



Surfing the Energy W.A.V.E.

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ENERGY W.A.V.E. 1402 446th Ave - Pickerel Lake, Grenville SD 57239
www.energywave-energymedicine.com 605-590-0899

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"...many hormonal and physical stress reactions...also triggered is a core body muscle called the psoas..."

Physician Combines Energy and Medicine

By Astrid Pujari, MD, ABIHM (1)

I am one of those rare birds--a physician who uses energy medicine daily--in her medical practice. For those of you who are curious about my specialty, I am board certified in both Internal Medicine and Integrative Medicine. I have been invited to share with you how I combine two, apparently different paradigms -- the Western medical model and the subtle energy viewpoint. Before I do that, however, I think it makes sense to talk about why someone would attempt to do that in the first place.

One of the oldest professions in human history is that of the healer. As long as people have lived on Earth, they have had times when they got sick and as a result, they have needed and turned to others for help with their healing. Looking back through recorded history, we also notice that healers traditionally came from both a spiritual, as well as, a physical perspective when treating a patient. It is only very recently, since the advent of "Western Medicine" in the past few centuries, that we find healthcare to be an industry, devoid of--and even afraid of mentioning-- the spiritual component of healing.

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Back/Hip/Knee Pain: A Contract with Stress

By Penny

Stress has been scientifically associated with numerous physical and emotional issues. Each person's stressors may be unique, but it's not unusual for stress to take up residence in a person's body. "Stress is the trash of modern life--we all generate it but if you don't dispose of it properly, it will pile up and overtake your life." (1) How do you know if stress has made its home in your body? Pain is often the first sign.

When the brainstem, our reptilian brain, determines the body is in danger (whether true danger or not) there are many hormonal and physical stress reactions: adrenalin and cortisol are produced, blood leaves the brain to pool within inner organs, and muscles contract--all in milliseconds to provide the "fight/flight/freeze" response. The body's adrenal glands, located on the kidneys, are the hormonal messengers triggered, but also triggered is a core body muscle called the psoas (pronounced "so-az"). The psoas muscle attaches the top and bottom halves of the body together; it is attached to the diaphragm (muscle which helps us breathe), to the 12th thoracic vertebra and the 5th lumbar vertebra of the spine, and also to the top of each thigh bone. It's a muscle which helps us walk because it's the only muscle

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Tension & Relaxation

Chinese Proverb

Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are.

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When I say the word “spirituality,” what do I mean? Obviously, that is a big topic. For purposes of this article, I am referring to the great intelligence found in life. Now think about all the cycles of nature you learned in biology class - one example being the streams which flow to the ocean, make clouds, rain, and begin the whole process again - and notice that all of these ecological cycles operate in balance with each other on Earth. No human created any of this. We are simply born into it. No one teaches a tree how to work - it just does. Even our most well-designed computers, of which we are so proud, do not compare when it comes to the sophisticated workings, growth and self-actualization of a simple tree.

Although most people do not spend a lot of time thinking about it or take it for granted, the proof of life’s great intelligence is right in your own body, in your dog, and in the flower you planted last spring. Just like nature, even though we do not create that intelligence, we can acknowledge it, respect it, and harness it wisely for our use. Healing comes from that great intelligence. Every life form has within it the capacity to heal.

Which brings us to the question, “*What are the elements we need to foster healing intelligence in ourselves and in others?*” For me, this is where both Western and energy medicine have a lot to share. Western medicine helps to point out that it is important to take care of our physical bodies and that when we do certain things - like exercise - we make it easier for our bodies to heal. Western medicine also knows that without the intrinsic healing intelligence of the body, even the best medicines fail. For example, even the most potent antibiotics will not heal a person without the help of the body’s own intrinsic power to fight infection which we call the “immune system.” A bone will not heal, no matter how well placed, if the body’s cells do not participate.

Energy medicine, on the other hand, points out the importance of our inner world - our beliefs, emotions and subconscious motivations - which can either enhance or block our natural healing intelligence. All of us have experienced the power of our minds to hurt or help us - that is, some thoughts are love centered and others are fear based. Repeated thoughts or feelings based on fear create contraction in the energy field of the body which then can lead to physical illness.

One of the greatest benefits of perceiving energy, in my opinion, is that you get a “shortcut” - you can directly perceive a negative thought or feeling pattern, even subconscious - in the energy field and its ramifications on health. This allows the client to take action directly and immediately which engenders faster healing....[and] if thoughts and feelings are energy, then you and the client can work on these patterns by working directly on the energy field. This will enhance the results you get from other healing modalities, including Western medicine. In addition, healing happens when we are honest. You cannot heal something unless you first acknowledge that a problem is there. Energy medicine helps us to achieve this honesty because the more human beings learn to perceive energy, the more we will have to take responsibility for the type of energy we put out. We can no longer ignore the impact of our thoughts and feelings on ourselves or on the world, because they will become more and more tangible to us and to people around us.

In my practice, then, energy medicine is helpful for several reasons. First, it helps me and my clients to understand more directly what some of the negative thought and feeling patterns are that are blocking healing, and what needs to shift inside to change that. Secondly, it points out the clear and simple fact that we are all connected, because if everything is energy, we are all one, we all belong and are loved. This allows us to live in greater honesty and transparency which accelerates our ability to heal. In combination with the Western medical emphasis on a healthy body, I find it to be a powerful combination.

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connecting the spinal column to the legs. And this muscle seems to have an intimate contract with back, hip, and knee pain...and stress.

“Whether you suffer from a sore back or anxiety, from knee strain or exhaustion, there’s a good chance...a constricted psoas muscle might be contributing to your woes. Intimately involved in the fight or flight response, the psoas can curl you into a protective fetal ball or flex you to prepare the powerful back and leg muscles to spring into action. Because the psoas is so intimately involved in such basic physical and emotional reactions, a chronically tightened psoas continually signals your body that you’re in danger, eventually exhausting the adrenal glands and depleting the immune system. [Releasing] your psoas can rekindle vital energies by re-establishing your connection to your body’s internal signals, your instinctual somatic wisdom. With a properly functioning psoas, the bones bear weight, the muscles move the bones, and the joints connect the subtle energies of the body. Energy flows through the joints, offering a sense of continuity... [and the] psoas, by conducting energy, grounds us to the earth, just as a grounding wire prevents shocks and eliminates static on a radio. Freed and grounded, the spine can awaken.” (2) In the worlds of yoga and sports medicine there are numerous stretching positions which can be of benefit to the psoas.

In the world of energy medicine there are also a number of techniques which help release stress, as well as benefiting the psoas and diaphragm muscles. A technique called “Connecting Heaven and Earth” is one of my favorite energy techniques because it’s an easy stretching which affects not only the psoas but many other muscles, opening up numerous subtle energy meridians to expel toxic energies, improve immunity, and stimulate fresh energy flow through the joints. (Meridians provide energy to numerous organs such as heart, stomach, large and small intestine, and kidneys.) This technique helps me feel more grounded, calm, flexible, and energized by harnessing healing energies and improving my mental wellbeing.

For a fun demonstration of this technique, check out this Youtube video featuring Donna Eden, the founder of Eden Energy Medicine. **NOTE: If you decide to try this technique, be sure to stretch slowly and carefully so as not to overdo it the first few times, and also be sure to bend your knees slightly when bending forward at the end of the technique so as not to put too much pressure on your lower back.**

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=90cnjqlqsmQ>

(1) Terri Guillemets

(2) Liz Koch, Yoga Journal Aug. 28, 2007; <http://www.yogajournal.com/article/practice-section/the-psoas-is/>



1402 446th Ave - Pickerel Lake
Grenville SD 57239

Phone:
605-590-0899

E-mail:
Penny.energywave@gmail.com

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