching and moving experience, 1988.)

by Sara Aeikens

Abstract

This "Touching, Moving Experience" is a personal journey. The title of this presentation reflects the "aging" process experienced by the author, resulting from her recent struggles with illness and recovery. Ms. Aeikens shares some of her life's "herbs, spices and onions(!)" which give flavor to her story. She also relates specifically as to how the theme of seasons and cycles aided her healing. This includes specific Touch for Health techniques that were helpful in times of crisis and recovery. This paper is also an appreciative writing for all the supportiveness received through and from the Touch for Health Community. Sara Aeikens, of Albert Lea, Minnesota owns Imprints International, a multi-sensory educational and counseling service. She is the author of a video tape, "Massage for Everyone"; she is also creator of Solution Symbols, a visual technique developed specifically for problem solving with those who learn best visually. She uses movement, touch, sound, color, timing and imagery to help create positive changes in people's lives.

Valentine's Day is near. In fact, I just opened a Valentine's letter from John Thie, this morning, that was very supportive. I'm touched by how he makes it a priority to keep in contact with TFH members. The International Touch For Health Conference proposal deadline is also very near. I have painfully postponed writing my yearly presentation because inside my head I hear "you should be completely healed before you write about those unsettling experiences of 1988." I am not...and I am writing, risking a raw version of my "touching and moving experience." I write from my heart. My heart is grateful for all the enduring support I received from the Touch For Health family during my year of illness--and I truly experienced you as a family.

I share with you specifics, because I now believe that this type of community support is rather rare, and it is a unique element that helps survival, that helps to bridge the transition phase that TFH had been experiencing recently.

There is a now calmed child within me that did not think she was going to survive. I could label it as a feeling of dulled terror. Dulled, due to denial. I had a pre-cancerous condition in my uterus that required surgery. I spent nine months in gestation with the idea

of accepting my need for surgery of a part of the body that represents the "center of creativity." I asked for help from Touch for Health'ers, and they gave willingly, patiently, and creatively, in person, with stories, with hugs, with balances, with advice and information, with visits, with phone calls, with letters, and with unconditional love.

In the Swiss Alps, Rosemarie Sonderegger "filled me full of the yellow light of doing nothing." "There must be something else I should do", I pressed her. But the balance was complete and I confidently taught Edu-K in Germany, despite my illness.

Next I'm in the North Dakota flatlands having Varun McGuire balance me for a goal of being well by October, and by October I was through the physical crisis of two surgeries. On the trip to San Diego, Marilyn Budde of the Minnesota TFH network of seven, just happened to be not only on the same plane, but in the seat behind me, giving me great health suggestions the whole flight. Dancing on the bay boat trip reminded me that the rhythm within is always available for revitalizing my relationship with that joyous, funloving part of me.

John Thie's round of sounds gave me permission to moan and groan in my hospital room (a cheap pain reliever!). Australia and Nevada in the forms of Dr. Dewe and Rev. Jim, created fitting emotional affirmations. Internalizing this support came when I heard Richard Byrne's courageous keynote presentation. Humor is possible in the most terrifying of situations. I remember his love and his hug, enough to get me to listen carefully to Norma Harnack's nudgings to follow medical advice. During conference farewells, another Minnesotan, Sister Dorothy Merth, coincidentally connected me with a convent for a place to stay while I visited a San Diego clinic.

At home and faced with surgery, I appreciated the phone calls of concern from my Wisconsin next door neighbor, Marge Murray, and cross country from Phillip Crockford. The doctors and nurses all became familiar with Phillip's meridian tracing tape, one of the most useful TFH tools I used in healing. An Emotional Stress Release headband, created by Minnesota North Country's Dick Bellamy, may have looked rather weird on me in the operating room, but my cool former Californian surgeon was actually rather flexible, allowing tape recorders and hand selected official hand holders and feet rubbers (as in massagers, in the form of nurses, of course!) The doctor even complied with my request to bless my organs while he was in there checking them out. When he had his vasectomy a week later I reminded him to also ask for such a blessing from his surgeon!

I recall one of the biggest countdown surgery dilemmas for me was discussed via last minute phone conversations with Norma and Richard Harnack. Should I prefer to be slit vertically or horizontally, intercept the main central meridian or transverse a half a dozen flocked across my abdomen? My doctor, of course had a sense of humor too. He did it his way. Fortunately we were all in agreement.

So what did I do with all this great stuff and how did it help? I remember some instant results with pressure points for pain when I couldn't move to do it myself; so I told others what to do. It helped to place colored stickers on my head for neuro-vascular points to

show my helpers where to touch to help relax me. I imagined the meridians in color and ran them continuously mentally until they became like background music. I drank lots of water and asked almost any visitor who was willing to rub my feet or to balance me. Wires and tubes restricted my movements; so I did lots of eye rotations in circles and figure eights. I also used or modified the Thinking Cap, the Brain Buttons, the Space and Earth Buttons, and the Cross Crawl. One of the most powerful tools I used that resulted in positive change, I created out of necessity. I simply named it the CROSS OVER.

I would always reach for a needed object with the hand that was further away from the object, so I had to cross over the mid-line. When I came back to the center of my body, I switched the object to my other hand, then reached to the other side, creating both a stretch and a balance.

I was just amazed at not only how balanced this felt, but also how these minute bedside exercises helped increase my muscle strength. The neighborhood grocer challenged me to an arm wrestling match shortly after my final hospital release, as I was so skinny and looked frail, and I won!

I had to have two surgeries because unfortunately my bladder wound up with a large hole in it, due perhaps to a wandering suture misplaced. This negative news came the same hour as the mail with a letter from John Thie relating of the death of a mutual friend and mentor, family therapist Virginia Satir. My grief seemed like a starless universe after next hearing of Richard Byrne's death.

Shortly after the successful second surgery, when I thought I was safely "home", a very unlikely accident occurred. I swallowed two tablespoons of Basic H, a Shaklee cleaning liquid, and created another crisis. I carefully read the directions to dilute the two tablespoons that I had swallowed with a gallon of water for best results. This I proceeded to do, and then immediately went into a deep socking coma for about three minutes or so. (This is not a misprint; the experience socked me right in the gut.)

Outside of my awareness I threw up the mixture and somewhere in there had what I would call a "near death" experience.

The Basic H *incident* was definitely a *cleansing* experience. Perhaps meant to be, to eliminate the toxins and drugs from my system, such as the morphine. I produced bubbles from both ends; I could see them in my catheter bag. I needed to do a lot of spitting, so decided to be expedient by fertilizing the plants. It occurred to me that most crazy-looking behavior originates from logic, and this has increased my understanding of some of my more difficult clients.

Another awareness was that in some ways I experienced my body as a simple mechanism. If tenderly and well-cared for, it responds immediately. For me, this included just a lot more of self touching. Using pressure points was made easier by bathtub bathing and sleeping with a few marbles. I put towels in the tub and slept on a woven sheepskin mattress cover to soften the effect on my angular body. Yes, I did "lose a few marbles". I also noticed during a period of time when I had the oddest behaviors I seemed to totally trust the universe and always found everything I'd lost. The most apt word is synchronicity. I knew exactly who was going to contact me when and what for. When I was with someone, time speeded up. When I was alone doing something, it slowed down. And when I ventured into my inner self, time got very squashed together.

I found myself floating through our galaxy in a time warp. I could vaguely etch the image of a dark cylindrical circumference encircling my soul on the way out of this reality, but my clearest recollection was experiencing the universe in a figure-8. I had always pictured a two-dimensional, Lazy 8. I unfolded the flat figure-8, first into a daisy-like flower and then into a pom-pom chrysanthemum, three dimensional, dynamic, and alive.

Time speeded up at the tips of the loops and came to a standstill back at the center, where the loops all joined. The further out the loop was on one side, the further out it would go on the other side, as each loop had a balanced counterpart. If it's difficult to imagine this; just filter through the implications. Going to

extremes in one direction will not only have a backlash in the precise opposite direction, but towards the end of the loop, experiences become compressed. So what all that told me was to explore all views while staying true to one's self. But don't get too looped!

The cycle of the seasons also became an aware part of my being during my healing. I became acutely attuned to timing as well as time. During some of my night driftings I felt as though I'd become some of the Five Elements. I focused healing colors in associated parts of my body, and the remnant of that activity was to color-co-ordinate my clothes closet by seasons, not a insignificant accomplishment considering my attachment to clothes and my indecisiveness around what to wear!

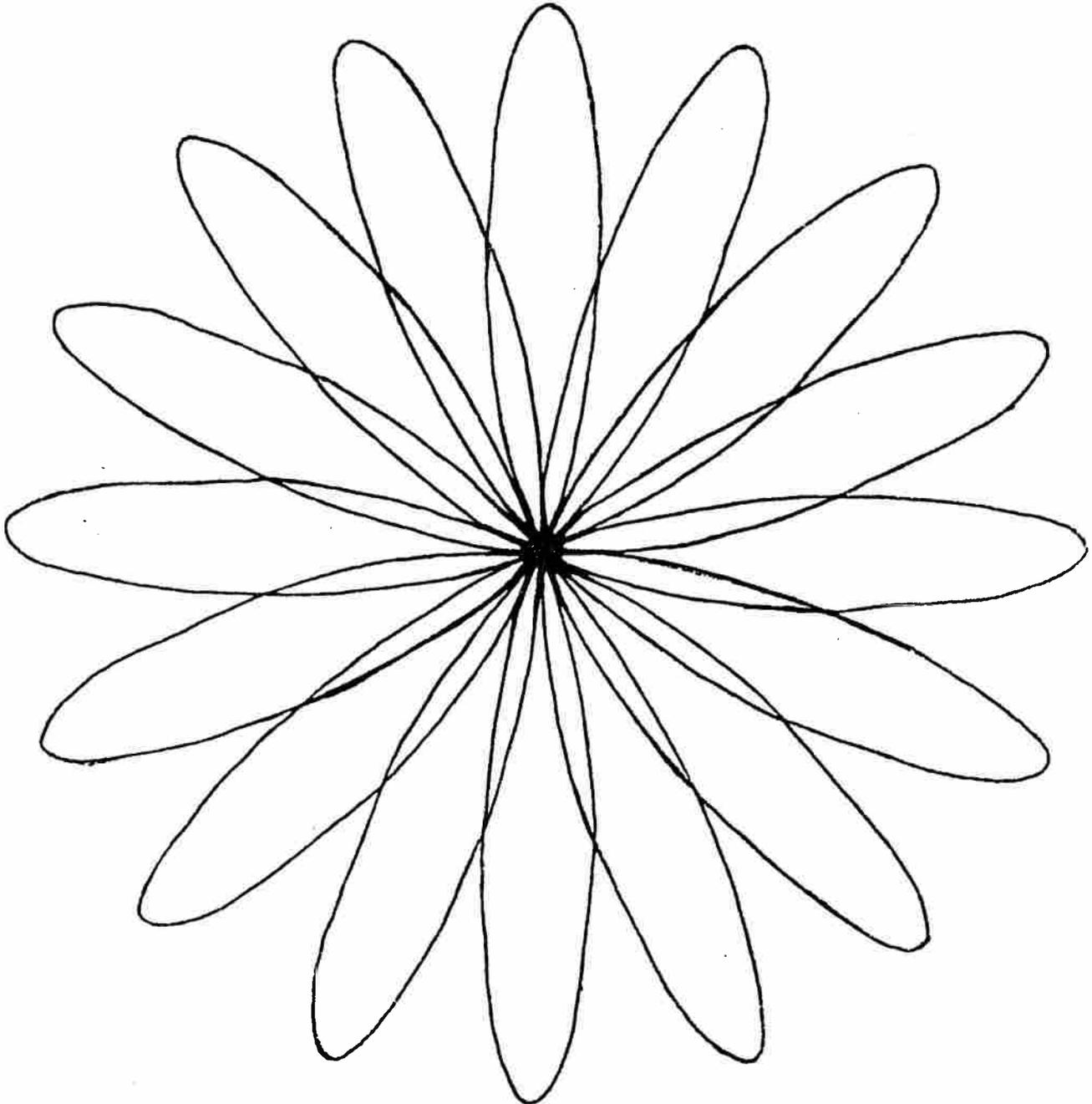
It was apparent to me that I was able to counteract the intense pain with an immense joy and sense of clarity based on an awesome trust that came through so powerfully that I simply did not know what to do with it. My experience told me I had been "through" infinity. My person did not know how to communicate with my "new being." I felt more like a verb than a noun. My friends were startled by my gauntness. I was eating well, moving in a rhythm, and delighted in being able to count my ribs and locate my neurolymphatic points. Those who experienced the full cycle of illness and healing with me shared my pain and joy, and I felt understood. Some who missed part of the cycle wanted to know when I'd "get back to the way I used to be," and when I saw a reflection of fear, I picked up a portion of that fear and began to allow myself to "forget." I stopped doing many of the things I intuitively found helpful and began to travel "downwards" once again to experience the leftovers of grief still re-cycling all the realities of losses, i.e. changes. I had to quit my job and identify myself with a healthier oriented system; I had to readjust my vision of my husband, who was as truly thankful for my aliveness as I was for his support and understanding. I experienced his male energy like a ground wire at times connecting me to the earth's energy when I needed it the most.

So on one of my journeys, while still connected to this reality, I was surrounded by the presence of all the souls of the above

mentioned persons, who simply told me I would survive and didn't have to waste any of my own energy because it was lovingly being sent from all directions. Thus remembering, I am assured that the universe is a hologram, for I experienced it myself. And though my conscious self may not be

manifesting these memories at that moment, my inner self always has the imprint.

Touch for Health friends, I want to thank you for the love and light of safety with which YOU have surrounding my BEING!



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