



## Communication, Consciousness & Self-Care:

### The Origins of the Touch for Health (TFH) and Energy Kinesiology Model

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#### **Abstract:**

Underlying the bio-feedback techniques (muscle testing) and the Energy Balancing techniques of TFH is a philosophy of empowering individuals to be active in their own self-care which stems more from lay educational programs in (person-centered) psychology than from chiropractic or Applied Kinesiology. This emphasis on self-care and effective communication, together with the holistic energy model of TCM, is an important legacy of the emerging profession of Energy Kinesiology that helps make it distinct from other health-care modalities. This different model is powerful within the clinical setting, but is only just beginning to fulfill its potential for transformation of individual lives, relationships, families and communities.

In addition to their collaboration with George Goodheart, Gordon Stokes, and so many other pioneers in chiropractic, AK and Energy Kinesiology who contributed to the genesis and development of Touch for Health, John and Carrie Thie also studied with Virginia Satir, Yetta Bernhard, and Thomas Gordon. These authors and leaders developed simple, yet practical and powerful techniques for communication and self-development in relationships which provided the inspiration and the foundation of the Touch for Health workshops, and particularly the TFH Instructor Training.

#### **Making Contact:**

*"I believe  
the greatest gift  
I can conceive of having  
From anyone  
Is  
To be seen by them,  
Heard by them,  
To be understood  
And  
Touched by them.*

*The greatest gift  
I can give  
Is  
To see, hear, understand  
And touch  
Another person.  
When this is done  
I feel  
Contact has been made"*

From *Making Contact*  
By Virginia Satir

**How to be Somebody**

I count, therefore I am worth  
the investment of risk & pain to:

1. Change sabotaging behavior patterns.
2. Take necessary Risks of Self-Assertion
3. Develop interest beyond my own immediate personal concerns
4. Bring Meaning into my Life

From *How to be Somebody*

By Yetta Bernhard,

***Physician Heal Thyself: Self-care is Not Only "Do it Yourself"***

How many kinesiologists do you know that dedicate their lives to helping others to feel better and discover their own Wellness, yet leave their own self-care for last, often suffering ill-health in their service of others? Virginia Satir, in her introduction to *Self Care* by Yetta Bernhard, notes that we all "know" that self-care, taking care of ourselves, is important, yet all too frequently WE DON'T DO IT. She proposes that there are two reasons for this. *First*, we don't actually believe it. Our choices and actions belie our actual priorities and deep seated, often unconscious, beliefs. *Second*, we don't actually know HOW to take care of ourselves, or even very clearly WHAT our own Wellness consists of. The dynamic between knowledge, self-awareness and action creates not only the practical parameters of taking care of ourselves, but actually the sacred path of self-discovery and authenticity which is the common thread underlying all heal-

ing and the essential foundation of all spiritual practice.

Louise Hay, in her contribution to *Healers on Healing*, points out that taking care of ourselves, far from a selfish act, is the beginning point of spirituality, healing, and ultimately the only true form of revolution that will contribute to positive change for all of humanity and the world. Hay also points out that self-care often also means acting selflessly, or as Yetta Bernhard describes it, "developing interests beyond immediate personal concerns". Carl Rogers refers to transcending one's own narrow interests in the context of group-centered leadership, and Abraham Maslow refers to "Meta-Motivation" beyond personal needs and gratification, as a universal aspect of self-actualized people.

In the TFH tradition, we have a "Rule of Two's. This refers to muscle testing with light pressure (2 pounds, or even 2 ounces), checking to see if a muscle locks within 2 inches, pushing for no more than 2 seconds. We also have a tradition of muscle testing with TWO PEOPLE in a partnership of sensing and communicating for maximum awareness of what is happening. Part of the "Touch" in Touch for Health is the idea that there is a person taking time from their own life to touch you, specifically for the purpose of supporting your health. Certainly there are many things we can do for ourselves, by ourselves, but the added dimension of the presence, appreciation, and non-judgmental support of another person in itself is a powerful healing influence and a core purpose of the Touch for Health system.

If you know techniques for helping yourself, do you do it? Why not? Are your reasons real? Do you embody the phi-

osophy that you teach, practice what you preach, walk your own talk? If you advocate dialogue, touch and energy balancing for others, do you proactively and assertively seek this out for yourself? Where you recognize the need for something more than you can do for yourself, or achieve through subtle energy balancing, do you seek out help of appropriate nature, whether that be office assistance, tax preparation, medical care, psychological or spiritual counseling?

Bernie Siegel in *Healers on Healing* emphasizes the **responsibility** of therapists to take care of themselves, "Perhaps most importantly, a therapist must live his or her own message. This does not mean we are perfect.... I must forgive myself... just as I forgive my patients." Part of our work in taking care of others has to include taking care of ourselves.

### **Goals for Me**

*In want to love you without clutching,  
Appreciate you without judging  
Join you without invading  
Invite you without demanding,  
Leave you without guilt  
Criticize you  
Without blaming,  
And help you without insulting.  
If I can have the same from you  
Then we can truly meet  
and enrich each other.*

From *Making Contact*, by V. Satir

Virginia Satir's beautiful poem, **Goals for Me**, provides us with a valuable insight into the attitude that we cultivate when we support another person to explore their issues, symptoms, and positive life goals through dialogue in the

self-responsibility model. Although many psychologists employ kinesiology and energy balancing, kinesiology teachings generally do not pretend to train us to analyze, diagnose or treat psychological processes and conditions.

We don't attempt to solve people's problems or tell them what to do with their lives. Instead we come from a place of respect for each individual's inner resources, seeking mainly to reflect and help clarify what they already know about themselves, consciously or unconsciously.

We make concrete measures of life experience, pain, suffering, conditions, symptoms, but look beyond problems to fix, seeking out a clear vision of functional goals and positive descriptions of individual Wellness. Frequently the Goal-setting process "is the balance." Simply supporting a person through a process of communication to develop their own awareness is transformative and begins to create the health and wellness that we imagine for ourselves. This is achieved through conscious conversation, but also through monitoring our postures, attitudes, and energy through the muscle/meridian balancing process.

### **The Problem of Diagnosis**

In his seminal work, **Client Centered Care**, Carl Rogers points out that this approach is NOT built on diagnosis, but rather, the design of the process is therapeutic from the first contact, based on the type of atmosphere and relationship that is developed. It is an atmosphere of acceptance that is neither approval nor disapproval. Rather it derives from the assumption that "the client is the only one who has the potentiality of knowing fully the dynamics of his perceptions and his behavior... the primary locus of responsibility [is] kept with the client

throughout [the process] *which is important even in dealing with organic ills.*"

While Rogers defers for the most part to Medical Science and Diagnosis in the effective treatment of physical ailments, his observation in relation to mental, emotional or social "conditions" resonate with the holistic approach to health in general, "Prescriptive treatment is generally palliative and superficial." Reductionism of human lives to specific problems to be fixed with specific treatments, the disease model of cause and cure, is generally found to be ineffective when applied to the process of "self-actualization." A more holistic process of client-centered (rather than disease or treatment centered) therapy has a different focus: "the client's awareness of his attitudes and perceptions as residing in him, rather than in the object of his attitudes and perceptions."

Deeper self-understanding, integrating perception, behavior and self-awareness, all contribute to an overall sense of independence, effectiveness, satisfaction and enjoyment in life. Rather than direct, analyze or advise the client, the emphasis is on individually self-selected definitions of health and Wellness, and strategies for coping or self-development to recognize, enrich, reinforce and reproduce experiences of personal best and optimum performance. Through a process that looks like "just listening" but employs a good deal of skill and training in active and reflective listening, the individual is empowered as the primary actor in the drama of their own life.

Carl Rogers, in his introduction to his book, **On Personal Power**, quotes Gertrude Stein, "It is not what Paris gives you; it is what she does not take away." This is the same magic in the safe and gentle approach of personal empowerment through client-centered care, "It is not that this approach gives power to the person; it never takes it away."

### **Taking Care of Number One: The Constant Pie vs. "Giving it all away"**

Rogers relates his gradual understanding of the political implications of his philosophy and technique of the client-centered approach. While 'political' can be narrowly defined as the processes of power and control within governments and institutions, he eventually came to see that his work was radical, in the sense of going to the root and foundations of human interactions, and revolutionary in the sense of creating distinct and lasting change. This is immediately apparent in the case of an individual client experiencing personal transformation, but also has resounding implications for society as a whole, and resonates with the ancient wisdom: To change the world, change yourself.

Rogers' approach was in fact radical, essentially opposite to the training of thousands of psychologists, psychiatrists, and Medical doctors which posited the therapist as the authority who must diagnose, prescribe and cure the client of their disease or dysfunction, rather than support them in their own self-discovery and eventual self-care; in the logical extreme, making the therapist ultimately obsolete!

### **Empowerment**

**“The most effective leader is the one who can create the conditions by which he will lose his own leadership”  
– Thomas Gordon**

When John Thie first proposed to share Applied Kinesiology techniques with lay people, embracing the dream of possibly “putting ourselves out of business,” he was criticized by some for creating (perceived/feared) economic competition for doctors who had dedicated many years of study and had a vested interest in keeping certain techniques as “trade secrets.” In 1990, when he “gave” to the existing Instructor Trainers (who established the International Kinesiology College) the authority of establishing international standards for TFH Instructors, and continuing the program of TFH Instructor Training, the intention was to allow for the dynamic growth of the TFH program to reach its maximum potential for the greatest public benefit.

Thomas Gordon, in his chapter, *Group Centered Leadership and Administration*, in Carl Rogers’ **Client Centered Therapy**, extends the principles of the person-centered approach to the group: Families, Schools, Organizations, and Companies. He suggests a “... direct relationship between the degree leadership is given over to the group and the extent to which the group will utilize the maximum potential of its members... where self-responsibility empowers the individual and creates a maximum release of constructive creativity.” Gordon holds that groups, like individuals, have within them the adjustive capacities to create harmonious and productive processes and policies, provided their administration is a process of development which encourages a maximum of participation, inclusion of all members, and a right to be heard and

understood by all members in an atmosphere of safety in matters that are of concern and/or will effect each of them. He readily recognizes that it is NOT easy to transfer the non-judgmental, accepting therapeutic attitude and process to other social settings, especially the administration of organizations and businesses. Nevertheless, the alternative has its own difficulty: Authoritarian approaches tend to engender participation that is mainly reactive, negative and counter-productive.

The challenge that we face as leaders in the field of kinesiology can be seen as the logical extension of the challenge we face as facilitators, teachers, therapists, coaches and kinesiologists. It is to have the respect and the courage to take the risk of allowing space for authentic individual participation and fostering a sense of self-responsibility for having a positive impact that goes beyond narrow self-interests.

As Louise Hay observes in *Healers on Healing*, “...we are the government, we are the churches, we are the medical profession. The changes are going to have to come through us. When enough people are willing to live that way, I think we will have peace on earth. And then we will begin to learn our real potential.”

**A Short List of Accessible Reading Materials:**

Origins of the TFH model of teaching and balancing, and resources for developing communication, consciousness & health. ☺

**Self Care; How to Be Somebody,** Yetta Bernhard, The What and How of self-care in relationships, the exponential potential for self-awareness in growth through interactions with other people. Practical exercises and steps to take for creating growth and meaning in life.

**Making Contact,** Virginia Satir, Paying attention to the power of words, sensory input, and emotions in the context of self-awareness, authenticity and clear communication. In simple, poetic language, Satir distills the essence of transformation through relationships.

**Client Centered Therapy,** Carl Rogers, (with a chapter on Group Centered Leadership and Administration by Thomas Gordon) Roger's seminal work that

has had a dramatic impact in the practice of therapy of all kinds, education, leadership, parenting... essentially all situations which involve human interactions.

**Parent Effectiveness Training,** Thomas Gordon, The classic text that made active listening, I-messages and no-lose conflict resolution common concepts in homes, schools and offices around the world.

**Healers on Healing,** Compiled by Richard Carlson and Benjamin Shield, with contributions by George Goodheart, Louise Hay, John Upledger, Shakti Gawain, among others. In this fascinating collection, healing innovators of the last 50 years weigh in with succinct commentaries, NOT on the details of their distinct techniques, but the Golden Threads which are the true basis of any healing encounter: The process and journey of self-discovery, self-awareness, self-esteem, love and the power of relationships, therapeutic or otherwise, in bringing about meaningful and lasting change.