

How I became an Energy Practitioner By Dawn Warnaca

- Originally published in *Marlene's Sound Outlook, A Newsletter for Healthy Northwest Living*, September, 2010

- Updated, December 2011.

“You will never be well – as long as you live – but your condition can be managed with medication.” I wonder if those words, from my doctor, are what touched me, deep enough to spur me beyond my comfort level. This trusted professional loved me, cared for my welfare, but had no hope and offered me no hope of healing.

The high wire I stepped out onto included changing doctors, beginning body work (a form of massage), and I began to work with an energy therapist. I loved all three – oh, don't get me wrong - each of these practitioners could share with you my initial fear and trepidations. I didn't even give the massage therapist my real name! Oh, how I wanted to hide from what I was facing.

I acknowledge that Energy Work chose me, for I did not enter into it intentionally – or rather my intention was just to explore it from a student perspective, instead of client.

I attended my first full time college class, which just happened to be the first day that I was completely medication free. I had been granted a one year leave of absence from my office assistant position in the local elementary school where I had worked for 14 years. I loved my job, I loved the staff, and I loved the children – both those that presented as child and parent. I was fully supported by those who loved me to try my hand at higher education. It also appealed to me to learn more than academics. As I embraced instead of resisted what I jokingly referred to as my mid-life crisis, the earth itself seemed to rise up and become a safety net. Stepping out, did not mean stepping off.

That Fall a Level 1 Healing Touch class was offered in Seattle, and it gave a \$100 discount for full time college students! I maturely arrived as a

curious skeptic, my ignorance about energy work profoundly revealed when the discussion soon turned to the chakra system. What the heck was a chakra? As I was currently a model college student, I asked questions, lots of questions, I listened, and, I participated. Healing Touch classes are only part lecture. The real lessons come in the hands-on practicing of the techniques taught.

My skepticism was tempered by my enthusiasm to try these techniques out – on just about anyone that would sit still. It was the feedback from these family, friends, and the occasional fellow student that complained about a sore shoulder or twisted ankle – that peaked my curiosity. My hands felt cool, but they reported them as warm. They felt vibration at the same physical location that I felt vibration. Pain, stress, and depression were measurably changed. I was able to help them – but I knew it wasn't really me; it had to be the techniques, the energy work, but the question remained – how did this work?

My husband, Mike, was vocal and supportive from the beginning. He willingly submitted to my experimentations – with the text book on his stomach, or the middle of his back. He wasn't lying, and was as surprised as I when the pain level in his back was reduced by 80 or 90%. He deals with chronic back pain from a high school trampoline injury. He told me that he preferred HT to massage. "Massage hurts" he said, while Healing Touch allowed his body to relax. He soon offered to pay for my Level 2 class... level 3, level 4 and more, oh so much more! Reiki, Thai massage, and aromatherapy classes have also broadened my field of study.

I graduated from Pierce College having perhaps the unique opportunity to combine my interest in Healing Touch with basic studies. I prepared an ethnography on a Healing Touch Practitioner for Anthropology, studied the healers in Shakespeare, researched Healing Touch for English, wrote a business plan in Marketing, and compared the ethics standards of the American Psychologist Association, American Anthropology Association and Healing Touch Program in Linguistic Anthropology. The more I learned the simpler and more profound the mystery became. I came to appreciate my passion, and the passionate teachers that have walked with me.

I have completed the 5 levels of training with the Healing Touch Program, which included a one year mentorship. I applied for and was granted certification in March of 2010. Complementing my current status, I recently completed a qualified mentorship course; I am one of three practitioners in the State of Washington up to date on the current standards and requirements in the Healing Touch Program. More recently I have completed Level 6 – the Instructor level and will soon be a Certified Healing Touch Level 1 Instructor.

My 'condition' no longer requires medication management, yet I continue doctoring. I see it as self care or preventative maintenance; healing for me is much more than managing symptoms, healing means getting out of the circus, a stop to the performances, juggling acts and clowns. It means embracing my human condition, whatever that may be, for as long as I live.