

Healing Scientific Minds (and their Backs)

I was at one of these impromptu think tank gatherings. Well, technically it was a social gathering at a coffee shop on a Friday with some interesting people, including a retired doctor and a man who works in the nuclear medicine biz. The doctor had asked me what it is that I did for a living and I, knowing his 'people' might not approve of me and my standing as an alternative medical practitioner, took a deep breath and explained that I worked as an energy healer. The response I got from him was one which I could have easily recycled from any one of the many conversations I've had with certain doctors and researchers in the left-brain world of medicine and wellness: there is no scientific proof that alternative medical practice is in any way effective in treating health related matters. He qualified his statement by adding that any feedback which was positive, such as someone claiming that their cancer or other affliction had been cured was purely anecdotal: that is to say that it could not be scientifically proven that indeed it was the healing intervention that caused the ailment to be cured and even cited the placebo effect, a process whereby the wishful thinking or belief by the patient in the effectiveness of the treatment is the actual cause of the healing effect.



Then lo and behold the nuclear medicine guy joins us at our table, being a friend of the doctor. By chance, he opts to complain to us that he has been suffering lower back pain. I lean over to ask the doctor whether he would consider it to be a scientific validation of the efficacy of energy healing if I succeed in reducing or eliminating the pain his friend is feeling in his lower back while we are seated at the cafe. He says that yes, it would. With that, I ask the nuclear medicine guy if he would like me to try to lessen the burden of his pain. Sounding equally sceptical as his friend (and mentioning that most reports on healing are considered anecdotal –you hear an echo?), he still decides to humour me and so I place my hand on his lower back.

Trust me.
I'm a doctor.

Right away I sense a wall around his auric field, telling me that he is not very open to the treatment that I am giving. Imagine trying to penetrate lead with the rays of a flashlight. But he had extended his invitation to be treated and I am a stubborn woman. I decide I'd better work on his resistance first and then deal with the back pain. Fortunately, he's busy talking to his buddies so he's somewhat mentally distracted. I get to work. When I feel that the wall has dissipated, I start working on the lower back pain. And when that's done, I ask him how his back is feeling. He says it seems somewhat better but he adds that he needs to stand and move his body around to know for sure whether he's feeling better. I encourage him to do it. The man's feeling better. What does he do then but attribute it to the warmth of my hand having a 'hot water bottle effect' on his lower back by heating the afflicted area. He also added that having the soothing hands of a lovely lady surely didn't harm, either. The doctor concurred that the heat of my hands no doubt helped... I could understand where they were coming from. I'd been here before.

Arguably, the most popular means of scientifically proving the effectiveness of a treatment is through a double blind study "in which both the investigator and the participant are blind to (unaware of) the nature of the treatment the participant is receiving. Double-blind trials are thought to produce objective results, since the expectations of the researcher and the participant about the experimental treatment such as a drug do not affect the outcome." (MedicineNet.com) I'd personally be happy to participate in such a study. Being a healer makes me no less a seeker of objective truth than they are. We just typically look for such truth in different necks of the woods.

Thirty minutes later, I again asked him how his back was. Better, apparently, but what would utterly shock me was the man's sudden suggestion that it was most likely a placebo effect as well! This was a guy who didn't believe in what I did at all! Needless to say, I kept to myself the initial work I did to get beyond his wall. Interestingly, the doctor seemed a little surprised that the healing effect had lasted as long as it had and he seemed less willing to see the placebo effect as the cause.

And when I ran into the gentleman later on, he admitted that his back was feeling better and asked if I wanted a reference. Another 'anecdotal' success story ;-)

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