

What is Inherent Health?

By Robyn Michele Jones, MA, CMT, RCST®

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Thirty spokes converge upon a single hub;
It is on the hole in the center that the use of the cart hinges.

We make a vessel from a lump of clay;
It is the empty space within the vessel that makes it useful.

We make doors and windows for a room;
But it is the empty spaces that make the room livable.

Thus, while the tangible has advantages,
It is the intangible that makes it useful.
(Lao Tzu, 2003, p.23)

Inherent Health is the ground and energy field that we live in, that we are. It is that which lives and breathes us. One might call it love or life or intelligence. It is intangible in the energy web around and through us. It is tangible in the incredibly wise workings of our psyche and body, always aiming for balance and health the best that it can. It is not a thing or a substance; it is a movement, a constant process.

Personal example:

I am feeling anxious. Rather than ignoring it or attempting to function on top of it, as I often do, I take the time to “be” with the anxiety. I give it space while at the same time attending to it lovingly. As if I am relating to a small child, I inquire gently. What is needing to be known? I allow the anxiety to be there without becoming it. My breath slows, my body relaxes, an ease creeps in. I feel a nudge at the edge of my awareness. I suddenly remember a couple of “to do” things I had forgotten to include in my plans for the day. My body relaxes even more. The anxiety, rather than being a nuisance, has been a sign to pay attention.

I had felt the push of “something” trying to get my attention. Resting in a spacious field of attention, the “something” that felt to be a problem eventually led me to an answer; it was the answer. To me, these are the workings of Inherent Health. Health in this context is broader than whether one is physically/emotionally/mentally/spiritually well or ill. Inherent Health is the energy web that encompasses and includes all the particulars of one’s life. It is essentially whole and is always moving us toward

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wholeness and healing. What helps us access Inherent Health is embodied present time awareness – settling into our body and paying attention to what is happening in the moment. Our attitude is all inclusive. The felt sense that arises is one of wholeness, connection, and fluidity.

As we work with this awareness in our bodywork practice, two things become evident. First, we have to work wholistically with the intersection of the body, mind, emotions, and spirit. And secondly, we find that something larger than ourselves is at work in the healing of ourselves and our clients. When we work within the knowing that our problems are held in a much larger ground of wholeness, the healing process will be fluid, less entrenched, and come to resolution much more easily.

This larger energy field and the flows within it are spacious and continually expressing health. The same quality of energetic movements are present in all of us. The macrocosm and microcosm reflect each other and are inextricably related. Interestingly, energetic blocks or problems seem to be made of this same energy as well. Think of life's experiences as energetic movements in the web. These movements come to us and move through us to completion or they remain incomplete and get stuck in some way. Energies that get stuck in us are still seeking to complete their movement in an inherently healthy way.

In quantum physics prominent physicist, Mae Wan Ho says, "...that there is no discontinuity between the so-called 'hard' sciences such as physics and chemistry and the 'soft' sciences such as psychology and philosophy." (Ho, 1993, p.170) She has found that, "The quantum field seems to hold the memory both of the ideal form of the organism *and* of the event and conditions it encounters. This field is responsive to the environment and does the 'intelligent thing'." (Sills, F., 2007, p.18-19)

The quantum field is theorized to be at the subatomic level, at the very foundation of our universe. Descriptions of this field are very similar to the experience of Inherent Health. David Bohm, a student of Einstein's and world renowned physicist, "suggested that wholeness was in some ways the more primary reality." (Talbot, 1991, p.41) He called this "quantum potential." "More and more the picture of reality Bohm was developing was not one in which subatomic particles were separate from one

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another and moving through the void of space, but one in which all things were part of an unbroken web and embedded in a space that was as real and rich with process as the matter that moved through it.” (Ibid, p.42-43)

Amit Goswami, Ph.D., in The Quantum Doctor, says “a new hypothesis is being considered within the medical profession – that our body already has, in many cases of illness, the requisite wisdom and mechanism for cure; we just have to discover it and manifest it.” (Goswami, 2004, p.225) This echoes the teachings in Myofascial Release and Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy: that the cure is inherent in the disorder, Inherent Health is always present. Franklyn Sills’ experience is that, “Healing is found within the conditions present and our role is to deeply appreciate and encourage this potential.” (Sills, F., 2004, p.246)

Relating to our resistances and defended structures is one thing. Relating to our Health is a whole other affair. It is not about working anything through, or discharging anything, or clearing anything. It is not about personality dynamics. It is about the immediacy of our most fundamental essence. It is about the intelligence which originates order out of chaos, which allows change, which is infinitely present and which is the basic imperative of life itself. (Sills, F., 1999, p.1)

Joanna Macy, eco-philosopher and spiritual activist, reminds us that the experience of Inherent Health and connection through wholeness is universal to human beings. “Basic to most spiritual traditions, as well as to the systems view of the world, is the recognition that we are not separate, isolated entities, but integral and organic parts of the vast web of life.” (Macy, 2007, p.127) “We begin to see the world as ourselves. Hunger for this union springs from a deep knowing, which mystics of all traditions give voice to.” (Ibid, p.27)

To the extent that we are able to connect with our belonging between Earth and Heaven through our vertical alignment, or the midline which we have formed around, is the extent to which we will be able to open to a wide field in relationship, which will include personal, archetypal, ancestral, collective material which is ‘trying’ to get heard through the portal of the therapeutic meeting. (Sills, M., 2007, p.2)

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The vertical axis is an energy flow centered in the core of our being. It is formed by our connection with Earth, our bodies, and our connection with Source. “In all traditional healing and spiritual traditions, an understanding and relationship to Source is the key to wisdom and happiness.” (Sills, F., 2007, p.30) Depending on one’s experience, Source can be known as God, Tao, The Breath of Life, Creative Intelligence etc. “*Source*: represents an alignment to a deeper field of interconnection and openness at the heart of the human condition. The concept and experience of Source takes us into the realm of archetypal energies and creative forces.” (Ibid, p.10) Franklyn Sills goes on to say that, “I am proposing that life is basically spiritual in nature, and the greatest wounding we encounter is the obscuration of Source and the subsequent disconnection, or dislocation, of being.” (Ibid, p.10-11)

Centered in our vertical axis is our Being, our Core state. “The Core State is the direct felt-experience of being and Source.” (Ibid, p.32). Being is directly connected to Source; it is a locus of Source in our core. It is our who-I-amness or the answer to the question, “who am I?”

From Being we form a “self”, a “me”, as we meet the world. In quantum physics terms, the self is the collapse into form from infinite quantum potential. Our self structure or personality is what mediates Being’s interface with the world and its conditions. As practitioners, we hold this awareness of the Source-Being-self connection knowing that these territories “are holographically enfolded and naturally co-arise.” (Sills, F., 2007, p.10) Our intention in being with a client is to relate to them Being to Being. This supports the alignment with Inherent Health/Source/Wholeness as ground for the session. “This is an important orientation in clinical work; the understanding that the openness of the Core State is the ground of all healing process.” (Ibid, p.32) Luckily, this alignment is not to be generated by our “self” but is something we can rest in, something that is inherent and to be allowed into our awareness.

In the awareness of Inherent Health we are in a state of non-polarization. Here the universal and the personal, the absolute and the relative, “are actually two complementary aspects of reality.” (Kornfield, 2008, p.80) Focusing on the big picture alone is not enough. Form with all its beauty and challenges must be honored.

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Similarly, “As Jung implied, when universal and conditional forces come into dynamic balance, the transcendent faculty naturally arises and the client can transcend the conditions present so that something new may emerge.” (Sills, F., 2007, p. 32)

Thich Nhat Hanh uses the analogy of ocean water and a wave. The wave rises and falls, comes to be then disappears, yet it is always part of the water. “Liberation is the ability to go from the world of signs to the world of true nature. We need the relative world of the wave, but we also need to touch the water, the ground of our being, to have real peace and joy...Relative and absolute truths inter-embrace. Both truths, relative and absolute, have a value.” (Thich, 1999, p. 125) Not only do they have value, they are inherent in each other. “It means that what we seek does not lie outside of ourselves.” (Ibid, p.141)

In lecture, Franklyn Sills often says, “if something is true it is true at all levels” (Sills, F, 2006). Interestingly, Dr Jill Taylor, Harvard neuroanatomist, in speaking of the two hemispheres of the cerebral cortex of our brain shows that both of these truths are inherent within us. The right brain processes in parallel. It thinks in pictures, only knows the present moment, and perceives everything as connected in a bigger picture. It contains our ability to “just be”. Our left brain processes linearly; it thinks in language, sees our life as a story in time, and perceives everything as separate details. It contains our ability to “do”. These two hemispheres coordinate giving us our perception of reality, though often we can feel polarized between these even within ourselves.

As Dr. Taylor recovered from a severe stroke, she discovered that “a balanced-brain” approach was the most healthy. “As much as I obviously adore the attitude, openness, and enthusiasm with which my right mind embraces life, my left mind is equally amazing...My left mind is responsible for taking all of that energy, all of that information about the present moment, and all of those magnificent possibilities perceived by my right mind, and shaping them into something manageable.” (Taylor, 2006, p.141) As Jack Kornfield so wisely says, “We need to remember our zip (postal) code as well as our Buddha nature.” (Kornfield, 2008, p.79) The absolute and the relative, the water and the wave, are interdependent and inherent in each other.

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My thoughts turn to something I read once, something the Zen Buddhists believe. They say that an oak tree is brought into creation by two forces at the same time. Obviously, there is the acorn from which it all begins, the seed which holds all the promise and potential, which grows into the tree. Everybody can see that. But only a few can recognize that there is another force operating here as well – the future tree itself, which wants so badly to exist that it pulls the acorn into being, drawing the seedling forth with longing out of the void, guiding the evolution from nothingness to maturity. In this respect, say the Zens, it is the oak tree that creates the very acorn from which it is born. (Gilbert, 2006, p.329)

What is Inherent Health? It is our true nature. It is the true nature of all reality. It is the substance we are made of and the energy field we are woven in. It is the process of life itself. The urge to heal, seek, and question is the same as the healing, the discovery, and the answer.

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