

THE JOURNAL OF STRESS MANAGEMENT

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THE SOCIETY OF STRESS MANAGERS TRADING AS THE SOCIETY OF STRESS THERAPISTS

The Association for Professional Stress Managers & Hypnotherapists
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STRESS: the reaction people have to an imbalance between the demands they perceive to be placed upon them and the resources they have to cope.

The Society of Stress Managers was incorporated as a professional body on 1st February 1999. The Society is a Registered Company Limited by Guarantee and has a Council of Management with a provision for nine Directors and the Company Secretary. The Objects of The Society are:

to establish and promote a professional association for those persons qualified to nationally accredited standards in the skills of stress management and hypnotherapy;

to promote the training and continuing professional development of those persons;

to do all such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of these objects.

To meet these Objects The Society has adopted a 'Code of Conduct, Ethics and Practice', which sets out the principles that members of a professional association should follow at all times, both with their clients and their fellow Stress Managers. These principles include the ethical values of honesty, integrity and probity.

All hypnotherapists registered with the CNHC are expected to abide by the **CNHC** Code of Conduct, Performance and Ethics.

All members and potential members are invited to contact the Secretary of The Society of Stress Managers, Peter Matthews, for further information (see details below).

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Last acceptance date for inclusion of contributions in the next Journal is 1st MARCH 2012.

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to Journal 9. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Members will be aware that Journal 8 was not produced in hardback copy. This will continue with Journal 9 and future Society Journals. However, the Council looks forward to the time when the Journal can again be printed in hardback format.

Gill Hines, the membership secretary, will already have reminded members that if they have not yet read Journal 8 they can access it on the Society website, and of course can download a copy if they want to. In future Gill will notify members and others who regularly receive our Journal when future Journals are published on the Society website so members can have an early opportunity to read the Journal.

Members will also have received information from Peter Matthews about insurance. This is very important information, so please be sure you thoroughly understand the situation.

CPD

All members registered with the CNHC will have received a copy of the *CNHC Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Standards* – a guide for CNHC-registered practitioners. This document clearly sets out the CNHC CPD requirements, to which registered members must adhere. The policy will come into effect from the first of September 2011. All registration renewals from September 2012 onwards will need to confirm that the required CPD has been done. CPD has now become a must-do activity if members wish to remain CNHC-registered. Don't wait and make it a rush job later on. Start your CPD now.

Members will already have been advised that the Society Council will organise a national CPD meeting scheduled to take place on the 11th November 2011. Members are invited to attend the event, during which they can add to their CPD portfolios. If the November meeting is a success there

will be two more, held in April and October 2012. It is planned to have three meetings a year on a regular basis in the future. Members can therefore gain most of the CPD accreditation they require from these meetings. For any other CPD meetings outside the Society I am sure members will have to pay an attendance fee. The meetings will also provide an opportunity to meet Society colleagues and will provide a forum for discussion and social contact. CPD is a **must-do activity now**, so take advantage of the Society's CPD meetings. I look forward to seeing you in November.

You will also have been informed about the new trading name of the Society of Stress Managers: the Society of Stress Therapists. The Society Council directors believe that this new trading name more accurately reflects the work our members do.

Journal 9 again welcomes guest authors who have sufficient respect for the Society Journal to spend their time writing articles for it. We welcome a first article from Jenny Lynn, 'The need for hypnotherapists to develop a thorough psychological underpinning to their practice'. Jenny is very active on the internet and many of you may have seen the material she publishes. Terence Watts has provided a follow-up article to his Journal 8 article 'An effective way of working'. I am sure members will find the article interesting and useful.

I had a ghastly time in July this year. My computer crashed and I was without a computer for some time. I curse my computer frequently when using it, but how I missed not having it. Worst of all the engineer, when attempting to transfer all my saved files from my old hard drive to my new one, transferred only half the files, then wiped the old hard drive clean thinking he had transferred all the necessary files. He gave some complicated reason why this happened that I will not bore you with. Suffice to say, I had some pretty 'red hot' words to say to him (xxxx) which are certainly not for publication.

Anyhow, I got my new computer and after getting used to the different software compared with my old computer, sailed forth again with the wind in my sails and the old event left in the past where it belongs.

At one time during the computer calamity, I thought about giving it all up and just spending time in my garden and other calming activities. During this time I read an absolutely hilarious article about retirement which I hope you don't mind me sharing with you. The following is the best retirement pension plan I have ever heard of:

Outside Bristol Zoo there is a parking lot for 150 cars and 8 buses. For 25 years, its parking fees were managed by a very pleasant attendant. The fees were £1.40 for cars and about £7 for buses. Then one day, after 25 solid years of never missing a day of work, the attendant didn't turn up; so the zoo management called the city council and asked it to send them another parking agent.

The council did some research and replied that the parking lot was the zoo's own responsibility. The zoo advised the council that the lot attendant was a city employee. The city council responded that the lot attendant had never been on the city payroll.

Meanwhile, sitting in his villa somewhere on the coast of Spain or France or Italy... is a man who'd apparently had a ticket machine installed completely on his own and then had simply shown up every day, collecting and keeping the parking fees – estimated at about £560 per day – for 25 years. He made the fees so low that nobody ever complained about them. Assuming seven days a week, this amounts to just over seven million pounds... and no one even knows his name.

That made me laugh so much I forgot all about my computer episode. What a pension. What a man. I am working on my scheme now. What can I do? Maybe.....

Mike Dillon

AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF WORKING

Terence Watts

A very powerful and effective way of working with the Warriors, Settlers and Nomads concept to produce a rapid change for your client is to have them find, with your help, a character in their mind for each of the personalities. (See *The Journal of Stress Management*, Volume 8, Pages 8 to 12.)

- **The Warrior**, for instance, might be Genghis Khan, a Crusader from the middle ages, or even Boadicea;
- **The Settler** could be a farmer, a philosopher or a teacher;
- **The Nomad** could be a Bedouin or a Gypsy dancer, or maybe a famous adventurer – Christopher Columbus, maybe.

It is not necessary to be gender-specific, so if your lady client finds a Black Night as her Warrior, let her be happy with that. Use hypnosis to create an anchor to the resources that belong to whichever 'archetype' is being developed, so that when your client needs those resources, all s/he has to do is to vividly recall the image for a few seconds and absorb the *feel* of that personality. For example: an individual could access 'their' Warrior to help them be more assertive and confident – or stop blushing, perhaps (would a Warrior blush upon entering a room?), or if they needed more 'pep' in their personality, they could visualise the Nomad to help them be more outgoing (would a Gypsy dancer be retiring and quiet?). All you have to do is to assess which of the three would be best suited to dealing with the problem your client has presented.

There are many ways we can use this; the following is effective, though you will be able to find other ways.

Before we can get on with the real work, we have to ensure credibility within the client for what we are about to do. This is something that is best done by detailed explanation of the three types and by carrying out the personality test given above. Describing the Ancestral Memory hypothesis shown in the previous article can also help greatly, because of the scientific and evolutionary 'feel'.

From there we can continue to one of the most important facets of this work – developing each archetype.

An important point

This is most important: we must get agreement from our client that they would like to create the imaginary images of the archetypes before progressing, because it is essential that the client feels in total control of the process. This also helps to build a 'yes set', which will help us no end.

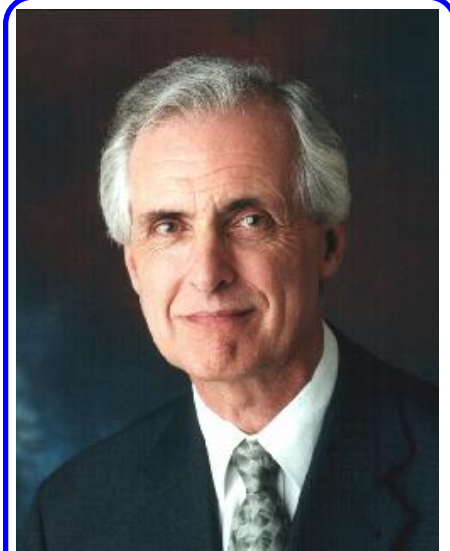
On the rare occasions when we get a 'No' at this point, we have something to work with, using your 'standard' psychotherapeutic skills to explore the reasoning. There is usually a fear of some sort present in the psyche and it may even be the cause of the client's presenting problem; sometimes, it is fear of the concept of one of the parts (often Warrior); in other words, our client is frightened of herself! Of course, this is not uncommon in a timid individual who may well be anxious about her suppressed or repressed feelings of aggression. Whatever we find, it is essential that we release the resistance before we proceed.

Having got a 'Yes' from our client, we work in a conversational manner, encouraging the development of each Part to a reasonable level, remembering that Parts can be of a different gender from the client and asking questions to ensure that they are focussing sufficiently:

- "Tell me what this person looks like."
- "How does s/he sound?"
- "How tall is s/he?"
- "How is s/he dressed?"
- "What is his/her name?"

Some clients – and some therapists – may well want to refer to these parts simply as 'Warrior' or 'Settler' or 'Nomad'. This is perfectly in order and will not affect the outcome; a good way to discover what works for your client is to ask: "Does he/she have a name?"

You should always ensure that your



Terence Watts

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Terence has been in practice as a hypnotherapist since 1989. He is the author of several books on hypnotherapy and psychotherapy, including Warriors, Settlers & Nomads, Rapid Cognitive Therapy, and Hypnosis: Advanced Techniques in Hypnotherapy and Hypno-analysis.

He has presented extensively at home and abroad, including the USA and Hong Kong, and has written many courses and manuals. In 2007, he gained Membership of the City and Guilds Institute for his work with Psychosexual Dysfunction, and is so far the only member of the psychology-related professions to have achieved this award.

client seeks to develop a positive version of the particular part; it is sometimes necessary to find a way to despatch one that shows more of the negative characteristics of the type than the positive – for instance, a 'shifty' and/or unreliable Nomad, or an aggressive and tyrannical Warrior. This exercise, in itself, can result in a

much improved 'way of being' for your client.

The VMI

Usually, by the time you have done this with the three parts, your client will have entered into the spirit of it all and will begin to volunteer extra information. Keep going until you have a clear picture of each of the archetypes. This is probably a good time to introduce the concept of the Vivid Mental Image – the VMI; you will be using that concept quite frequently and it is something that the vast majority of your clients will love to do. The VMI is simply a mental image that is as complete as it could possibly be; there is an awareness of the height, weight, shape and bearing of the archetype, the way they move, their clothes, voice, body scent... everything, in fact, that you could become aware of in a living person who you knew very well. It is possible to develop this VMI to the point where the behaviour of a Part can be confidently predicted for any given circumstance.

If we now encourage our client to recognise that the personality they have 'created' is actually a true part of her own psyche, a part that actually exists in her mind and can be accessed whenever they need it; this is a confidence-boosting therapy in itself. You will need to emphasise this and be sure that the client takes it fully 'on board' that this is a part of them. Many clients will be astonished that they can develop such a clear image of a type of personality that they have always believed was not part of their 'way of being'; it is useful to point out the concept of: 'if you can see it, you can be it'. Sometimes this is all that is needed, as one of the case histories, later on, illustrates.

The VMI task complete (this may not be until the second session), we can begin to use hypnosis, though it is not necessary to name it as such. I usually just say something like: *"Ok, in a moment or two, we will start to see just what those parts can bring to bear on your difficulties. Just allow your eyes to close and steady your breathing for a moment or two... that's right... just let your body relax as much as you want to"*. After this, you should allow maybe a minute before starting with

the therapy itself.

Getting involved

This is where the work proper begins, when we get our client actually communicating with each Part, either separately or together. It really is most important that we give her total control – we only act as a guide, somebody who knows how to help the client create her own symbolic world from her own imaginative processes. It is easy enough; we simply ask the client if they want to talk to whichever part is relevant or present, then wait for an affirmative before proceeding. The next thing is to instruct the client to ask the Part if it will agree to talk to her.

Sometimes, this is where we hit a small stumbling block, where the client 'feels silly' or for some other reason does not enter into the spirit of things. The best way through this is to allow them to be as dissociated as they need at the beginning and then gradually increase the amount of involvement.

This is actually quite easy. All we need to do here is ask the client to imagine what the Part would say about the situation, if it was in the real world. We can go a little further by explaining that all solutions come from the creative part of the mind, and that what we are doing here is to let that creative part work without restriction for a little while. Most clients will go along with this, and once they start talking they will gradually become immersed in the concept, many of them becoming noticeably enthusiastic as they become aware that they do have answers, even if those answers are not yet workable in reality. They learn that they can be creative, and if they can be creative, then they can find an answer.

It is worth recognising that the Nomad Part can present in many guises and can even appear as the child part of self. This Part may actually change during the session, allowing us access to some of the deepest and darkest corners of the psyche. Much expression will be carried out through the Nomad Part, and it is a good idea to teach your client about this ability to change and the inherent expressiveness. Generally speaking, the Nomad is associated with the child

within; the Warrior with parental or other influences; the Settler with the sense of self.

The meeting

This method is excellent when seeking to access hidden or dormant resources. It is important that the client has defined the area in which they need to work. We are seeking to get all three parts in agreement with a plan of work, which will help our client to achieve her goal.

We suggest to our client that they imagine themselves in a comfortable room in which there is a table with four chairs positioned around it. Our client takes a seat and waits for the Parts to enter one by one and take their places at the table; once they are all seated, the meeting can begin. When working in this way, we get our client to describe how they feel as they communicate with each of the Parts. Subsequent communication will help our client to recognise strengths within him or herself.

The trick is to attempt to find a plan, one which is agreeable to all three Parts, even if one or two of them are only prepared to 'give it a try' – then, of course, there will be a need to re-evaluate the situation later on.

Although this is essentially a logical style of working, as long as your client 'plays the game' and tells you the first thing they think of each time you ask a question, much subconscious work will surface. Some problems will be solved by this direct method; others may need more advanced ways of working, including symbolism and fantasy work. Whatever method of work you employ, it is essential that you become totally at ease with the concept that follows...

Communication

This is sometimes the tricky bit unless you handle it confidently, for this is where some clients will become inhibited. Probably the best way to handle this is to have your client converse – always remembering to get agreement first – with the relevant part of her mind and then tell you what has been said. We can and sometimes should guide the conversation, especially at the beginning.

It matters little whether we are talking to a Warrior, Settler or Nomad Part, or to an animal or even non-human Part. Never forget that the Part is simply the communicator for the creative and imaginative part of our client's psyche, and that whatever representation it has, we are communicating directly with our client's subconscious mind! So our first task, as therapists, is to ensure that the right questions are asked in order to guide our client to a solution, or at least an offset, for the presenting problem. There are many ways to work, but the important thing is to get dialogue going.

Sample questions to client:

- "Do you want to talk to (Part)?"
- "Is there anything you want to say to (Part)?"
- "Is there anything you'd like to ask (Part)?"
- "Is there anything (Part) has to say to you?"
- "What does (Part) mean, to you?"
- "How does (Part) fit around your problem?"
- "How do you feel in the presence of (Part)?"

Assuming that the client is in agreement with the idea of conversation, we can suggest that they ask the part:

- "Will you talk to me?" (This is an essential question)
- "What is it that you want?"
- "What are you here for?"
- "What are you going to bring into my situation?"
- "What do you need?"
- "What stops you from having that?"
- "What do you try to do for (client)?"

Of course, you may recognise that there are specific questions relevant to your client's situation and as you work it is entirely possible that you will need to investigate conflicts that come to light. For example, it might be that the Warrior and Nomad parts are completely happy about a plan that will produce a greater income, while the Settler is ill at ease with a feeling that somebody might be in some way disadvantaged if the mooted plan were to be brought to fruition. Then, conversation with the Settler might allow a compromise of some sort; or perhaps the Nomad would agree not to let the Warrior get too controlling,

while the Warrior agrees to help Nomad keep a grip on the tendency to irresponsibility. The important thing is to find agreement.

If you have temporarily finished communication with a Part, but now need to access another Part, always ask the client to ask the Part if it will 'wait there' for a little while. You will be surprised how often there is a sudden recognition that this Part does not want to wait and is in fact most anxious to resolve something – and in those circumstances, the answer you and your client are seeking is almost to hand.

Helping the client

It's ok to help a little if the client seems to be struggling, but in general, we must let the client do most of the association work. When working with the 'WSN' concept, you will quite often discover a negative Part or sub-part that needs to be changed or accepted in some way. It is your client who must decide the course of action and how to carry it out – your job is to ensure that they work at this until there is a feeling within your client that this task has been completed. This is the signal of subconscious change, of new and more positive resources being accessed.

Because we need to ensure that the limitation of logic is not brought to bear, we must insist that our clients tell us the first thing that comes to mind as an answer to the question, without judgment or criticism. This is probably the most important element of this style of therapy, since it is that first response to a question that is most likely to be from the workings of the non-critical subconscious, the objective part of self that 'knows' the best way forward, taking all elements into account. The client ignoring this first thought is a form of resistance, possibly stemming from the fact that for a whole variety of reasons the best solution, which may be some form of compromise, is not one that immediately appeals to conscious logic.

When the client 'double-takes' or spends more than a couple of seconds finding a response, they are almost certainly being selective with the answer, perhaps seeking to avoid an

uncomfortable truth. Whatever surfaces, we must always accept it as the right answer; our own lack of judgement and criticism is just as important as that of our client. We work with what we are given, helping our client to discover the workable truth of the answer.

Whatever method of work is chosen, something that is most important is that your client must be able to relate what transpires to their presenting problem. Often, they will find this understanding as a matter of course but sometimes you will need to offer encouragement by asking something like: "And what sort of sense does this make to you?" at the right moment. This is the point at which they may well realise that they have been creating their own obstructions for years.

The aim is to get a conversation going in which each Part states what it wants so that any conflict with the other two parts can be resolved. The following gives some idea of how this works – there will often be lengthy pauses in the client responses.

Therapist: "Ask Nomad what he thinks of what Warrior wants?"

Client: "He thinks it's far too boring. He wants to have a bit more fun."

T: "Ask Warrior if he can help with that."

C: "He says he can, if the Nomad will get up a bit earlier instead of laying about in bed."

T: "And what does Nomad say to that?"

C: "He's a bit put out but he says he'll give it a try."

T: "Is Warrior ok with that?"

C: "He is... but I don't think Settler is too happy."

T: "Ask her why."

C: "She says that Nomad stays up late but needs to get enough rest. She wants him to get to bed a bit earlier."

T: "Ask Nomad if he heard what Settler said."

C: "He did. He's not very happy about it because he enjoys late nights."

T: "Ask him if he can think of finding a way to agree."

C: "He says he'll go to bed earlier during the week but wants to stay up late at weekends."

T: "And what do the others think of that idea?"

C: "Warrior doesn't think it will work but he's happy to give it a go. He'll try to help. Settler thinks they should

all give it a try. Warrior and Nomad agree with her."

T: "So they all have an agreement, then?"

C: "Yes... they'll give it a go."

This small example is merely to give you an idea of how we might conduct a session; most of the time, a conflict will take a lot longer to resolve. Once agreement/compromise has been reached, we have one more task to perform... reintegration. This an important task, and failure to carry it out properly might well mean that the session work is wasted and the client can feel uncomfortable for a day or two, as they are not quite 'together'.

The easiest method is to have the three Parts joining together in a kind of 'group hug' and becoming as one before being totally absorbed into your client's psyche. Allow your client to perform this task on his/her own – there should be no need for guidance

from you at this point, other than to outline the procedure as you have just read.

The last thing that you should say in the working part of the session is something like: "When you are quite sure that you have absorbed all those parts back into yourself, and not before, then you can allow your eyes to open. Don't rush, there's plenty of time. Only when you're sure you're quite ready...". Then just wait for as long as it takes, within reason. If you should feel the need to hasten things a little – and this should not be until at least 2 or 3 minutes have passed – you can say: "Ok, in your own time now... just getting ready now to... open your eyes... and be awake and aware...".

Inductions

Matching the induction to the personality type produces a better

state of hypnosis, and does so more quickly:

- For the **Warrior**, a good confusional induction is recommended
- For the **Settler**, keep it nice! A general relaxation method will work well
- For the **Nomad** it must be anything novel that will hold attention. Imagining breathing in through the fingers and out through the toes is always good – there's a good free script for this, along with many others, at:-

http://www.hypnosense.com/index.php?main_page=page&id=51&chapter=2

The book **Warriors, Settlers & Nomads** is available from www.hypnosense.com as well as on Amazon and the Anglo-American book company and other bookstores

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

Although this item is included as 'on the lighter side', there is nevertheless a significant underlying message. Is health-and-safety political correctness spiralling out of control? It is an important consideration for all therapists, in relation to the way they work, their practice and waiting rooms, even the buildings they work in, whether their own home or a building other than their home. What effect will it have in the future? Will common sense prevail, or will there be just more and more nonsensical rules and regulations? So now the lighter side:

Important new Christmas regulations

Political correctness – health and safety

Due to complaints received from the two members of the 'Association Against Fun and Games' and an Eskimo living in the Outer Hebrides, the following regulations will come into force on November the first 2011.

Jingle bells

*Dashing through the snow on a one-horse open sleigh,
Over fields we go – laughing all the way.*

A risk assessment must be submitted before an open sleigh is considered safe for members of the public to ride. The risk assessment should also consider whether the use of only one

horse is appropriate – particularly if passengers are of larger proportions. Permission from landowners must be gained before entering any 'open fields'. To avoid offending those not participating in the venture, it is required that only 'moderate laughter' is used and not at a noise level likely to be a nuisance to others.

Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer

*Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer, had a very shiny nose,
And if you ever saw it, you would even say it glows,
All of the other reindeers used to laugh and call him names,
They never let poor Rudolph join in any reindeer games.*

You are advised that under the Equal Opportunities policy it is inappropriate for persons to make comment upon the ruddiness of Mr. R. Reindeer.

Name-calling contravenes our anti-bullying policy, and further to this, the exclusion of Mr. R. Reindeer from any reindeer games will be considered discriminatory, and disciplinary action will be taken against anyone found guilty of this offence.

A full investigation will be implemented, leading to imposing sanctions such as the banning of hanging up stockings or enjoying Christmas dinner.

(Submitted by the Editor.)

THE NEED FOR HYPNOTHERAPISTS TO DEVELOP A THOROUGH PSYCHOLOGICAL UNDERPINNING TO THEIR PRACTICE

Jenny Lynn

The proliferation of hypnotherapists and hypnotherapy as a treatment option has been phenomenal in the last ten years. Once the only hypnotherapist in my small town, I'm now competing with at least three others that I know of. However, the range of styles and interventions under the general term 'hypnotherapy' is diverse, ranging from pure suggestion through to analysis, regression and on into past life regression, to name but a few. It is a minefield for clients out there searching for the right hypnotherapist for them. And it can likewise be a minefield for hypnotherapists, knowing which clients they can and cannot help.

Becoming NHS fit for practice

In light of the recent publicity from the Royal Society of Medicine* around the misuse of hypnotherapy to induce false memories, and the NHS drive to employ more and more hypnosis in their range of treatment options, it would be useful if you had a sound and solid foundation to your practice. That may well mean studying to achieve an understanding of the underlying psychology that would support all the hypnotherapy training you have embarked on to date.

Why do I suggest this? I hear again and again from newly qualified hypnotherapists who are becoming students and supervisees of Open Mind's Integrative Therapy Training and membership site all the fears and anxieties that surround their practice. Here's a common story:

"I've seen a client for a single session (or a couple of sessions) of hypnotherapy. I've since had a message from them that they're having depressive thoughts and are feeling low since the therapy. I'm naturally worried that I've awoken something dark in them and may have caused them harm." All those aspirations to help others have suddenly turned to anxieties. Why might that be?



Jenny Lynn is a practising integrative psychotherapist and hypnotherapist of ten years, the first five years of which were spent working alongside her local GPs and Primary Care Trust, offering integrative psychotherapy and hypnotherapy to sufferers of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. It is from here that she developed her well-known course 'Unlocking the mysteries of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome'. She is also a practising Buddhist of nearly thirty years.

She now not only runs a busy private practice, but also is a supervisor accredited by the HA, the National Council of Psychotherapists, and the APHP. She also runs a Continuing Professional Development programme for the working hypnotherapist. Jenny identified early on in her career progression that as many hypnotherapists were working from scripts and protocols, a large number suffered with performance anxiety and stress. She realised from her first sojourns into training her hypnotherapist colleagues that many lacked a psychological underpinning to their work. As a result, she has now developed a range of options involving additional psychotherapy skills to engage hypnotherapists in their ongoing professional development. Jenny has presented to the following professional bodies: The Hypnotherapy Association, The Association for Professional Hypnosis and Psychotherapy, The HypnoSummit, European Transpersonal Association (Switzerland), The James Braid Society, and the Association of the Institute for Clinical Hypnosis. She has also had a number of articles published in professional journals. You can learn more about Jenny's work on her website: www.theopenmindtherapist.com.

How easy is it to go into practice as a hypnotherapist?

The world of hypnotherapy enjoys a rare privilege in the personal development industry: you can fast-track your way to being a professional hypnotherapist in one year – and sometimes even less. There aren't (m)any other professions as life-changing as being a hypnotherapist that you can train for in just one year – and bear in mind, that's often just one weekend a month. Most health care providers, from doctors to nurses, from psychiatrists to counsellors, are generally required to follow at least a two-year and often a three-year full-time course as a minimum.

For the prospective hypnotherapist, a cursory glance around the internet will reveal a lot of claims and sensationalism about how it can cure or treat almost anything. Coupled with a relatively high price tag on an hourly session rate, and prospects may well be queueing up to train at their local hypnotherapy training school. They'll invest maybe £1500 to £2500 or more in a bit of training lasting perhaps ten months, and they'll be looking for evidence that this business is all that it promises to be.

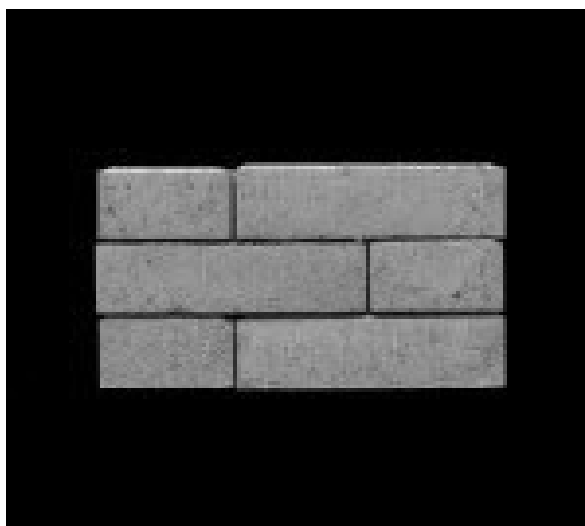
Infected by media propaganda, hypnotherapy has become a commodity, packaged up as a cure-all: an intense, effective and life-changing programme that will cure almost anything. However, anyone who's tried and failed, or is currently struggling in practice, will know that the reality is vastly different from this.

So what really happens in practice?

The practice of hypnotherapy is of course very different from the way it's packaged up and sold. While some clients may well respond in a very predictable, textbook way, many will not, and as a hypnotherapist you can be left feeling inadequate and underskilled by a client's challenging issues.

In practice, clients arrive with all sorts of weird and wonderful psychoses and neuroses that don't fit in to any kind of

routine script or technique. The sophistication of the mind is phenomenal, and the subconscious will use many ways to protect itself, which may well defy your sincere attempts at helping your client to resolve their issue. They may block your hypnotherapeutic intentions. To ensure that they never get to work on their deeper issues, they may use all sorts of interpersonal strategies with you – a type of game-playing – for example turning up late for



Are you on solid foundations?

appointments, accusing you of causing them upset, or dropping a nugget of something you can really work with, moments before the session ends and you have another client waiting (knowing full well they can avoid talking about it again next time).

Those are some of the obvious games. The more subtle games are played so unconsciously and form such a part of our general theory of mind, our ideas of social engagement, that they pass almost unnoticed. For example, I have heard many times supervisees say such things as, "I don't want to offend my client", or "This client seems very dependent on me and I don't want to let her down". These are born of the unspoken contracts that we make in our general social engagement: we protect other people's feelings, in these cases, by avoiding unpleasant truths, and we do our very best to be dependable even though we find our friends/associates difficult to manage. To do anything but this is seen, socially, as

confrontational, unpleasant or even selfish.

However, the hypnotherapist is not their client's friend. As a hypnotherapist, though without any deeper personal psychological awareness or underpinning, these rules of social engagement are still being played out in the therapy room. Behaving as such, adopting the usual social rules, will create the same traps for the client that they habitually find themselves in and may well be complaining of.

When techniques cause more problems than they solve.

Let's say, for example, that your client comes to you with a lack of confidence. After a couple of sessions, you start to feel frustrated with your client because they're very anxious and your hypnotherapy interventions aren't working as effectively as you'd like. You try harder to find a solution for your client. But the harder you try, the further away the answer seems to be. You realise that you're developing a dread or dislike of this particular client. Every time you see them

it's the same old story. Meanwhile, your client, being sensitive, is aware that your techniques aren't helping them as much as you'd like. They try harder to please you, but being anxious and lacking in confidence, they add pressure to themselves. There comes a point where they keep fulfilling their own prophecies that they just don't have the confidence they need to stand up to people and defend themselves in social situations. Your relationship with them: a case in point.

The subconscious mind – where is it? What is it?

One of the most fundamental tenets of hypnotherapy is that our conscious behaviour is driven by our subconscious minds. Bear in mind that this is a working hypothesis, a theory or a construct that works well for the hypnotherapy world. Depending on which trainer, which school and which ethos, different schools of hypnotherapy will regard gaining access to the subconscious mind in different ways. Some will look for an 'ISE' – initial sensitising event – to

current day trauma or phobias. Others will look to childhood experiences for everything in a regression or analysis-style intervention. Others don't waste their time looking into the past and concentrate on a more dynamic or cognitive style of hypnotherapy, manipulating symbols that may represent various forces in a client's current day environment. Yet others believe that the reading of a script, written by someone else that treats a particular mental or emotional presentation, will access the subconscious mind.

It is assumed that the subconscious mind is a kind of storehouse for all of our manifest behaviour. In the storehouse are beliefs and patterns that have been established and their origins or reasons for being there forgotten. Hypnotherapy aims to reach those forgotten and abandoned contracts we made with ourselves so that we can change the presenting problem.

The idea of the subconscious mind is so fundamental to hypnotherapy and the assumption that hypnotherapy can access it and change it, that as a general principle it doesn't need explaining to the general public or the medical professions. However, despite that truism, the world of hypnotherapy can be divided into two camps: those who seek to change without needing to understand – suggestion hypnotherapists or script readers who are following a protocol that has been thought through by someone else, and those who seek to change with personal realisation and awakening – which involves a more engaging way of working. Either way, hypnotherapy attempts to access the subconscious mind directly, bypassing the critical factor of the conscious mind.

To do or not to do, that is the question.

However, how do we know when it is best to let sleeping dogs lie? How do we know that revisiting some kind of traumatic memory, if the subconscious mind allows access to it, won't retraumatise the client? How do we know whether the client really understands what they need from a therapist and isn't just intoxicated by all the media hype surrounding hypnotherapy? The answer, in my

opinion, is that we don't. Unless you know how to listen and question in a psychotherapy-type way, you may not know which technique will best suit, which approach will best work, and what kinds of blocks your client has to getting well, despite the fact that they're in your therapy room asking for help. And unfortunately, unless you have a deeper awareness of your own blocks and impasses, you're unlikely to take a client who has the same blocks as you have any further. It is the proverbial blind leading the blind. This is what the Royal Society of Medicine was concerned about at their last meeting in June 2011.

Stepping up to the mark using psychotherapy

Becoming a reckoned-with force in the world of hypnotherapy doesn't mean we have to grudgingly 'water down' our practices by investing in psychotherapy training. I've met many hypnotherapists on various forums who are vehemently anti-psychotherapy, claiming that the therapeutic process just takes too long. These extreme views in themselves are often tell-tale signs of a therapist's personal blocks: perhaps they had a bad experience with psychotherapy (there are poor psychotherapists too!), or perhaps they have picked up clients who also had a poor experience with psychotherapy. It does not mean psychotherapy per se is unhelpful, just the psychotherapist.

Whatever those views, there is no question that underpinning your hypnotherapy practice with some psychotherapeutic knowledge may well make you more grounded, more centred and more confident in your practice. You stand to get to know more about what different kinds of language and behaviour patterns indicate, what kinds of games your client is playing with you, how to be authentic and real in your therapy chair, how to stay centred when your client is unstable, how to use the therapeutic relationship to illustrate a client's stuck point, and how to use hypnotherapy with great insight and sensitivity. And over and above all this, it is a sound business decision to be more flexible and referable to your client base.

A hypnotherapist with psychotherapeutic knowledge can drift in and out of empathy with a client, can identify their own blocks more easily, can remain dispassionately compassionate, can maintain boundaries and can model for a client how to be authentic, congruent and confident. After all, much of what is going on with our clients is the internal conflict between their own interests and those of other people in their environment. The client has erected any one of a number of personal mental and emotional constructs in order to try to maintain some equilibrium, which invariably causes more problems than it solves. Modelling authenticity, and showing them that it's fine to do that, can remove some of their neuroses as effectively as can hypnotherapy.

In my opinion, knowing how to do all this, to be authentic etc. whatever your therapeutic leaning, is absolutely central to being a therapist. And yet, many hypnotherapists never get this opportunity to develop. Cast off from their schools of hypnotherapy, hypnotherapists find themselves affiliated to the professional association of the school they trained with, perhaps even perpetuating the school's own blocks and misunderstandings among their peers. Let's face it, we came into this profession to treat people and earn a living at it, not to uphold a brittle and inflexible professional ethos that places a block between you and your clients. Growing up in this profession and becoming a fully endowed hypnotherapist requires you to make your own path while broadly working within some general ethical guidelines.



Are you a heroic therapist?

Why be a therapist?

The world of therapy attracts to it people who want to remove another person's pain and misery. Why are we driven to do this? Probably because we know from first-hand experience how it feels to have to go through our own pain and misery, but in our case to recover. If we can save other people from their misery then we can make use of our own pasts. A certain altruism mixed with a messianic awakening spurs us on. We may have achieved a certain closure on our own pain and feel we are ready to share the fruits of our journey with our clients. However, that may not be the end of it.

What if one of our clients appears to be headed to that place we only narrowly escaped ourselves? What if we can't help this one? What if we can't get to the root of this one's problems for them? A number of my students have found me because they can't work out why what worked for them doesn't work for their clients. With the rapidly growing awareness that you need more than just techniques to reach your clients, hypnotherapists who haven't yet studied the foundations of psychology, or more accurately, psychotherapy, could unwittingly lay themselves open to accusations of causing more harm than good.

How will it benefit my hypnotherapy practice?

The benefits of having a psychotherapy underpinning to your hypnotherapy practice are as follows:

- You can assess more quickly what is going on subconsciously without using hypnotherapy
- You can reach your clients by using skills in listening and questioning which lead your clients to awareness
- You can feel more comfortable in the therapist's chair as you release



Create calm in your hypnotherapy practice

the pressure to perform 'tricks' in every session

- You can create insights, awareness and change by talk alone
- You can learn to use any outcome in a therapy session to enhance your client's increasing self knowledge
- You can learn how to identify faster which clients need which kind of input
- You can become much more flexible in your hypnotherapy practice
- You can choose to use talk instead of hypnotherapy if a session calls for it
- You can cater for your client's modality far better with a broader range of skills
- You will increase your client list
- You will reduce your need to 'prep'
- You will increase your income
- You will enhance your reputation
- You will be able to help more clients with more issues

In my opinion, if we as hypnotherapists want to become a force to be reckoned with, we need to have psychotherapy skills and personal awareness. In addition to gaining the acceptance many look for through conventional routes (the NHS, private medicine, and insurance companies), becoming truly integrative as hypno-psychotherapists means that we raise

our profile, gain more clients, gain more job satisfaction, and become known for being a first resort instead of a last resort.

The way forward

It would be hugely beneficial if the word 'hypnosis' didn't automatically conjure up fears of having someone dabble in your mind, of losing control, of accessing traumatic memories that the conscious mind had forgotten, giving hypnotherapy the reputation of being sidelined as a cooky, crazy, voodoo thing to do. Hypnotherapy is a very powerful process used by people who

have an organic or holistic overview of their clients. In the hands of the uninitiated it can be a dangerous, reputation-damaging technique that in some cases does more harm than good; and that damages our whole industry.

In my opinion, we ourselves as hypnotherapists have to overcome our own blocks to integrating our practice with psychotherapy skills. Treating individuals who are all vastly different requires great insight and awareness. Knowing which techniques and which skills to use comes from a deep personal inventory of who we are, which a psychotherapy training will afford. And especially in a time of recession, it has never made more sense to incorporate a more holistic approach to reach more people and attract more clients.

Jenny Lynn

Integrative hypno-psychotherapist
www.theopenmindtherapist.com

*<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/cowboys-hamper-use-of-hypnotherapy-to-treat-nhs-patients-2293490.html>

QUANTUM PHYSICS: DOES IT SUPPORT THE IDEA OF ENERGY HEALING?

Michael Dillon

The following article is a follow-up to the article published in Journal six in April 2010, 'Mind Power Healing – can hypnotherapy help clients with physical healing?'

The Quantum Field

In India the idea of a reality deeper than the materialist interpretation of reality has an ancient history. Many modern-day philosophers believe that the Greeks were greatly influenced by ancient Indian philosophy, expressed by the Greek philosopher Socrates and his pupil Plato, who taught that the world of our sensory perceptions is a distortion, a mirage, much like shadows dancing on the ground.

In Sanskrit the word 'Maya' refers to the **illusion** that we perceive the true nature of things through our senses. However, 'Maya' claims that we really only take a very selective aspect of reality, because beyond the manifest physical universe there is a field of energy information and an intelligence that orchestrates and creates the material environment.

Eastern philosophy has always claimed that there is a mystical power at the core of existence and that everything that happens springs from this essential life force. It has been known by many different names in various cultures and in different eras over the centuries. But the Far East – where the life energy force is known as 'chi' – has produced the most penetrating insights into this primal energy, as well as the most powerful application of it. Much of this wisdom is associated with the martial arts, including karate, jujitsu, tai chi, and aikido.

In Western societies, these ancient beliefs were more or less discarded when Newtonian science was claimed to be the answer to how the world exists and operates. However, is this most basic state of creation of Eastern belief the same energy force that quantum scientists refer to as the 'quantum energy field'? Are these energy forces one and the same?

Cutting-edge scientific 'quantum' discoveries persuasively suggest that a field of intelligent energy pervades the whole universe and connects all things contained in the universe. It is not beyond us or out of our reach, and it knits the whole universe together as one unified field and connects to everything that happens. The field of pure energy makes us part of everything and everything a part of us. This energy field has been put forward as a reality by leading quantum physicists based on painstaking experiments and research, not on anecdotal evidence. As everything in the universe was originally created by stardust, the idea of a unified origin is scientific fact.

From earliest times mankind has always had a belief, or at least a hope, that there is something beyond human capability that they can obtain help and assistance from in living their earthly life. There is now powerful evidence through the research and discoveries of quantum physics to suggest that this source of help is a scientific possibility.

It has been established that even the smallest particle in the universe is a part of every other particle, and that each particle is a minute replica of the whole universe. The universe can be considered as a gigantic hologram, and it is known that the smallest particle of a hologram produces a 3D representation of the whole hologram. So every smallest particle of the universe is a representation of the whole. That means everything in the universe is interconnected in a very fundamental and powerful way, because everything in the universe, including planet Earth and all that exists upon it, are made up of these same small particles. When it is realised that there is a strong belief among the majority of scientists that the whole universe exploded from a small collection of particles no larger than a pea, an explosion generally known as the 'Big Bang', it can be appreciated how logical this is.

The world based on the theory of chaos and separation has been severely tested by the discoveries made in quantum physics. The pioneers of this relatively modern science have peered into the universe with modern cutting-edge technology and have been astounded by what they have found. The tiniest pieces of matter are actually not matter as previously believed. They are not even constant, but sometimes one thing and sometimes something else quite different; not constant, but a field of fluctuating energy.

Even more dynamic, these subatomic particles have no function in isolation but are effective only in relation to everything else. This suggests that the universe is a dynamic web of interconnected energy.

Everything in the universe is a part of everything else. Matter in its elemental form cannot be divided into individual units; it is completely indivisible. It is not constant, but constantly changing. For instance, a photon light particle or electron can be in two places at the same time. This is called bilocation, which is seemingly not possible in human reality as we know it, but very common in the subatomic quantum world. In the quantum domain, a particle or electron can go from here to there without crossing the intervening space. Electrons appear to go from nonexistence to existence without a cause-and-effect process. So can these smallest particles move faster than the speed of light? Quantum physicists refer to this strange property in the subatomic world as 'nonlocality'. Does this mean we can reach out beyond our five senses to the subatomic world around us that we are part of?

"We still do not know one thousandth of one percent of what nature has revealed to us".

Albert Einstein.

Some of the qualities of the quantum field are:

*It is everywhere and manifests itself in everything.

*It is holographic; every miniscule part is a complete copy of the whole.

*It manifests itself in different vibrations, and all these vibrations can occupy the same location in space and time; yet none of them distorts or interferes with the others.

*It is constantly transforming and evolving – just as the human race is transforming and evolving. There isn't any regression in the field. It's continuously developing.

Quantum physics suggests that the universe does not consist mainly of empty space, but is a field of fluctuating energy. It has also been discovered that space is not silent either, as the following testifies:

For many people, the ethereal images of outer space such as glowing orbs against a backdrop of blackness present a sense of **stillness** and **silence**.

In fact, there is sound in space; and what's more, each planet, moon, and orbiting system has a distinctive 'musical' pattern, embedded in an electromagnetic vibration that is created through interactions between their magnetosphere and the solar wind, all created by energy.

How do we know this? These vibration patterns were recorded during the journeys of NASA Voyager 1 and 2, using highly sensitive equipment connected to the exterior of the spacecraft. Under ordinary circumstances, the sounds in space are inaudible to the human ear. However, during many space journeys astronauts have reported mystical experiences. Were these experiences created, in part, by astronauts' subliminal response to space sound?

Through experimentation, an extraordinary method of 'decoding' these vibrations enabled them to be heard through speakers, allowing people for the first time ever to experience audibly the sound of the universe beyond planet Earth. It is believed that these space sounds awaken primordial mystical cords in the heart of a person's subconscious mind, creating a profound sense of connection to the universe.

It is not possible in this article to go into any great detail about the findings of quantum physics, but there is plenty of information in books and on the Web for those who would like to find out more. Suffice to say it has influenced what many prominent scientists believe about the universe we live in.

The majority of quantum physicists started their careers with the following concepts:

*Humans are survival machines largely powered by chemicals and genetic coding.

*The brain is a discrete organ and the home of consciousness, which is also largely driven by chemistry, by the communication of cells and the coding DNA.

*Man is essentially isolated from his world, and his mind is isolated from his body.

*Time and space are finite, universal orders.

*Nothing travels faster than the speed of light.

Quantum physicists have discovered that something much more impressive than haphazard evolution was happening. Human beings are not just genetic survival machines. Something much more interesting has been discovered. A decentralised but unified intelligence existed that is far more fundamental and refined than Darwin or Newton had imagined. A process that was not random or chaotic, but intelligent and purposeful. They discovered that in this dynamic flow of quantum energy, order prevailed. In the past, many individuals had experienced premonitions or past life happenings, clairvoyance, or faith healing, which were usually dismissed by traditional scientists as a freak of nature or a confidence trick.

However, the work of these quantum scientists suggested that such happenings were not abnormal and hinted at human abilities beyond what previously had been imagined possible; that indeed this new science, far from reducing us to our lowest common denominator, would help mankind take a giant evolutionary step by helping us to understand the true nature of the universe.

Not least these findings have helped to support the healing potential of

complementary therapies, which have more or less been believed beneficial since man's earliest times, but at last we can begin to understand why they work. If we can discover how energy healing can be applied with quantifiable success the possibilities for physical and psychological healing would be almost limitless. Perhaps healing could be achieved more by feeling than thought processes.

Many quantum physicists have come to the conclusion that the bedrocks of many traditional scientific beliefs are probably wrong. Among the new concepts are:

*The communication of the world does not occur in the realm of Newtonian theories, but in the subatomic world of quantum physics.

*Cells and DNA communicate through frequencies.

*The brain perceived and made its own record of the world in pulsating waves.

*A substructure underpins the universe that is essentially a recording medium of everything, past present and future, providing a means for everything to communicate with everything else. (See 'stranger than fiction' later in this article.)

*People are indivisible from their environment.

*Living consciousness is not an isolated entity. It increases order in the rest of the world.

*Does the consciousness of human beings have incredible powers, to heal ourselves, to heal the world, in a sense to make it as we want it to be?

The quantum field does not mean that there is no external reality, or that the whole universe literally takes place inside our heads. What it does suggest is that the physical universe does not have any qualities or attributes in the absence of a conscious observer. One simple example of this is our seeing colour as an attribute of physical reality. When we look at the Union Jack we see red, white and blue. When we look at grass, we see green. But colours are not really inherent to the reality. Instead, the phenomenon of colour is a response made by the human nervous system to stimuli from the environment, which, it is claimed, has its origins in the quantum field.

However, like everything else in its early stages of discovery, some of what is stated in this article is based on supposition. But there is one indisputable fact: that all matter in the universe, including the human body, at its basic atomic level, is made up of **vibrating energy**.

So with the discoveries of quantum physics, we are poised on the brink of a revolution. At the very frontier of science, new ideas are emerging that challenge everything we think we know about how our world works, and how we define it.

So, going back to the article heading, **‘Quantum physics: does it support the idea of energy healing?’**

Let us examine the following quantum physics suggestions:

*Reality is created by observation. There is no reality in the absence of observation.

*In order to observe something, we have to create a representation of it in our minds. If it is not observed it does not exist in our reality.

*Everything in the universe, space, mass and time, is composed of energy.

*Thought and emotion at a fundamental level are generated by energy.

*Quantum physics states that if we can move the symptom from its space, by altering the energy, the symptom will collapse.

*Everything interpenetrates everything else. Reality is an undivided wholeness.

*Implicit order is the energy force that unites the universe: the empty spaces between material manifestation and the empty spaces between thoughts.

*Explicit order: this is governed by energy contained in the universe.

*Quantum physics qualifies the principle that everything in creation is created by energy.

Mind-body science has certainly developed progressively over the last ten to twenty years. It could be argued that many therapy modalities engaged in ‘the treatment of mental disorder by psychological means’ use processes that are probably ahead of current established science. Many of these processes therapists know can be

effective; can we now begin to understand why and how they work?

That our thoughts cause structural changes in the brain has been confirmed by MRI scanning. It would appear very likely, therefore, that in the next ten years or so there will be more scientific confirmation of what many therapists have intuitively believed for a long time, that people are able to use their mind energy in very powerful ways to heal their minds and bodies. It also seems likely that other therapies, such as Reiki, acupuncture, sound therapy, faith healing and the like will be increasingly supported by scientific discoveries and research.

Stranger than Fiction

Something that has always interested me is how competent psychics are able to tell people about their past and future. I am fully aware that traditional science does not accept that this is possible, but the fact that it happens is indisputable. I shall give a personal experience of my own to illustrate this.

I was in my thirties, working in the commercial world as a chartered shipbroker, without, I might add, any idea whatsoever of being a therapist or of being involved in any job other than the one I was engaged in, that of international shipping and transport. A psychic told me she could see me working with doctors, but they did not have white coats on; and she described other details she could see in this scene, all of which much later in my life proved to be valid predictions.

At the time, I thought it was beyond the realms of possibility and forgot about it completely. Over twenty years or so afterwards, I trained as a professional stress manager and hypnotherapist. Shortly after taking up full-time practice as a therapist, I was invited by a local GP centre with seven GPs to be their resident stress manager and hypnotherapist. After I had been working for a while at the medical centre, the psychic prediction suddenly came to my mind. I was working with doctors, and they were not wearing white coats. Nobody will ever convince me that that was just a lucky guess by the psychic. So what was happening when that prediction was made? I write about this example

because it happened to me personally. At the time I was certainly a very down-to-earth and materialistic-minded person, and as I had never had any thoughts about being a therapist there could have been no so-called mind reading taking place.

More and more experiments are being undertaken in connection with all aspects of psychic phenomena, and views are changing; not based just on individual experience or anecdotal evidence, but on serious scientific research. For instance, it has been established that when faith healers work, energy passes between them and the person they are healing. What is this energy? Is it the ‘quantum energy field’ that some scientists suggest it is – “a field of intelligent energy that pervades the whole universe and connects all things contained in the universe, that is not beyond us, or out of our reach, which knits the whole universe together as one unified field and connects to everything that happens, and is essentially a recording medium of everything, providing a means for everything to communicate with everything else”?

It seems likely that the discoveries of quantum physicists will more and more underpin the Eastern philosophies that teach that the existence and significance of energy is an important element in mind-body healing. A new paradigm could emerge, wherein all healing, whether traditional medicine, or so-called complementary therapies, may have energy in one form or another at the foundation of the healing process.

The new scientific discoveries support the belief that human beings are far more extraordinary than an assembly of flesh, bones, chemical interactions and electrical impulses. These discoveries offer persuasive evidence that energy is the central organising force governing the human body and the rest of the cosmos that surrounds us. All living things are a coalescence of energy in a field of energy connected to every other thing in the universe. This pulsating energy field is the centre of our being and our consciousness, the essence of our very existence. Can we now begin to accept that this energy field, rather than germs or genes, is the force that

ultimately determines whether we are healthy or ill? What a fascinating thought that is!

So the intriguing question is, can a person's own personal energy connect to the quantum energy field to promote psychological and physical healing? That's a big question. Well, isn't it just?

In conclusion, I would like to leave the reader with these thoughts:

Should all those who come under the various modalities of healing widen their horizons by considering healing possibilities outside the established parameters of conventional thinking? Some may consider doing so, some may not; like everybody else, the therapist has individual choice. Those who chose to can consider the following:

If one looks inside the human body one sees cells. Inside the cells are molecules, of which one is DNA. Looking at the DNA, one discovers it is made up of atoms.

It then becomes even more interesting to discover that the so-called subatomic particles (protons, neutrons, electrons, etc.) are not particles at all, in the sense that they are not solid balls. They are vibrations of energy. The latest research in quantum physics shows that they are tiny vibrating strings.

The conclusion must be that reality is not solid, but is constructed from vibrations of energy. Quantum physicists believe that these vibrations originate in a larger field of energy known as the 'quantum field'. Therefore subatomic particles, which make up atoms, which make up molecules, which make up cells, which make up humans, are all created in the quantum field.

So can our thoughts interface with matter, at the level it is created? Ultimately, is the mind the instrument that creates our beliefs of reality? The mind causes us to see matter where really only vibrations exist. If we think of our mind and body at that level of creation, can our power to heal mind and body be even more powerful? So as therapists, can we lift our minds beyond conventional beliefs and assumptions and align ourselves with

the client's unconscious mind at a deeper core level of reality? Can we help them in a more fundamental way to bypass their limiting beliefs, assumptions and perceptions?

One idea is to look at a client's problem as energy waves and vibrations that originate from the quantum field, so that we do not look at the problem in any way as a physical thing. This is particularly relevant if we are involved in helping with pain release or in bodily healing. Should we see any client's problem, whether it is manifested in a psychological or in a physical way, as patterns of energy vibrations that can be changed, just as you could change a wave on a pond by dropping a stone in it?

No doubt many therapists in the 'talking therapies' field will consider these ideas too 'way out' to be seriously considered. That is fair enough; we all have our own pathway to tread. I myself, in my life in general and in my work as a stress manager and hypnotherapist, am a person with his feet firmly on the ground. I am not a person to go down a pathway of fancy and illusion. There must be what I consider acceptable scientific, biological or well-researched anecdotal evidence, to support my work as a practicing therapist, which I have been engaged in for the last twenty years. However, I do like to explore new processes and gain new knowledge so that I can extend and develop new ways of working. I believe it is important to have an enquiring mind to progress my work as a therapist, not only using well-tried and tested processes, which are very important of course, but also researching new possibilities that could lead to my becoming a more effective therapist. It is enquiring minds that have changed the current practice of therapy from how it was twenty or thirty years ago.

As far as grassroots level is concerned, Nightingale Conant, arguably the world's leading publisher of self-development courses, after about thirty years of producing what one might term conventional self-development programmes, have increasingly over the last few years published courses with a more spiritual perception. These include

many about using the quantum energy field as a physical and psychological healing process. When a successful company like this begins to move away from traditional ways of projecting self-development programmes, one can be fairly sure that the whole perception of personal development is experiencing a significant shift in emphasis.

The knowledge about our planet is doubling every few years. The faster and more thoroughly you can learn what you need to to keep abreast of the profession you are in, the greater your advantage will be in this ultra-competitive, information-driven world. All healers of whatever modality can collectively examine the possibilities of 'quantum healing' as we learn more and more about the new frontier science that is being presented to us. Always remember, however: it is with ideas that we create, but only by doing that can we learn.

In particular, I believe all therapists who work with clients when they are in altered states of consciousness, such as hypnotherapists for instance, are in a particularly favourable position to examine the possibility of using energy in respect of psychological healing.

Any organisation or system of knowledge can only be a way of doing things. It is not factual in any absolute sense of that word. All that we do is arbitrary. So personally I always feel free to do what works. If it helps my client in any way, that is an end in itself.

Above all, I believe that effectiveness is the only real measure of truth. In a pulsating and ever-changing universe, there cannot be any absolute truth. Instead each truth must be effective for the individual person.

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REFLECTIONS

Alex Evison answers questions asked by Mike Dillon (Editor) about his life as a stress manager.

Thank you, Alex, for agreeing to reflect on your work and life.

MD: *Can we start, Alex, by you giving some brief details about your life before you became a stress manager?*

AE: I was born in Hove on the South Coast in April 1948, moved to Luton aged 6 months, Enfield aged 6 years, then to Aberdeen in 1966 to study Electrical Engineering. There I met Joan and we married in 1969. After a brief spell in Manchester we moved to a flat in Caterham in 1971 when I started work for what was then Post Office Telephones, in International Circuit Negotiation and Traffic Management. Joan became a pension consultant in the City of London until in 1974 she had a row with her boss and told him if he refused her a pay rise she would leave to have a family.

MD: *Knowing Joan, I can easily imagine her saying that to her boss with an "I am only going to say this once so don't mess me about" tone in her voice.*

AE: That night the family was started and we moved to a house in Earls Barton near Northampton. I transferred to National Headquarters Marketing, became a long-distance commuter into London, and started my long involvement with computing systems and sales management.

MD: *How quickly we can start things when it is such a pleasurable thing to do.*

AE: In 1977, with two daughters and one on the way, I decided I had had enough of commuting on British Rail and we moved to the North East where I managed a sales team for several years before becoming Exhibitions Manager and then Market Intelligence Manager, an early data miner if you like.

After I had spent several frustrating years trying to persuade BT to update its computer systems before privatisation, BT responded by reducing the Market Intelligence staff from 150 to 10 and making me

Exhibitions Manager again as well. I was now working 7 days a week, 18 hours a day, and soon became very ill. It was an object lesson in the effects of stress. I very nearly did not survive. After two weeks on the cardiac arrest ward and 3 months off work, it took me nearly five years to fully recover.

MD: *Well that was all very eventful. I am sure everybody who knows you are glad you regained your health. Those who have worked with you over the last 15 years or so really appreciate the commitment you show with everything you are involved with.*

MD: *Who or what inspired you to train as a stress manager and enter the therapy profession?*

AE: After the illness I returned to work to find that Human Resources, those wonderful caring people, had marked my records as having died.

MD: *Health and Safety probably asked them to do that to be on the safe side! Sorry for the interruption Alex; please continue.*

AE: That completed the transformation in my attitude towards corporate employers. I totally changed my approach to life, and employment in particular. So when I was offered a redundancy package I jumped at it without any thought about what I would do next. I just left.

It was Joan who spotted an advertisement to train as a Stress Manager. After my recent experiences I knew I had to learn how to help others avoid the hell I had been through.

Of course, in common with so many others in my situation, six months after I left BT, the board realised that I was right in trying to update its computing systems and reemployed me as a consultant for a year back in London, at a higher pay rate, to help specify the new system. I used the money to pay for my stress management training, bought a plot of land, designed a house, and Joan and the kids



supervised the building of it during the week whilst I was away working.

MD: *To what extent did you find your experiences in life, before becoming a stress manager, helped you in your training and work as a therapist?*

AE: I had learnt an important lesson. However robust we think we are, we all have our limits. Exceed those limits at your peril. The consequences can be severe. I had learnt the hard way what it felt like to go beyond what was reasonable. That gave me an ability to empathise with overstretched clients and a desire to learn how to help them.

MD: *There is nothing like experience to gain useful skills and the necessary motivation to use them.*

MD: *What particular personal skills and resources did you possess that you felt were of most advantage to you when you started training and later helped to develop your skills as a stress Manager?*

AE: People have always seemed to find it easy to talk to me. Heaven knows why. Maybe it is because I am slow to suggest solutions to their problems. I tend to empathise first then go quiet until I am ready to articulate a possible solution. Experience has taught me that people often feel compelled by my silence to carry on talking, focusing their mind on

their problem, and frequently coming up with a solution of their own.

MD: *I believe people can talk to you easily, Alex, because you are so open, honest and genuine. What people see is what they get.*

MD: *Did you experience any aspects in your training, or when you started up in practice, that you found particularly difficult and challenging?*

AE: Training was easy. Sit back and absorb. Coping with the first few clients was a real challenge. Was I really the expert they sought? Would I really be capable of helping them? Did I understand them better than they understood themselves? It appears that personal experience and training meant that I did cope and helped them find the solutions to their problems. Frankly, I was amazed.

MD: *What is the best piece of advice you have been given that has helped you develop and progress as a professional stress manager?*

AE: Listen! Do not assume. Do not extrapolate. Listen. Accept the client's views and realities. Empathise and work from there.

MD: *Just so Alex – the ABC, or should I say the LDDL, way of being an effective therapist.*

MD: *How important do you think a variety of techniques is essential for a therapist to provide a really professional service to their clients?*

AE: Essential, but I do not think I can provide all the services for every client need. Let me give you a classic example. Some five years ago, a 22-year-old computer input operator came to see me. She said she had a headache. The initial assessment revealed that she had had the headache for two years. It also transpired that doctors and pills had not sorted out the problem. I provided two relaxation sessions, two sessions with a Bowen practitioner to relax her neck muscles, and an optician to check her eyesight. A fortnight later her headache was gone.

MD: *I am sure we all agree we cannot meet every client need. I had a client that came to me some time ago who*

had just finished her BACP training. She said to me she had been told in training that if her client did not show any signs of gains within five sessions it was the client's fault; it meant they were not interested in changing. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I thought, she is going to have problems meeting her client's needs.

MD: *What is your next professional goal?*

AE: For many years now I feel I have been operating with one hand tied behind my back, looking after each of our ageing parents in turn, and being house husband whilst Joan has been working full time. Sure, I still saw some clients and put some time into WellMind. Now all four parents have passed on, and I have more of that limited resource, time. This has brought the opportunity to start bringing myself up to date with modern technology and seeing more clients. I have started learning to build web sites both for WellMind and myself. I have a time management computer programme to write and a book to write. I want to develop the quality and outcomes system, stimulate interest in WellMind's training courses and increase awareness of the Stress Torque™ programme for organisations. I will be looking to develop the Life Support System™, and look for new ways of increasing awareness of stress management in both organisations and the public in general.

MD: *Marketing and advertising appear to be a difficult challenge for many stress managers. Have you found this a problem for you? Can you give a brief account of what you have found difficult and what you have found successful in marketing and advertising your practice?*

AE: When I first started in practice, I used local newspaper advertising and leaflet distribution as the main means of selling my services, backed by a ¼-column entry in Yellow Pages. These worked well at that time. But times have changed and most people now use the internet as a first point of reference. I have just signed up to a one-month-renewable trial advertising contract with Google. I await the results with interest.

MD: *It is always of interest to stress managers what they can do with marketing and advertising that does not cost a lot of investment. Can you give any examples of how you have marketed your practice without having incurred any or very little monetary cost in doing so?*

AE: Most importantly, whatever means of advertising you use, it is vital that responses are answered straight away. I am amazed how often I have tried to contact another member of the SST to be met by an answering machine, or worse, no reply at all. Clients will not generally ring back. If they want a hypnotherapist or stress manager, they want them now. They will simply ring someone else.

For a few pounds a quarter you can transfer your calls to your mobile, partner, colleague, etc. when you are away from the 'phone or with a client. Three years ago Joan and I took a weekend break in Amsterdam. In a period of an hour she received two calls resulting in £5k of insurance business and I booked three initial assessments which turned into £750 of business. So make sure 'phones are answered all the time by real people.

Remember, the internet and directories are points of reference. Using these, potential clients have to understand their needs and take appropriate action to find you when they need you.

Advertising can put a solution in front of a potential client before they have come to recognise they have a need. Newspapers can work here but are less effective than they were and are increasingly expensive. Leaflets still work reasonably well and at around £20 per thousand, are cost effective. But leaflet delivery can be expensive and unreliable. I deliver them myself (with my mobile in my pocket). It's free, reliable, and keeps me fit!

As for the internet, ask me again in a few months' time.

MD: *I will, Alex, and ask you to write an article for the Journal about your internet experience.*

MD: *Have you ever worked as a stress manager in any specific areas of work that could be called a niche market?*

AE: We work with people, and every person is different. Forget that at your peril! I have worked with organisations at a training level, but I would not call that a niche market. One afternoon I saw the Financial Director of a bank and a local dustman. In that order I am relieved to report, given the lingering smell left in the practice room by the dustman. It transpired they both had the same problem. But I wouldn't consider either a niche market. So, on balance, I think not.

MD: *Most stress managers during their working life come across unusual or humorous experiences or cases of particular interest. Can you let the Journal readers know of any such cases you have been involved with?*

AE: There was the case of the country pub landlady who had a severe dog phobia; she had developed a flight strategy such that if she was caught out in the bar area and a dog entered the premises, a not infrequent event, she would run and dive over the bar to escape. This often involved scattering all the drinks on the bar. It was costing her a fortune in breakages, the replacing of spilt drinks, and customer laundry bills.

An agoraphobic farmer proved to be quite tricky – believe me, providing hypnotherapy in a barn surrounded by cows presents its own challenges. I don't recommend it!

MD: *Or looking at it positively, the joys of a rural practice.*

AE: Perhaps the most difficult sessions I have ever undertaken were whilst recording material for *The Fear Club* on BBC2. The television crew arrived each week to film treatment sessions between me and a client with a wasp phobia, the crew being a camera man, a sound recordist, a lighting engineer and a presenter, plus, of course, all their equipment. That meant six of us crammed into my ten-foot square consulting room. Ever tried to hypnotise a client under arc lights? It was the client who had agreed to be filmed in the first instance in the altruistic belief that the resulting programme might help fellow

sufferers. I can't think of a better way of inducing a state of extreme anxiety in a therapist. Fortunately the treatment was successful and the final film footage was of the client being interviewed about how she felt whilst standing perfectly relaxed and quite unconcerned between two ivy bushes with wasps flying past her head from one bush to the other. Phew!

MD: *Yes, I remember you telling me about the wasp client. A great triumph under difficult conditions. Such challenges move a therapist on in leaps and bounds.*

MD: *What advice would you give to a person who came to you and showed interest in becoming a therapist in the 'talking therapies' but did not know which particular therapy they wanted to be trained in?*

AE: Train in hypnotherapy. In my experience it is the single most effective, fast, versatile and safe form of therapy. But don't study hypnotherapy in isolation. To become an effective therapist you also need to develop good communication and counselling skills, an appreciation of the principles of life coaching and some business skills in marketing and basic accounting. Try and find a training organisation that provides all these as a package, such as WellMind. Well, you did ask!

MD: *As chairman of WellMind Ltd, to what extent have you found your work with WellMind has helped you to progress as a stress manager?*

AE: I am tempted to say that this question should be reversed. After all, I could never have become involved with WellMind had I not been a stress manager first. However, on reflection, both roles do support each other. They say that if you really want to understand a subject you should teach it to someone else. I have found that to be true. Trainees can ask the most searching questions which can in turn stimulate me to re-examine subject areas and techniques in depth. Thus often the tutors learn as well as the trainees and that feeds back into my own practice. Perhaps that is why CNHC counts relevant teaching, as well as relevant learning, for the purposes of Continuing Professional Development.

MD: *That surely is why the CNHC include teaching in their CPD accreditations.*

MD: *Can you give the Journal readers some idea of your current and future plans for WellMind Ltd?*

AE: In the past, WellMind has generally been focused on providing basic training for new entrants to our profession. Whilst I believe that training has been of an increasingly high standard, our ability to invest time and money in selling that training has been very limited. Consequently the number of trainees has been small. However, WellMind has developed a considerable body of intellectual property and expertise, not only in Diploma training but in other areas.

For example, we have developed and trade-marked the 'Stress Torque' range of services to deliver stress management to organisations. We have also developed and trade-marked 'The Life Support System'. WellMind's 'Quality and Client Outcomes' questionnaire has been adopted by some branches of Mind and we are working on a computerised time management system, code named 'Daybreak'.

The challenge now is to bring these offerings to the marketplace through the medium of the internet, using the increased time resources available but without the investment of further finance. If this strategy proves successful, benefits and opportunities may be available, not only to WellMind itself, but to members of SST if additional stress management work is generated.

MD: *I am sure all members of the SST wish you every success with this venture.*

MD: *If you had followed some alternative career other than stress management what might it have been?*

AE: Who knows? At need I can turn my hand to most things. Since leaving BT I have done some Sales and Marketing consultancy and am still a Fellow Member of the Institute of Sales and Marketing Management. Twenty years ago I was involved in a computer systems analysis project

and earned a Fellowship of the Institute of Analysts and Programmers as a result, but I have to say I am a bit rusty now. Things have moved on apace.

Of course, I designed and built our house. A neighbour who built two houses near ours at the same time went on to form a building company which is doing well. However, stress management seemed the right choice at the time and frankly still does.

MD: *You could say building a career can be done in many different ways.*

Life in general:

MD: *As therapists, we usually emphasise to our clients the importance of happiness in life. What makes you happy?*

AE: Helping others, family, friends, clients and colleagues and being in control of my life. I was lucky enough to find and marry my soul mate 42 years ago. We have three great children. We live in a house I designed and built in glorious open countryside. Who could ask for anything more?

MD: *Yes I have been to your house many times Alex. If you like to live in the countryside it is a place 'to die for'. Sorry Alex – you wanted to say more.*

AE: Successfully tackling new projects brings me a sense of achievement and satisfaction. I have time to do more in this area now.

MD: *If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?*

AE: My age. At 63 I feel I have a lot more I want to do and there probably isn't enough time left to fit it all in.

MD: *At the age of 73 I feel the same. So all being equal you have another ten years at least to fulfil your ambitions.*

MD: *So to continue, as therapists we all know how important happy memories are in coping with the bad times. What's your happiest memory?*

AE: Difficult, there are so many, but if you insist in pinning me down, it has to be being at the birth of my children. Don't tell me, that's three memories.

Tough! I refuse to pick one of those above the other two.

MD: *What is your favourite treat?*

AE: Lying on a sun-soaked beach without a care in the world. I intend to do some more of that.

MD: *That sounds great, but if you don't want to miss any clients, take your mobile 'phone with you. Or should you be getting away from it all on holiday?*

AE: It is all an attitude of mind. I know people who dare not go on holiday for more than a few days in case things go wrong or they lose business whilst absent. I take my mobile, and a small computer with me, answer calls and spend a few minutes answering Emails in the evenings. I feel relaxed but in touch. I can sunbathe all day, know everything is OK at home, and stay away for weeks on end if I wish.

MD: *Is there anything you could not live without?*

AE: My family.

MD: *Your grandfather was a very famous public figure. What do you most remember about him?*

Albert Victor Alexander, known to his friends and colleagues as AV. I carry his name of course.

Not wishing to live in his shadow or appear to fail to rise to the heights that he did, I don't normally mention my maternal grandfather in public. Nevertheless as a family we are very proud of the heritage he left.

He was the son of a widowed corset-maker in Weston-Super-Mare. He left school aged 13. Largely self-educated, he rose to become First Lord of the Admiralty in World War II, and together with Winston Churchill was the organiser of the Battle of the Atlantic and the D-day landings. He died an Earl, a Knight of the Garter and a Peer of the Realm. Some achievement!

I was in my mid-teens when grandfather died and I remember him well. He was living proof that in this country we can all rise to fulfil our ambitions if we have drive, health and abilities. He started out with nothing

but determination. It is a sobering thought for all of us, for me in particular, that our achievements, or lack of them, are determined by our own aspirations, determination and abilities. Given my own relatively meagre achievements, perhaps that is why I don't talk about him in public very often.

I remember his presence – you always knew when he was in the room with you. I remember his Churchill style of oratory. His absolute confidence and commitment. Above all I remember his memory. By that I mean I remember his ability to recall past events with amazing accuracy. As a child I remember sitting 'behind the bar' on the floor of the House of Lords listening to debates. I recall one furious argument when he was leader of the opposition in the Lords when he suddenly stood up, pointed to the leader of the government side, and quoted what this politician had said, several years before, word for word, undermining the said gentleman's position completely. I looked the quote up in Hansard afterwards: grandfather was right, word for word. I wish I had a good accurate memory, and instant recall in the heat of the moment, like that. We left the chamber shortly after that exchange to have tea with Clement Attlee. It was an unusual upbringing.

It's funny how things come around. Last November, a film clip of my grandmother appeared on *Wallace and Gromit's World of Invention*, 'Better Safe Than Sorry' episode. She was presenting Dicken medals for gallantry, the animal equivalent of VCs, to two carrier pigeons that carried messages back from the D-day troops.

MD: *Wow! I know of him of course from talking to you and the wonderful portrait of him that hangs in your house. What a hero to have in your family.*

MD: *What is the best advice you have ever been given?*

AE: My father used to say to me, 'nothing is ever as bad as it seems'. Put another way: keep a sense of proportion.

MD: *Excellent advice. It reminds me of the maxim 'It isn't what happens that matters but the perception we take of it'.*

AE: If ever I feel under pressure I ask myself what the root cause of the problem is and what the worst possible outcome could be. I then assess my position against my personal threat scale (shown below) to assess the severity of the threat.

- 10 'Am I going to die?'
- 9 'Am I or my family at real physical risk?'
- 8 'Will I lose my family?'
- 7 'Will I go to jail?'
- 6 'Will I lose all my worldly goods?'
- 5 'Will I lose my friends?'
- 4 'Will I lose my job?'
- 3 'Will I lose the respect of others?'
- 2 'Will it materially affect me at all long-term?'
- 1 'Is this problem worth worrying about at all?'

I have made it to 10 once in my life. Then I trained as a stress manager. I have not been above two ever since.

MD: *The old 1-10 scale. Keep where you are now, Alex, and the next ten years should realise all your remaining dreams.*

MD: *As stress managers, we always encourage our clients in the important task of dealing effectively with life's ups and downs. How do you deal with any setbacks in your life?*

AE: I don't like the expression 'setbacks in life'. 'Setbacks in a project' makes sense. It usually results in a delay to the project completion, the completion date goes back. But 'setbacks in life' to me implies some sort of personal injury, or illness. These are more likely to result in a bringing forward of the end of life. Hey-Ho. Perhaps they should be called 'setforwards in life'!

Setbacks in projects are simply learning experiences. If I fail to achieve an objective, I reassess whether that objective is still attainable and worthwhile. If it is, I examine the reasons for the failure, learn from the experience, and look for a new way of achieving the objective.

MD: *I was using the word 'setback' in the generally accepted dictionary definition 'impede or reverse the progress of.' I have never myself connected the word with personal injury, or illness or anything to do with the end of life. I suppose it's all about opinion and perception.*

MD: *What do you do to maintain a healthy mind and body?*

AE: I don't worry about maintaining either. Worry causes more harm than you will ever counteract by exercising.

MD: *An interesting comment Alex. I believe it is better not to worry but take some exercise as well.*

AE: There is always plenty of exercise to be had delivering leaflets. Forget paying to go to a gym. Walk the streets for free and earn potential income at the same time. It exercises the body, helps fill the wallet, and allows thinking time into the bargaining.

MD: *Yes, exercise is exercise. The method of doing it is personal choice.*

MD: *We all feel out of sorts from time to time. How do you cheer yourself up if you ever feel blue?*

AE: I haven't really felt blue, as you put it, since I recovered from my illness. Near death experiences change one's perspective. Every morning I wake up is a bonus. Life is wonderful and I shall never forget it. Feel blue? What a waste of time.

MD: *Some stress managers, from time to time, find their work stressful. What do you do to relax after a hard day's work?*

AE: Frankly, I have never felt stressed after working as a stress manager. Sometimes I feel pressure whilst working with a difficult client case, particularly when there is a TV crew in the room. Sometimes I feel apprehensive before a potentially difficult session. But afterwards I relax in the knowledge I have given of my best. If I ever feel I could have done more, I write my thoughts down at the time on the client's notes ready for the next session.

MD: *I suppose the stress factor can be relevant to how many clients a stress*

therapist sees daily. If only a few are seen each day it probably isn't stressful.

MD: *What is your idea of a perfect day?*

AE: Waking up alive and healthy yet again. After that, everything's a bonus.

MD: *What do you consider is your greatest achievement in life?*

AE: Recognising when I had met my lifelong soul mate and persuading her to be my wife.

MD: *Yes, Joan is certainly a remarkable and resourceful lady, one of a kind to be sure.*

MD: *What is your philosophy of life?*

AE: If I believe in anything it has to be perpetuation and improvement of the human species. We spend our formative years absorbing knowledge, our mid-years learning through experience. Perhaps then we should spend our latter years distilling what knowledge and experience have taught us and recording our thoughts for the benefit, or at least consideration, of generations to come. Contributing to the gene pool if you like.

MD: *What is your all-time favourite book?*

AE: The compendium edition of the first four of the five books of the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* trilogy. If that makes no sense to you, go and get the book!

MD: *It does – I have the books and I have read them as well.*

MD: *What's your most treasured possession?*

AE: I have thought long and hard and can honestly say I don't have one. If the house burnt down tomorrow and all my possessions disappeared in a heap of ash, I would be sad but not heartbroken. Provided my wife, who is not a possession, was with me, we would survive very happily, rebuild and carry on enjoying life.

MD: *At the end of your life, what would you like to be able to look back and say?*

AE: No regrets. I never failed to offer help to a friend in need. Enjoyed life and feeling content with myself.

AE: Oh! And I hope that Mike Dillon character is still alive because he would ask some difficult questions standing at St Peter's gate.

MD: *In view of our comparative ages I no doubt will be there before you. Not alive in the mortal sense but waiting at the gate with my clipboard of questions. If you think the above questions were difficult you can bet those at the gate will be even more scary.*

MD: *Thank you, Alex, for sharing your reflections with the readers of our Journal about your work and life. It has been very illuminating and interesting.*

STRANGER THAN FICTION WHITE RABBITS

By Royston Willmott

The weather was cold and miserable! However, it was Ben's wedding day and nothing could stop the exhilaration he felt in getting married to the most beautiful and wonderful young lady he had ever met.

As Ben was so deeply in love, despite the very cold March weather with a white carpet of snow on the ground, nothing whatever could change him from feeling on top of the world, able to cope with everything before him.

As Ben waited in the church for his gorgeous wife to appear, he felt the luckiest person in the world.

As the familiar music started, his bride Angela appeared on her father's arm. As they both walked down the nave, there was a gasp of admiration throughout the congregation. Angela's beauty was so apparent for all to see, the perfect bride.

The wedding ceremony was an unforgettable experience. As Ben and Angela stood side by side, listening to the vicar and taking their vows, Ben felt very strange, but it wasn't unpleasant at all. It was a very warm comforting feeling. There seemed something ethereal about what was happening, but he did not know how or why.

After the ceremony, Ben and Angela kissed in the customary way. As they did, Angela said, "I am so happy, Ben, and love you very, very much. I feel so safe and cherished."

Ben did not feel nervous at all when he gave his speech after the wedding feast had concluded. He felt like he did when his old nan used to comfort him and urge him to go ahead and do

things and do them to the best of his ability. He felt her firm safe hand on his shoulder. His nan had died when he was twelve years old, but Ben never forgot the very special relationship they'd had.

Ben knew how much his nan loved him, and remembered when she had said to him, many years before, "Ben, you were sent to replace my dear Arthur, you look so much like him; he would have been so proud of you." Ben's Granddad Arthur, his nan's husband, had died only a few months before Ben was born.

As Angela and Ben were strolling around chatting to the wedding guests, Ben noticed his Aunt Sylvia sitting quietly in a corner. He said to Angela, "I am just going over to have a chat with Aunt Sylvia; she seems very pensive sitting over there on her own." "Okay," Angela replied, "I will stroll around and talk to my cousin Daisy; she has come over from Paris to be at the wedding."

"Hello Aunt Sylvia!" Ben said, in what he hoped was a comforting and reassuring way. "You look deep in thought; is anything the matter?" "No" Aunt Sylvia replied. "I am just wondering if I should tell you what I saw while you and Angela were getting married. "Please do," Ben responded, "it can't be that bad, surely."

Aunt Sylvia looked at Ben rather apprehensively, and started relating to him what she saw in the church. "When you moved next to Angela, Ben, and you both stood side by side, just before the vicar started talking, your nan stepped inside Angela and

your Granddad stepped inside you. They were married again, through you and Angela. They did this because they did not have a church wedding themselves; they married in a registry office. They were dressed in wedding garments, but they were made of wonderful material and colours, with a wonderful translucent quality, clearly not of this world."

Aunt Sylvia continued. "As your nan and granddad stood inside you both, they spoke the same vows as you and Angela did. They looked very happy and contented as they did so. As soon as the vows were completed, hundreds of white rabbits started running all around the church."

Well, to say Ben was flabbergasted by what his aunt had said was the understatement of the year. Ben had heard as a young lad about Aunt Sylvia being a medium, but he had never thought much about it. He was far too involved with football and cricket and other sporting activities to concern himself with all that stuff. If truth were told, he believed it was all a bit weird. However, being a kindly soul, Ben gave Aunt Sylvia a peck on the cheek and thanked her for telling him what she had seen, and she was not to worry, he was glad she had done so.

Later, during the honeymoon, Ben told Angela what his Aunt had told him when she spoke to him at the wedding reception. "How interesting," Angela remarked, saying she didn't understand what it was all about, but was open-minded and certainly wasn't worried about it. "I will tell Mum about it when I get back," Ben said, "she will certainly be interested in what Aunt Sylvia witnessed in the church."

As soon as Ben had a chance to see his mum after the honeymoon, he told her what Aunt Sylvia had said to him. "Well! Well!" was her response. "It is true your nan and Granddad did only get married in a registry office, but as for the white rabbits, I don't know what they were about. Your Aunt Sylvia is a medium, Ben, I think you know that." "Well, I have heard something of the sort but have not thought much about it." Ben didn't say any more than that, but it certainly started him thinking what it could possibly be all about and what it meant.

Sometime after that, Ben went to see his mum again for the usual occasional visit. "I have something to tell you Ben, which should convince you what your Aunt Sylvia said to you wasn't just her imagination. I guess that's what you believed it was, Ben?" Ben was non-committal. "I don't know what I really thought about it, Mum, but I know Aunt Sylvia wouldn't deliberately lie to me."

"Well, here is something to ponder on." Ben's mum continued, "I was thinking about all Aunt Sylvia said to you, and suddenly out of the blue I remembered something about your

Granddad keeping white rabbits when he was a young boy. I believe your nan told me that sometime, when I was quite young." So I asked my elder sister Alice, and she confirmed that it was indeed correct. Granddad did keep white rabbits as pets when he was a young boy. Apparently he absolutely adored them and they had to be white rabbits: no other colour would do. So what do you think about that, Ben?" "Very interesting" said Ben, somewhat bewildered by the new information his mum had come up with.

"I will tell you something else as well" Ben's mum continued. "There is no way your Auntie Sylvia would have known about your Granddad keeping white rabbits. She was your dad's sister, and we never had much to do with her because of a rift between your dad and his family, so for many years we did not meet them. When we did start seeing them again, any talk about white rabbits in your maternal Granddad's past would have been long forgotten. As you know, I didn't even remember until some time after I had heard about what your Aunt had seen at the church."

"That is incredible, Mum!" Ben almost shouted out. "How can that be?"

Ben's mum then explained to him what spiritualism was all about. Ben became very interested in the whole subject and eventually became convinced that what his Aunt told him was not of this world.

What happened at the church gave Ben a completely different outlook on life. Ben read and studied a great deal about the more spiritual side of life and both he and Angela developed a profound personal belief in life beyond mortal existence.

It changed Ben's life in a very significant way. But that is another story.

Footnote:

Royston Willmott has worked as a hypnotherapist in south-east England for over twenty years. For reasons of confidentiality the names of the people mentioned in the above article have been changed. Royston testifies that the events described in this article are a true account of Ben's actual real life experience.

PSYCHOSOMATIC HEALTH CARE

In 2007 The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued guidance that psychological therapies should be made available to all people with depression or anxiety disorders, and that the number of psychological therapists in practice in the United Kingdom should be dramatically increased, particularly therapists qualified in the techniques of cognitive behavioural therapy. These guidelines have been given added impetus by the publication of research by Professor Irving Kirsch of the Department of Psychology, University of Hull, based upon an analysis of 47 clinical trials using data released under United States freedom of information legislation, concluding that anti-

depressant drugs, such as Prozac and Seroxat, are no more effective than placebos in treating most cases of depression: "Drug-placebo differences in antidepressant efficacy increase as a function of baseline severity, but are relatively small even for severely depressed patients. The relationship between initial severity and antidepressant efficacy is attributable to decreased responsiveness to placebo among very severely depressed patients, rather than to increased responsiveness to medication." (Full details of the research may be seen on the website of PloS Medicine – the peer-reviewed open-access journal published by The Public Library of Science at

<http://medicine.plosjournals.org>)

The research has prompted questions whether people with mild or moderate depression should be prescribed such drugs at all. According to Professor Kirsch, "The difference in improvement between patients taking placebos and patients taking anti-depressants is not very great. Given these results, there seems to be little reason to prescribe anti-depressant medication to any but the most severely depressed patients unless alternative treatments have failed to provide a benefit." The Society of Stress Managers/Therapists would argue that alternative treatments should include hypnotherapy.

Submitted by The Editor.

COLOURING YOUR THERAPY

For me, each day merges through a multitude of shades and intonations with each passing moment. A single hour consists of thousands of different colours, a rainbow of colours through to murky darkness. As a therapist, I

see the colours first; the words come afterwards. That's usually how I see things, or at least how I start to. Sometimes I arrive too soon. I am a rather impatient person. Clients' beliefs can seem to me to be blurred

and I have to catch up with them. Using the client's language and all that.

To me, helping a client re-colour his or her life is one of the joys of being a therapist. Mike Dillon.