

“Distant Treatment”: Theories About Sending Healing Energies

by

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In the 5th century B.C., yogis wrote of healers directing a force from their hands which cured patients, and that this cure could be effected over long distances by the healer consciously directing therapeutic mental forces toward the patient.

Energy healing has a long and a proud history. Nearly 100 cultures around the world use forms of energy work. Some techniques, such as acupuncture, are thousands of years old.

Recently, there have been a surprising number of significant, reputable, laboratory-based experiments showing that energy work by laying-on-of-hands actually works, and that it can be sent to a recipient in a different location. Some of these studies were done on cells and animals, so there could be no question about results being due to the bias of subjects, or to a placebo* effect. Outcomes have been so successful that physicists are now very busy trying to figure out how energy healing works.

At the end of this article is a list of journals and books in which you can look for further information.

* *“Placebo” means that people get well because they think they have been treated, even if they have received faked treatment or no treatment.*

How Energy Heals

In order to understand distant healing, it will help to have some knowledge about energy work itself. Theories abound about the actual mechanism of energy healing. I will briefly summarize two of the most widespread theories. For in-depth information, see my website and the resources cited at the end of this article.

The Resonance/“Information” Theory

The atoms which form the body are made of moving particles with different electrical charges. These particles group together to form the molecules of which matter is made. So though the body appears physically solid, every cell is actually in motion: part of an energy wave. Energy work heals because the entire body is actually made of energy.

Research suggests that “living systems” (anything alive, whether a “being” or not) regulate themselves by means of an internal “coherent energy field” extending throughout the organism from the inside to the outside. This field contains bioinformation. Living systems also respond to external energy phenomena. Disease, or a condition disposing the organism to disease, may occur at an energetic level when the biofield is disrupted. In other words, certain kinds of energy waves thwart health by disrupting the energy field, and therefore its bioinformation. Conversely,

the research suggests that there are also certain energy frequencies** which, when applied externally, produce beneficial effects. They “tune” the organism back to a state of health.

Energy fields are also called “electromagnetic fields” because of their electrical and magnetic properties. Electromagnetic fields can produce highly specific biological responses in body tissues. Some waveforms bring results as specific as drugs do.

Energy work is effective because it impacts the rhythms, frequencies, wavelengths and electrical charges of the vibrating energy waves which form the body. Disrupted energy waves are weaker than healthy waves, and chaotic rather than organized. When they collide with healthy waves, because they are weaker they are influenced by the stronger waves, and take on matching properties. This is called healing by “resonance.”

As a simple example of the effect of resonance, think about how music affects you. It can change your mood, ease pains, even be felt physically (usually in the chest or head) if it is loud enough. This is because the energy waves in your body change as they begin to resonate with the energy waves of the music.

** *“Frequency” describes the form of an energy wave: its height, width, and speed.*

Research shows that certain types of ultraweak electromagnetic fields can stimulate a healing response.

Discoveries in the emerging science of bioelectromagnetics (bio-electro-magnetics) have demonstrated a variety of biological effects from the application of ultraweak electromagnetic fields. One explanation is that electromagnetic forces on the cell membrane modify ligand-receptor interactions (such as the binding of hormones and calcium), which in turn would alter the internal state of the cell.

Modern medicine has noted the effects of electromagnetic fields and accepted that these energies are integral to our bodies. Examples of treatments and diagnostics using these energies are: MRI’s (short for Magnetic Resonance Imaging), ultra-sound, EKG’s (electro-cardiograms), EEG’s (electro-encephalograms), TENS units (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation), radiation therapies, and CAT scans (Computerized Axial Tomography, done through x-rays). These devices work by reading or affecting the body’s electromagnetic fields. For example, the EEG determines how healthy you are by measuring the electromagnetic fields emitted by your central nervous system.

Electromagnetic fields are used in devices to speed the healing of bone fractures, for nerve stimulation to decrease chronic pain, and for insomnia and mood disorders. Many other devices being developed now seek to promote soft tissue healing and regeneration, or to stimulate the immune response.

Some energy waves emitted by the body are in the range of waves we see as light. Very low intensity visible and ultraviolet light, called “biophoton emission,” is emitted by most organisms, and carries information about the organism. Researchers have described this light as a coherent, organized energy field.

Biophoton emission has been used experimentally in cancer diagnostics and therapeutics. Experimental results show differences in the light emitted from cancerous tissue compared with

light from normal tissue. The degree of this difference in light emission may be used to diagnose the degree of tissue abnormality. (This is one way energy work practitioners can diagnose — they also find differences in energy emission, but they do it by using their hands and their perceptive abilities.)

In summary:

The research implies that magnetic emissions, electromagnetic emissions, or biophoton emissions from the healer send information to the energy field of the client, whose unhealthy patterns are then corrected through resonance.

The Energy System Theory

Scientists are least happy with this theory of healing because it is difficult to measure using current technology. However, acupuncture and other practices rely on it, and they have brought healing for thousands of years. This theory describes an energy system including organs (called energy centers or chakras), circulatory channels (called meridians) and an enclosing skin (the energy field or aura).

The primary function of the energy system is to bring in, circulate, and release the energies we need to live. These energies are the basic stuff of life, the sea of energy surrounding, permeating, and giving birth to everything in our world.

The concept of a basic life-force energy has been part of the philosophy of life and health in “Eastern” cultures for millennia. In Japan it is known as “ki,” in India it is “prana” and in China it is “chi” (also spelled “qi.”) The ancient Chinese discovered that qi had its own circulatory system separate from that of the blood, although the two systems were intimately intertwined. The Chinese believed that the movement of qi influenced the flow of blood. What, then, directs qi? They say it is directed by “yi” (intention of the mind). It can also be moved by conscious breathing. Qi is therefore seen as a psycho-physiological force connected to the flow of breath, blood and inner thoughts.

To be healthy, one must have a healthy energy system. Therapies focus on cleaning out, balancing, repairing, or in other ways healing the energy system.

Healing is done with specific techniques in combination with the conscious intentions of the client and the energy work practitioner.

In addition to the particular energy system outlined above, I have found several others. They all contribute to how healthy one is.

Even without a theory with which everyone agrees, many experiments have proved that energy medicine, whether by machine or by laying-on-of-hands, does work.

The Three Main Theories of Sending Healing Over Distance

There are a plethora of theories about *how* the energy travels and what happens when it gets to the client. I will summarize three of the most popular. They link up with the explanations above, and then go on from there.

1. The Resonance/“Information” Theory of Distant Treatment

“Long distance cell-to-cell or organism-to-organism communications may be accomplished by transmission and reception of electromagnetic signals through membrane receptors or enzymes,” says Tian Y. Tsong, M.D.

Hard to believe? Think for a minute of how electromagnetic waves can pass through the air and be picked up elsewhere, as our radio and televisions do, as satellite systems and cellphones do. In a similar way, organisms can send energy waves back and forth between them.

One problem with this theory has been identified. Physicists have measured that if electromagnetic energy is not constrained or contained, it spreads out. It thus diffuses, decreases, over distance. If new forms of energy that do not decay rapidly over distance are being used, the interaction of subtle energies would be a possible mechanism for long-distance healing.

Or, there might be a different way to keep electromagnetic energies from diffusing. The next theory addresses one possibility.

2. The Intention/Focus Theory of Electromagnetic Emissions

One biologist reported on controlled, double-blind studies that proved that the growth rate of bacteria could be influenced by the experimenter’s conscious intention.

Other researchers have investigated the sending of such intentions over distance. They call it “distant intentionality.” In a review of 150 experiments about the effect of “distant intentionality,” the statistical results are consistent and far more successful than would happen by chance. Some results were eight times larger than those of recent studies heralded as medical break-throughs.

Continuing this line of thought, Marilyn Schlitz and William Brand postulate that levels of consciousness may modulate patterns of energy and vice versa. He suggests that one’s attention can magnetically point atomic and electrochemical processes in specific directions. Certain organs, such as the eyes and heart, may focus specific electromagnetic energies.

Schlitz and Brand confront the problem of electromagnetic energy diffusing over distance:

“But what if it *were* contained? What if it could be focused, like a lens focuses light?... It will be stronger and go farther. If it could be focused into an infinitely thin beam, it would be infinitely powerful and travel infinitely far, without decreasing in power over distance.”

Schlitz and Brand believe that attention (a form of intention) can contain and focus the energy. To support this idea they cite: “The anomalous bursts of directional energy observed to emanate from healers on copper walls may indicate such focused, synchronized energy.” They also mention martial artists who, when an “enemy” is approaching but is still quite a distance away, can throw them across a room purely with intention and energy.

They widen their theory to include other methods of distant healing:

“The purported power of love and prayer to heal over distances may draw on its inherent capacity to focus intention and thus attention, and, in the process, focus energy itself.”

Chinese thought supports this theory. The concept of qi is vitally connected with intention. One definition says, “Used correctly, the word *qi* means the foundation of courage, will and intention.” The Song dynasty scholar Zhang Zai (1020-77) wrote, “If qi integrates, its visibility becomes potent and physical form appears. If qi does not integrate, its visibility is inadequate and there is no physical form. Therefore, in some cases qi becomes form and in others it remains space.” Perhaps when we repair chakras or make new, larger meridians it is our intent “integrating” the qi which brings the new energy forms into being.

3. The Theory of a Universal Field

In general, this theory states that there is a coherent energy field which connects everything. We can send “correct” electromagnetic energy patterns through it, and the energy of the recipient then changes through resonance healing.

Physicist Harold E. Puthoff, Director of the Institute for Advanced Studies (Austin, Texas, U.S.A.) says scientists think an energy field exists throughout space, everywhere, saturating everything, and that it existed before there was matter. He says that space is not “empty,” it is a continuously fluctuating electromagnetic field.

This new idea lines up nicely with the age-old metaphysical idea that we live in an ocean of energy from which we — and all of creation — take our form, and through which we are all interconnected.

Larry Dossey, M.D., theorizes that this energy field might be the explanation for distant healing (and also healing prayer, some forms of extra-sensory perception, and much more).

The science of quantum mechanics supports this theory. Physicist Fritjof Capra says:

“In this world, classical concepts like ‘elementary particle’, ‘material substance’ or ‘isolated object’ have lost their meaning; the whole universe appears as a dynamic web of inseparable energy patterns.

“The distinction between matter and empty space finally had to be abandoned when it became evident that virtual particles can come into being spontaneously out of the void, and vanish again into the void. . .the vacuum is far from empty. On the contrary, it contains an unlimited number of particles which come into being and vanish without end.”

In this view there would be no problem of energy attenuating with distance. The healing energy being sent by the intention of the energy work practitioner, and being drawn in by the intention of the recipient, would travel like the tides, rippling through the universal energy field, called by quantum physicists the Zero Point Field, until it reached its destination.

Prayer & Spiritual Healing

No matter how you explain distant treatment and energy work, it is not the same thing as spiritual healing or prayer. A surprising number of writers and even researchers use the terms interchangeably. But they are quite different. Energy work is a science and an art. Spiritual healing is a form of prayer, and so requires love and God. Energy work and spiritual healing can be kept separate. For example, no one is arguing that experimenters loved the bacteria in their petrie dishes, yet the experimenters were able to increase the bacteria's growth rate purely through their intention. So it is possible to send healing energy simply by following a procedure, without emotion.

In my experience, however, most of us blend energy work and spiritual healing to some degree. It may be a non-religious blending. Love enters into it for most of us. When we do distant treatment, the energies travel on the wings of our intention to help, and this is love, though it may not be "personal" in the usual way we refer to love. This brings in a spiritual aspect, but it is not a religious practice. If we go farther and ask God (however we define God) to do the healing, or to help us do it, then we are doing spiritual healing or healing prayer.

Energy work is usually quite straightforward — you do a particular technique for a particular purpose and you get quite predictable results. But prayer can have a terrific rebound — it can work in unexpected ways. In one study, people with poor self-esteem, or with anxiety, depression or mood disorders, prayed for other people who had the same problems. The results of the research showed an improvement not only in the people being prayed for, but also in the people who did the praying. In fact, the more they prayed, the better they got!

The theories in this article are not meant to explain how prayer or spiritual healing work.

Lastly, there are the murky places where techniques, love, energy and metaphysics all blend together. Good luck to the scientists trying to explain those!

What Does the Practitioner Do To Send Energies?

I have done forms of distant treatment where the energy is sent with the mind alone, and other forms where one builds an "ether tube" (a channel made of energy) from oneself to the client, through which the healing energy travels. I have used techniques where you visualize yourself with the client in their home and simply put your hands on them as if you were with them. This can be so clearly done that afterwards I can tell them the color of the bedspread on which they were lying.

All of these methods work well. Many people tell me they feel *more* during a distant treatment than when we are together. This might be because the energy goes directly from my energy body to theirs, without a physical body to slow it down, block it, dilute or divert it. The thought of distant healing is exciting: we interact purely through consciousness and energy, and a pair of hands to contain and direct them. We are so much more than we appear!

It is possible to use distant treatment techniques without knowing the mechanisms by which they work.

Why Is It Frightening To Some of Us?

Distant treatment doesn't seem "normal" or "usual." To some of us, it doesn't even seem possible. In fact, even when I had been doing it successfully for years, it still scared me occasionally. It took a long time to get used to because it changed reality for me. It proved without a doubt that the world was not what I thought it was, and could work in very different ways than I had been taught that it worked. I had no framework with which to understand the "miracles" I was seeing.

The reason for this report is to help you accept the possibility of distant healing, so I can use it to help you. It doesn't have to conflict with your religion if you know that it's being done as a science of resonance, working on the same principle as music (like when an organ or a loud bass amplifier makes your bones rattle). It needn't seem frightening or ridiculous when you know that historically people have used it in India, Tibet, Japan and China for centuries, and even in North America for over 60 years.

Why are many people reluctant to accept the idea of distant healing? Larry Dossey, M.D., tackles that one:

"One of the most common reasons people reject distant healing is that there is no generally-accepted hypothesis in science that permits it. This leads researchers in distant healing...to imagine that if we just had a super-duper theory explaining all these anomalous happenings, all the skeptics would come over to our side. To those researchers who actually believe this, I say, 'Dream on.' It is not the lack of an explanatory theory that retards this field so much as the innate resistance to changing one's worldview."

There are many things we don't understand, but we use them every day. No one knows just how aspirin works, or gravity, or even magnetism. But they don't frighten us.

Don't wait for the scientists to figure it out. Use it now.

Resources Included in This Article, and Recommended For Additional Theories

“An Experimental Study of the Effects of Distant, Intercessory Prayer on Self-Esteem, Anxiety, and Depression,” Séan O’Laoire, PhD, “*Alternative Therapies*,” 1997, Vol. 3, No. 6

“Cults, Quacks & Non-professional Psychotherapies,” “*Contemporary Issues in Psychiatry*,” chapter 56, p. 3246-7

“Deciphering the Language of Cells,” *Trends in Biological Science* (cited in one of the other articles)

“Distant Intentionality and Healing: Assessing the Evidence,” Marilyn Schlitz, Ph.D., and William Brand, Ph.D., “*Alternative Therapies*,” 1997, Vol. 3 No. 6

“Dynamic Energy Systems and Modern Physics: Fostering the Science and Spirit of Complementary and Alternative Medicine,” Gary E. Schwartz, Ph.D. and Linda G. Russek, Ph.D., “*Alternative Therapies*,” 1997, Vol. 3, No. 3

“Energy Medicine and the Unifying Concept of Information,” Beverly Rubik, Ph.D., “*Alternative Therapies*,” 1995, Vol. 1 No. 1, p. 34-39

“Evaluating Distant Healing: A Research Review,” Elizabeth Targ M.D., “*Alternative Therapies*,” 1997, Vol. 3, No. 6

The Field, Lynne McTaggart
HarperCollins Publishers, 2002

Despite the subtitle (“The quest for the secret force of the universe”) this is a sound, scientific presentation of how all life on our planet is based on interconnecting energies. From the back cover: “...is a highly readable scientific detective story that offers a stunning picture of an interconnected universe and a new scientific theory...well researched, and well documented by distinguished sources...” Research about the Zero Point Field discovered in quantum physics provides theories which unite East and West techniques for energy healing, along with a profound understanding of ourselves and our world. It’s thrilling to read this book, I highly recommend it.

“Healing Happens: Exploring the Non-local Gap,” Larry Dossey, M.D., “*Alternative Therapies*,” Vol. 8, No. 2

Healing Words: The Power of Prayer and The Practice of Medicine, Larry Dossey, M.D., HarperSanFrancisco, 1993

“Intentionality and Intuition and Their Clinical Implications: A Challenge for Science and Medicine,” M.J. Schlitz, Advances, 1996; 12(2):58-66

“Nothing,” Larry Dossey, M.D., “*Alternative Therapies*,” 2002, Vol. 8, No. 5, p.121-22

Prayer is Good Medicine, Larry Dossey, M.D., HarperSanFrancisco, 1996

Watching the Tree to Catch A Hare, Adeline Yen Mah, Flamingo, 2000

“Frontier Perspectives,” the Journal of Temple University’s Frontier Sciences Program. Many articles which seem from their titles to be totally unconnected, actually have nuggets of relevant information. Wade through the technical information for the juicy tidbits!

“European Journal of Parapsychology.” Unfortunately, this journal is out of print. Inquire about past issues at your library.

I have not yet read the following two books, but they were cited in a journal I respect, so they might have good information for you. They are written for the general public, not physicists:

The Non-local Universe, by Robert Nadeau and Menas Kafatos

Quantum Reality, by Nick Herbert.
Happy studies!