

The Importance of History in Touch for Health Kinesiology

by John F. Thie, D.C

TOUCH FOR HEALTH EDUCATION
6162 La Gloria Drive, Malibu CA 90265. USA.
Phone: 310-589-5269 Email: thie@touch4health
Web Site: www.touch4health.com

Touch for Health continues to grow throughout the world as a system that lay people can easily learn to be more aware of their health and vitality and to balance their Chi, their life energy, to live fully and have more meaningful lives. But ever since the beginning of the Instructor Training Workshops, there have been those who have become TFH "practitioners" either by making TFH central to their practice of massage, physical therapy, chiropractic, acupuncture, etc, OR by expertly practicing the simple procedures of TFH alone as a modality for healing. Many natural, "gifted" healers have found in TFH a structure to focus and reinforce their abilities, as well as a context in which to allow others to see and feel in a concrete way what they see in an intuitive way.

For many years, we advocated that TFH instructors only be "practitioners" under already recognized and licensed modalities such as massage therapy, etc. Today, with the growth of many Kinesiology training facilities which offer 2 and 3 year programs in the TFH Kinesiology model of energy balancing, the TFH practitioner is becoming a professional health care modality in its own right. Many governments have formally recognized this fact, as have insurance companies and other third party payers in some countries.

As we develop standards for a professional TFH Kinesiology practitioner, it's important to consider what has kept TFH on the cutting edge of health care for all of the 30 years of its existence, and a few ways things we can adapt from mainstream health care to fit the Touch for Health model, and also make us more effective practitioners.

Let's consider an article from the June 25, 2001 issue of Newsweek, by Melvin Konner, M.D. of Atlanta's Emory University, author of *The Tangled Wing: Biological Constraints on the Human Spirit*. Konner, a medical anthropologist, suggests that the health care professions are going in a direction that may be irreversible if more attention isn't paid to listening to patients as opposed to studying their test results. He is talking about the modern "scientific" premise that information gathered by machines and laboratory analysis is more significant than the holistic assessment of the individual person.

Konner asserts that 85% of the information needed in an exchange with a health care provider comes from the history, the physical examination and a few simple, low-tech tests. He suggests that the attention to technology, the time and cost demands they place on physicians, may serve to side track some of the less glitzy but more productive skills such as listening and watching and touching. He sees that as doctors have not learned to listen or touch, they will become mere technicians, the servants of the machines, rather than having the machines serve them.

He concludes as follows, "But as technological diagnosis replaces physical examination, there is less and less excuse for touching. However scientific they are, doctors are always shamans, too. When we are in their hands, they are magical to us. Pre-scientific shamans claimed to recruit spiritual powers; scientific ones invoke high technology. And we want them to, because this is our wizardry. Yes, it works a lot of the time, but our faith in it goes far beyond its effectiveness. Unless we find a balance

between the old arts of healing, and the new technology, we may lose as much as we gain. And the loss may be irreversible."

From the beginning, TFH has often served to "make up" for what has systematically been eliminated from a lot of "scientific" health care. Even within the ranks of technology driven bio-medicine, there are those who recognize diminishing returns in machine-based diagnosis, particularly of conditions which have no symptoms. You may be hearing more and more advertising slogans advocating full body MRI scans. The hope and claim is that this kind of scanning provides early detection of disease, and allows for early treatment which can only be beneficial. But this approach may result in unnecessary and sometimes dangerous surgery or medication of "pseudo-disease", diseases which left undetected and untreated will NEVER result in any symptoms affecting the health or function of the person. The treatment may be worse than the "disease". The FDA is investigating the claims of benefit related to this kind of testing.

So how can we be more effective as TFH Kinesiology Practitioners? We will need to integrate to some extent with the existing, mainstream health care community, but we must be sure to adopt only those aspects that are in keeping with our holistic model. Although we put more emphasis on understanding individual people than on knowing their "disease", we can benefit from adopting the SOAP notes approach which many health care practitioners use to document the way in which they manage clients and provide reports for other practitioners or third party payers. SOAP stands for Subjective Objective Assessment/Analysis Plan.

The Subjective part refers to what the person tells you that they want to change. In the diagnostic model, it is the complaint, and the symptoms that they want to get rid of. In the TFHK model, we look at any symptoms, and any life issues the person is working on, and also the POSITIVE OUTCOME goals that the person wants in their life. This can include their personal, subjective measurements, on an analog (0-10) scale, of pain, symptoms,

as well as function/attitude related to a positive goal.

The Objective part refers to the objective observations that are made by the health care practitioner. These would be any findings that are objective, including any testing that is done that gives objective evidence that pertains to the complaints. This would include any physical examinations, observations of posture, muscle tightness, spasms, range of motion diagnostic studies, etc. In the TFHK model we would record all of the various muscle testing/monitoring outcomes and changes, as well as measurements of range of motion, changes in attitude, mood, etc.

The A stands for Assessment or analysis of the client/student/patient's status in the biomedical model as well as in the TFHK model. This is the part where we decide how to proceed further with the person seeking help, or whether we should make a referral to another kind of practitioner. In our model we make clear the kinds of outcomes we expect in an energy balancing, and the kinds of goals that are better dealt with by another kind of practitioner. (Treatment of a specific named disease is not done in the holistic TFHK model, for example. Instead we work to balance the energy of the whole person to support the natural healing system and the effectiveness of medical disease-focused treatment). The TFHK assessment and analysis is a cooperative process in which the individual (or their advocate in the case of a child or someone who is very sick) is the authority in their own health awareness. We work with the person to bring their energy into an appropriate balance, considering what things in their life might be blocking the wholeness that they seek.

The P stands for the Plan for care that is tailored to the person seeking help. What kinds of things will be done on any given visit, and what specific progression of treatment will be appropriate for a particular person. This plan may include prescriptions or referrals or other recommendations. In the TFHK model, it will usually involve an *ongoing process of education*, learning to be aware of what affects us, and utilizing the energy balancing tools as we learn them.

It may include an emphasis on particular balancing techniques as appropriate for different kinds of energy issues.

If you do not keep SOAP records of your sessions with clients, you will find it a lot more difficult to integrate with other kinds of health care practitioners who use "medical speak" (the commercial language of the medical profession). As the trend towards integrating the "alternative" therapies with the orthodox bio-medical practice of medicine and other "standard" modalities, it is important to be able to understand some "medical speak" and to describe the work that you do in a context of "medical speak", which is the common language of health care just as English has become the common language of the Western world.

Part of being a professional and taking a good history often requires interpreting the records made by other health care providers. With the increased mobility of individuals, there needs to be a corresponding portability of records, and *an awareness that medical records may have been recorded by someone other than the primary care provider who knows the patient*. So it can be difficult to accurately interpret a person's records without checking with the person. In emergency situations, and in cases of serious illness, you may not be cared for by anyone who knows you, or even by the same person twice. So it can be very beneficial to keep your own records and compare notes with any professional you work with and make sure you're both on the same page.

For the past 10 years I've been emphasizing ways to improve the effectiveness of TFH through taking a good history, and putting the history to good use. Although I have not been able to complete the TFH Interactive Program to my satisfaction, even in its present rough form, it contains a very useful database for keeping records on the computer and for compiling the data centrally and anonymously. So, using the computer, we can keep a kind of SOAP notes that are specifically designed for the holistic TFH approach and techniques. At the same time we can gather data through the Internet and begin the kind of research that is demanded

of any health profession. The program is provided on a CD to anyone who joins my Research Club. Part of the database includes a questionnaire that follows the goal setting process that I have been emphasizing. The basic outline of my goal setting protocol is also provided as an appendix in the back of the latest additions of the TFH manual. In my new book which I wrote with my son, Matthew Thie, M.Ed., *TFH Pocketbook with Chinese 5 Element Metaphors*. We include 21 pages on goal-setting, but even more useful for developing effective history and present awareness are the 5 Element metaphors themselves which can enhance our memory access through sensory and associative reflection.

This brings us to a crucial role of memory in taking a history and keeping records. Often there are clues in our history that can help with our present health if we can remember them. Keeping a record of our experiences over time can be helpful in identifying patterns, but sometimes there are aspects of our experiences that aren't recalled in an oral or even written narrative. Yet these 'memories' of past events can have an effect on our functioning without our being consciously aware of them, without remembering them. Forgetting and letting go of past events is very important for our effective functioning in the present. But forgetting and letting go are not always the same thing.

We cannot be aware of everything at once, so sometimes we need to forget, or not think about things from the past in order to be present in the present. Yet, we may have consciously "forgotten" and still retain postures, attitudes and energetic and behavioral patterns formed in relation to a past event or experience. Often, we can release these patterns through energy balancing without knowing how they came about, but accessing the mental/emotional/sensory associations related to the energy patterns of our current goals.

To better understand and implement this process, we need to consider a couple different aspects of memory. What we most often think of as memory is the verbally accessible aspect of memory. Another aspect

is the situationally accessible memory, which is more holistic, sensory and associative. When we recount a narrative of a memory, we are not always able to access all of the sensory aspects of the past experience. Sometimes we only recall an abstracted "story", and not the event itself. Yet a great deal of sensory data from vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, as well as mental and emotional feelings and meanings are automatically recorded and can be "triggered" to replay. Sometimes this occurs at the conscious level, as when a certain aroma takes us back to a vivid Technicolor memory, complete with the unique voices and exact words, and all of the emotions of a moment from the past, however distant. More often, it occurs at a subconscious level as when a similar situation in the present brings back postures, emotions, and reactions related to a previous event. The similarity between the memory and present events can be obvious, as in a conflict with a co-worker, or more subtle, as in a certain perfume, a mannerism, or a phrase.

One of the reasons that so much of this occurs without our being fully aware of it is that it is tied in with automatic survival functions. If you step on a snake, it is very valuable for survival to react automatically. But automatic reactions can be a problem when we respond based on past danger or trauma rather than choose to do what's appropriate right now. We have automatic survival reactions that may be based on genetic instincts, such as the fight or flight response, or on early life experiences, family patterns or childhood trauma or success. They may even be related to accidents of fate where a kind word or thoughtless insult at the right moment happens to "stick", or catalyze a chain of events.

I use the TFH goal setting protocol to maximize our access of the verbal/narrative aspects of memory, and I have found that the

sensory/associative symbols of the 5 Element metaphors can be very effective in activating the sensory associative memory. I find that there can be an amazing amount of relief through an open-ended consideration of the Metaphors in relation to the narrative/verbal memory and the current goal. After a balance with the 5-Elements, we can remember stressful events without reacting to them as if they were happening in the present. Releasing the stress associated with the goal/meridian imbalance and the 5 Element Metaphors allows us to be aware of more aspects of our experience, and to choose a positive response to current situations, rather than simply unconsciously reacting. Finally, our energy balancing is reinforced by re-testing the muscles and establishing balanced postures and positive attitudes, sometimes providing that ever so subtle catalyst that will allow personal growth, blossoming and life transformation.

I hope that each of you will expand your self-awareness and see yourself as a Soul, not a body which has a soul, or a soul that is separate from a physical body, but a Soul that is a completely integrated whole, and that is connected with everything else in the universe. Check out or review the goal-setting, coaching, dialogue, interview process which will help develop your narrative history and vision of the future, and the 5 Element Metaphors to develop your awareness of the sensory/associative aspects of your energy balance. And keep records of your balances. Your records can be as simple as a goal statement with a subjective rating on a scale of 0-10 before and after the balance. Or if you use the TFH interactive program, you can rather painlessly record each muscle imbalance, energy pattern, reflex/technique, and outcome and create an excellent, holistic, TFH/Kinesiology oriented system of SOAP notes.