

consciousness and Healing

CREATING HEALING TEAMS,

ORGANIZATIONS, AND SOCIETIES

Robert Kenny

According to Daniel Benor, MD, the fourth most frequent cause of fatalities in the United States is death caused by adverse drug reactions during hospitalization and by negligent medical care.

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These estimated 204,000 annual deaths exceed fatalities resulting from highway accidents, breast cancer, AIDS, and firearm wounds. Despite a significant allocation of our health-care dollars to create the world's most technologically advanced health-care system, something seems seriously amiss with regard to the outcomes of conventional medicine. How can this be?

Many health-care organizations have lost touch with the primary causes of health. The root of the word healing means "to make whole or integral." Wholeness and therefore healing require engaged and loving relationships with all aspects of ourselves, with other individuals, with our communities, and with Nature. Research has demonstrated that deep and sustainable healing always takes place within a web of supportive and caring relationships-that is, within community. True healers represent the community and life itself, conveying healing energy in sacred acts of service. Effective healing organizations work with clients and staff holistically (including spiritually), build community inside and outside the workplace, provide relationship-centered care, and make decisions based on these values, not merely the potential for profit. If we do not work with emotional and spiritual integrity, if we treat our clients as objects to be processed as quickly as possible, if our organizations are cut off from the community they are meant to serve, then we and our workplaces will not be healing agents.

Addressing so many factors may sound like an overwhelming task, but it can be accomplished with vision, inspirational leadership, shared focus and determination. Before I began consulting to organizations, for example, I helped build and co-lead a comprehensive youth development program, including a large health and mental health center, for 17 years in New York City. Under the initial leadership of a visionary, Erling Thunberg, the values of community, personal authenticity, collaborative leadership, and work as spiritual practice were woven into the very process, procedures, and day-to-day life of the organization. He stressed again and again that every interaction with clients, whether by doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers, case aides, or receptionists, was equally important and healing. A powerful community, comprising both staff and young people, was created and sustained. The atmosphere, or field, of the organization itself-the therapeutic milieu-was a central healing agent. Shortly after walking in the front door, visitors often would comment, "There's something different about this place. I can feel it." When public school teachers saw their students in our after-school learning center, they couldn't believe they were seeing the same kids. Whereas the youths often engaged in violence or acted out in school, they were focused and constructively engaged at our center. The young people inspired one another and the staff. They became partners in creating a healing field. All of us-regardless of role, position, function, education, or class-were transforming ourselves. We thereby became healing agents, just as the milieu was.

Since that time I have worked with a number of other organizational consultants to create effective, productive, holistic, and healthy work environments characterized by staff who continuously transform themselves through reflective practice; high levels of collaborative

In this chapter, I will discuss the following issues:

- How a reflective-practice program can help your organization to harness the shared intentions and increase the healing impact of your teams and of a coherent, coordinated, and conscious organization
- How an integral model of human, organizational, and social development can inform your organization's vision, mission, and healing practice
- How research findings on subtle energies and field effects, including collective consciousness, can suggest ways to boost the healing power of your staff, teams, and organization

Because of space limitations, in many cases I have cited only seminal research or overviews of the research in the endnotes. If you wish to explore the extensive research on many of the

topics discussed below, you can read my in-depth paper, "What Can Science Tell Us About Collective Consciousness?" at www.collectivewisdominitiative.org/papers/kenny_science.htm or contact me for the longer version of this chapter,

including full citations.

A Program for Creating Healing Teams and Organizations

In 1997 I began collaborating with the High Tor Alliance for Organizational and Community Renewal, a nonprofit association of 20 consultants. Some of us designed an action-research, organizational development program to investigate the role of reflective and spiritual practice in creating healing workplaces and to design a change program that would help teams and organizations become effective agents of healing and service in society.

The use of reflective practices to increase effectiveness, creativity, and collaboration at work is part of a burgeoning trend, a long-term, global, sociocultural shift. Leading organizational consultants such as Peter Senge have reported that currently the top concerns of executives are how to restore spirituality in their workplaces, how to develop and nurture the healing effects of their organization's "field" (discussed below)

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, how to build community, how to

strengthen the emotional and relational intelligence of leaders and employees, and how to develop leaders who operate according to core values and principles.

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To track and assist this trend, High Tor surveyed 155 organizational leaders, interviewed 48 in depth, and conducted a dialogue and training series for 70 other leaders at 11 U.S. locations. In each of the seven-session, 5-month series, the leaders used a set of nonsectarian reflective practices, within a facilitated and supportive learning community. We studied whether they could learn to work and lead from a more thoughtful, creative, and long-term perspective and whether their personal and organizational health, productivity, and effectiveness would improve.

The reflective practices-used alone, with "speaking partners," and as communities of practice and learning-included journaling; dialogue, creative problem-solving through exploratory role play and imaginative visualization; contemplation and meditation; visioning retreats; shared affirmation; goal setting and strategy; strengthening personal and organizational missions; reflective walks and sitting in Nature; building mutual understanding and respect; active listening; values clarification; ethics-congruent action; authentic feedback; clarifying one's life purpose, dream, and legacy; and developing a strategy for manifesting these goals.

In detailed follow-up evaluation questionnaires and interviews, the leaders reported that participating in the series had helped them live and work in healthier and more balanced ways with clearer vision and greater purposefulness, focus, and authenticity and increased

their creative decision-making, principle-based leadership, collaboration, and teamwork and personal and organizational effectiveness.

As part of High Tor's action research program, our organizational consulting firm worked with the leadership team of a division that provides executive training and development for a Fortune 50 global aerospace company. We designed three offsite management retreats of 1 to 2 days each. One involved experiences in Nature. We spread the offsites over 5 months so that the team members had opportunities between retreats to practice the skills they had learned. They worked together as speaking partners, sharing their experience with reflective practice and supporting one another's efforts.

In their evaluation feedback 3 months after the consultation ended, they reported that they were working more effectively as a team, helping one another accomplish their personal and team goals, their mission, and the legacies they wished to create at work. Despite a work environment characterized by extreme time pressure and scarce resources, they had increased their collaboration and creative problem solving, deepened their mutual trust and support, and improved their communication skills. They reported working with a greater sense of authenticity, integrity, and purpose. Many spoke about the healing that had occurred in their team. They understood one another more fully and felt deeply supported by their colleagues. They handled job stress more easily. When conflict arose, they discussed and resolved it in person, rather than firing off an angry e-mail.

The chief operating officer for the division said that the tenor of the division's weekly leadership meetings has changed dramatically. "In the past, I would rarely offer a creative idea, because the meetings were marked by sarcasm and my idea would invariably be shot down. Now I'm offering many new ideas. I'm finding that my colleagues support me. We're laughing a lot more in our meetings. Rather than dreading them, I now look forward to our meetings."

One reflective practice for teams has been especially effective and powerful in terms of solving problems creatively and building individual, team, and organizational health. Rather than trying to immediately solve a dilemma, I teach team members to explore together the true nature of the issue, to understand the deeper life question that the problem poses. For example, a member (whom I'll call Sue) of the executive committee of a non-profit organization needed to ask the chief financial officer (whom I'll call John) to relinquish some control over the organization's financial records by teaching a member of the committee how to access and view the computerized records. Although this might sound like a fairly straightforward request,

Sue had avoided talking with John for many months because she feared, on the basis of past interactions, that conflict would ensue and John might resign.

I asked Sue to describe for her team the essence of the problem and the key colleagues involved. Members of the team then volunteered to play various roles imaginatively, drawing upon their intuition. Sue observed the ensuing improvised role-play of the dilemma. By assuming a "witnessing" position, Sue could better see the diverse perspectives portrayed by members of the group. After the role play, team members spent time in silence, each reflecting on their intuitive insights. The team then discussed the ways in which their understanding of the dilemma had changed. Sue realized that she had found herself in similar situations throughout her life, in her relationships both at and outside work. She now saw that the larger challenge for her involved learning how to communicate directly, clearly, and effectively in difficult, conflictual situations; to trust her and the team's intuitive wisdom; and to assume her full leadership capacities by standing confidently in her personal and professional authority and the fullness of her being. Sue agreed to practice her prospective communication with John during an upcoming meeting with a team member whom she had selected as a "speaking partner." She also agreed to practice "standing reflection" (a cross-cultural form of meditation and prayer) in the coming weeks to develop an embodied felt-sense of confidence, strength, and courage. By responding to the problem in these ways, Sue used a challenge at work as an opportunity not only to learn new skills but also to develop her character, intuitive wisdom, and, therefore, greater wholeness and health.

I then asked Sue's team members to ponder her dilemma over the next 2 weeks, until we met again, to see whether any new perspectives emerged. In addition, I asked them to feel warm regard for her during their daily individual reflective practice and to imagine a sense-rich future scenario, in which Sue would tell them that the problem had been resolved in a way that served the highest good for herself, her team, her organization, and her community.

As typically is the case, this reflective practice had immediate transformative effects on Sue, her team members, and even John. First, the experience of being understood and then imaginatively supported by her teammates was deeply healing and encouraging for Sue, giving her strength to take on what she perceived as a daunting challenge. Second, her teammates now knew Sue more fully and how they could support her in the coming weeks. Third, on the fourth day after the role-playing exercise, before Sue had even said a word to John, he approached her and said, "I've been thinking that it would be good for me to train someone else how to use the financial system. I'd like to talk with you about how to do that." (This example of inner communication and influence at a distance has occurred often, when teams have used

this form of reflective practice.)

Teams can use imaginative visualization to heal not only their own members, their working relationships with colleagues, and their organizations but also their clients and communities. I will discuss in a later section how such effects have been demonstrated in scientific research.

I am writing a workbook about this and other processes, which organizations will be able to use to increase their own health and their healing efficacy with clients. Its provisional title is *Change Your Life, Change Your Work: The Transformative Power of Reflective Practice and Inspired Action*.

I will now turn to theory and research, which suggest that we can use our teams and organizations as healing agents.

A Model of Individual, Team, and Organizational Development

Because it is grounded in a comprehensive, cross-cultural survey of scientific research and age-old wisdom traditions, Ken Wilber's integral model of development provides a rigorous, clear framework for understanding collective healing and health. I will present only those aspects of his model that are not covered elsewhere in this book and that are necessary as context for the research on team and organizational fields under review.

To explain how teams and organizations can act as healing agents, I need to first discuss collective consciousness.

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At a certain point in their lives, some individuals begin to develop this mode of awareness, in which identity expands beyond oneself to ever-widening circles of membership and care: from small groups (family, organization, etc.), to a community (geographic, interest group, etc.), to a society or culture (national, ethnic, etc.), to all humans, to the world (all sentient beings and nature), and to the cosmos. Each identity transcends, yet includes, the prior one. Within each circle of identification, members feel they are subjectively united and interdependent. They perceive their mutual identity, recognizing themselves in one another beyond the illusions of separation and duality. They develop an authentic, primary, and abiding concern for the well-being, health, and productive functioning of the members of that circle-for the common good, the definition of which continually expands.

I believe that collective consciousness develops through Wilber's four transpersonal stages of development.

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Two key changes in consciousness begin to occur, and both have profound implications for the ability of individuals to develop collective healing abilities. First, individuals now start to consciously choose their identity, values, morals, and so forth and to collaboratively agree upon these and the norms, processes, and culture of the collectives with which they identify. They become aware of the ways in which their mutual actions create the environment or field of the collective. Second, whereas individuals previously added up the diverse perspectives in a collective, in order to arrive at integration, they now directly see the integral through intuition. The development of this intuitive ability may play a crucial role in healing. The research I will cite below suggests that members of a group may be able to directly apprehend the unexpressed thoughts and feelings of one another and perhaps the intelligence of Spirit. This ability may permit team members to consciously use their focused attention and intention to draw upon healing energies that are more efficacious than those available to them on an individual basis.

The Felt-Sense of Collective Consciousness: Tele-Prehension

When asked in interviews to describe experiences of collective consciousness,

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individuals

often talk about being able to anticipate one another's words or behavior, reading one another's minds, seeing through one another's eyes, feeling one another's feelings, and experiencing a harmonic resonance of heart and mind. Consequently, people speak about enhanced communication, facilitated coordination and flow in action, and a sense of deep knowing and connection.

Wilber calls the ability to feel another person's feelings or know another's thoughts in an immediate and direct way tele-prehension. He identifies three ways in which tele-prehension may occur:

- Psychic or psi phenomena. A key example is telepathy, or prehension (feeling, perception, or awareness) at a distance.
- A transcendent Self (Spirit). Wilber believes "the same nondual and nonlocal Subject inhabits" all individuals, so that "an instantaneous intersubjectivity" connects them, prior to any sense-based communication.
- Harmonic empathy or resonance. A note struck on one string of an instrument causes the same string on a nearby string instrument to vibrate. Harmonic empathy is the "interior equivalent between people: a type of felt resonance or mutual prehension-an immediate,

nonreflexive, intersubjective presence or resonance."

A number of scientists have found the scientific evidence for psi to be very compelling.

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Research protocols have typically been more rigorous than those used in mainstream research.

Results have often exceeded chance by huge margins. Regarding tele-prehension, Rupert Sheldrake has said, "The extended mind is a scientific hypothesis that leads to testable predictions. It is already supported by a large body of evidence…from controlled experiments."

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Subtle Energies

Energy patterns or fields may mediate tele-prehension. On the basis of research regarding brain functioning and neurophysiology, Wilber considers matter (mass) and energy to be two of the exterior, physical forms of consciousness (prehension). As life evolves, the forms of matter-energy (bodymind) reflecting each level of increasing consciousness become more complex and subtle.

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Researchers have been attempting to understand the nature of the subtle energies that may be used by unconventional healers. The explanatory mechanism for this type of healing remains unclear. Some subtle energies appear to take certain forms of matter-energy, such as electromagnetic fields.

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Other forms, called morphic forms, may manifest the subtle energies associated with mental activity, including tele-prehension and distance healing. I will now discuss the types of energy fields proposed under Wilber's model.

Field Effects

Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing

There is a field.

I'll meet you there.

When the soul lies down in that grass,

The world is too full to talk about.

Ideas, language, even the phrase each other

Doesn't make any sense.

-Jelaluddin Rumi

A number of researchers have argued that individuals and groups can communicate with

and influence one another through some form of field effect, outside of modalities that use the five senses.

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This is not a wild suggestion: Although magnetic, electrical, and gravitational fields are invisible, they produce effects at a distance. In biology the concept of morphogenetic fields guiding the form of growing organisms is widely accepted, yet scientists don't "yet know what these fields are or how they work."

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In his hypothesis of formative causation, Sheldrake has postulated that morphogenetic fields are part of a larger family of fields, called morphic fields. Morphic resonance (a nonlocal transfer of information across space and time) creates these fields, which evolve and contain an inherent memory. They are regions of influence, located in and around the self-organizing systems that they shape into spatiotemporal patterns of vibratory or rhythmic activity. They work probabilistically, imparting characteristic properties, wholeness, and order upon the "inherent indeterminism of their systems" and making them "more than the sum of their parts."

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Sheldrake suggests that attention creates perceptual fields, which connect us to what we look at. Mental fields and morphic resonance may explain tele-prehension, extended mind, and, I would argue, distance healing. Social fields "organize and coordinate the behavior of individuals within a social group; for example, the way individual birds fly within a flock."

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Attention and intention may allow us to connect with others in our social fields.

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A number of experiments seem to indicate that Sheldrake's hypothesis is valid.

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Sheldrake's work is congruent with Wilber's model, which postulates seven types of fields, corresponding to increasing stages of consciousness, each extending spatially beyond the previous field. The first type of field, physical, includes gravitational, electromagnetic, strong nuclear, and weak nuclear fields. The other fields are etheric, astral (or powerful emotional, passing through the acupuncture meridians), first psychic (or thought, caused by sustained mental activity), second psychic (thought), causal, and nondual. The greater the degree of consciousness, the greater the number of energy fields around the physical form.

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I suggest that as individuals develop their collective consciousness, they can begin to work with thought fields by focusing their attention and intention.

Nonlocal Field Effects

The local aspects of these energy fields, according to Wilber, are the areas of highest density and therefore have the greatest probability of being measured. Many can be detected with instruments, perceived by highly respected psychics and unconventional healers, and tested according to empirical and phenomenological criteria.

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For example, the magnetic component of the heart's field is "not impeded by tissues and can be measured several feet away from the body."

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Even the

most basic types of fields, such as electromagnetic fields, influence objects at a distance.

Many of the effects that I report in this chapter appear to operate nonlocally. According to Wilber's model, certain energy fields operate nonlocally during certain states of consciousness because they do not by their nature need to manifest through a physical body. For example, while dreaming during sleep and during some nonordinary waking states-such as out-of-the-body experiences-the astral or the psychic (thought) fields may operate. In formless meditative states or near-death experiences, the causal field may come into play.

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Research Regarding Nonlocal Effects

I will now briefly review the research regarding field effects, which have implications for healing by teams and organizations of others and even of their members.

INSECT AND ANIMAL STUDIES. Sheldrake and others have demonstrated that psi capacities are widely distributed, even in insect and animal societies. For example, using synchronized video cameras in dog owners' homes and workplaces, he has proven that dogs go to the front doors of their homes to wait as soon as their owners decide to return home from work, even though those times are varied daily. Sheldrake suggests that social morphic fields helps explain highly coordinated, synchronized behavior found within colonies, schools, flocks, herds, packs, groups, or pairs. For example, he and other researchers have proposed that the social fields of termite colonies contain the blueprints for the construction of the colony. Experiments have

indicated that neither sense-mediated communication nor an electrical field can likely explain how termites, after the nest they are building is cut in half and separated by a steel-plate barrier, can still create structures and tunnels that are perfectly aligned.

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BIOPHOTON EMISSIONS. Fritz-Albert Popp has detected "biophoton emissions" (a form of electromagnetic radiation) from living organisms.

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In his experiments, bacteria, sunflowers, fleas, and fish "sucked up" the light emitted by other living organisms in their environment. Popp concluded that this exchange of photons, or wave resonance, was a means for living organisms to influence the health of one another. (This may be the case when healers use their hands in touch or near-the-body healing.) From his study of illnesses, Popp hypothesized that illness results from incoherence, either too little or too much light. "Perfect coherence is an optimum state just between chaos and order,"

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he writes. Popp also believed that biophoton exchange might explain "how schools of fish or flocks of birds create perfect and instantaneous coordination."

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REMOTE INFLUENCE. Many studies and two meta-analyses have shown the ability of people to significantly influence, through intention, the physical condition of other living beings in remote settings. For example, influencers have slowed the rate of hemolysis (bursting of cell walls) in red blood cells; increased the electrodermal activity (EDA) of those being stared at; calmed a group of highly nervous people; helped recipients to focus their attention; and affected the eye or gross motor movements, breathing, and brain rhythms (one group produced these effects upon another).

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A number of these findings have been replicated. The EDA studies succeeded 47% of the time, and the studies in general had the intended effect 37 percent of the time, in contrast to an expected 5 percent chance success rate. Ganzfeld experiments (including telepathy studies), which eliminated sensory input, have produced the strongest results, with 82 percent significantly better than chance. A meta-analysis of all ganzfeld experiments showed odds against chance of ten billion to one.

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DISTANCE SEEMED IRRELEVANT. The strongest influence occurred when the subjects greatly needed the intended effect, which indicates that interactions with a client who desires healing may be particularly effective. Finally, as with other forms of tele-prehension, strength of effect correlated with the degree to which the influencer identified with the subject.

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PHYSIOLOGICAL COHERENCE AND ENTRAINMENT. A number of experiments have suggested that sustaining positive emotions produces synchronization, coherence, or entrainment of the body's oscillatory systems (respiratory, heart, and brain rhythms), and that coherence confers a variety of physical and emotional health benefits. Additional studies have indicated that people can influence one another's physiological coherence through cardioelectromagnetic communication, the entrainment of one or more of their respective systems, and may thereby help one another to derive these benefits.

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Experiments have shown that, when individuals had close living or working relationships, or when they felt appreciation, care, empathy, or love toward one another, their heart waves became entrained, even when participants were in separate rooms. Under similar conditions, their heart and brain waves entrained if the receivers had achieved coherence of their heart rhythms. EEG alpha rhythms, visually evoked potentials and interhemispheric synchronization (measured by a functional MRI machine), created in one person can produce the same effects in another, even when they are in separate electromagnetically shielded rooms. Brain-to-brain entrainment is facilitated by the previously described conditions and by participants meditating together or being in an altered state of consciousness. Interhemispheric synchronization in one person results in greater influence on the other.

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Coherence and entrainment appear to increase awareness, attention, and mutual understanding; to produce feelings of calm, empathy, connection, and rapport; to facilitate tele-prehension of sensations, emotions, images, thoughts, and intuitions;

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and to promote healing.

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REMOTE VIEWING. In a number of double-blind experiments, people have described a distant location to which another individual has been sent with a statistically significant degree

of accuracy, well beyond chance levels, even when viewers were in electromagnetically screened rooms. As in other psi experiments, pairs who had an emotional bond obtained the strongest results. Other factors that improved accuracy included being in a relaxed, even playful state; not interpreting, analyzing, expecting, or imagining the scene; and using the right hemisphere of the brain and the unconscious, indicating receptivity rather than conscious control. Meta-analyses indicate that results are more significant when the viewers are in altered states of consciousness.

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DISTANCE HEALING INTENTION (DHI). More than 80 percent of Americans believe that their "thoughts can cause healing for another person at a distance,"

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as do 75% of family practitioners.

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In more than 150 controlled studies of DHI over 40 years, 67 percent have produced statistically significant healing effects. In more than 50 of these experiments, which were rated to be of excellent methodological quality, 74 percent yielded significant results.

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Meta-analyses of these studies "provide strong evidence that DHI is related to predictable changes in a distant person's physiological state."

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Many excellent comprehensive surveys of the literature exist.

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DHI healers use intention

as the essential healing modality, together with relaxation, enhanced concentration, visualization, and a request to a healing force greater than themselves.

Four studies have involved DHI by groups.

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In two groups the effect size was almost twice as large as previous meta-analytic estimates involving individual intention, which suggests that groups may enhance DHI effects."

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Other studies of distance healing by groups, focused on widespread social rather than individual healing effects, are reported in the subsequent section.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HEALING. More than 600 studies, together with meta-analyses that have controlled for other factors, have reported that the practice of transcendental meditation (TM) significantly reduces stress, reverses chronic-stress effects, and improves health, creativity, intelligence, and social behavior among both practitioners and nonpractitioners. Several studies have shown increases in interhemispheric coordination and the number of areas in the cortex perceiving information. These results are similar to those reported in the literature on meditation.

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More than 50 of these experiments, which have controlled for alternative explanations, have demonstrated that TM practice in groups representing 1 percent of a target population, have significantly improved the nonparticipating surrounding population's quality of life and physical and mental health, significantly reducing crime, accidents, conflict, and war. More than 20 of these studies have been published in respected peer-reviewed scientific journals. Eight of the 50 studies have shown that group practice is significantly associated with improved physical and mental health among nonparticipants, and many of the studies purport to show that group practice has a more beneficial effect than individual practice.

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TM's founder originally hypothesized that the coherent intention and the calm created within a meditating group would reduce stress in the collective consciousness of the surrounding population via a field effect. A recent study may provide "empirical support for a postulated psycho-neuroendocrine mechanism that could mediate the observed reductions in behavioral indicators of social stress."

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FACILITATED LEARNING, CREATIVITY, AND HEALING. A number of experiments suggest that field effects facilitate faster and easier learning by individuals and groups that attempt to learn a skill or behavior after others have done so. For example, in one of a number of studies, a group completed a newly created crossword puzzle. It was then broadcast to millions via TV for them to complete. Subsequently, a new group, one that had not seen the puzzle, finished it significantly faster than the original group. Researchers have investigated this phenomenon in terms of language skills, solving crossword puzzles, birds pulling caps off milk bottles, conditioned aversion among chicks, and other forms of learning. Other researchers have suggested that field effects may also explain cultural synchronicity in times past, when a discovery or creative renaissance in one culture appeared within a relatively short time frame in other cultures

around the world despite an absence of communication.

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If learning and creativity can be facilitated and distributed by field effects, perhaps the same may be true of healing-among the members of teams, organizations, local communities, and even our global community.

Coherence Created by Collective Attention and Intention.

Random-number-generating (RNG) computers are programmed to issue zeroes or ones randomly so that each number eventually appears 50 percent of the time. Ordinary people, however, in more than 900 experiments, have used intention to cause RNGs, sometimes in distant locations, to issue more of one number over many trials, representing a statistically significant deviation from chance. Bonded pairs-couples in a relationship-produced effects that were 6 times stronger than those of individuals. Like the remote viewing experiments, these results indicate that people with an emotional connection, when acting in concert, are more influential than individuals acting alone.

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Groups also produce stronger results than individuals. For example, even when only the attention of groups has been captured by high-interest events, the RNG effects have been 3 times greater than individual-intention results-despite the fact that the groups were unaware of the RNGs and therefore did not intend to influence their output. When groups of people meditated together-a practice that creates even greater focus by synchronizing members' brain waves-the effect of their coherent attention was 6 times greater than the individual-intention results. Finally, during certain events that have captured mass attention, such as Princess Diana's death and the 9/11 tragedies, the combined output of 60 RNGs around the world has significantly deviated from chance.

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These results suggest that focused collective attention or intention can create significant order in otherwise random and chaotic reality, perhaps via field effects. It is precisely this effect-the transformation of randomness into coherence-that underlies insight, learning, healing, and creative manifestation.

Psychosocial Support, Community, and Spiritual Connections. A good deal of research indicates that relationships and involvement in strong community or social networks, including spiritual communities of practice and psychosocial support groups, are important predictors of physical and mental health, of recovery from disease, and of length of life.

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Indigenous traditions, communally oriented cultures, and a number of Eastern traditions still recognize the primary role of community in individual health and see a rupture in a person's connection with the community as a key factor in disease.

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In mainstream U.S. culture, we have unfortunately shredded a good deal of our sense of community, including that which once existed in the workplace. Given the research presented in this chapter, it is imperative that this destruction be reversed. If health-care organizations hope to be effective as healing agents, they need to help build a sense of caring, mutual support, and community in their teams, organizations, and communities and to begin to use those collective entities as healing forces.

Key Variables in Collective Healing

Across the many areas of research discussed in the preceding section, a number of common variables emerge as crucial for collective healing. Future research might focus on the following factors:

Fields may mediate healing effects during noncontact and distance healing. Electromagnetic fields may be involved, particularly in proximal healing. Mental fields may be involved in distance healing.

Fields associated with groups may create stronger healing effects than fields associated with individuals.

Our personal physiological and emotional coherence, and our ability to stabilize and focus our attention and intention, appear to determine the degree to which we are a healing influence on others.

Integral models of human development suggest that our awareness of healing field effects and our ability to use them consciously and constructively correlate with the degree of our development. These capacities may increase as individuals develop their character traits

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and collective consciousness.

Like any skill, effective noncontact healing requires practice. Factors that appear to increase healing field effects associated with subtle energies include relaxation, alert receptivity, and concentration or focused attention; gentle wishing or visualization, rather than intense willing or striving; reduced physical activity or sensory input; right-brain activation and

interhemispheric coordination; belief in success; the tendency to view life as interconnected and believe that tele-prehension is possible; intentions that reflect the highest good; a request and surrender to a healing force greater than oneself (e.g., the spirit world, a religious figure, collective consciousness, light, love).

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Many of these abilities can be developed through meditation, contemplation, and other forms of reflective practice. Supporting such practice by staff may therefore help organizations to become even more effective healing agents. Developing connection, rapport, empathy, appreciation, and compassion also seems to improve intuition, communication, and understanding, thereby augmenting staff's diagnostic skills and increasing cultural sensitivity, respect, and acknowledgment. Staff members would likely cooperate with and support one another more, collaborate across interdisciplinary boundaries, and work more creatively as a team. The increased intuitive ability to truly "see" clients and colleagues in their wholeness is in itself profoundly healing-perhaps one of the most potent healing forces. Health organizations would benefit from relationship-centered approaches to health care, from building trust throughout the organization, and from related staff development.

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Groups may be able to achieve greater healing effects than individuals, especially as they grow in size. Teams and even the organization as a whole, especially with an ongoing program of reflective practice, may be able to harness large-scale intention to heal to diseased (i.e., stress-filled, unharmonious) situations in their community and society.

Community and strong support networks convey major health benefits. Health organizations need to pay more attention to building community within their organization and in the surrounding geographic area. Distance healing by teams, especially when supported by an ongoing program of reflective practice, may be very effective as well as extremely cost effective. Nurturing healthy employee, team, and organizational fields may increase healing efficacy with individual clients, communities, and society.

Conclusion

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes.

-Marcel Proust

We have embarked on an exciting journey, exploring new methods of healing. In some ways, these methods have been known in the wisdom traditions for a long time. In other ways, however, we are approaching them anew. First, we are exploring them scientifically, moving

from metaphysics and belief to experimentation, practice, and methodologies that can be used to train many in the subtle healing arts. Second, we are harnessing the true nature of healing, which involves relationship-centered and collective approaches, and coming into individual, organizational, and societal wholeness, which is inherently spiritual and sacred by nature. These approaches promise to restore community in our organizations and in mainstream U.S. culture. Third, we are beginning to consciously learn how to work with field effects and to assume our individual responsibility for our crucial contributions to the health of our relationships, our organizations, our communities, and our culture.

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