

Legacy of Hope

An account of the healing power of exhalation during a cancer experience

Eric Wall

I was born just before the start of the Second World War in a city which suffered much bombing. My parents' relationship with me was not too close and that plus the bombing resulted in my being sent away to school when I was five. Further boarding schools followed and this led to my becoming introverted. I also became short sighted when I was thirteen years old.

After university I began work as a probation officer. After five years I recognised that my personality was stopping me from relating to extroverted people. At this point I started to look for ways to get out of my then dimly perceived difficulties and found bioenergetic analysis. This emphasised the importance of discharging past hurt which had become contained in tense muscles and, through this, recharging your breathing.

I was then looking for some basic explanation for my own and other people's psychology and came across a book which pointed me in the direction of developing such a theory. By this time I had left the Probation Service and become a counsellor/therapist. The basic tenets of the theory I developed were that a) both inhalation and held inhalation are painful, and exhalation pleasurable, b) this is true at birth,

and c) through their personal dynamic people satisfy, or don't, their needs through life, and so develop, or don't. The counselling/therapy I based on these processes, and especially the healing force of spontaneous exhalation, I have called Real Counselling/Therapy.

Carole

In 1982 a client called Carole came to me. She was distressed because she was having difficulty with her relationship to her husband. She had previously been a very outgoing person, Her maiden name had been Spindley and she was nicknamed 'Spin'. Her sister later told me that in her student days she had been quite a little raver and also a good ice-skater. She had worked first as an English teacher and then as a home tutor.

By this time I was gaining in energy. My breathing was improving and even my short sightedness diminishing. I felt able to assist Carole. In 1983 she told me that she had breast cancer; a month later she had a lumpectomy. At the time she was less perturbed by this than I was. At the back of my mind I remembered reading that Wilhelm Reich, from whose therapy bioenergetics derives, had with Otto Warburg discovered

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that healthy cells are vitalised by a good supply of oxygen, whilst cancerous cells lack this primary respiration. I later learnt that the type of cancer Carole had was highly invasive. I also later read that many cancers are anaerobic rather than aerobic, preceding in evolutionary time the oxygen holocaust when oxygen became a major component of the earth's atmosphere.

Continuing to help Carole we concentrated on the problems she had had in her immediate and far past which had caused her emotional stress. Emotional stress causes muscle tension, held inhalation which can become chronic, emotional non-expression and mental confusion. It is also masked by the influence of the body's natural morphias which prevent the immune system from working effectively. Carole took easily to the approach because she had previously done some co-counselling which placed great emphasis on the naturalness of discharging feelings.

Gradually I found that I was beginning to look forward to seeing Carole and eventually that I was falling in love with her. I stopped the individual professional relationship and she continued to release her emotional stress through a co-therapy group.

A period of stability followed but then a new cancerous lump developed. Her doctors advised her that she was in a serious condition, and at this point she decided to leave her husband and two teenage children and join me. This was a very difficult decision for her as she felt she was betraying her religious principles, but once she had made it she hardly looked back.

Our honeymoon was a week at the beginning of 1987 at the Bristol Cancer Help Centre, where we made it clear that

the healing process was a joint one, in the sense that it had to be remembered that I too, like Carole or indeed any human being, had within me cancerous cells which might erupt and jeopardise my health. The Centre led us to consider a number of approaches, and as a result we developed the following basic regimen:

(1) Every morning a quarter of an hour each of co-therapy, consisting principally of a bodymind exercise based on a bioenergetic exercise, to redress emotional stress.

(2) Twice a week, one and a half hours at a bodymind co-therapy group, and once a month a whole day. These sessions included spontaneous dancing to music which we both enjoyed.

(3) Eating a vegan/vegetarian diet, supplemented for Carole with recommended vitamins.

(4) Weekly visits to a healer, where I assisted. This was especially helpful as he felt able to touch Carole's mutilated breast, which it was not easy for me to do.

(5) Quarterly or six-monthly attendance at the Royal Homeopathic Hospital, where homeopathic remedies and Iscador, an extract of mistletoe, were prescribed.

(6) Appointments for Carole with her GP and consultants. The latter I attended with her.

After attending Bristol Carole gave up her work and spent a period of time decorating our home. Gradually she moved into doing voluntary counselling and therapy. This especially involved delighting in the spontaneous exhalatory healing processes of the client, as manifested in such things as laughing, crying, sighing and easy talking.

Two years from the discovery of the new lump this had increased in size to 4cm.;

there was also an intermittent node in the lymph gland under her arm. Carole then began the process of considering whether or not to again enlist the help of the medical profession. The choice was whether to start taking an oestrogen blocker, Tamoxifen, with its known side effects. Excessive oestrogen stimulates cancer growth.

Carole had still not reached the menopause. Apart from the conscious breathing work which we were doing we were aware that other healing forces were at work, connected with good sleeping and good love-making. During these the energy of the individual is increased. Tenuously we were of the view that this was somehow reducing her oestrogen levels, and it appears that this could have been the case, as natural oestrogen disappears once it has fulfilled its function. However, in terms of a general strategy we came to the conclusion that the more natural methods which strengthened Carole's immune system worked on a slow basis and did not necessarily move fast enough to counter the growing cancer. She therefore reluctantly agreed to take Tamoxifen, and a year later agreed to an early menopause being effected through radiation of her ovaries.

All this would appear to suggest that Carole and I were busy thinking a great deal about the cancer. This was not the case. We were sustained by a mutual recognition that exhalation, through the satisfaction of all our needs, mental, emotional and intellectual, leads to us being connected with others. Carole, especially, was aware that these connections, 'glimpses of God' as she put it, were part of the cosmic whole. Generally we were happy. However this was not to last.

First Carole went through a bad patch arranging her divorce. Secondly in 1992 we were suddenly plunged in our professional lives into extremely difficult circumstances. These meant having to maintain a stance of quiet integrity in the face of much provocation and injustice. It also affected us financially, as we had to pour much of our life savings into supporting the cause of helping people to help themselves with their emotional stress, in which we both believed.

Under these pressures Carole deteriorated. In 1993 she suddenly fell, and it was discovered that the cancer had spread to the bone in her leg. After this, compaction of the spine occurred, but a remarkable operation led to her regaining some limited mobility. This plus chemotherapy and continuing low key co-therapy led to some remission. She began climbing upstairs to bed.

During this period she started to think of death and to plan her funeral. This took a positive turn when her daughter, seeing the kind of things Carole wanted to put in the service, said 'Why not have a service now?'. As a result a 'Celebration of Life' took place which was attended by many. This especially affirmed Carole's love of nature and our connections with it, based on our mutual appreciation that humans as a species need to recognise this basic symbiotic and synergic relationship. Nature provides us with oxygen and we it with carbon dioxide. Unfortunately we are currently set on destroying both nature and ourselves by our excessive use of fossil fuels.

Nine months after her successful operation Carole died. I slept in the same room with her for some weeks beforehand and,

through touching her while she lay asleep, helped her to remain in touch with the healing power of her unconscious unstressed breathing. This lessened the need for painkillers. When she died I was of the view that she lived up to her nickname. Her electrical and wave-like energies spun off into the universal implicate order through the medium of her last exhalation.

Although I was very familiar with the idea that the pre-death process is just as much a mourning process as death itself, not surprisingly I was left with some emotional stress. But here again the healing forces took hold, helping me to engage in much crying. This was further helped by

two long-standing co-therapy relationships. Also Carole's spirit helped. Very shortly after her death I was lying alone on my bed and suddenly heard her say 'Breathe'. Also I had dreams in which she appeared full of vitality. In one of these she was for instance skating at speed in group formation, although I had never seen her skating during our time together. In another dream, which occurred while I was writing this, she appeared and flung herself into my arms. With a slight feeling of amusement I told her that I would have to contact the Register of Deaths because they would need to alter her entry. The bureaucrat in me lives on, despite everything.

Further reading

Brian Jencks, *Biofeedback at its Best*, Nelson Hall, 1977

Eric Wall and Carole Jones, two series of papers entitled 'Psychology and the Real Self' and 'Real Counselling and Therapy', Derby Counselling and Therapy Centre, 75, Osmaston Road, Derby

Lynn Margulis and D. Sagan, *Microcosmos*, Allen and Unwin, 1987

L. Temoshok and H. Dreher, *The Type C Connection: The behavioural links of cancer and your health*, Random House, 1992

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