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JEREMY P. TARCHER / PENGUIN

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# THE PROMISE OF ENERGY PSYCHOLOGY



*Revolutionary Tools for Dramatic Personal Change*

DAVID FEINSTEIN



DONNA EDEN



GARY CRAIG

*Illustrations by Mike Bowen*

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JEREMY P. TARCHER/PENGUIN

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*Dedicated to Jean Houston,  
a giant in our midst*

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The cell is a machine driven by energy. It can thus be approached by studying matter, or by studying energy. In every culture and in every medical tradition before ours, healing was accomplished by moving energy.

—*Albert Szent-Györgyi Nobel Laureate in Medicine*

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A book presenting a method that traces back to a 5,000-year-old healing tradition has a long list of indebtednesses. After a respectful bow to the ancestors, we turn to four contemporaries who paved the way for this presentation: George Goodheart, by bringing the energy perspective of ancient Eastern healing arts into the Western, thoroughly modern form called Applied Kinesiology, provided the foundation upon which this program rests. John Thie, by bringing the principles of Applied Kinesiology to the general public and introducing them as “Touch for Health” to hundreds of thousands of people in at least forty countries, demonstrated that powerful healing methods can be used by laypeople responsibly and effectively. Psychiatrist John Diamond and psychologist Roger Callahan, by independently applying the principles of Applied Kinesiology to emotional issues, fashioned prototypes of the approach presented here.

The immediate predecessor of this book is a training program for psychotherapists and other health care professionals called *Energy Psychology Interactive: Rapid Interventions for Lasting Change*. The book you are holding synthesizes some of the most immediate and practical concepts and procedures from that program, which David Feinstein developed over a four-year period in conjunction with two primary advisors, Donna Eden and Fred Gallo, Ph.D., and an advisory board composed of twenty-four of the field’s pioneers and leaders. These included Joaquín Andrade, M.D., Dan Benor, M.D., Patricia Carrington, Ph.D., Asha Nahoma Clinton, MSW, Ph.D., John Diepold, Ph.D., Jim Durlacher, D.C., Charles R. Figley, Ph.D., Tapas Fleming, L.Ac., Rebecca Grace, Psy.D., David Gruder, Ph.D., Dorothea Hover-Kramer, Ed.D., R.N., Warren Jacobs, M.D., Martin Jerry, M.D., Ph.D., Peter Lambrou, Ph.D., Greg Nicosia, Ph.D., Larry Nims, Ph.D., Gary Peterson, M.D., George Pratt, Ph.D., Lee Pulos, Ph.D., Mary Sise, MSW, Larry Stoler, Ph.D., Judith Swack, Ph.D., Sharon Cass Toole, Ph.D., and Helen Tuggy, Ph.D.

Meanwhile, several hundred lay and professional practitioners have been meticulously describing clinical outcomes and sending them for posting on Gary Craig’s Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) website. Although too large a number to acknowledge individually, that level of documentation is a tremendous contribution to a fledgling field, and some of those cases are presented in this book.

The influence of each of the individuals mentioned above is gratefully acknowledged, along with the courage and inventiveness of growing numbers of practitioners who are successfully applying energy interventions to all manner of settings, problems, and goals. Special thanks also go to Peg Elliott Mayo, MSW, Ron Ruden, M.D., and Joaquín Andrade, M.D., for their valuable comments on earlier drafts of the manuscript. As usual, however, responsibility for this book’s content rests solely with its authors.



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## FOREWORD

Our ability to help people overcome self-defeating emotional patterns, achieve higher levels of psychological well-being, and open their spiritual sensibilities is accelerating at an extraordinary pace. This book introduces you to a powerful development within that unfolding story.

The biochemical underpinnings of awareness—of sensations such as pleasure and pain, drives such as hunger and thirst, emotions such as anger and joy, and “higher” states such as awe and spiritual inspiration—have been identified. “Informational substances” such as hormones, peptides, and neurotransmitters find their way—in one of nature’s most stunning designs—to receptor molecules that are on the surface of every cell in the body.

These “molecules of emotion” shape mood and thought. Significantly, it is a two-way process. Emotions and thoughts initiate a series of cascading chemical and cellular events—including the formation of new neurons—that are the basis of other emotions and thoughts. Some studies suggest, in fact, that meditation may cause neurological shifts that are as potent as our most effective medications for alleviating anxiety and depression.

*The Promise of Energy Psychology* is a synthesis of practices designed to deliberately shift the molecules of emotion. These practices have three distinct advantages over psychiatric medications. They are noninvasive, highly specific, and have no side effects. Energy interventions impact the body’s intricate electrochemical system as well as more subtle energies. *Subtle energy* is a term born of an emerging paradigm that is still just outside the embrace of Western science, though it has long been central to the worldview of Eastern medicine and spiritual disciplines.

These practices focus on energy systems that still cannot be detected by our scientific instruments, though they are well known to the most sensitive healers and sages of every culture in recorded history. The program you are about to begin teaches you about these natural energies and how to influence them to shift patterns of emotion, thought, and behavior that are blatantly dysfunctional, or merely self-limiting.

This book is an early formulation of a new field. It brings unfamiliar methods into the therapeutic and self-help arenas, using tapping as much as talk, aiming for energy integration as much as insight. The procedures, as you will see, can look quite odd. The range of appropriate clinical and self-directed applications is still being debated, but my personal impression, based on my own experience, is that the potential is enormous.

*The Promise of Energy Psychology* grows out of an earlier highly acclaimed work by a team of twenty-seven health and mental-health professionals led by David Feinstein to bring the new tools of energy psychology to psychotherapists. This book brings those methods to anyone who wishes to apply them.

At the same time I was doing my early work on the opiate receptor at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in the 1970s, Dr. Feinstein was there conducting research on psychotherapeutic innovations. Thirty years later his focus has turned to the intersection of psychotherapy and energy medicine. While he has practiced as a clinical psychologist during the intervening decades and in fact pioneered a powerful methodology for helping people transform the internal guidance system he refers to as a “personal mythology,” he has also accumulated some unusual credentials for a psychologist. Not the least of these is that he is married to one of the world’s most renowned energy healers, Donna Eden, a co-author of this book.

Together with Gary Craig, founder of the most widely used single approach to energy psychology, the three have produced a work that is authoritative, engaging, and refreshingly friendly. You will find it an illuminating companion as you incorporate these wonderfully empowering methods into your life.

—*Candace Pert, Ph.D.*

*Research Professor, Georgetown University School of Medicine*

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# INTRODUCTION

## A REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO PERSONAL CHANGE?

*David Feinstein, Ph.D.*

All truth goes through three stages.  
First it is ridiculed.  
Then it is violently opposed.  
Finally it is accepted as self-evident.

—SCHOPENHAUER

Your emotional health, your success in the world, and your level of joy can all be dramatically enhanced by shifting the energies that regulate them. That is the promise of the fascinating new field of energy psychology.

With it, phobias and stubborn anxieties often fade in minutes. The lifelong grip of an early trauma can frequently be released within one or two sessions. Anger can be managed more reliably. Depression can in many cases be alleviated without drugs. Achievements in sports, school, music, and business can be given a powerful boost. Other complex issues can be separated into a network of self-limiting beliefs and dysfunctional emotional responses that are eliminated one by one. Even elusive physical problems may respond where other treatments have failed.<sup>1</sup>

After more than three decades as a clinical psychologist carefully monitoring the field's developments, I find that the energy approach presented in this book is the innovation that has made the most profound difference in helping my clients. Energy psychology can shift problematic beliefs, behaviors, and emotions so rapidly because it allows the therapist to alter the client's brain chemistry

with a precision yet gentleness that is unprecedented within psychotherapy. And while energy methods can be extraordinary tools in the hands of a skilled clinician, perhaps their most important application is how empowering they can be in your own hands.

## WHAT IS ENERGY PSYCHOLOGY?

When James Reston, a *New York Times* reporter accompanying Henry Kissinger on a visit to Communist China in July 1971, had an acute appendicitis attack, Chinese physicians performed an emergency appendectomy. Reston suffered from postoperative abdominal pain, which was treated with acupuncture, a routine procedure in many Chinese hospitals. The publicity surrounding Reston's successful acupuncture treatment, which included a front-page article in the *Times*, is credited with having opened Western minds to the practice of acupuncture. By 2005, the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture had over 1,600 physician members, and the World Health Organization listed more than fifty conditions for which acupuncture was believed to be effective.

Since the early 1980s, Western mental-health practitioners have been finding ways to apply the principles of acupuncture to psychological issues, patterned initially on the work of California psychologist Roger Callahan and Australian psychiatrist John Diamond. While acupuncture is usually associated with the use of needles, less invasive procedures—such as tapping or massaging specific points on the surface of the skin—can also produce the desired effects. This allows therapists not trained in the use of acupuncture needles to still apply the principles of acupuncture, and it allows you to use them on a self-help basis as well.

Energy is the blueprint, the infrastructure, the invisible foundation for the health of your body. Your body is composed of energy pathways and energy centers that are in a dynamic interplay with your cells, organs, moods, and thoughts. If you can shift these energies, you can influence your health, emotions, and state of mind. These energies include electromagnetic impulses, such as those that can be recorded by an MRI or EEG, as well as more subtle energies, which existing scientific instruments are not able to detect. But cultures that are closer to nature have developed disciplines—such as acupuncture, yoga, and qi gong—for working with these energies. As the field of energy psychology matures, it is drawing from these traditional systems while also staying consistent with the storehouse of knowledge offered by contemporary Western science and psychology.

Energy psychology, in fact, builds upon conventional psychotherapies. It works within the context of established psychological principles such as the decisive role of the conditioned response in human activity and the ways that early experiences shape current emotional and behavioral patterns. But energy psychology also has a special card in its deck. Stimulating energy points on the skin, paired with specified mental activities, can instantly shift your brain's electrochemistry to:

- help overcome unwanted emotions such as fear, guilt, shame, jealousy, or anger,
  - help change unwanted habits and behavior, and
  - enhance your abilities to love, succeed, and enjoy life
- 

The procedure allows virtually anyone who learns how to use it greater emotional control, inner peace and effectiveness in the world. But this was not always my assessment of the approach.

## **A SKEPTIC'S JOURNEY**

My personal voyage into the perspective reflected here occurred over many years and with much resistance. I happened to marry a woman, Donna Eden, who was destined to become one of the world's most renowned natural healers. For the first nineteen years or so of our relationship, I did not know what to make of her work. I had early in my own career served for seven years on the faculty of The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, a fount of innovation in health care, but I'd never seen anything like this. As I witnessed people coming to see her from all over the world with serious illnesses report improvement after a session or two, I explained to myself that these outcomes were a product of Donna's empathy, charisma, belief in the power of her methods, and perhaps a peculiar healing presence. I certainly did not think it was a system that could be taught or replicated, and the "subtle energy" explanations that were bandied about by alternative healers seemed more confusing than clarifying.

Donna was receiving overtures to write a book and she asked me, skepticism notwithstanding, to help her tackle the job. The next two-year period was an amazing process. I interviewed her, day after day. I could not pose a question that she could not persuasively answer from within her energy paradigm. Granted, she had one little quirk that was hard to verify: a lifelong ability to "see" energy if it were as visible as the print on this page. Repeatedly, she had, by simply looking at a person's body, made health assessments that were later confirmed by medical tests. While her abilities to see and read energies were far beyond anything I'd personally experienced, her explanations remained coherent no matter how hard I tried to poke holes. That, combined with her accurate medical evaluations and impressive cure rate, pushed me to conclude that effective healing forces were somehow being mobilized by her "energy" approach.

Once the ability to derive meaningful information by reading the body's energies is accepted, then Donna's method turns out to have a strong internal logic. Those who can see energy—and Donna is b

no means unique in this—report that the material world is patterned on a “blueprint of energetic forms.” Medical intuitives who can recognize problems in the flow of the body’s energies (a new genre of electronic instruments can also identify such abnormalities<sup>2</sup>) are able to accurately predict the kinds of physical problems that are likely to emerge before any symptoms or other signs have been detected. And they can prevent the brewing illness by restoring the energy flow. Many healing traditions understand this relationship. In some provinces of ancient China, where work with the body’s energies was highly refined, you paid the physician to keep you healthy. The recognition of energy disruptions before symptoms appeared allowed those disruptions to be corrected rather than to progress and finally erupt into a cancer or heart failure or nervous disorder. If you got sick, more intensive treatments were offered, but they were free.

I eventually realized from the discussions with Donna leading to her book that she operates according to principles that are highly empirical, a fact that had eluded me for nearly two decades. Her approach is based on observation (though through an unusual lens) and experimentation. She sees and feels where the energies are not flowing or not in balance or not in harmony, uses her hands or other means to try to correct the problem and, based on what happens, figures out the next step. Everyone’s hands actually have an electromagnetic field extending beyond the fingers, so simply holding one’s hand over an affected part of the body can have a therapeutic effect, as can massaging, tapping, or holding specific energy points on the skin. Other techniques might include asking the client to move or stretch or contract in designated ways.

Basing her approach on such methods, and also drawing from ancient as well as modern practices—including acupuncture, Applied Kinesiology, and Touch for Health—Donna had formulated hundreds of interventions for correcting specific kinds of problems in the energy system. Why couldn’t these interventions be systematized and made available to anyone wishing to learn them, whether or not they have a special facility in sensing the body’s energies? This became one of our central objectives in writing *Energy Medicine*. Now, with the book widely distributed (U.S. sales in excess of 100,000 copies, and a dozen foreign editions) and many students trained, a plethora of reports has come to us that the procedures work whether self-applied or applied by practitioners who do not have Donna’s sight.

*Energy Medicine* was released in January 1999, and we headed out for a six-month workshop and publicity tour. I took a sabbatical from my private practice as a clinical psychologist in Ashland, Oregon. As the close of the six months approached, the book seemed to be hitting a cultural nerve and at least one reviewer had already referred to it as the “classic” in its field. Demand for additional talks and trainings throughout the world became compelling. I returned to Ashland and, with strong misgivings, closed what had been a deeply satisfying clinical practice in order to support this new turn in Donna’s journey.

While these were exciting developments, I also mourned the loss of my practice and recognized the

I might be leaving forever a career I loved. I was already in my fifties, and I had no idea where energy medicine would lead me. Where it led was right back into psychology. Many of Donna's students were psychotherapists who were applying energy interventions to psychological issues. Because of their influence, I began to study with some of the pioneers in this area. Energy psychology had developed independently of Donna's work, though they are both part of the same Zeitgeist. While I was now open to an energy paradigm, as I educated myself about energy psychology, I discovered that despite this being a relatively new area, it was already rife with controversy, incompatible explanations, and deep schisms about procedures and appropriate claims. This reignited my skepticism, which was further fed because the techniques used in energy psychology look exceedingly strange.

Something else happened, however, that in my mind overshadowed the field's odd procedures and lack of coherent explanations. The outcomes I witnessed seemed remarkable. For a relatively wide range of complaints, the results were more rapid and consistent than anything I'd experienced in my thirty years of clinical practice.

One of the first times I publicly demonstrated the approach, following my own training and certification in it, was during a six-day residential workshop I was teaching in South Africa. Many of the participants were leaders in their communities who had come to learn about the unconscious beliefs and motivations that shape a person's life, what I call a "personal mythology."<sup>3</sup> I had been formulating ideas for integrating energy interventions into the personal mythology model, but I was uncertain how to introduce them. At the close of the first evening, an opening appeared. One of the participants told the group, with great embarrassment, that she was terrified of snakes and was afraid to walk through a grassy area from the meeting room to her cabin, about one hundred feet away. Several participants offered to escort her. Sensing that she could rapidly be helped with this phobia, I thought this might also lend itself to a credible introduction of energy methods. I arranged—with her tense but trusting permission—for a guide at the game reserve where the workshop was being held to bring a snake into the class at 10 A.M. the next morning (having the snake there was not necessary for the treatment to work, only to demonstrate that it had worked).

I set up the chairs so the snake and the handler were about twenty feet away from her, but within her range of vision. I asked her what it is like to have a snake in the room. She replied, "I am okay as long as I don't look at it, but I have to tell you, I left my body two minutes ago." She was dissociating, a psychological defense mechanism in which specific, anxiety-provoking thoughts, emotions, or physical sensations are blocked from a person's awareness. Within less than half an hour, using methods that you will learn in this book, she was able to imagine being close to a snake without feeling fear. I asked her if she was ready to walk over to the snake, across the room. As she approached it, she appeared confident. The confidence soon grew into enthusiasm as she began to comment on the snake's beauty. She asked the handler if she could touch it. Haltingly but triumphantly, she did. She reported that she was fully present in her body. A couple of days later, she joined the group on a nature walk, and at the end when someone asked her if it was difficult, given her snake phobia, a surprised look came over her face. She had never even thought about it. Her lifelong

fear had evaporated and, on follow-up two years later, had not returned.

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I have now worked with many cases that were similarly dramatic and have interviewed dozens of practitioners whose clinical records contain literally thousands of instances that corroborate my personal experiences. This does not constitute scientific proof—case reports never can—but it is not one-person medicine show either.

## **SORTING OUT THE CLAIMS**

The conflicting claims and theories among the field's practitioners were still troubling. Here we had a method that had leaped ahead of all available scientific explanations. It was perhaps unprecedented for an approach with so little theoretical or research support to generate thousands of reports of striking clinical results from hundreds of fully credentialed professionals who represented the whole spectrum of backgrounds and theoretical orientations. What was going on?

As a way of sorting through the field's claims and confusion I, along with Donna and Fred Gallo, Ph.D. (author of *Energy Psychology*, the first academic book to introduce professionals to the field), invited an advisory board of twenty-four of energy psychology's pioneers and recognized leaders to carry out a project that focused on one question: What are the essential principles and procedures that psychotherapists new to energy psychology should master before introducing the methods into their own practice?

The project transformed my computer into a lightning rod for the field's controversies. After four years of wrestling with core questions, a consensus was built, and *Energy Psychology Interactive*, a comprehensive home-study course to introduce clinicians to the field, was released early in 2004. It consisted of a forty-hour computer-based training program on CD-ROM, a companion book, and a client self-help guide. While the broader mental-health field had been slow to embrace the energy paradigm, our program received surprisingly positive reviews. In one of them, the journal *Clinical Psychology* called energy psychology “an exciting and rapidly developing realm” and, after describing some of the controversy surrounding it, concluded that “emerging research suggests that these methods are very effective indeed, extremely rapid, and thoroughly gentle.”<sup>4</sup> In a landmark review, the American Psychological Association referred to energy psychology as “a new discipline that has been receiving attention due to its speed and effectiveness with difficult cases.”<sup>5</sup> The Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology, a 700-member professional organization, honored the program with its Outstanding Contribution Award.



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## HOW THIS BOOK CAME ABOUT

A book based on the authority of the professional training program but designed to bring the new methods to the general reader seemed a natural next step. But it carried some special challenges. By introducing health and mental-health professionals to the field, *Energy Psychology Interactive* had the buffer of each practitioner's professional judgment before the methods were applied with any particular individual. A popular book, however, would not have that buffer.

The person with by far the most experience in bringing energy psychology methods to the general public was Gary Craig. Gary is not a psychotherapist by training, but I had noticed in doing the research for *Energy Psychology Interactive* that many of the leaders in the field would regularly seek his opinion, or direct me toward him, about various professional questions. His kind responses to my requests always offered insightful, practical, experience-based guidance. In addition, he had personally, or through his home-study programs, trained more professionals and nonprofessionals in the basic methods of energy psychology than anyone else; and his training manuals, videos, e-newsletter, and website constituted a significant portion of the field's evolving literature.

The thought of inviting Gary onto the team was almost instantaneous. Trained as an engineer at Stanford, Gary has a remarkable eye for what works and what doesn't work, and he had been one of the early synthesizers of NLP (neurolinguistic programming), self-hypnosis, and other methods for personal improvement. On studying Roger Callahan's "Thought Field Therapy" (TFT), he was stunned to find that simple physical interventions could help people overcome unwanted emotional reactions and conditions with speed, efficiency, and lasting results. He reworked Callahan's approach into the Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), making the methods more accessible to the general public. He has now, for more than a decade, been tirelessly advocating the idea that emotional freedom is everyone's birthright and can be reclaimed by skillfully applying EFT's simple set of procedures, which have powerful neurological consequences. A promoter's missionary zeal does not particularly impress me. Yet the closer I looked, the more impressed I was with the ways Gary's training, website, and newsletter were guiding people to use the methods effectively and with a wide range of issues.

Meanwhile, on the domestic front, Donna had in her own way been practicing energy psychology for a quarter century, and her methods were quite different from TFT or its derivatives. First of all, she did not separate the physical from the psychological in her approach. Second, while TFT, EFT, and various other methods that fall within energy psychology begin by focusing on an issue or presenting problem—usually desired changes in a behavioral, thought, or emotional pattern—Donna's focus was on the body as an energy system. Yet her results often yielded strong psychological benefits.

I asked Donna if she would bring her experience with *seeing* how energy moves when dealing with psychological issues to the book, checking the concepts and procedures against her own observations and introducing methods from energy medicine that might augment the more traditional energy psychology approach (this became chapters 6 and 7). She met the idea with enthusiasm, and the blueprint for the project had been laid. I have written the first draft of each chapter based on interviews with my co-authors and consultation with their earlier writings, combined with my own clinical experience, and they have then reviewed and further revised each chapter

This is a book that can be approached with a “show-me” attitude. Experiment with the methods it presents. Growing numbers are finding them to be potent and rewarding.

## YOUR ELECTRIC BRAIN

Information transmitted by one neuron and received by another takes the form of electrical signals generated by charged atoms.

—JEFFREY M. SCHWARTZ, M.D., *The Mind and the Brain*

Every thought or emotion that you experience causes a reaction in a specific area of your brain. Joy or sadness, love or jealousy—all have distinctive counterparts in the way your neurons fire; modern electronic imaging technology allows us to view the intricate dance in your brain's energies that accompanies your every thought and feeling. If you were to watch the screen of a brain-imaging device such as a PET scanner while you were experiencing substantial stress or anxiety, you would see specific areas receiving arousal signals that make the screen light up like a Christmas tree.

If your brain recognizes a similarity between a distressing situation from your past and what you are seeing or hearing in the moment—even though there is no current threat or danger—the same distress signals that you experienced in the earlier situation can become activated. Although it may seem unreasonable, the emotional response can be overwhelming. Or it might be more subtle. Perhaps your spouse's voice hits just the tone of your parent's voice right before you got spanked, and you are suddenly angry at your spouse and fiercely defending actions that weren't being criticized. Though people often are not aware of it, this basic sequence—where a current situation activates an outdated response—is at the root of many of their difficulties, from dysfunctional patterns in their relationships and self-defeating choices on the job to unnamed anxieties, unprovoked bouts of depression, and irrational jealousy, fear, or anger.

Energy psychology shows how you can stimulate specific points on your skin that will send electrochemical signals directly to your brain. If at the same time you hold in your mind a situation that triggers an unwanted emotional response, you can actually *shift your brain's response* to that situation. It is an unconventional approach, yet it frequently produces undeniable improvement in one session and often works where other approaches do not. You can also stimulate points to help you achieve specific personal goals, like thinking more positively, speaking more confidently, or eating more sensibly. This book shows you how.

## **RAPID SUCCESS WHERE YEARS OF THERAPY HAD FAILED**

Despite seventeen years of psychotherapy for symptoms of posttraumatic-stress disorder (PTSD) tracing back to the Vietnam war, Rich's <sup>1</sup>insomnia was so disabling that he had checked himself in two months earlier for yet another round of inpatient treatment at the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Los Angeles. When he tried to sleep, any of more than a hundred haunting war memories might intrude into his awareness. He felt trapped in these overwhelming images, and every night was dreaded and interminably long. Every day was clouded with exhaustion and further anxiety. He could not function effectively. He also suffered from a severe height phobia that had developed over the course of some fifty parachute jumps he had made during the war.

Rich was one of twenty patients treated by Gary Craig and his associate, Adrienne Fowlie, during a weeklong visit after a hospital administrator had invited them to demonstrate the effects of energy-oriented therapy on emotional trauma. Rich's treatment first focused on his height phobia. He was asked to think about a situation involving heights. His fear level shot up immediately. He was wearing short pants, and he pointed out that the hair on his legs was literally standing up. At the same time, as he brought to mind the terror of facing a height, he was directed to stimulate a series of electromagnetically sensitive points on his skin by tapping them with his fingertips. Within fifteen minutes of using this procedure, Rich reported no fear reaction when imagining situations involving

heights. To test this, Gary had him walk out onto the fire escape of the third floor of the building and look down. Rich expressed amazement when he had no fear response whatsoever.

Gary then focused on several of Rich's most intense war memories, using the same tapping procedure. They, too, were similarly "neutralized" within an hour. He still remembered them, of course, but they had lost their debilitating emotional charge. Gary taught Rich a technique for stimulating energy points that he could apply to his remaining memories outside the treatment setting. He complied with this homework assignment, focusing on several of the more intense memories. Eventually, there was a "generalization effect" in that, after a number of the traumatic memories had been neutralized, the others lost their overwhelming emotional charge. Haunting memories simply stopped intruding into Rich's awareness, even at night. Within a few days his insomnia had cleared, and he discontinued his medication. He checked himself out of the hospital shortly after that. At a two-month telephone follow-up, he was still free of the height phobia, the insomnia, and the intrusion of disturbing war memories.

Most of the twenty V.A. Hospital patients that Gary and Adrienne worked with enjoyed near-immediate, readily observable results for PTSD symptoms that had in many instances resisted years of psychotherapy. Sessions with six of these men were videotaped and are available for inspection,<sup>2</sup> including the work with Rich.

Successful energy interventions have been demonstrated in a range of difficult situations. In Kosovo, for instance, 105 victims of ethnic violence, after receiving energy psychology treatments from an international team in 2000 over a period of several months (TFT, or Thought Field Therapy, was the primary modality), experienced "complete recovery" (based on self-reports) from the posttraumatic emotional effects of 247 of the 249 memories of torture, rape, and witnessing the massacre of loved ones they had identified.<sup>3</sup> Although such anecdotal accounts are scientifically equivocal, their impact on the local community was profound, with the chief medical officer of Kosovo (the equivalent of our surgeon general), Dr. Skkelzen Sylja, stating in a letter of appreciation:

Many well-funded relief organizations have treated the posttraumatic stress here in Kosova. Some of our people had limited improvement but Kosova had no major change or real hope until . . . we referred our most difficult patients to [the international treatment team]. The success from TFT was 100% for every patient, and they are still smiling until this day [and, indeed, in formal follow-ups at an average of five months after the treatment, each was free of relapse].

If your own situation is as tough as or tougher than Rich's or than that of the victims of ethnic violence in Kosovo, you should be using this program only in consultation with a psychotherapist. If not, some important cautions still apply. So in either case, please carefully consider the guidelines presented later in this chapter under the heading "What This Book Can Do and What It Can't Do" before applying its methods.

# RAPID RESULTS, SLOW ACCEPTANCE

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You might think based on the outcomes described above that every relief organization and every V.A. hospital in the country would be experimenting with these methods. That is not how it played out. In professional practice, as in human history, an old way is not necessarily immediately replaced just because a better one appears, particularly when the new way cannot be understood using familiar concepts. Most relief workers have still not heard of, or at least have not investigated, the methods offered by energy psychology. As for V.A. hospitals, the evolution has been interesting. Initially there did not seem to be *any* curiosity on the part of the treatment staff. Even with the conspicuous, rapid help the men described above were receiving for the stubborn symptoms of PTSD, none of their therapists accepted invitations to sit in on the sessions. None responded to offers to watch the videotapes. And though most of the patients expressed strong enthusiasm and appreciation, no one on the clinical staff indicated any interest in hearing more or learning more.

The V.A.-hospital episode is a microcosm of the way much of the psychotherapy community initially responded to energy psychology and its unconventional techniques. <sup>4</sup>Though unfortunate—people such as Rich who could have been helped haven't been helped—it is also understandable. Seasoned clinicians have learned, through hard experience, to be reluctant about embracing new methods before they have been scientifically substantiated; and the methods discussed here are just starting to command the attention of serious researchers. While the professional atmosphere is becoming more receptive <sup>5</sup>—a number of V.A. hospitals, for instance, were a decade later routinely training their clinical staffs in these methods with good results <sup>6</sup>—psychotherapists are, of course, skeptical upon hearing claims that strange and unfamiliar methods produced near-instant cures of long-standing problems. Beyond suspicion about the odd-looking procedures used in energy psychology, therapy is not believed to be so rapid. Time is needed for building rapport, examining the antecedents of the problem, exploring the meaning of the symptoms in the person's life, assessing which therapeutic modalities are most appropriate for the unique situation, applying them, observing, and revising.

What might account for the contrast between the videotaped outcomes with the patients at the V.A. hospital, corroborated by thousands of similar cases reported by growing numbers of energy-oriented psychotherapists, and conventional wisdom regarding the therapeutic process? If we try to understand the results in terms of the stock concepts of psychotherapy—such as insight, cognitive restructuring, reward and punishment, positive expectation, or the curative powers of the relationship—they make little sense. If we examine electrochemical shifts in brain chemistry that are brought about by stimulating points on the skin that are known for their electrical conductivity, however, a coherent explanation for these rapid shifts in long-standing patterns of mind, emotion, and behavior begins to emerge.

The brain-scan images shown on the inside back cover of this book tell the story visually. They

show a patient's progression over twelve treatment sessions, conducted during a four-week period. The treatment involved tapping electrochemically sensitive areas of the skin while bringing to mind anxiety-provoking images. The patient was being treated for generalized anxiety disorder. Where a fear or phobia is a response to a specific type of situation (such as Rich's fear of heights), generalized anxiety disorder is characterized by persistent *free-floating* anxiety, accompanied by symptoms such as tension, sweating, trembling, light-headedness, or irritability (such as the unrelenting nervousness, insomnia, and physical tension that were part of Rich's PTSD). The brain scans show that the disturbed brain-wave activity found at the start of treatment with the patient suffering from generalized anxiety disorder had normalized by the end of the treatment.

By comparison, matched patients at the same clinic who were successfully treated with cognitive behavior therapy, a conventional treatment for generalized anxiety disorder, showed a similar progression of brain scans, but it took a greater number of sessions before the brain-wave patterns had normalized and, on one-year follow-up, the improvement was less likely to have held. Patients who were treated with medication also showed a decrease in symptoms, but the brain scans did not show significant changes in the brain-wave patterns, suggesting that the medication had masked rather than treated the disorder. And indeed, in addition to frequent side effects being reported with the medication, symptoms tended to return when the medication was discontinued.

## HOW DO ENERGY TREATMENTS WORK?

Growing understanding about the relationship between electromagnetic energy and the molecules that carry information throughout the body is causing conventional medicine to rapidly update the old perspective that treats the person primarily as a bag of chemicals and organs. The EEG, EKG, PET, and MRI are diagnostic instruments that allow us to glimpse the dazzling intelligence of the body as an electrical system. Your brain, for instance, consists of some one hundred billion neurons that each connect *electrochemically* with up to ten thousand other neurons in governing your every movement, feeling, and thought. Despite this incomprehensible complexity, powerful treatments are being devised that influence the brain's electrical activity in precisely the ways needed to overcome a range of psychiatric and other medical disorders.

- The magnetic stimulation of specific areas of the brain, for instance, has been shown to help with major depression that did not respond to other therapies, [7](#) as well as with bipolar disorders. [8](#)
- The surgical implantation of deep brain stimulators—devices that deliver precisely targeted electrical stimulation in the brain—has helped thousands of patients with Parkinson's disease to control their symptoms. These “brain pacemakers” are also being used with some success to stimulate the vagus nerve in treating severe depression, obsessive-compulsive

disorders, and other neurological conditions. <sup>9</sup>

- More closely related to the approach described in this book, because it is based on the client's own efforts, is neurofeedback training. By using EEG biofeedback to teach patients how to alter their brain-wave patterns, improvement has been demonstrated for a wide range of psychological disorders, including attention deficit disorder, hyperactivity, depression, anxiety, migraines, panic attacks, PTSD, seizures, impulsivity, and cognitive performance. <sup>10</sup> Neurofeedback training does, however, require expensive equipment and has a longer learning curve than stimulating points on the skin.

Except for such still-rare and sometimes invasive applications, however, Western medicine has so far produced very few treatments that take full advantage of the ways the body's energies can be directed to mediate the complex flow of biological information that influences health. Energy psychology, on the other hand, is part of a coming wave of such approaches.

While Western medicine may be slow to understand the body's subtle energies and even slower to accept that these energies can be used in healing, other cultures have been working with energy healing for thousands of years. From tribal healers throughout the world to Hindu yogic practices to traditional Chinese medicine, models for working directly with the body as an energy system are plentiful. One of the most elaborately developed systems, and one that has held up relatively well to Western scientific scrutiny, is the practice of acupuncture. Acupuncture is not only among the oldest known medical treatments, extending back some five thousand years, it is one of the most widely used health-care systems on the planet.

In acupuncture, the tips of needles are inserted at specific points in the skin to treat pain or disease. An acupuncture point, or acupoint, is a tiny area of the skin with significantly lower electrical resistance than other areas of the skin. <sup>11</sup> Acupoints also have a higher concentration of receptors that are sensitive to mechanical stimulation; and specific points, when stimulated, send signals directly to areas of the brain that are associated with emotions. The electromagnetic properties of the acupuncture points can be activated by tapping, massaging, or holding them, as well as through more intrusive means such as the insertion of needles, electrical stimulation, or the application of heat. At least 360 acupoints are distributed along a network of energy pathways that is called the meridian system. A more accurate translation (from the Mandarin) than "point" is "hollow," and because of their lower electrical resistance, acupuncture points have been called "windows" into the body's energy system. <sup>12</sup>

These entryways into the body's energy system can be used for restoring physical and mental health. <sup>13</sup> Stimulating an acupoint can send impulses to areas of the body that are far away from the point itself. For instance, an acupuncture needle inserted into a specific point on the toe can be seen in a "functional MRI" (fMRI) as affecting blood activity in the brain, <sup>14</sup> though no nerve, vascular, or other physical connections are known to exist. Another study, also using an MRI, demonstrated that



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