



Roots, Essence and Vision of TFH

According to Carrie Thie

Welcome to this 38th Touch for Health conference in Malibu! I am delighted to be able to visit with so many friends from around the country and around the world. Thanks for coming to my neighborhood, as I really am not traveling too much anymore as part of my self care. I just turned 80 a few months back!

Hopefully, most of you know the roots of TFH in terms of the work of George Goodheart (Applied Kinesiology) and the Energy model from Chinese Medicine. But maybe some of you are less familiar with the roots for John and I personally, which perhaps still contribute to the essence of Touch for Health, as we share it here today.

Actually, John and I both had healing traditions in our families and met with many visionaries along our own paths of development that contributed important ideas that have been embodied in the writings and the culture of Touch for Health. My grandfather was a Methodist minister. My Grandmother was a midwife and was considered to have a special gift of “presence” and often attended people in time of need, particularly sitting with people through the dying process. My mother was a Block Mother in World War II and hosted the Red Cross trainings in our home. So I grew up with the model of the helper role and always had the intention of following this type of social helper role for myself.

When John and I met, we found we had a common seriousness about wanting to dedicate our lives to making the world a better place in whatever way we could. I was studying psychology and child development. John was actually studying Law, but later decided to become a chiropractor. John’s father, John C Thie, was a naturopath and chiropractor and developed a nutritional program that he called A New Approach to Therapy.

The Holistic tradition of chiropractic was a major influence on our growing vision for the work we wanted to do together. When John began to use Dr. George Goodheart’s Applied Kinesiology, we quickly recognized that this was something different and as he adopted it in his chiropractic practice he saw that this was amazing work.

But it was through our study with Virginia Satir and Thomas Gordon that we realized that basic skills of communication, self-care and balancing needed to be shared at the grassroots level within families. We need healthy families as the basis of a healthy society. Just as we need to brush our teeth everyday to maintain health, we learned that we need a certain number of hugs per day and opportunities to develop a vision of our own health and a role in maintaining and developing Wellness.

We became instructors of the Effective Communication workshops that Tom Gordon developed for lay people based on the “person centered therapy” ideas of Carl Rogers. We loved the model of passing on fundamental information through an “each one teach one approach”. We combined these concepts with

the muscle balancing principles of Goodheart's Applied Kinesiology, developing a program called Health from Within, which was meant to be a basic, safe program for anyone, regardless of previous training or education. As the training program developed and we put the Touch for Health book together, the "bodywork" of muscle testing and the energy balancing were emphasized. The communication skills informed the process of teaching, but were not formally presented to students until they reached the Instructor Training. Yet to me the essence of TFH has at least as much to do with that "Rogerian" person centered (rather than disease centered) approach as it does with posture and energy balancing.

And really, the part that I have worked on the most has been the focus on the person living their own unique life. Balancing people to achieve their life goals seems to be a better way of improving health in general, rather than focusing on treatment of disease. Rogers' field was more psychological wellbeing, yet he recognized that even with physical illness, treating of symptoms or conditions is problematic without considering the holistic context and perception of life.

We have so many great tools and processes at our disposal through AK, TFH and the vast tree of Energy Kinesiology and yet, we can achieve profound benefit from the simplest ESR balancing in an attitude of support and respect. Rather than assume that we can analyze and fix what's wrong with other people, we take on an expert supporting role in helping people develop WHO they are and what they want to BE.

For me this process becomes a form of healing prayer and spiritual development as I integrate my TFH with study and participation in our local church and various spiritual programs. One of the adventures that John and I began together was to help organize a Prayer and Healing ministry at the Malibu United Methodist Church (MUMC) which incorporates some sharing of concerns and gratuities, some inspirational readings and TFH balancing and surrogate balancing as a healing modality in the context of the healing tradition of the church. We integrate some muscle testing and some ESR/"laying on of hands" with our appreciations, worries, aspirations for ourselves and hopes for others, whether present or far away. Simple yet profound elements of spirituality, of self-awareness, of "intunement" with God and harmony with humanity, are all grounded and physically embodied through a little cross crawl, some ear stretching and zipping up our Central Meridians. And this too is part of the essence of Touch for Health. (Join us pretty much any Tuesday evening at the MUMC!)

We had a pregnant idea in the 70's. We saw that it was needed and we shared that idea. We got busy with that idea and cared for it. And it was born a strong and beautiful babe. Now that TFH babe is 40, and ready to begin a new phase. Where to, you say? Wow! Where not? Returning vets care, after school and vacation programs for kids, correctional officers and prisoners, firemen, teachers, actors, musicians, truck drivers, etc. Wherever you go every day and wherever your imagination takes you, there is a need for simple effective tools to relieve stress, center our hearts and minds and get our energy flowing in a positive direction.

How can we do it? Like we did before! It used to be that when someone was inspired to share in the community, so they told everybody, they found venues and they showed people how to get a balance. With that naivety and simplicity that comes with newness they shared their experience and invited others to feel it too. One nurse thought she would like to share it with nurses, though we thought the "medical people" would not accept it. She said why not try, and so we have provided CEU's for nurses for 40 years!

Enthusiasm is still infectious. “Each one teach one” is still viable. We have always had a rather loose and informal network, but you have TFH friends in every corner of the earth!

If TFH can be shared in Mongolia and remote areas of Indonesia, in Saudi Arabia and Siberia, in France (*and Belgium too!*), then we can share it anywhere!

And though you’ll be shocked that I don’t even use a computer very much (my granddaughter handles my emails for me), I know that we have some great opportunities to strengthen our communication and mutual support through all that “social media internet stuff”. Active listening may be a bit more possible over Skype (video conferencing) and we CAN touch at a distance, but there is also no replacement for physical presence.

So many of us have these cell phones cemented to our heads at the dinner table. We are always connected, but not connecting to those around us. The family needs a support to get in touch with each other. Appropriate, healthy, touching has always been a great need that TFH has been a wonderful way to fulfill. With the accelerating pace of technology and seemingly ever more mechanized view of life, we need this hands on ritual of reconnecting with the reverence for life, with presence of a human being, with emotions and a physical body, connecting on a personal level. At that is the essence of Touch for Health! Enjoy the retreat, get plenty of hugs and balances and go forward from here recharged and re-inspired to share of yourself and this work, again and again!

Carrie Thie

Reflections and Greetings from Serra Retreat

Greetings TFHKA members, board members, speakers and participants from around the world, at this hilltop retreat celebrating 40 years of Touch for Health (1973-2013). We hope everyone will have a chance to have some quiet reflection at this time, some fellowship with like minded friends, as well as some interesting new ideas, techniques and energy from this diverse gathering.

What are your roots in this work of muscle/energy balancing, and in your journey of life? What is the essence of TFH and Kinesiology for you personally, as you have experienced it, and as you would like to develop it in your activities? How does this relate to your dream of the life you want to live, spiritually and professionally? And what is your vision for yourself, for our associations/schools, and the worldwide Kinesiology community?

John Thie passed the torch of leadership to the International TFH Faculty in 1990, many of whom have now been serving for 30+ years. After 40 years of sharing TFH in different ways, it is time again to look at passing this treasure to a new generation of leaders. Each of us can look at how we like to share this work, at home, in the clinic, in the workshop or classroom, or even on “Skype” or “youTube”. We can work to create group structures for mutual support and synergy in our activities, and connections to other groups etc. Maybe at this time in particular a lot of us are looking at the legacy of our years and decades of effort, and considering how we can mentor and develop and multiply the leaders, practitioners and teachers who will take this work forward.

Some of our speakers will be sharing their nuggets of wisdom from their journey in the growth of TFH and Energy Kinesiology. Others will give us some of the classic, tried and true tips for successful public presentations, or new innovations, quick tips and tricks. And as always we will have a rich cross-section of concepts, approaches and techniques from around the world that can be put into immediate practice, or lead us down new paths of learning, investigation and development. Hopefully everyone will take advantage of the opportunity of at least one of the pre or post conference workshop.

At this 40 year milestone, we have asked all of the speakers, and ask all of the participants, to reflect on our common experiences, the ideas that unite us, and energize our mutual vision for the future of this work, of our communities, and of this beautiful planet we share with all of creation.

There have actually been many TFH/Kinesiology gatherings in this special space, and the consistent feedback we have received, and part of the essence our conference this time is the old wisdom, “Less is more.” We have intentionally limited the number of speakers and the hours of programming. We have no special excursions or tourist activities. The food is homey, the sleeping quarters are almost Spartan, and we have taken a “no-frills” approach to decorating this space. This is all to maximize the time and energy that our board members, speakers and participants can dedicate to simply enjoying the time together in this special place, chatting, balancing or just communing. May you enjoy this retreat on the mountaintop, and return to your daily lives with a new energy and new connections to sustain you for 40 years to come!

With Love,

Claudia Thie, 2014 Conference Chair

and Matthew Thie, President, International Kinesiology College