

SCIENCE AND HANDS-ON HEALING

William Bengston

THOUGH MY INITIAL RESPONSE TO THE VALIDITY OF HANDS-ON HEALING WAS ONE OF INCREDULITY, THE ACCUMULATION OF REPLICABLE SCIENTIFIC DATA HAS OVERWHELMED MY OWN DISBELIEF. I HAVE BECOME A FAILED SKEPTIC.

I discovered my own hands-on ability through a mentor who was a natural healer. We met in Long Island, New York, during the summer of 1971, when I was twenty-one. Though Bennett Mayrick was in his late forties, he had only recently discovered that he had psychic abilities. By his own testimony, he could hold an object belonging to someone he had never met and give detailed information about its owner. In parapsychological literature, that's known as 'psychometry.' For months I tested him with objects provided by friends, determined either to debunk his alleged abilities or to understand scientifically how they worked. Even when I designed double-blind studies to outfox him, using protocols that I considered flawless, Ben always beat me.

While conducting readings, Ben began to pick up physical sensations corresponding to the medical problems of the object's owner. His initial impulse was to draft me to help him banish these unwelcome effects. Instead, I became his first patient. He cured me of chronic back pain that has never returned.

Through trial and error, Ben morphed into a hands-on healer without either of us knowing what was happening. Through word of mouth, people would come to him with their afflictions. Ben would put his hands on each one, for thirty minutes to an hour, curing or improving conditions previously considered incurable. He had some unexpected failures. He could not make warts disappear, and as far as the

common cold is concerned, you'd probably do just as well with an inhaler.

With cancers we would often learn later through blood work and CAT scans that the disease had retreated, then disappeared. Most of our patients' doctors classified these unexpected cures as spontaneous remission, a rare but medically recognized phenomenon. By contrast, we were routinely observing such remissions, involving a wide variety of cancers. What was happening in each case? What tied these cases together?

Despite gratifying results, I was growing increasingly frustrated from a scientific viewpoint. Each and every patient came with complex physical and psychological issues that made it difficult to isolate the results of Ben's work. Perhaps one might be taking massive doses of vitamin C, or visiting an acupuncturist, or undergoing more orthodox medical treatments. As a scientist, this problem confounds me even today.

My relentless need for answers drove me into the controlled world of the laboratory in search of ironclad, replicable validation. Our first experiment was to be conducted with mice in 1975 in the biology department of Queens College of the City University of New York. At the last moment Ben, who abhorred formal testing, refused to participate. Since I had been healing together with him for several years, I reluctantly substituted.

In the initial experiment, which became the template, mice bred for research were injected with a particularly lethal strain of mammary cancer that always resulted in 100 percent fatality within fourteen to twenty-seven days. Through hands-on healing, these results were completely reversed: 100 percent of the mice survived the disease to become cancer free and to live a normal two-year lifespan! This experiment was replicated once more at Queens College with the same 100 percent success. Eight other replications, with minor

variations, at four other biological and medical laboratories produced comparable results. Just as amazing, mice that were re-injected did not get cancer, suggesting they had developed an immunity.

I wish to remind readers that my animal research findings reverse the classic experimental model. I did not begin by

testing mice in a lab, producing a theory that now awaits human application. I went into the lab to verify and gain insight into a procedure that I had already successfully used to cure many people of a variety of medical problems, especially cancer.

Unraveling the mystery of hands-on healing has been the passion driving much of my work over the past three decades. Like most high-stakes, life-and-death stories, this one has not always proceeded smoothly. Along with exhilarating triumphs, I have encountered perverse roadblocks, strange anomalies, and – most discouraging of all – the arbitrary rejection of hard scientific data on the grounds that it is too good to be true. I have also gained intriguing insights into the complexities of human nature, the tragedy of self-sabotage, and the yawning gap between stated desire and behavior.

Over the years I peppered Ben with questions, hoping to find ways to reproduce his experiences. In between discussions on horse racing, astronomy, and politics and our ordering pizza, we evolved what began to look like a process. Recently, I have directed my curiosity toward a question with broad clinical application, “Can hands-on

healing be learned by others using techniques that I have developed?”

Hands-on healing has emerged independently as a tradition in most cultures, including the West, despite having been severely repressed here for the last three hundred years. Since most cultures have independently produced a tradition of hands-on healing, it seems

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reasonable to assume that this ability may be distributed throughout any population, much like artistic or musical talent.

In Western culture, Jesus is still the preeminent model of a hands-on healer, suggesting that this ability is the overflow of a wise, compassionate, highly evolved consciousness. The word consciousness does not have a plural and that may be instinctive wisdom built into the language, reflecting our awareness that all consciousness is connected.

When I met Ben I would say I was open-minded about psychic phenomena in principle, but was intensely skeptical of those claiming to produce it. As a teenager, I had had a number of dreams around death that had proven startlingly prophetic. This motivated me to read some of the popular paranormal literature, most of which was anecdotal and little of which impressed me. I had also taken a noncredit, adult education course on the paranormal at Buffalo State University, with instructor Douglas Dean, a well-respected parapsychology researcher. In the course, Dean reviewed laboratory experiments, conducted with strict protocols, into such phenomena as telepathy and

energy healing. Those did impress me, and I was puzzled as to why so many scientists were hostile toward what appeared to be legitimate results. Unfortunately, I was to find tunnel vision within the whole scientific community, and the bigger the picture became, the more certain the experts were to miss it.

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An obvious problem with energy healing is determining who is qualified to practice. Currently anyone can claim to be a healer, whether through genuine ability, fraud, or self-delusion. I would like to see the development of tests that can show ‘something’ relevant is happening when healing is supposed to be occurring. For example, after I held a beaker of water for several minutes, a chemist friend reported that the water’s oxygenization had increased 25 percent. When he tested other healers, increased oxygenization also occurred, but only by about 1 percent. Does this have anything to do with healing? The field is still too mysterious for us to know.

Perhaps all Creation as we know it is an extraction from a totality, which I have chosen to call the ‘Source. Three psychics have told me the same thing: ‘You’ve touched Source energy.’ Though I don’t know what that means, sometimes I do have an experience of traveling to a place in which everything I need for healing is in infinite supply. My mind moves into super-

consciousness and a sense of higher intelligence, then past that into peace, and past that into Nothingness – a place of pure potential where all possibilities exist at the same time. The higher I go, the less I feel. The Source doesn’t do anything, it just is.

The best way I can describe the Nothing that contains Everything is through the metaphor of white light. Physicists tell us it contains all other colors: when we see red or green or yellow, that’s a subtraction from white.

Perhaps by touching the Source I can give my patients what they need to heal, because the Source offers an infinite number of simultaneous existences transcending time and space. Just as I speculate that Creation may be a subtraction from the perfection of Nothingness, I see disease as a subtraction from perfect health. I find that I am unconsciously drawn to physical need in others, and that somehow I’m able to offer a patient what he or she requires. Instead of time travel backward or forward perhaps I’m able to access some kind of universal energy, intelligence, awareness, or information beyond my perception. I can’t describe any of this more clearly – that’s why we have poets!

What I am sure of, through personal experience, is that this kind of healing is a natural system, not a magical one, which is why it’s also an imperfect one. Sometimes I can help, and sometimes I can’t. What I endeavor to do is to offer patients the whole spectrum – metaphorically, white light – in hopes they can subtract from it what they need in order to return to health. That’s different from my healing them, though out of habit I still use that word. It’s also why I’m always surprised when patients thank me for restoring them to health. While those were my hands moving around, I never feel as if I was the healer.

But is it really necessary for me to tell you these things? In a national survey forty percent of all Americans admitted

to having had at least one profound mystical experience that took them beyond time and space, with many others perhaps too shy to report such experiences. That was touching the Source. And the Source doesn’t pay attention to national borders. In countries where the spiritual is woven more firmly into daily life, the numbers are likely to be much higher.

My hope is that all those who read my book take from it an expanded sense of the resources offered by the Universe, along with a greater awareness of their own potential in calling upon that abundance, not only for healing, but for all aspects of life. The possibilities are infinite. The limitations are our own and we need not faith, not belief, but trust.



William F. Bengston is a professor of sociology at St. Joseph's College in New York, and President of the Society for Scientific Exploration, an

international group of scientists who study anomalies. His areas of specialization include research methods and statistics. For over twenty five years, Dr. Bengston has been doing research into anomalous healing and has numerous publications in the Journal of Scientific Exploration, the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine, and Explore. In addition, he has lectured widely throughout the United States and Europe. His research has produced the first successful full cures of transplanted mammary cancer and methylcholanthrene induced sarcomas in experimental mice by laying-on-of-hands techniques that he helped to develop. He has also investigated assorted correlates to healing such as geomagnetic micropulsations and EEG harmonics and entrainment. He has recently published a memoir, The Energy Cure, with Sounds True, along with a 6 CD set Hands On Healing: A Training Course in the Energy Cure, which describes his healing techniques.