

“Getting the War Out”

NEW PARADIGMS FOR HEALING POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS

Denis W. Ouellette

Not many of us get through life without bumps, grinds and dents along the way. They say that stress becomes trauma when the injury takes up residence—when an event was so overwhelming for us that we can’t seem to recover from it. We think of soldiers coming back from war, but some of that war never seems to leave them.

As a bodyworker and breathworker, I’ve worked with releasing stress and tension from bodies for 30 years. I’ve learned to trust the body’s ability to self-heal, and that many problems that seem mental and emotional, are locked and blocked in the body’s cells and nervous system too. They say that 75% of the time, doctor’s can’t find anything wrong when patients come to them with complaints. They call this psychosomatic, i.e., “it’s all in your mind.” Yet stress and the effects of trauma are often the cause, and

mind-oriented talk therapies, and/or psychoactive drugs, have produced less-than-complete results in many cases. Let’s examine emerging natural therapies, and new paradigms for understanding the key role that somatic experience (trusting the body’s innate self-healing powers) plays in resolving the effects of trauma.

I was giving a lady from the east coast a massage recently and we got to talking about her son, who recently returned from Iraq. “I wish you could work on my son,” she said, “that Walter Reed Hospital patched up his wounds but didn’t do a thing for his psyche... Boy, does he need anger management!”

I also worked on a psychiatrist from a major-city veteran’s hospital and I asked him what they do there for PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder). He admitted that their approach was not enough, mostly using drugs and group therapy. He talked about how when there is shock or

trauma, the neuropeptides (transmitters in the brain and nervous system) get frozen. Locked “at the scene of the crime,” so to speak, replaying the event, or “stuck in emergency mode,” which is the body’s fight-or-flight response, and unable to unwind and re-balance, resulting in the many, complex symptoms of PTSD: flashbacks, hypervigilance, dissociation, memory loss, and a disconnect from parts of the body, avoidance of restimulating experiences. (See the sidebar for a longer list of symptoms.) If not resolved, coping with trauma can evolve into bouts with depression, anxiety and addictions. This doctor talked about how the Alpha or Beta blockers commonly used for PTSD can blunt the memory and block the release of excess hormones (adrenaline, cortisol); but still, he said, “you’ve got to get the feelings out.”

We talked about how the frontal cortex of the brain doesn’t fully develop until the age of 28.

RAPID EYE TECHNOLOGY (RET)

My oldest son is a Marine and I am a proud Marine mom. At 21, he was sent over to Iraq for his first tour there. He was away for 7 months. When he came back to the states and was able to spend his 30 days of leave at home, I became very aware that all was not well. When darkness fell, he was absolutely haunted, and for 30 days straight, he would have to leave and go out with his friends to drink. Many nights he would not come home.

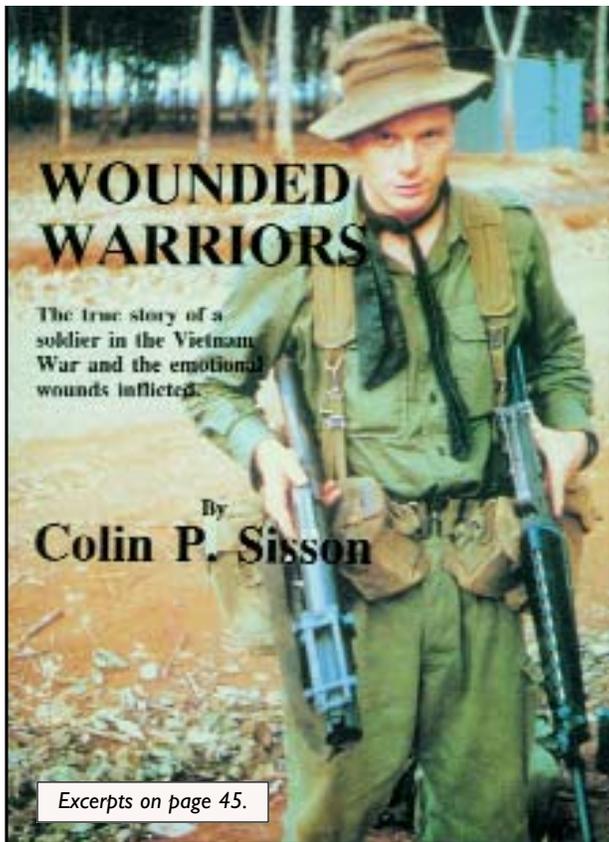
It was very sad to watch. He was a profound alcoholic and in such a state of remorse. I finally asked him about what happened over there. He began to sob and said bluntly, “I don’t remember, it’s as if I was never there. I remember leaving and I remember coming back.” How do you help a matter of the heart like this?

Some time after this, I was referred to RET with the hope this would help my son. I found a technician in his area and signed him up. I asked my son to just do this for me on faith, as neither of us had ever heard of it. After only five sessions, a profound change had occurred,

evident as he began to spend weekends fishing or with family and friends. He was able to sleep at night.

His second tour to Iraq came quickly and I was very glad to see such healing had occurred before he left. I honestly believe the RET saved my son’s life, for if he had gone to Iraq on that second tour in the same shape he was when he came home from the first, I am not sure he would have lived through it. During his second tour to Iraq, he called aunts, uncles and grandmas, very much more connected than before. I am grateful every day for the RET and what it did for my son and our family.

—Thanks, J.C.



brain, located in the lower rear, is sometimes called the reptilian brain and is our instinctual brain. From this part of the brain, life is viewed as either black or white, yes or no, friend or foe. Life is also only about needs in the present, i.e., “hand-to-mouth.” This brain takes over in times of extreme stress.

With all mammals we share the mammalian

That’s the rational brain, responsible for long-range planning, global thinking, and “fuzzy logic,” which is the ability to consider a host of variables, and how sad it is that soldiers (and other young trauma victims) may have this brain-maturation process interrupted. It reminded me of the statistic that 40% of the homeless in this country are Vietnam vets, with brains only capable of living in “survival mode.” Back in the 70’s, there was no PTSD diagnosis and little understanding or resources for soldiers returning from an unpopular war.

Let’s look at how Dr. Peter Levine, a psychologist and world leader in the somatic approach to trauma healing, describes the brain. We humans have three functioning parts of the brain, two of which we share with the animal kingdom. The survival

brain, located in the center, which drives emotional bonding with others, caring for our young, etc. Only humans have the frontal cortex, the higher reasoning brain. Our three brains work together as an integrated whole when there is homeostasis, i.e., a fluid balance of communication and coordination. Dr. Levine describes how, when trauma occurs, the survival brain takes over and then, because of the overwhelm, is unable to reconnect and reintegrate with the other two. He describes how small animals have life-threatening experiences from predators all the time and recover quickly, but for us humans, it is the rational brain that blocks the reprocessing. Why?

The energy that is marshalled in a life-threatening or powerfully stressing experience is huge. Think of the mother being able to lift a

TYPICAL PTSD SYMPTOMS

- Abrupt mood swings, e.g., rage reactions or temper tantrums, shame
- Addictive behaviors (overeating, drinking, drugs, etc.)
- Amnesia or forgetfulness
- Attention difficulties: ADD, ADHD, etc.
- Attraction to dangerous situations
- Avoidance behavior (avoiding certain circumstances and phobias)
- Chronic fatigue or very low physical energy
- Constriction (tightness in body parts)
- Compulsion to re-enact actions or circumstances that mirror the trauma
- Depression, feelings of impending doom
- Difficulty sleeping
- Diminished interest in life
- Dissociation (including denial)
- Exaggerated emotional and startle responses
- Exaggerated or diminished sexual activity
- Extreme sensitivity to light and sound
- Fear of dying, going crazy, or having a shortened life
- Feelings and behaviors of helplessness
- Feelings of detachment, alienation, and isolation, “living dead” feelings
- Fibromyalgia or skin disorders
- Frequent crying
- Hyper-vigilance (being “on guard” at all times)
- Hyperactivity or hyper-arousal
- Immune system problems or certain endocrine problems, i.e., thyroid malfunction or environmental sensitivities
- Inability to love, nurture, or bond with other individuals
- Inability to make commitments
- Intrusive imagery or flashbacks
- Loss of sustaining beliefs (spiritual, religious or interpersonal)
- Mental “blankness” or “spaciness”
- Nightmares or night terrors
- Panic attacks, anxiety or phobias
- Psychosomatic illnesses, particularly headaches, neck and back problems, asthma, digestive, spastic colon, or severe premenstrual syndrome
- Reduced ability to formulate plans or goals, living “hand-to-mouth”

Compiled from www.Breathing.com²
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 and *Healing Trauma*, by Peter Levine, Ph.D.
 See Recommended Reading.

car off the legs of her child. When neither “fight” nor “flight” are viable options, the body moves into “freeze.” Think of the immobility response of the opossum and other prey animals. When we humans start to move out of this frozen state, we are often frightened by the intensity of the energy that needs to be released, whether it’s anger, retribution, shame, judgement, or grief. The rational mind blocks the discharge of these feelings out of the fear that it will be out-of-control, and someone may get hurt. This stalemate becomes a “cold war” between the parts of our brain where the cure and the resolution itself are at odds. The good news is that with proper guidance we can employ simple techniques that are safe and gentle to shake off the trauma of overwhelming events, and unravel the complex mass of symptoms and coping mechanisms.

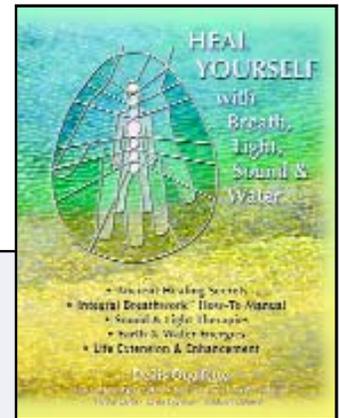
My friend Dustin is a Vietnam vet and as a young man, went through just about the worst that a war can dish out. For over 25 years, he dealt with the gnawing memories, the depression, and various addictions. Also a massage therapist, he could lose himself by de-stressing others, but hadn’t found

a way to heal himself of his past experiences of war—until breathwork. He came to six of our seminars and watched the trauma roll off as we introduced incremental openings in his breathing pattern and supported his body’s discharge and reorganization. As a healer himself, he knew how to go with it, and trusted his body’s process. (You can read his story and others at www.IntegralBreathwork.com.)

Dustin now practices breathwork every day—not for trauma discharge as this has totally left his body—but for oxygenation and detoxing, to stay energized and clear. He is a regular facilitator at our breathwork seminars now. At a recent checkup at the veteran’s hospital, the doctors said he has the biological make-up of a 47-year-old—he’s 64. Last month, he did 90 mini-massages all night long at a cancer walk-a-thon. That’s his idea of fun.

So trauma is not an incurable disease and its effects (PTSD)

don’t have to be a “life sentence.”



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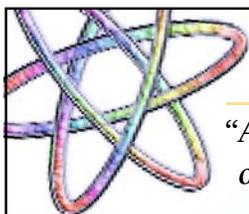
WORK, with assessment, correction and improvement of the breathing mechanics and physiology, followed by TRANSFORMATIONAL BREATHWORK for oxygenation and detoxification, balance and reorganization of the autonomic nervous system, release of stress and trauma, and gentle movement of the life-force energy. This results in the holistic clearing and harmonization of the body, mind, emotions and memories.

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Medications can be helpful and necessary in some cases, but drugs involve manipulating and disabling biochemical switches in the body that can hamper the healing on deeper levels. Traditional group or private talk therapies can be lengthy and expensive and “telling the story” can have limited results if real discharge and reintegration are not happening.

Dr. Levine’s Somatic Experiencing® techniques (visit www.traumahealing.com), and the breathwork approaches of psychotherapist Joy Manné (visit i-breathe.com) and others, trigger various body changes, called *discharge*, which are key for trauma resolution through body and brain reintegration. These phenomena can include tingling and trembling, spontaneous full-body breathing, body temperature shifts (usually from cold to warm sweating), and can involve emotional release and verbal discharging—all signs that the

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body's frozen fight-or-flight response is thawing. Levine uses a progressive series of imagined exposures related to the trauma, with a careful watching and managing of the body's "felt sense" reactions. Joy Manné describes her approach with a clients as follows:

this technique slows the process and enables dealing with each feeling and sensation as it comes up. Starting like this means that the client is doing a lot of talking in early breathwork sessions and I am doing a lot of listening and responding."¹

Michael Grant White, creator of Breathing.com, is among the voices cautioning against any

lasting results. Daily practice of proper breathing is where I believe we should direct everyone for balance, grounding, and accelerated emotional stability. The therapeutic environment should be used for breakthrough work, spiritual principles, practical solutions, and to train, monitor and re-enforce daily breathing practices. I have used mostly gentle techniques and exercises and have purposefully avoided the high-intensity, cathartic styles. I am trained in them and I rarely use them. Inasmuch as the unbalanced breath can result in emotional confusion and overall convoluted energy management, I feel strongly that the professional therapist should know how to develop the breath in the fastest, safest, most grounding, and centering way possible."²

Mike White trains therapists at his Optimal Breathing School™. He and I have collaborated to develop Integral Breathwork™,

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

EMDR is a psychotherapeutic approach developed by Francine Shapiro that uses dual attention stimulation, such as eye movements, bilateral sound, or bilateral tactile stimulation, to resolve symptoms resulting from exposure to a traumatic or distressing event. Clinical trials have demonstrated EMDR's efficacy in the treatment of PTSD. It has shown to be more effective than some alternative treatments and equivalent to cognitive behavioral and exposure therapies. Although some clinicians may use EMDR for various problems, its research support is primarily for disorders stemming from distressing life experiences.

"The method I used was to teach him to breathe deeply into his belly and to slow down his breath. I had him place his hands on his belly, one higher than the other so they did not overlap, to increase the area of sensation, and instructed him to breathe "into your hands, so that you can feel your breath caress your palms." When the breath is slow and deeply abdominal, grief [or anger and re-stimulation] will not get out of control... Once I am convinced that a client is sufficiently grounded and aware for us to start breathwork, all I do is ask the client. "Put your attention on your breathing and tell me what happens." The client is to give a phenomenological account, describing bodily feelings and breathing rhythms and when they change. Thoughts and ideas are included in this phenomenology. The attention to precision and detail inherent in

high-energy therapy that is aggressive in eliciting cathartic discharge, especially with trauma victims. Some of the early forms of breathwork encouraged highest hyperventilation (rather than gentle diaphragmatic breathing), or paid no attention to breathing-pattern assessment, correction and improvement before therapy. These approaches can result in "too much coming up too fast" and can retraumatize. A wise saying common among the evolving uses of this therapy is: "You don't push the river!" Here are Mike White's words:

"Self-determinism is almost always the key to



The Hopi Nation

In Anglo-European cultures, it is the needs of the autonomous ego that dominate perception. In the Hopi cultures, it is the needs of the tribal community that are primary.



The Hopi are not alone in this worldview. In many aboriginal cultures, the entire group shares the pain of an injured individual. Because of this felt connection, the healing of a single person naturally becomes the responsibility of the entire group. Specific rituals are performed involving the whole community. The Hopi say that if trauma is not dealt with quickly by the whole group, then its negative consequences will affect the tribe for seven generations.

What happens to cultures whose sole focus is self-involvement and autonomy? What lies in store for countries made up of isolated individuals who have little feeling for being a "people"? They become, as we have, particularly vulnerable to the disconnection that results from traumatic experiences.

—Peter A. Levine, Ph.D.

ing pattern can be useful in moving the client toward self-regulation and a sense of wholeness... Particular cautions need to be kept in mind when there is any evidence of shock or trauma, medical conditions, or dissociative issues."³

Now let's look at a few of the other emerging natural approaches to the healing of trauma, some involving neuro-logical repro-

gramming, others working with the unblocking of energy, such as EMDR, RET and EFT. Still others work with repatterning of beliefs, such as Constellations work and Psych-K. (See sidebars for stories and definitions.)

I spoke recently with another psychiatrist, Dr. S. Robert Martin, himself a Vietnam vet, who has switched from traditional talk

therapy, where it typically took 3–4 years of once-a-week sessions to resolve PTSD symptoms, to EMDR therapy, where he is seeing resolution in 3–4 months (for trauma or abuse victims), and even 3–4 sessions for less severe cases (auto accidents). Dr. Martin mentioned that, although EMDR is the treatment of choice by the Veteran's Administration and the Red Cross, he has made attempts to work with veterans' hospitals and insurance companies to get EMDR covered for vets and has met resistance, so for now he sees patients privately. He also introduced me to Dr. Breggin's books (see recommended reading list) on the harmful side effects of drugs for depression and trauma. (E-mail Dr. Martin at spirithealer@gorge.net.)

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a bringing together of physiological breathing improvement with transformational breathwork.

In the well-worth-reading book, *Body, Breath, & Consciousness*, Drs. Levine and Macnaughton offer the following advice: "Attention to the pattern or type of breathing displayed by a client can provide useful information for the therapist... Intervening in the client's breath-



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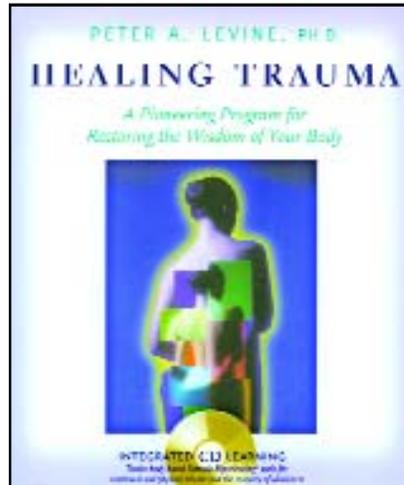
"Getting the War Out"

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As you review the stories and descriptions with this article, you'll see that the methods described do not involve a retelling or reliving of the original traumatic experience. (Some will involve discharge and emotional release, while others do not.) In his article, "Nature's Lessons in Healing Trauma," Dr. Levine relates: "I learned that to heal trauma, it was not necessary to dredge up and relive memories. In fact, severe emotional pain can be re-traumatizing. What we need to do to be freed from our symptoms and fears is to arouse our deep physiological resources and consciously utilize them. If we remain ignorant of our power to change the course of our instinctual responses in a proactive rather than reactive

way, we will continue being frozen, imprisoned, and in pain.

The tacit acceptance of drugs as the answer to this epidemic is frightening as well as misleading. These so-called disorders are not diseases like pneumonia or juvenile diabetes. Why are we not profoundly disturbed by the creation of future generations of chemically-dependent citizens? Will America become known as the "Prozac® nation," unable to function without mood elevators and anti-depressants? Perhaps this situation already exists.



Trauma is about broken connections. Our connections with the body/self, family, friends, community, nature, and spirit have been broken, perpetuating the downward spiral of traumatic dislocation. Healing

trauma is about restoring these connections."⁴

Dr. Levine describes trauma as the most avoided, ignored, denied, misunderstood, and untreated cause of human suffering. So many

complicated symptoms and maladies arise out of fear as we try to block it. And yet, as I often hear in my seminars, "Could the solution be that simple?" Yes, it can.

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We are not born with PTSD, it occurs when something traumatic happens to us. In those moments of trauma, the body and subconscious mind instantaneously develop beliefs that are 'downloaded' into our biological computer. These beliefs, now imprinted on our cells, tend to override all conscious thoughts. We may be unconsciously holding beliefs that tell our body that life is not safe, or that certain persons or animals are a threat. Or, our body/mind may believe that we may be hurt when we go out of the house, or drive a car. Since our subconscious mind is much more powerful than our conscious brain, the beliefs it holds are what determine our personality and our reality. Our biological systems react to what our subconscious mind believes. So when we are in a place that triggers this response, i.e., driving,

alone in a dark place, passing a barking dog...our heart rate goes up, it becomes difficult to breathe, we begin to panic and the domino effect kicks in, and we are unable to get to a place that is safe for our body/mind.

In my personal experience using Psych-K to treat PTSD, I did not have to focus on how this all came about. I did not have to know about or restimulate what caused the problem in the first place. I only had to identify what the belief was, which was easily accomplished with muscle testing. Then, I had to determine what I would prefer instead. For example, I knew that I had a tough time being alone at night, even with the doors locked, the dog next to the bed and a gun in the nightstand. Consciously quite safe, right? Wrong! The panic would kick in and I could not rest until I got up and checked the windows and the doors again, sometimes 10 times a night! So I made a simple statement of, "No matter where I am, I am safe and

my body and mind are filled with peace and comfort." Within a few moments of doing this PSYCH-K balance, I noticed a calm come over my body/mind. That night I slept better than I had in years. This has remained the same for over almost 2 years.

I have used this technique on clients who have experienced similar symptoms with various causes. Every time within a few balances, things are noticeably different and have lasting effects, even going so far as to (with their physicians' direction) get off of prescription medications. This is a fast, easy, effective way to address the cause, while focusing on the future—focusing on what we want to be true. We are born with a blueprint for wellness, it is the disruptions in this blueprint that cause dysfunction, disorder and disease. It is within each of us to know what we need to heal.

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(See ad on page 40.)

As we employ these gentle, natural, and simple modalities, and trust the body's intelligent, self-healing abilities, we can safely overcome the fears that bind us to non-resolution of trauma. Otherwise, the cure itself is at risk of becoming the enemy, and the war within will continue. When portions of the mind/body are disconnected and at odds with each other, when the rational mind won't trust the instincts, where fear, anger, shame, or pain can't resolve, or are chemically suppressed, there will be acting out (violence, abuse), or "acting in" (addictions, self-destructive behavior).

Every man must find his own way to diffuse the tension. *So play with your kids! Get a massage! Go fishin'!* But where there are deeper symptoms of PTSD, seek help, rather than thinking you can just "cowboy up." Men's conditioning and training lead them to either explode or implode when there is too much stored tension and trauma. But what about the women? Well, first off, there are female soldiers too. But most women will end up taking on the suffering of the men they love. Statistics show that up to 80% of all women will be victims of some kind of abuse in their lifetime. It's easier for women to say, "I need help," and easier for them to find their heart and to forgive. So, men, we must first and always protect the ladies in our life from harm. Then in matters of the heart, it's OK to let them lead the way.

No discussion of these natural therapies can be complete without an

Wounded Warriors

by Colin P. Sisson. Excerpts:

[Upon first arriving home from Vietnam in 1967...]

I woke up bathed in sweat, feeling totally disorientated and not knowing where I was. It had been that same nightmare that I had been having every night for over a month... Since those dreams started, they had been getting steadily worse and I was starting to think that I was going crazy...

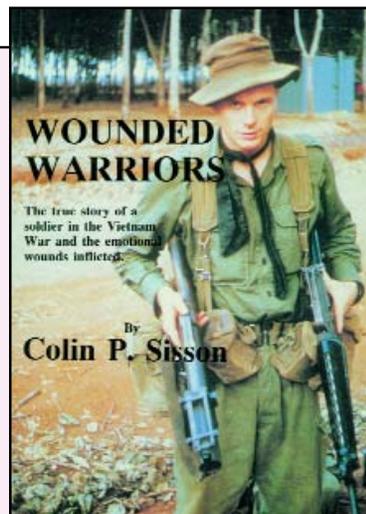
Mum came up to me and stood behind me, then wrapped her comforting arms around me. "Welcome home, son. I'd like you to know that whatever's going on inside of you, I'm always here for you. You don't have to talk about it. Just know that you are safe at home. I choked back the tears that demanded expression. She cried for me instead, at the same time telling me that, if I wanted to, it was okay to cry too. Her assurance was in vain, for I had a deeply rooted belief that, if I were to survive, I had to keep my feelings under control.

The next day was spent shopping and sightseeing in Auckland. While walking along the street, a car suddenly backfired; the next thing I knew I was looking out at Mum from underneath another vehicle that was parked. She was staring at me, with her head tilted to one side. "Are you all right son?" I pulled myself from under the car, stood up and brushed the dust from my jacket. I smiled weakly at her and at several curious passer-bys. "Sure, just keeping my reactions in trim," was all I could think of...

Six months after leaving Vietnam, I was still having nightmares about the war, but by that time I was able to suppress any screams at the point when I woke up. This self-control saved me from having to make embarrassing explanations to my concerned family about the state of my mental health.

[Now 25 years later, Colin is a breathwork facilitator and trainer...]

In the twenty-five years since my return from Vietnam I have experienced many radical changes in my life. The most significant was probably, that



I gave up my need to regard each potential female partner as a surrogate mother. Secondly, I worked hard at building my self-esteem...

On July 7, 1992, I left New Zealand for Russia, where I had been invited to run a training course for therapists and aspiring practitioners of the technique of Breath Integration. This was my new—and I felt, more appropriate—name for rebirthing. It had been arranged that I would give my services for free, as a contribution to an emerging nation in need of help from the West.

As I came down for breakfast, Eva said, "I think you need to breathe, Colin." Her sharp eyes and intuition missed nothing. "No. I'll be okay in a few hours." My reply did not fool Eva. "I've known you long enough to know when you are avoiding something important. Come on, I'll rebirth you."

During the next two hours, I exploded with anger and then cried like a wounded baby, digging deeply into my subconscious and discovering emotions I had long forgotten. In the end, I surrendered totally, and felt joy and the profound relaxation that follows a breath integration session. The healing I received related to the battle in operation Coburg when I had dysentery. In some way, the upcoming-training course, even though I was conducting it, had reactivated that memory both mentally and physically, from all those years before.

[When conducting this breathwork training, Colin finds that one of his Russian students was among his enemies in Vietnam...]

Continued on next page

Wounded Warriors (continued)

I was stunned, suddenly and without warning, I was looking across the room at someone who was my former enemy. Feelings about the war welled up strongly and it was several minutes before I was able to speak. There was neither hostility nor love, only memories. Everyone in the room felt the energy between us as we looked at each other. Neither of us knew what to do with the feelings that were arising, but mercifully, someone rescued the situation by asking a question about an aspect of breathing and its relationship to mental health and the lesson continued.

Later in the afternoon, the ex-Russian soldier had a breathing session that brought up issues from twenty-five years earlier when he had been serving in war-torn Vietnam. He exploded angrily, then cried like a hurt child for nearly half an hour. I knew exactly what he was going through, as I had been in a very similar session only days before. Gathering myself, I went over and sat beside him. Then I wrapped him in my arms, held him like a baby and gently rocked him, feeling the pain slowly leave his body.

Many of the students in the class broke down and openly wept at seeing two former enemies now united as brothers. I was unaware of the commotion in the room, being fully involved with a man whom I could never again hate, for whom I could only feel total love. It was a moving experience for everyone, but no more so than for me and my new Russian brother.

It seemed that I had found why I'd come to Russia: to heal and be healed, afterwards my new friend hugged me and wept from joy. Then, looking straight at me, he spoke in a torrent of Russian, too fast for me to understand a single word or even for my interpreter to translate. It was not necessary though. The message of love and brotherhood was unmistakable. ■

understanding of life-force energy (*chi, prana*, etc.) as all of these methods employ it in one capacity or another. Ultimately, whatever approach to wellness we take, East or West, traditional or alternative, it all comes down to how well and how much this life-force moves through us. Modern medicine is a technical marvel and has saved many lives, and drugs have a valuable place, but they are limited and limiting. A paradigm shift in healing is approaching, along with our view of who we are energetically. Our nature and our potential go way beyond the physical, and even our bodies are way beyond a simple series of biochemical switches. In the meantime, like the Hopi, let's remember that "we are our brother's keeper," and we carry each other's burdens collectively.

If you have experienced trauma and are dealing with any PTSD symptoms, there's plenty of hope and help. Seek it. If addictions have set in as coping mechanisms, don't settle for that. You now have the opportunity for probably the most challenging and yet the most rewarding overcoming that we humans can go through. So consider that reward as your grand victory and go for it!

Dr. Levine: "Trauma is about thwarted instincts. Our instinctive energies are not limited to acts of flight or uncontrolled violence. They are our *heroic energies*. And they can be harnessed." Trust in your body's natural healing wisdom and power! ■

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4. Article: "Nature's Lessons in Healing Trauma," Dr. Peter Levine, at www.traumahealing.com

Life-Force Energy (Chi)

Beyond the earth's atmosphere, in what the ancients called the ether, there is an essential substance dispersed throughout space, and everything on earth is designed to attract and retain a certain quantity of this life-bearing substance. Scientists would do well to take up this matter and through laboratory research teach the public about the nature of this quintessence, since it is so necessary to our physical, psychic and spiritual health. The Hindus call this substance prana and have methods for capturing it, particularly by means of the breath. But there are many other methods besides respiration. There is the contemplation of the rising sun and of the starry night sky. There is contact with the forces of nature in the forests, mountains, rivers, lakes and oceans. There is also nutrition, since all the foods we eat contain something of this quintessence, which is distributed everywhere in space, from the rocks to the stars.

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov (1900–1986)
Visit www.prosveta.com.

RECOMMENDED READING

- Healing Trauma: A Pioneering Program for Restoring the Wisdom of Your Body*, Peter A. Levine, Ph.D. (book & CD; also 6-CD *Sounds True Learning Course*)
- Body, Breath, & Consciousness: A Somatics Anthology*, by Ian Macnaughton
- The Body Remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment*, Babette Rothschild

Soul Therapy, Joy Manné

Heal Yourself with Breath, Light, Sound and Water, Denis Ouellette

The Tapping Cure: A Revolutionary System for Rapid Relief from Phobias, Anxiety, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and More, Roberta Temes

EMDR: The Breakthrough Therapy for Overcoming Anxiety, Stress, and Trauma, Francine Shapiro

Reclaim Your Light Through the Miracle of Rapid Eye Technology, Ranae Johnson

PSYCH-K: The Missing Peace in Your Life, Robert M. Williams

Wounded Warriors, Colin P. Sisson

Your Drug Might Be Your Problem—How and Why to Stop Taking Psychiatric Medications, Peter R. Breggin, MD & David Cohen, Ph.D.

Talking Back To Prozac: What Doctors Aren't Telling You About Today's Most Controversial Drug, Peter R. Breggin, MD and Ginger Ross Breggin

Toxic Psychiatry: Why Therapy, Empathy and Love Must Replace the Drugs, Electroshock, and Biochemical Theories of the "New Psychiatry", Peter R. Breggin, MD

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Please Note: The natural therapies discussed in this article should be pursued through properly trained and certified practitioners. These modalities are intended to complement rather than substitute for proper medical or psychological care. They are tools for personal growth and are not intended for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical or psychological condition.

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Denis W. Ouellette, BA, BS, MT, OBDS, has been a holistic-health practitioner since 1978. He trained with the original breathworkers in the 1980's, and is a certified Optimum Breathing Development® Specialist through Michael Grant White, creator of *Breathing.com*. As a core faculty member at the Optimal Breathing School, he collaborated with Mike to develop *Integral Breathwork™*, a "new world paradigm" for integrating correct breathing physiology with transformational breathwork. Denis has facilitated thousands of private and group breathwork sessions. He practices breathwork and bodywork in Paradise Valley. He conducts ongoing *Integral Breathwork Seminars*. Check the schedule in this magazine, or contact Denis directly at 406-333-4103, or at denis@wispwest.net, to bring this seminar to your city. To obtain a copy of Denis' book, "Heal Yourself with Breath, Light, Sound and Water," go to www.IntegralBreathwork.com. (Free PDF download of the first five chapters.)

SYSTEMIC CONSTELLATIONS

Systemic Constellations offers an effective way to look at traumatic events from a healing perspective without judgment. Using others to represent the people and issues involved, a healing resolution to the symptoms of PTSD can be found by finally grieving for what happened. The military teaches soldiers how to kill, not how to grieve; and frankly, there's no time for grief in the midst of battle. For civilians, there's no time for grief during war—survival is the only thought. But when there is time, grieving must happen in order to find peace of mind.

If a comrade or relative has died, the survivor may feel guilt that he was not able to save him, or may wish that he would have died too. He also feels anger at the ones who caused the death, which frequently includes anger at God. One way for survivors to resolve their feelings is to know they will live for a while, then they too will die and join the one who died. This gives them permission to live. Since it's only for a while, they can accept life more easily. After a while, if they have been able to grieve, they can accept life and live it fully until it is their natural time to die.

If the trauma was caused by abuse or violence against a person, innocence has been lost and must be grieved for. Soldiers who are severely wounded will be reminded daily of what happened for the rest of their

lives, as they live with the consequences. Their anger about the loss of their bodies and lives as they once were must be grieved for, and their new situations must be accepted in order to find peace. Constellations offer a way to achieve that goal.

If a soldier was responsible for the death of an innocent civilian, it is impossible to push that responsibility onto someone else, even if he was a small cog in the military machine. It simply is how it is. When the wrong is acknowledged and faced, when the victim is acknowledged as a person of equal value, respected and mourned, the terrible effects of the wrong can cease.

Peace comes after grieving, after looking at all that has happened, and accepting the fate of those who were affected. Grieving doesn't mean forgetting, which is neither possible nor desirable. It means that as time goes on, the symptoms of PTSD can recede. The Constellation process offers you a picture of the solution—a different picture than you currently have. Once your soul has this new picture, it takes over the healing process as it unfolds and is integrated over time, bringing peace back into your life.

Please visit www.wisdomhealing.com/wartrauma.htm for more information about war trauma.

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- Systemic Family & Business Constellations
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- Past Life Regressions • Feng Shui

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