

## Using Metaphors as a Dynamic Intervention in the TFHS Protocols

by John F. Thie, DC

The Touch for Health Systematic Protocols (TFHSP) reflect a Holistic approach designed to facilitate the flow of energy and information, increase awareness and appreciation of all of the aspects of the whole Soul (all of the integral aspects of the human being- mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, etc.) and to enhance health and well-being. The TFHSP utilizes the ancient Chinese model of subtle energy meridians integrated with the western chiropractic postural/structural emphasis; to assess the present experience of a whole person in the context of his or her uniquely lived life. We use muscle testing or monitoring, together with the person's own subjective personal assessment to get a sense of energy balance, posture and attitude. We use various touch reflexes to balance the flow of subtle energy and re-align posture. In addition, one of the most dynamic tools for effecting subtle energy, posture and attitude is the use of metaphors which may be discussed or contemplated independently, or in conjunction with touch reflexes. When we contemplate/discuss metaphors as part of our energy balancing protocol, we extend, and enrich the meaningfulness of our lives, create new meanings, new insights, new patterns of energy flow and renew the whole Soul. The specific ways that we use metaphors creates subtle and sometimes dramatic changes in our awareness and in the balance of energy, allowing us to be conscious of our choices, to make choices that are more in harmony with our well-being in all the aspects of our Soul and life, and enhance the quality of our experience of life.

As science divides the human being and human experience into parts for purpose of study, we may re-integrate our concept of the whole Soul by contemplating various facets of life in turn, and in relation to one another. The functions of the 14 meridians, the metaphors of the Five Elements, as well as free association related to the functions of the

muscles provide fertile ground for enhancing our perception and experience of our lives and freeing the flow of the natural healing system. These many aspects are not literally separate parts of life, but simply different perspectives for looking at an integrated, whole system. A change or shift of any one of the aspects is a change in the whole, yet by addressing the system, the Soul, as a whole, we can facilitate balance and harmony overall. The use of metaphor in healing is a way of exploring different perspectives, or areas of emphasis that will be most meaningful at the moment, and be most effective in bringing equilibrium. This may result in specific, conscious insight into life issues and a greater sense of well-being, or it may simply help to "get the juices flowing".

The western rational concept of metaphor is an interchange of relatively equivalent terms, which may create gradations of meaning, or superficial ornamentation of language, but conserves a particular meaning for each word. Even in this framework, we can benefit from savoring the nuances of difference between terms, but the TFHSP use metaphors in a far more open, creative and intuitive way to access the whole Soul, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually as well as developing new intellectual meaning in the lived life of the person. This concept serves as a blueprint for the person wanting changes for the better in their lives.

Metaphors are symbolic image/action pictures which draw figurative or literal similarities, parallels, correlation's etc. between different, sometimes even disparate things or events. When offering a metaphor we often assert a structural similarity between two aspects of life normally thought of as separate. This principle can be a very powerful catalyst for creative thought and insights into areas where we feel stuck, and find that the subtle energy of the natural healing system is literally blocked. There is a transformation in

consciousness and in our energy, posture and attitude which occurs as we perceive first a cognitive disequilibrium, then that "aha!" of seeing the connection or relation between ideas and aspects of our Soul and our life, and finally grasp an emergent structure, image or idea that we have never before contemplated. It may be a more subtle and sophisticated perception of wider patterns and implications, or an appreciation of a simpler, more basic truth. This process allows continual discovery of new meaning in events and extension of meaning through comparison. The exercise of juxtaposition and synthesis helps us to realize the dynamic holism of the whole Soul that is so much more than a series of discrete parts assembled in a mechanical way.

In TFH we use the Chinese Five Element metaphors which will be best understood if the words are thought of as pictures that are brought to mind and thus can have many interpretations and suggest actions, processes, changes, stories and parables. These word-symbols are to be interpreted in the context of the life we are living. They may have a message for us about some aspect of our life, or symbolize the essence of our life as a whole, our symbol-story, the parable of our life. Thus, we consider the ideas and intuition of the individual to be the most significant for him or her. We are looking for any imagery that vividly illustrates or represents some significant aspect of your life. This is a creative/associative activity which returns the authority and "authorship" of the meaning of one's life to the individual, increasing awareness of the multitude of available choices, facilitating choices that are in harmony with the whole Soul, and enhancing the quality of experience and appreciation of life.

TFHS Protocols draw metaphors from four main categories: mechanistic, functional, contextual, and intuitive. We draw mechanistic metaphors from the actions of the muscles and consider how these actions or gestures might represent events or issues in

our life. We draw functional metaphors from the functions of the organs either in western physiological terms or especially in eastern terms of the meridian functions in the whole Soul and try to see these functions as symbols of how we are functioning in life. We draw contextual metaphors from eleven categories of the Chinese 5 Elements, considering all of the phases of life, and how these relate to our present circumstances and experience. Finally, but most importantly, we are always open to intuitive metaphors. We listen to our internal wisdom and the concepts that naturally come to mind, whether they seem to relate logically or not. More than rationally making sense, the best metaphor rings true and feels right for the person seeking balance.

When we offer metaphors to someone seeking our assistance in balancing their own energy, we respect their individual sense of integrity, well-being, and intuition. As we "deliver" the metaphor, it is very helpful to be aware of two aspects of the words we are speaking. One is the "vehicle" of the metaphor and the other is the "tenor" or "tone" of the delivery. The "vehicle" consists of actual words used to convey the metaphor. The tenor is the underlying idea, subject, or situation and the tone of voice and way the words are conveyed. Words may have a different meaning for the person who hears them than they do for the person who is speaking. It is good to be conscious of any "baggage" from a person's past experience that they attach to a particular word. Clarify what the words mean to the individual who is contemplating them. If they are meaningful, if they "ring true", don't worry if they "got the joke" that you meant to be telling. If the words fall flat, then you might offer an alternative meaning of the words for them to consider. We may also deliver additional, different or conflicting meaning in the tone or tenor of the way that we say words. It is important to be aware of our own attitudes and to be conscious of the multiple messages expressed by those we are helping.

**A Protocol for Fix-As-You-Go Balancing  
Using Metaphors as a Primary Intervention**

1. Establish a goal that you feel enthusiastic about and you believe is possible.
2. Do any pretests that you normally do
3. Check and correct the Central and Governing meridians, using the usual reflexes (i.e. Spinal Reflex if bilateral weakness is found, then NL, NV, Meridians, etc. or use circuit location if you prefer)  
AND--- as you use the touch reflex, refer to the metaphors for the Central and Governing meridians.

*Example, Central:* "What subtle, small thing do you need to let go of?"

*Example, Governing:* "What burden do you need to release?"

4. Check and correct the rest of the meridians using the following guidelines for using metaphors:
  - 4a. Before using any touch reflexes, offer the word or concept of each metaphor and see what idea or meaning it suggests to the person being balanced in the context of his or her life/goals.
  - 4b. Present the metaphors as only *possibly* meaningful. Clarify your own understanding of the traditional meaning of the metaphor, or of your interpretation in this context only to "prime the pump" and get ideas flowing, rather than dictate meaning.
  - 4c. It may be fruitful to talk over all of the metaphors if it feels appropriate for both people, but it isn't necessary to talk about all of them. Sometimes just one metaphor "rings the bell".
  - 4d. Recheck the muscle to confirm that it is now strong. If the muscle has remained inhibited, see if contemplating the other metaphors rings a bell for the person. Finally if you've exhausted the metaphors and the muscle is still weak, continue with the touch reflexes. Do this with each of the muscles representing the meridians until no further imbalances are indicated by muscle tests.
5. Reassess your goal and how you are feeling, noting whether any of the metaphors will be valuable for you to hold in mind to enhance your ongoing awareness, dynamism, and balance.

**A Protocol for Assessment Balancing  
Using Metaphors as a Primary Intervention**

1. Establish a goal that you feel enthusiastic about and you believe is possible.
2. Do any pretests that you normally do
3. Check and correct the Central and Governing meridians, using the usual reflexes (i.e. Spinal Reflex if bilateral weakness is found, then NL, NV, Meridians, etc. or use circuit location if you prefer)  
AND--- as you use the touch reflex, refer to the metaphors for the Central and Governing meridians.  
  
    *Example, Central: "What subtle, small thing do you need to let go of?"*  
    *Example, Governing: "What burden do you need to release?"*
4. Check the rest of the indicators for the remaining meridians, recording results on the 5 element diagram, or the Midday Midnite/24Hour "Wheel".  
  
    (4b. If you are going to check for over-energy, use the Alarm Points to establish over-energy pattern.)
5. Assess the best place to begin balancing according to the 5-element or "wheel" rules. (see TFH manual , pages 112-115)
6. Once you've chosen the appropriate meridian to start with, refer to the metaphors associated with muscle/meridian/element, ***following these guidelines:***
  - 6a. Offer the word or Concept of each metaphor and see what idea or meaning it suggests to the person being balanced in the context of his or her life/goals.
  - 6b. Present the metaphors as only *possibly* meaningful. Clarify your own understanding of the traditional meaning of the metaphor, or of your interpretation in this context only to "prime the pump" and get ideas flowing, rather than dictate meaning.
  - 6c. It may be fruitful to talk over all of the metaphors if it feels appropriate for both people, but it isn't necessary to talk about all of them. Sometimes just one metaphor "rings the bell".
  - 6d. Recheck the muscle to confirm that it is now strong. If the muscle has remained inhibited, see if contemplating the other metaphors rings a bell for the person. Finally if you've exhausted the metaphors and the muscle is still weak, continue with the touch reflexes.
7. After correction, recheck all (under-energy) muscles to confirm that they are now facilitated. Correct any which may have remained inhibited, ***repeating steps 6a-6d.***  
  
    (7b. If you have checked over-energy, recheck ALL alarm points- all should now be clear. Use the acupressure holding points for sedation of any over-energy which may have remained.)
8. Reassess your goal and how you are feeling, noting whether any of the metaphors will be valuable for you to hold in mind to enhance your ongoing awareness, dynamism, and balance.