

Touch For Health Stars, Torch Bearers
Present and Past

by Idelle Weissenberg

Pre-Introduction

The Olympian carried the torch since the first recorded Olympiad in 776 B.C. Their stars then were the fastest and the fittest runners. Today many other sports have been added to the outstanding exhibition of excellence. Only the best, the healthiest in body, mind and spirit can be the potential stars, the metal holders of the events. Touch For Health has carried the Torch For Health for the past 9 years, and 9 conventions. We all have been trailblazers and stars, illuminating the lives of millions of people that are touched all over the world. We have committed ourselves, and the lives we touch, to healthy bodies, minds and spirits in our pursuit of excellence.

Nine Years, Nine Conventions Today & Yesterday

Introduction

I can't believe that this is my 9th Touch For Health Convention! In 1976, at Asilomar California, a beautiful peaceful California State Park retreat, approximately 20 dedicated students became Certified Touch For Health Instructors, Gordon Stokes was our teacher and trainer. At the same time, an elite group of TFH instructors were also there attending classes given by John Thie. In order to become an instructor, we were required to lecture to our class. I passed with flying colors and knocking knees---I haven't gotten the courage to speak for more than 3 minutes since then. That year, the attendance totaled some 40-50, which included the staff, instructors and students. The convention activities had to work around the class schedules; a far cry from our convention plans today. That year, we had approximately 300 trained instructors. I'm sure that by this writing, we have close to 5,000 all over the globe.

Present-Today

Last year, I developed some unusual courage and made two commitments. One, to speak to you at this 9th annual convention and second, with the Olympic year upon us here, in Southern California, I chose to concentrate this past year on the sport I love, tennis and integrate my knowledge with my other love, Touch For Health. I've accomplished this by writing, lecturing, and traveling.

For the past 6 months I have written a column in the Balboa Tennis Club News entitled Get In Touch With Your Stress. I was interested in lecturing and giving a mini workshop for the club and it was suggested that I might write one or two articles to familiarize the members with my subject. The readers have commented favorably to the director and to my great surprise, I am now writing a permanent column. One has to be very tactful dealing with tennis players. They always think, that no matter how battered they are; sore knees, tennis elbow or aching backs, they really think that playing tennis cures all. You sort of have to sneak in a remark to them like, "you ought to breathe a little more, because oxygen does help keep your muscles from spasming."

My lecture mini-workshop became a reality in May of this year. Though I've been using the title, Get In Touch With Your Stress, it basically contains TFH philosophy. I believe in simplicity to get the facts across. I am constantly aware of John's desire for us to stick to the safe and easy techniques introduced in the Touch For Health manual. The few innovative ideas I've included, are still based on TFH application.

Here are a few explanations and suggestions that I include in my experiential lecture:

I start with a friendly hand touching experience. At the same time,

I show them how energy work, both positive and negative by demonstrating how they can strengthen the opponens pollicis longus and then with information explained to me a few years back by Richard Silvers, one of our talented TFH Instructors from Milbrae, Calif. I explain in very simple terms how they can avoid tennis elbow. "We have extensor and flexor muscles. If the arm is thrusting forward, as it does to complete a serve and since the proper way to serve is to flex the wrist as you come down with your arm, the top muscles become the extender and the lower muscles become the flexor. If there is tension and stress from fear, anxiety or embarrassment, and you are trying too hard, one tends to stiffen the wrist while serving instead of flexing it. That's when there is a possibility that you could make the elbow or upper arm around the deltoids sore."

I physically demonstrate how balance and compensating muscles effect our body language. My six pointed star is a great tool to show a visual explanation of how energy blocks and the necessity of flow.

I conclude my mini-workshop with as much muscle testing as time allows. Usually we get into crosscrawl, emotional stress release and testing with sugar, cigarettes and water. I have used this workshop for various groups and with a little change I take the emphasis away from tennis and place it on whatever the audiences interest lies.

I would now like to report to you on my efforts to get TFH in the Israel Tennis Centers. Henry and I are both founding members of the centers and along with several other founders we toured Israel and visited six of the eight centers. I observed the wonderful programs that have benefited over 60,000 youngsters, mostly from impoverished areas. Young people, who have never been trained in any sport, receive free instructions and equipment and instead of spending their time after school on the streets, they are now becoming champion tennis players. An improved quality of life is reflected in youthful exuberance amongst thousands of children in these programs. As one of the officials expressed it, "Children from 100 different backgrounds play side by side, the greatest socialization has taken place here, which will effect the whole nation." After visiting the centers I did see a need for a self-help health program. With constant stress facing them daily, an over abundance of sugar in their diet and lack of knowledge in the holistic approach. After my return from Israel in October, I spoke to John about it, and with his help, a two year TFH membership was sent to the main Center in Tel Aviv. I was then given the title of International TFH Representative for the Israel Tennis Centers. Then my lengthy and time consuming correspondence started. Writing to center executives, TFH Instructors, Les Bolgar and Nathan Leeuwen; progress takes time but seems very promising. I hope to be able to report to you next year that the Israel Tennis Centers will be experiencing Les and Nathan's expertise....

Past-Yesterday

The Olympic Stars of the past (632B.C.) participated in wrestling, boxing and running. These original participants (as it was stated in an article in The San Diego Union, 4-8-84) performed nude. Women were forbidden to attend games. As a story is told in the Union, "One mother disguised herself as a trainer to see her son run. Her cloak slipped when she ran to congratulate him for winning. Only because he was a champion did she escape the usual death sentence." I think it is appropriate to get back to our past and I hope that I escape the death sentence. I do confess that I got hooked on TFH 9 years ago when John presented a one day workshop at Elesyum Feild in Topanga Canyon. It was an optional slothing workshop (John of course, took the option of wearing his clothes, all the rest of us ran around in our birthday suits. Running meridians on a persons body, using ink pens reminded me of our dear friend and speaker at numerous conventions in the past, Dr. Jim Polidora. His famous quote is "To hear is to forget, to see is to remember and to do is to understand." From that day on, my life has not been the same.

By attending all 9 conventions, I've been touched, pulled and practiced on while getting my 14 muscle balance by novice students and experts. I've experienced a Shiatsu balancing, have had loving conventioners give me a "laying on of the hands." My feet have been pressed by reflexologists. I've had color strips placed over my accupressure points and sure enough, they strengthened my weak muscles. It wasn't too long ago that a delightful participant gave me a Bach Flower remedy to heal my emotional and physical ailments, plus, a loving TFH instructor asked my body a hell of a lot of personal questions, and, she got some darn good answers. Even one of our famous Doctors that frequent lecture circuit convinced me that lazer beams placed on my partials would make me less allergic to it's metal content. Believe it or not, it was the first time I ever removed my teeth in public. Last but not least, I was convinced by Elizabeth Kubler Ross, who spoke at a holistic symposium in Pasadena, (the reason I went to the event was to find a way to rid myself of a siatic pain in my leg that I developed after my second ITW review) that we all have guides that are with us from birth and allwe have to do is to ask them a favor and we'll be granted our wish. Believe it or not, I've never failed in getting a super parking place. By the way, I've given my guide a name. When I Misplace my keys several times a week Josh leads me to them the moment I put in my request. I know none of you will mind if I explain to you that the other morning my guide, Josh, presented me with an idea for this convention, and honestly, I couldn't pass it up...

The Olympians have their stars, men and women with healthy bodies, minds and spirits. Wouldn't it be appropriate for this convention that we mention a few of our stars, Olympians receive the gold metal, in the movie industry, the stars are presented with an Oscar, the television artists get their Emmys; to embark on a symbolic award, one that could stand proud against the best of them for some of our stars of healthy bodies, mind and spirits. The award

is called the TITA for excellence. It fits in with this years Michael Jackson mania. (Take out white glove) This white glove placed on my hand represents the THE INTERNATIONAL TOUCH AWARD and without further adu I want to use this wonderful symbol of touch to thank some of the people that have touched my life with their spirit, help, encouragement and knowledge in the past 9 years. This Touch Award is not to be singled out for the few representative individuals that I am going to mention. I hope many hands will touch each other during the next 4 days...

1. My hand goes out to Bill Riley, I know he is not with us today, but he was one of my classmates at Asilomar in 1976 that always symbolizes the importance of the simplicity of the crosscrawl when he used it to change his son Dan's, uncorrelated speech and thoughts to that of a normal youngster. His son Dan had Down's Syndrome. Because of his involvement with his son's therapy, Bill retired from his newspaper work and went to Chiropractic College and became a Chiropractor.
2. This Touch Award goes out to Dr. Jim Polidora. Experiencing Touch by telling us "to do is to understand" finds it's way in every lecture that I have ever given. He taught me, "You don't stop playing because you grow old, you grow old because you stop playing. From 1976 he has pleased us at least a half a dozen times with his joy of movement.
3. Gordon Stokes, please come up and accept this Touch Award. So many times you have told me that I could do anything. I'll never forget the blind walk we had through the wonderful grounds at Asilomar and how we all took turns thrusting each others bodies into the air. That really taught us to trust... Remember that fella that was in our first class that owned a bar in New York and came all the way to Calif. thinking Touch For Health Instructor training program was a sex workshop of some king. Thankyou for all the loving support that you give to everyone in your touch.
4. Grace Halloran, PHD., please come up and get the TITA Award from me. What a woman, she came to us in 1979 telling us that she would eventually go blind with an inherited eye disease, Retinitis Pigmentosa. After studying braille, she came across the Touch For Health manual, had her roommate work on her kidney meridian and literally doubled her vision. A year or two later at one of our conventions, she honored us by giving her dissertation on reversing blindness for her PHD. You really made me a believer of what touch can do in it's simplicity.
5. Nancy Joeckel, I need to touch you for bringing that clever video tape to the 1979 convention called Joshua In The Box along with that fantastic lecture on stress and overwhelm. You made it possible for me to coordinate an innovative workshop called Live, Love, and Laugh For The Health Of It, by loaning me the tape. I wish you'd of seen it, I played the part of Joshua myself. I always keep your book Say Yes To Stress handy and quote from it frequently..You are wonderful...

6. A person that has done more for me in her quiet way than time could permit. Rosemarie Balinski Michelson, let me take your hand. Here is a loving individual who has balanced me whenever I've cried help! Who has let me build my confidence by assisting her with her workshops. She took it in stride, while I hilariously officiated at a Mock wedding for her and Neil at Asilomar in 1979????When I needed help with my role as Joshua, who do you think came to my assistance????She wrote some of the script, helped construct the box and played my straight man. (Taking puppets heads out and putting it them on) Remember Joshua Rosemarie? "Hi, Rosemarie, What's the sense of being in a box?
I feel like I'm in a trap
I've got to change my way of living
Start to do a little giving
Being trapped with my emotions
There's facts of life that are worth living--
Like breathing---Say it Rosemarie
Boy, your the best nutritionist ever too.
Wait till all of you tast the food
She sees to it that we get the very best here
At the Annual Meeting...

I am your secret admirer, I love your...

7. Hey Grace Baldrige, TH Enterprise herself. Did you thing I'd forget you? You represent for me the love and affection that shines from the whole staff. Well, come and get your TITA Award, you've been with us all the way, giving me and others a helping word of advice, a balancing or shatever is asked of you. Seeing that all of us get educated by keeping that book store in line. What would we do without you?
8. Elly Wagner and Don Henley, come up as a pair please. Haven't I seen both of you at all the 9 conventions? We've cried and laughed together, hugged together, danced together and held hands together in many a campfire in Asilomar and even Humbolt University in Eureka, California. That was in 1978 and we had many warm experiences in closing circles in the past nine years. Both of you have taken responsibility and the hard work that goes with it to make me and others enjoy and be proud of a top quality convention. You've made them bigger and better, and I love both of you...
9. Last but not least, John, did you think you'd get out of the line-up of stars in my life? John Thie how did you think I'd been able to write all this stuff if it weren't for you at that first optional clothing workshop? Please come up so I can thank you for making Touch for Health so simple and your effort in sticking to that philosophy. Remember many like me, lay persons can sound professional. Remember the skit we improvised at Humbolt University, when your dad was in the audience, we coned you into getting balanced on stage, then all the accupressure points and meridians became living characters and talked as you were being touched? You were a great sport. I'm going to turn this glove award over to you, I know you'll put it to good use this week. You are a jewel and I'd better get off stage so you can take the limelight...