

**COMPASSION:
FACILITATING THE HEALING PROCESS**
by Henry Boutros



Key terms: compassion, environment, health, healing

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the role of consciousness in health and healing.
2. Understand the need for proper environment to promote healing.
3. Introduce the role of consciousness in physical environment.

As a health care practitioner, organizational consultant and educator, I am hired to treat individuals with chronic pain, facilitate organizational change, develop stress management and diversity training programs, and educate students on a variety of complementary and alternative modalities in health care. One common factor that contributes to the overall success of these endeavors is the demonstration of authentic compassion for another individual.

I have been engaged at the Center for Integrated Therapy to incorporate complementary and alternative modalities into their practice. This has provided an opportunity to study the transformational effects of compassion in a health care setting. This facility is a rehabilitation center in suburban Detroit that primarily treats clients with acute and chronic conditions of the spine as well as fibromyalgia, chronic pain and fatigue syndromes, lyme disease and cancer.

Treatment interventions integrate traditional rehabilitation and counseling disciplines with myofascial release, deep tissue mobilization, conscious breath/movement activities, meditation, guided imagery, Reiki, Brennan Healing Science (energy medicine), and group prayer.

The Center's primary philosophy involves the role of compassion, which is a specific state of consciousness where the healer is aware of another's suffering and desires to help alleviate it. We are attempting to answer an important question: Does compassion facilitate the healing process?

Currently, the staff at the Center are engaged in a pilot research study with assistance from scientists Jahn, Dunne and Nelson at Princeton University Engineering Anomalies Research Laboratory (PEAR), and Jarski at Oakland University, Complementary Medicine and Wellness Program. The Center is gathering data utilizing a Random Event Generator (REG), developed at Princeton University.

The REG device generates random electrical signals (noise) during treatment sessions while the output signals (data) are recorded on a computer.

PEAR has studied the role of consciousness in the physical environment. A simplified version of some of their studies includes the examination of whether an individual (operator) is able to influence a random electrical signal being generated from the REG device without touching the unit. In other words, using one's state of consciousness, can an operator influence the REG to generate non-random electrical signals—coherency or order versus chaos and randomness? In short, the answer is, yes. To better understand this concept, think of an electronic coin flipper—heads (+ charge) or tails (- charge). The probability of flipping "heads" is 50%. But what is the probability of stringing together a series of heads (positive charges) that falls outside the probability of chance? Is this related to an operator, influencing the results?

From 1979 to 1996, PEAR has conducted over 50 million experimental trials containing more than 3 billion bits of binary information. When examining the data over the total database it has become evident, that the correlations of the REG outputs with pre-stated operator intentions (generating positive or negative charges), is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Additional controlled experimental findings include:

Operators could be identified by their characteristic output or results ("signatures").

Two operators addressing a given experiment together do not simply combine their individual achievement signatures; rather, their "co-operator" results are characteristic of the pair.

No learning or experience benefits are observed. To the contrary, operators tend to perform best over their first major experimental sets. Results then decline over the next one or two sets, after which they recover; performance then stabilizes to their individual values over subsequent sets.

Successful operators speak of a sense of a "resonance" or bonding with the machine.

"Bonded individuals" (e.g. husbands and wives) are more successful than non-bonded pairs of individuals.

There is no dependence of the operator's physical distance from the machine. Operators addressing the machine from thousands of miles away produce the same effect sizes and characteristic signatures as those seated next to the machines in the laboratory.

Experiments performed "off-time", that is operators exerting their intentions several hours before or after data collections show results similar to those performed in real time.

It appears that successful operators through some yet undefined anomalous means may be able to introduce order into random systems. This undefined means seems

to revolve around a state of consciousness, compassion, love or fun. Perhaps it is simply a demonstration of our true authentic self.

It is interesting to note the use of language to describe an experience. We all use language to describe our feelings, communicate our thoughts, or explain a phenomenon. Discussions around consciousness studies and experiential states of mind face certain challenges. How does one exactly convey in words the experience of a successful operator?

The ability to use one's mind or state of consciousness to influence one's own physiology is well documented in the biofeedback and imagery literature. The ability to use one's mind or state of consciousness to affect another is currently being studied. Intuitively we believe that there is a close relationship between client and clinician's state of mind, or level of consciousness and the resultant treatment outcome. Research conducted at the Harvard Medical School by Benson, et al. has demonstrated the interrelationship of these states of mind. Benson describes a state of consciousness known as "remembered wellness" where the quiet mind accesses a state for healing to occur.

Dossey, Byrd, and Targ, have examined the effects of intercessory prayer (intention or states of consciousness) on a number of client conditions. The results of these studies are probably familiar to the readers and demonstrate yet other unexplained/anomalous events where individuals who are engaging in distant prayer/meditation on behalf of others may have influenced their health in a positive manner.

Benor has recounted a number of consciousness experiments. This author critiques and summarizes dozens of experiments that reflect the effects of consciousness of one individual affecting another—whether at a chemical, cellular or at the organism level.

The staff at the Center are interested in studying the conscious state of compassion during care-giving. Specifically, are there correlations among REG coherent outputs, clinician self-assessment of the level of compassion rendered, and the client's reported outcome of the treatment? Presently, initial results support that when clinicians engage self-limiting thoughts, the REG results are random signals. When clinicians are not engaging in self-limiting thoughts, and feel an authentic compassionate contact with the client, the REG results are coherent and non-random at the $p \leq 0.05$ confidence level.

What is the role of consciousness in health and healing? Does the clinician's frame of mind or state of consciousness affect the treatment outcome? If so, how does that state of consciousness interact with the treatment intervention? Does the client's frame of mind, or state of consciousness affect the treatment outcome or the progression of the disease process? If so, what is the role of the clinician and the treatment intervention? If such states of consciousness exist can it be measured and can it be taught to health care professionals?

These questions still need to be answered. In today's managed health care market, it is imperative to create the right environment that facilitates the healing process. Perhaps technology alone does not hold the key. It may be the integration of technology and compassion.

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