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Direction of Energy

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Direction of Energy is a technique that has proven very helpful in CranioSacral Therapy (CST). It is so simple that it is almost hard to believe. It is performed by "intending" or imagining energy passing from one of your hands to the other through a part of a client's body.

Dr. William G. Sutherland, the "father cranial osteopathy," first wrote about the concept in the 1930s. He was using it to release the joints (sutures) between cranial bones that were "stuck" for one reason or another. He would use his hands to direct energy from one side of the skull to the other through the suture. He believed the energy was somehow recruited from the patient's cerebrospinal fluid and directed into the suture by his hand positions. The suture that was stuck was then mobilized by this energy, and skull bone motion was restored.

In the 1970s I began advocating this technique for any part of the body that was injured, dysfunctional or painful. We found that you do not need the presence of cerebrospinal fluid between your hands in order to direct this healing energy. We have also seen that Direction of Energy can be used effectively anywhere on the body.

We have taught mothers to use it on their children and spouses to use it on each other. We are even successfully teaching this technique to elementary school children who are using it to ease the pain of minor injuries, such as skinned knees. In turn, the children are exhibiting a heightened sense of accomplishment and self-esteem that I believe could go a long way toward helping us reduce childhood violence.

One of the best examples of Direction of Energy I can give you is a personal one I experienced years ago while on the faculty at Michigan State University. It was a Saturday morning and I was pruning some bushes in our yard. As I cut one branch, another snapped back and hit me in the left eye. The pain was excruciating. I tried hard to see out of the eye but all I got was light and blurred images. I controlled my tendency to panic, made my way back to the house, and asked my wife to look at the eye and tell me what she saw. She described an indentation across the pupil.

Fearing the possibility of permanent damage, I went to rest on my bed. After a minute or so of feeling the pain and realizing my vision wasn't improving, I thought, "Okay Upledger, you teach this Direction of Energy stuff all the time. Don't you believe what you teach? Don't you practice what you preach?" I embarrassed myself by my poor demonstration of belief in my own doctrine.

I looked at the clock with my good eye; the time was 11:22 a.m. I put my right hand on the back of my head. The fingers of this hand would be the "sending fingers." Then I cupped my left hand over my left eye so that if I could have seen with that eye, I would have been looking at my left palm.

I started concentrating on sending energy from my right hand at the back of my head to my left hand in front of my eye. It took a few minutes to get started. I had to detach myself in order to focus my attention on sending energy, rather than on fantasies of what life would be like without a left eye.

Would I wear a patch? Would I get a false eyeball? All these things were running through my head. And man, did that thing hurt.

After I got my concentration and focus working for me, the eyeball began to pulsate. As the pulse reached its crescendo, I became aware of heat radiating out into the palm of my left hand. I allowed my fingers to reposition themselves on the back of my head any way they wanted to. As the pulse amplitude built and the heat increased, the pain in the eye got worse. I considered stopping a few times because it hurt so much. Suddenly, there was a "pop" in my eyeball that I was sure could be heard from the living room. The pain went away immediately. All of my panic and fear dissipated, and I could clearly see the palm of my hand with my left eye. I went out into the living room smiling. I wanted to jump for joy. I had no pain; I could see. I asked my wife to look at my eye again. She couldn't find the dent across the pupil, and I had no after-effect from the injury.

In the years since then, I've seen this technique used successfully by therapists in hundreds of different cases. Those of us who have studied CST and learned the technique are helping others and themselves by the use of Direction of Energy.

Years ago I was teaching this technique at the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kan. They suggested it was a form of hypnosis, so they had me do it on babies and animals. It worked, which ruled out hypnotic suggestion. Why not try it for yourself? The worst thing that can happen is nothing. The best thing is that you facilitate healing. That is the power of intentioned touch.
