

For practitioners of Therapeutic Touch®, this book is an examination of what it can be like to choose to practice this healing modality as an art instead of a technique. Using poetry and a deep examination of the various aspects of Therapeutic Touch, readers are encouraged to reflect upon their own healing journey.

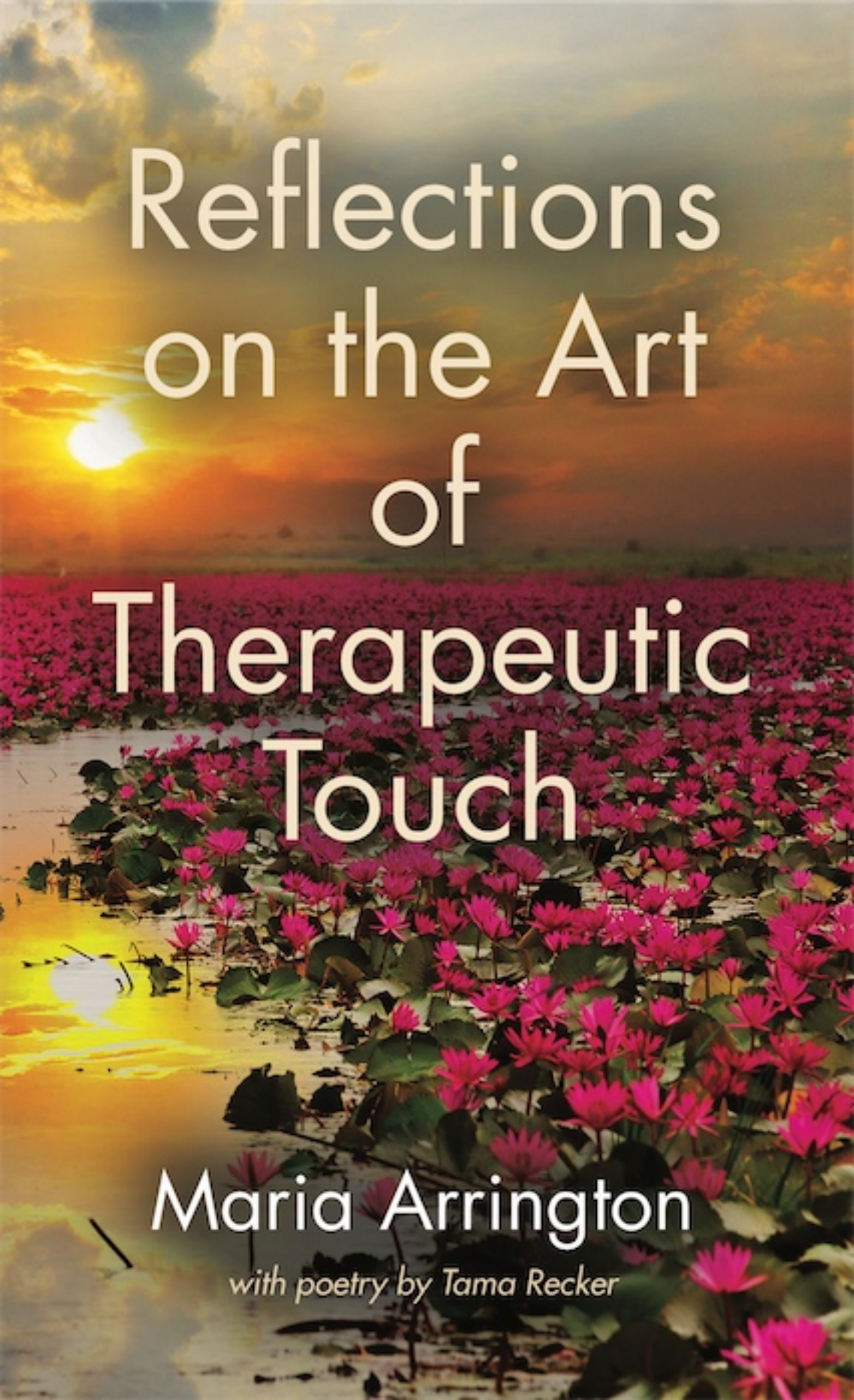
Reflections on the Art of Therapeutic Touch

by Maria Arrington

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A sunset over a field of pink lotus flowers. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow across the sky and reflecting on the water. The lotus flowers are in full bloom, their vibrant pink petals contrasting with the green leaves and the golden light of the sunset. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Reflections
on the Art
of
Therapeutic
Touch

Maria Arrington

with poetry by Tama Recker

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Figure

Figure 1. Diagram of the working model of a theory of healing presented at the TT Dialogues Montana in 2015 (Hanley et al., A Working Model of a Theory of Healing). 234

Introduction

This book is about the practice of Therapeutic Touch® (TT), a healing modality that has been in use since the early 1970s. My primary intention is to share my reflections on the art of TT for the many practitioners of TT who have had at least one class in the technique and are now gradually deepening their skills and understanding.

While teaching an intermediate-level class in TT some years ago, I found myself expounding on the *technique* of TT versus the *art* of TT, and I have continued to ponder this question over the years. In this book, I address the differences between these two approaches to the practice of TT. I also reflect on and hope to foster discussion about how practitioners move from practicing the technique of TT to the art of TT. Once we learn basic TT, we are automatically embarked on this voyage toward developing our ability to engage in the art of TT. The journey begins as an examination of this new skill we have learned that helps others to heal, but our path quietly shifts into a personal exploration that has the potential to change our own lives. Before we realize what is happening, we have already signed up for this inner journey, one that will illuminate much more than our skills as healers. Once we follow its lead,

this journey has the potential to impact our perceptions of ourselves and the choices we make in our lives.

I have arranged the chapters in this book so they move from simpler to more complex topics. You may find your curiosity piqued by a certain chapter and decide to go there first. No matter how you decide to read this book, take the time to think about what you have read and to reflect on how that compares to your own experiences. You will find a poem by Tama Recker, a TT colleague and friend, at the end of each chapter, and I hope that her poetry will serve as food for thought and reflection. Take some time after reading each chapter to allow the poetry to sink in and open your heart to your own experiences with each topic so that this book helps you to have your own reflections on the topics covered. If you have not had a lot of personal experience in the practice of TT, see the appendix for an overview of the typical phases in a TT session and the history of this healing modality. In addition, note that the terms used to describe various aspects of the healing act vary from individual to individual. The glossary provides definitions that explain what I mean by terms such as “clearing” or “universal healing field.”

Therapeutic Touch entered the health care system in the 1970s. This was a very special time in terms of the way Westerners view wellness and

illness and how we define our approaches to health care and life in general. Philosophies from afar and viewpoints from other cultures were infiltrating the West, leading to changes in the way we thought about ourselves and our lives. We began to think outside the traditional box when it came to issues about women, roles in society, health care, and just about everything else. In this ferment, we saw new forms of healing come into use, and ancient patterns of health promotion gained a foothold outside their traditional settings. As a result, some health care providers experienced new ways to foster the wellness of the people in their care.

Therapeutic Touch is a modern variation on several ancient healing practices that have arisen over the course of human history. It was founded in the 1970s by a natural healer, Dora Kunz, in collaboration with a professor of nursing at New York University, Dr. Dolores “Dee” Krieger. Kunz was convinced that all humans carry the potential to help others through the act of healing, and she based this belief on her unique ability to perceive the energy fields around people. She was a clairvoyant. In partnership with Krieger, she helped to establish a healing technique that could be used by health care personnel, and this was the start of a transformation in the delivery of health care that is ongoing these many years later. In the course of its history, TT has been used by nurses and doctors as well as massage therapists, counselors, and parents. It has been the subject of

nursing research and has been taught in colleges, universities, and a variety of other settings. An international organization oversees the regulation and teaching of TT by credentialing teachers and determining teaching guidelines. Many books have been written about this healing modality that examine the practice from a variety of different perspectives.

Often in the midst of teaching a TT class, I have found myself going off on a tangent in response to a student's question. Over time, I have come to trust these side trips to unplanned destinations and, indeed, to value them. The reflections in this book are very much like these classroom detours. They are the content that has come up for me as I have taught TT classes, mentored students, and lectured in TT support groups. They do share an overriding theme, however, which has to do with the word "art" in the title of this book.

I have heard Dee Krieger say that the contribution to TT from Dora Kunz was that she could see the human energy field. Krieger's contribution was that she could *not* see the human energy field. Kunz was able to actually visualize the dynamics of illness and wellness as well as the contribution that a TT practitioner can make to the relationship between the two. Krieger, on the other hand, without this visual knowledge, needed to translate Kunz's wisdom into something that could be used by the vast majority of the rest of us who are not as uniquely gifted as Dora Kunz was. She

helped Kunz to find a technique that can be done by those of us in the TT community who are nurses, massage therapists, counselors, or other helpers but are not clairvoyant. Krieger also fostered a strong relationship with nursing science to document the results of TT for the medical world.

Kunz was acutely aware of the humanity of us all. She understood the basic act of compassion that leads nurses to want to help others. She could also see the basic measure of our weaknesses—the times when our ego or lack of knowledge can get us into trouble. We each have a journey to make in which we experience and learn from our mistakes in life. When we are working with patients, however, there is no room for faulty judgments or ego-based inventions. Kunz was very wise in setting up TT as she did so that the practice has built-in fail-safe mechanisms that help us to navigate safely even when we do not have access to the visual information she had. For this reason alone, mastering the *technique* of TT is vital for each beginning student. If we faithfully practice TT as Krieger and Kunz laid it out, we know that the people we work with are safe.

As a result of the precautions that Krieger and Kunz took when establishing TT, we can now say that this technique, when done as it is taught, is a truly safe practice without contraindications or side effects. Despite its being practiced for more than forty years, no lawsuits or charges of

malpractice have been leveled against a TT practitioner. This has been achieved in part by the founders' decision to clearly define what constitutes TT and to outline the steps of the technique. Today, we teach the technique following established guidelines, and we safeguard its practice by certifying its teachers.

In the initial TT class, students learn the rudiments of TT. They learn to center, to assess, to follow the steps of the TT session, and to have enough confidence to offer TT to others. As students of TT, they have to step into a paradigm that is not the default philosophy of the dominant culture. The traditional Western medical model denies the existence of anything that cannot be weighed or measured directly. Instinct and intuition are devalued, and there is no recognition that the human energy field even exists. To practice TT, however, students must base their approach on a very different paradigm. Aware of the presence of the human energy field, they learn to listen to cues that, in the past, have always been relegated to the background of their awareness. They experience centeredness and groundedness, sometimes for the first time, as they develop their ability to operate from this grounded, centered state. They have little awareness of the field dynamics that are being affected by the TT they are doing. Beginners have little experience with the aspect of themselves that steps forward when they begin a TT session. And so, basic-level TT is taught

in very clear steps. Teachers work to give students experience with the centered state without the presence of a TT recipient before the students even begin to follow the steps of TT. Everything is engineered to help students become acquainted with their own personal inner terrain so that they can gain confidence and do TT safely and effectively.

As TT students progress, they are taught the basics about how energy fields respond. Kunz and Erik Peper wrote a series of articles titled “Fields and Their Clinical Implications” that is very helpful in understanding this new knowledge. Therapeutic Touch instructors talk about the use of color during sessions and as a visualization for the healing partner. We examine the various illnesses for which TT can be effective, and we teach our students about the ways that energy modulation can specifically target many diseases. This information is presented during the first two or three classes, and the student begins to amass a body of information that begins to look like a rather solid structure. Like all learning techniques, there are “good” things and “bad” things about this structure. On the positive side, it gives practitioners the solid ground that allows them to become confident and knowledgeable in the use of TT. On the other side of the fulcrum, however, this structure can become stiff and unresponsive to the variety of human dynamics we come across in the daily world of TT sessions. From my viewpoint,

this structure can become “cookbook” TT. In such a cookbook, the ingredients and their amounts are specified for each “dish,” and any diverging from the recipe courts disaster (at least in some people’s minds). Neither life nor TT can flourish under the influence of cookbook thinking, however, because we know that everything shifts and changes from one moment to the next. Life is change. Cookbook thinking is too rigid to work in such a changeable world. Any approach that hopes to be useful must shift and change as needed in order to be relevant.

I value the structure used in teaching beginning-level TT and use it as the backbone and reference point within each TT session. I want to know all this information about the steps of TT and its basic characteristics, and I want to keep this “archive” open to refer to on a regular basis (I refer to this body of knowledge as the “objective archive”). I add to this information the experiential knowledge that I have amassed over the years of my doing TT sessions. For instance, I have a sense of how a field feels to me when it is congested or depleted, and I also know how such a field usually responds when I work with it (this sense is part of what I call the “subjective archive”). Once I have all this information, both objective and subjective, at my fingertips, I set it on the back burner. I now look at the person I am working with—at *this* person’s field, *this* person’s dynamics. I stay in the present and open myself to the session, allowing the person’s field to give me

the information I need to do a session well. I keep an awareness of the archived knowledge that is available to me in the back of my mind, but I make my decisions about this session based on the dynamics of the present moment, which are revealed through my relationship with my timeless self and the timeless self of my healing partner. This is the *art* of TT.

As I shall describe in this book, doing a session in this way does *not* mean that I leave behind the techniques and rules that served me well earlier in my TT career. It does *not* mean that I travel wherever my ego beckons in my quest for wholeness for the person I am working with. It *does* give me permission to ask very deep questions of the field and to go where the field dictates to foster wholeness for my healing partner. All of us are unique individuals, and we all cope with pain, anxiety, and illness in our own ways. Doing TT as an art allows practitioners to move with the recipient in such a way that our healing partner's unique needs are met. In practicing the art of TT, I find that the rules only rarely need to be stretched or ignored. Usually, I find that doing TT as an art gives me the flexibility to create wholeness with my healing partner in ways that would be precluded were I to reside firmly in the rigid, habitual structure of TT technique alone.

So, this book is an examination of how it is possible to deepen the practice of TT so that it

becomes an art instead of a technique. As students deepen in their experience with TT, situations inevitably arise in which they begin to stretch the boundaries of the techniques that they learned as beginners. To someone viewing from the outside, this may be seen as a violation of the rules of TT because outside observers have no intimation of the information on which the therapist is basing her interventions. The outside observer isn't privy to the leadings of the timeless self.

On the other hand, some students will be tempted to toss the rules of TT to the winds as soon as they have completed a couple of TT classes because they have read an exciting book about some other form of healing and want to experiment with that newfound field of healing while claiming to be doing TT. They are easily tempted away from the structure of TT, even though they still feel their explorations should be considered part of TT. In reality, such adventures are an examination of the many dimensions of healing itself, not an exploration of TT. Each of us must experience the variety of healing modalities that are available to us in order to accumulate the skills that allow us to do healing work from our own unique perspective. We must be very clear, however, to distinguish between when we are doing TT and when we are doing some other technique. We must also be clear about keeping the techniques we have been taught operative even as we flex and move in response to the unique

needs of our healing partners. In this book, I explore what this middle ground looks like when beginners become more experienced and feel brave enough to launch themselves into the frontiers of more advanced TT while still keeping their adventures consistent with the principles of TT.

In each TT session, the actions of the therapist are heavily based on an inner subjective experience, and each practitioner's awareness is unique. It follows, then, that in this book I can only talk about my own personal experiences and impressions. Please keep in mind that what I have written here is not necessarily the only way that the practice of TT can be perceived. It is only 'the bible according to Maria' and should not be the sole guide on each practitioner's path to effective TT sessions. As you read this book, please keep in mind that I am only one flawed individual with a viewpoint that is fully formed by my own experiences and biases. Remember that what I write is only my own opinion and is colored by my present understanding. I have had many years of experience as a practitioner of TT, and I enjoy teaching students TT, so I do indeed have a few things to offer to those who are growing in the lifeway of TT . . . *and*, what I write is only my own version of the complex reality that is TT. If I am able to stimulate your thinking, I have succeeded, even if ultimately your conclusions disagree with mine. I offer my thoughts on TT in the hope that

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they will foster your own reflections on the art of
TT.

Chapter 1

Centering

The “centering” of the practitioner is the foundation of all healing. Many of the complementary health approaches we use today understand this and incorporate some form of centering as the beginning step in their practice. Many healing modalities use other terms to describe this first step in the process. In the Trager® Approach, for example, it is called “hook-up.” Centering is a necessary state of consciousness in any healing practice because it shifts the healer’s own energy field so that their connection to the universal healing field deepens. Moment to moment in our daily lives, usually unbeknownst to us, we thrive because we are immersed in the flow of an energy matrix that supports every aspect of our human condition. Our connections to that field wax and wane as we experience the joys and sorrows of each day. Things that pull us away from our better selves serve to thin our flow of universal energy. When we feel at our best, we are more fully flowing with this nurturing energy. To facilitate healing for another, our connection to this matrix needs to be as full and complete as possible so that we can be as helpful as possible. Centering is the mechanism

that shifts the flow of universal energy, resetting the channel so that we can accommodate the healing energies that will be needed by our healing partner.

I came to TT already experienced with part of the process of centering because of my experience attending Quaker meetings for worship. Quaker worship is based on silence. Attenders of this type of Quaker meeting enter the meeting room and settle into the quiet. In my experience, each person focuses internally and allows all the hubbub of the week to fall away. Next, the personal concerns and issues uppermost in our minds become evident, and then they also fall away. It is like allowing the outer rings of the onion to be pared away until we are sitting with the sweet nugget at the center. Eventually, I enter a state of mind in which there is only my breath and a deep sense of peace. This opens out into an experience of all-encompassing rightness and love, which some would say describes what happens in meditation. In this final stage, I sometimes realize that others in the room are also experiencing this unconditional state because others rise out of the silence and express exactly what I am feeling. It is as though we came to a state of unity by simply following ourselves down our own rabbit holes of longing for peace. All our centers somehow lead to this supreme state of corporate flow and peace from which members will, at times, rise and share something that seems to come from this unified state. This is what some

Quakers call a “gathered meeting.” It doesn’t happen all the time, but when I first experienced this several decades ago, I became hooked on this peace and on Quakerism. This was my first experience with centering.

In TT, the term “centering” encompasses more than the boundless peace and harmony that I find in Quaker meetings. At the start of a Quaker meeting, we are focusing inward, allowing the extraneous, peripheral things in our lives to recede from attention, and this results in a shift in awareness, a change in consciousness. But TT adds a few more dimensions to the act of centering. In centering to do TT, we make an agreement to be available to whatever will act for the highest good of our healing partner. We are making a blind commitment to this person to follow the trail that leads to their healing, whatever form that may take. We are choosing to be vulnerable, and we agree to follow the instructions we perceive as the session unfolds for both recipient and practitioner. We take the shifted consciousness and apply it to one goal—doing the best we can to help another. Instead of passively bathing in the soothing and comforting peace that this new consciousness brings, we are choosing to use this state as a conduit through which the resulting wholeness can be used in the human energy field of the one whose life needs healing. When TT is practiced as a technique, centering is the tool that “hooks us up” to the flow of the universal healing field and

ensures that we are the conduits, not the source, of this flow. Centering is our protection against using our own personal field as the source of the treatment. It is also a precaution against using the leadings of our own egos as the basis for the TT session. As we shift to the application of TT as an art, we begin to understand that centering is the gateway to our timeless self and that the timeless self supplies all the guidance and deep wisdom we need to function at a profound level, far beyond the intimations of the ego.

This deliberate decision we make in centering to use this consciousness for healing is more powerful than we realize, I think. I personally believe that in every moment of each day, individuals are given many choices. We blunder through our days, making the best choices possible in each moment. Each choice results from intentions that may be focused on our personal needs or our own concerns for the best for others. The world around us benefits or suffers from these individual choices to one degree or another. In contrast, the act of centering is a very quick inner movement that each of us makes at the start of each TT session; it guarantees that our mission involves the highest good, making the repercussions of that little act reverberate beyond our immediate understanding. We can move forward either from a place of fear or from a place that offers love and compassion to a struggling world. When we choose to spend our time and use

our awareness endeavoring to help others, we are making a choice to care for each other and the world at large. I envision that each time a person centers, somewhere in the mighty matrix that is the web of reality a signal is triggered that traverses the connections. It informs the entire grid that another choice has been made for love and not for fear. I suspect that each choice to center and to focus on healing for another actually moves the web an iota more toward the end of the spectrum where the light is brightest and love holds sway. This is my own understanding of what happens when we center, but I suspect the truth is very close to this. We cannot help but foster the well-being of the object of our compassionate attention. Centering, then, carries tremendous significance for ourselves and for our world.

When we are first studying TT, our acts of centering are probably mental. We are using intention to find and inhabit a calm, uncluttered space in the mind from which we can try this new technique. As we develop our TT skills, however, the act of centering eventually moves from the mind to the heart. Indeed, the quality of the centered state changes in powerful ways when we finally are able to center exclusively from the heart. This centered state is all about compassion. Much has been written about compassion, but I will focus here on some of the things that TT founders Dee Krieger and Dora Kunz have said about it. At its simplest, the definition of

compassion is “to help or to be merciful to one who is suffering: a deeply felt drive to help or to heal someone who is in need.”¹ I think the important aspect of this is the change of focus for the practitioner from concern only for herself to a strong awareness of the needs of others. Indeed, compassion may be the initial force that drives the student to take her first class in TT. I want to emphasize that many talk about compassion as a *force*. This compassion is not a passive emotional state. It has the capacity to impel us to move out of our usual patterns of life to do things that we would not normally consider. This force becomes the motivator that lures us out of established patterns of thinking and perception and into a more vulnerable state that, when translated to the recipient, impels movement toward a healthier state despite fixed patterns and stubborn attitudes.

According to Kunz, the act of TT is most closely allied with the heart chakra. When we center and experience compassion, we are more fully inhabiting this chakra, which “mediates the physical functions of the blood pressure and flow but also the psychodynamic aspects of the emotional field. The heart chakra is intimately connected with the energy centers in the hands and with the brow and crown chakras.”² The flow

¹ Krieger, *Therapeutic Touch as Transpersonal Healing*, 16.

² Kunz with Krieger, *The Spiritual Dimension of Therapeutic Touch*, 132–33.

of compassion through these centers can often impact the throat chakra as well. Each of the chakras affects parts of the endocrine system, so it can be easily seen that compassion can result in the release of cascades of hormones that affect us physically and emotionally in myriads of ways. As Krieger writes,

It is compassion and a sense of order that underlie the aspiration of all healers; it is at this level of function of the higher orders of self that all healers meet. The common ground for this insight appears to be a prior acceptance of the personal vulnerability that accompanies the conscious demonstration of compassion, an acceptance of the responsibility for intervening in another's life, willingness to be a significant change agent for the healee.³

Examining compassion can sound either very technical or emotionally sweeping, but I think Kunz speaks most plainly when she says “compassion plays a number of roles during healing. It helps to bond and unify the healer and the healee. It also has a channeling role: the force of compassionate concern coming from the

³ Krieger, *Therapeutic Touch as Transpersonal Healing*, 86.

therapist's heart chakra draws directly from the universal healing field and targets the healee for the flow of healing energies."⁴

A clear connection may be drawn between acts of compassion and the opening of the crown chakra. The timeless self inspires us as it moves through the crown chakra, and we access the universal healing field through our heart center via this crown connection. This force is the motivator allowing the directions from the timeless self to guide us as we beckon the power of compassion to flow through our hearts. When we center, then, we are setting up this juxtaposition of mind and heart. As the session progresses, we also learn how to maintain this flow by *sustained* centering. Over and over throughout the session, as the timeless self shows us the path, we sustain this healing connection of heart and mind. Becoming adept at maintaining this sustained center is what makes us technicians of compassion. Living without this connection of heart and mind can result in many of the difficult aspects of life that we see today. Our fast-paced modern world often leads us on a dizzying race in which we travel faster than our souls can really go. We say and do things that are not compatible with our true, compassionate nature.

⁴ Kunz, *The Spiritual Dimension of Therapeutic Touch*, 204.

Centering slows down our process, allowing us to apply both mind and heart to the things we make and do. As we center in session after session, we develop as humans and as practitioners so that we spend more and more of our time in the world in this centered state, with the mind and heart functioning together. Sustaining centeredness increasingly in our everyday lives makes TT an art as opposed to a technique because we become so familiar with the terrain of the centered state that we manage to use it more deeply and effectively, even outside the TT session itself.

Another aspect of the centered state is grounding. This grounding is not much different from the grounding an electrician works with when setting up an electrical circuit. The human body has an electrical circuit that flows best when one part of it is connected to the earth or, in other words, is “grounded.” It is amazing, but I have found that we can get along in everyday life only minimally grounded at best. This doesn’t mean we are functioning well, but we manage life in ways that are no better or worse than most people. This means that most humans are minimally grounded most of the time. I have practiced TT for many years at this point, but I still find that there is always more for me to learn about grounding! TT teachers present processes and exercises to beginners that help to acquaint the students with grounding. When I first experienced the grounding taught in a TT class, I could feel a palpable

difference in my body, which signaled that this degree of grounding was new and unfamiliar to me. When I am grounded, my hands grow warm and tingle, and I become aware of the flow of energy in my field (which leads me to conjecture that the flow has increased above its norm). I often sense a lightness that comes over my emotions as well as a feeling of sacredness in my awareness of the present moment. Over the years, meditation techniques have helped me to deepen my grounding. Even so, every once in a while someone shows me something new that makes me realize I have a lot more to learn about grounding.

Many patterns of energy flow are present in the human body, but TT focuses primarily on the macro pattern, which involves energy flowing in through the crown chakra, traveling down the body, and exiting through the feet. The incoming energy originates in the universal healing field that flows through the environment around us. Energy exiting through our feet flows into the earth, the source from which we all come and also a part of the universal healing field. With the grounded return of energy to the earth, the cycle of energy circulation is complete (see the appendix for more details on the typical TT session). We are part of this eternal cycle of relationship. We have at least a modicum of this flow present most of the time, and this allows us to function in the world. When I center, I am making the intention that this connection will open and deepen so that I will

become a much larger conduit for this flow of energy. I also want to make my field compatible with as many of the types of energy frequencies that characterize health as I possibly can, given the state of my own health and personal development. This means that I maintain a focus on keeping myself as healthy and well-adjusted as possible, for then I will embody less of the attitudes and attributes that close down my field such as physical illness, prejudices, resentments, and jealousies.

We don't have to be perfect to do TT, but it helps if we can be as clear as possible of the obstacles that hold us back, at least for the moment. Meditation is a great tool for helping us to attain the clearest state possible when we center as it teaches us how to find the state where we have released our personal obstacles (even if only for the moment). In this deeper, more peaceful state we are capable of embodying more of the wholeness we wish to convey to our healing partners. Practicing meditation frequently also teaches us how to slip into this state more quickly and easily and how to identify when we have lost this state. These are skills that help us to sustain centering for longer periods during the TT session, even in the face of external distractions or internal challenges.

When we center, we are uplifting ourselves and opening ourselves to the flow of the universal healing energy. I have gone to spiritual workshops

where very little attention has been paid to grounding even though the teacher was trying to facilitate students to embody larger and higher frequencies of energies in their fields. The students might have had a temporary experience of energy that was new to them, but no practical way emerged for the students to use this state either for themselves or for others. I am tempted to call this spiritual masturbation, for there may be a momentary high but no permanent change occurs for the student, nor does a new understanding or new skills result from the experience. For me, uplifting ourselves involves learning how to deepen our groundedness more and more. As higher and wider frequencies become involved in the act of healing, the practitioner must embody a deeper and wider vessel that will accommodate and steady these frequencies in order for them to be accessible to the recipient. I quote here a story about creation from the Kabbalah that illustrates this point.

At the beginning of time, God's presence filled the universe. When God decided to bring this world into being, to make room for creation, He first drew in His breath, contracting Himself. From that contraction darkness was created. And when God said, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3), the light that came into being filled the darkness, and ten holy vessels

came forth, each filled with primordial light.

In this way God sent forth those ten vessels, like a fleet of ships, each carrying its cargo of light. Had they all arrived intact, the world would have been perfect. But the vessels were too fragile to contain such a powerful, divine light. They broke open, split asunder, and all the holy sparks were scattered like sand, like seeds, like stars.⁵

The moral of this story is that the role of humans is to repair those broken vessels so that they can again carry their light, allowing God to bestow upon us the full measure of blessings. As TT practitioners, we are the vessels that must hold the energies of the universal healing field as they flow through to our healing partners. There may be times when the qualities or the quantity of healing energies needed for our client are actually too much for our limited human energy field to endure without buckling due to the overload. In that case, nature has built in a fail-safe mechanism: we can carry only the energies compatible with our own field. We must therefore deepen our grounding skills so that the circuitry

⁵ Schwartz, *Tree of Souls*, 122.

can carry whatever is needed by our recipients without being limited by our own natures. It is smart, then, to get to know ourselves well enough to sense our limitations and to follow whatever path we can discover to open and widen ourselves. Meditation is one sure way to encourage self-knowledge and to open to this inner world that is so much larger than ourselves. When we deepen our grounding skills and use them more frequently in everyday life, we are tempering our vessel so that we can be more effective healers.

If we can increase the depth and strength of our groundedness, then our fields are able to conduct a larger and greater variety of healing frequencies for the benefit of our recipients. When we fail to ground ourselves effectively, the circuit between ourselves and the universal healing field around us falters. We then end up sending recipients our own energies, and we take on the unbalanced energies that are leaving our healing partners but are struggling to find an outlet for returning to the receptive earth. We are also functioning without the full guidance of the timeless self, which means that our ego becomes an unbalanced force in our decision-making. For our own benefit, we must learn to establish a solid, functional groundedness.

When practitioners feel weaker or more tired after doing a session of TT, the primary reason is that the grounding during the session was ineffective. It is very easy for this to happen. Even

in daily life, I have found that I catch myself with my roots up in the air. I may feel slightly nauseated, tired, or headachy after a social interaction, and I realize that I was conducting myself without being adequately grounded. We often pull up our roots when we feel afraid, intimidated, insecure, or worried. Reflecting on such social situations can be a good lesson for me about which particular situations are most prone to decrease my groundedness. The issues underlying such situations are the ones I need to work on the most—not just for my own personal development but also to improve my abilities as a healer.

In addition to meditation, we can improve our groundedness in a variety of ways. Our knees should be soft, not locked, when we stand. Having a straight spine creates a direct pathway for the flow of energy. Tipping the pelvis slightly forward facilitates the flow of energy. Positioning the tongue in contact with the roof of the mouth connects some natural energy pathways that can facilitate groundedness. Techniques such as these can make grounding more effective.

Being firmly focused on the present moment will also increase our grounding. When we worry about the future or fret about the past, our sense of the reality of now diminishes. We need to be in the now to be most effective in the act of healing.

Personally, I find that I can also increase my grounding through deepening my relationship

with nature. As I relate to the garden and the trees on my property, my connection to them through my groundedness seems to increase. Camp Indralaya in Washington State comes to mind for me in this regard. The energies of nature are very palpable there, as they are in other places where nature has been protected and admired. My personal field seems to open more and my rootedness to deepen when I am in such sacred spaces. When I have visited Indralaya or one of the U.S. national parks and have experienced this greater openness, later on I can return in my mind to that time, and my heart as well as my energy field immediately open to the size and function they had during the original moment. These times of greater connection to the earth and to nature are highly conducive to experiencing the emotions, words, and sounds of inspiration that come from the universal healing field and that make life so much grander and joyful for each of us.

This, then, is the centered state as experienced when practicing the art of TT. It is compassion, with its openness to caring for others instead of concern for our own needs. It is the stated intention that we are choosing this healing act in order to bring forth the highest good for the person involved with us in the healing act. And it is the shifting of our own personal energy field to induce greater grounding and to set the stage so that we can become the conduit of this highest good. This is what occurs when we choose a

greater connection to the universal healing field via our own timeless self.

Therapeutic Touch done without being in the centered state is not TT. It is something else. When we are not in the centered state, our intentions are unclear, our focus is illusory, and we fail as conduits for the healing energies. When we are in the centered state, however, we are capable of stepping beyond ourselves in order to make the world better. Centeredness allows us to inhabit a space where compassion is uppermost and our human condition is pointed toward its highest potential.

* * *

In This Infinite Place

*In this infinite place
of unknowing
I am reminded of the
sacred space that
holds me in its grace
and silently whispers,
"It's safe to let go."*

*Its boundless wisdom
creates a harbour that
allows me to lay down
my injustices, assumptions*

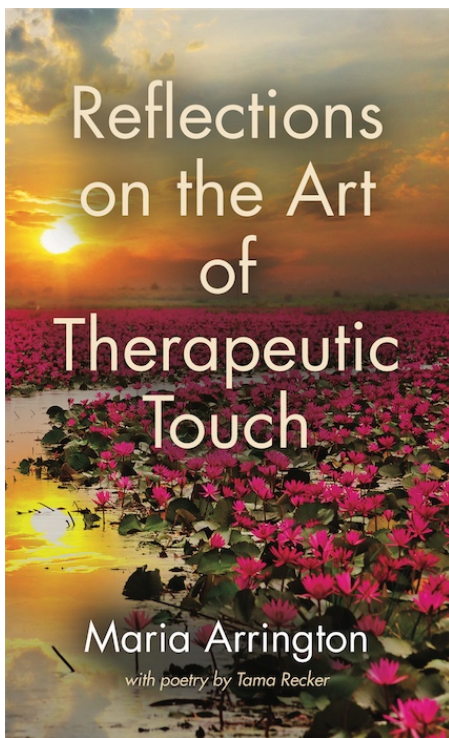
Maria Arrington

*and fears . . .
to breathe and recalibrate.*

*Being here now, resting
before opening wider
and gliding from
familiar shores . . .
guided by starlight,
divine guidance, and
my inner compass of
compassion.*

*You don't need the answers . . .
the questions hold the key.*

—©Tama Recker



For practitioners of Therapeutic Touch®, this book is an examination of what it can be like to choose to practice this healing modality as an art instead of a technique. Using poetry and a deep examination of the various aspects of Therapeutic Touch, readers are encouraged to reflect upon their own healing journey.

Reflections on the Art of Therapeutic Touch

by Maria Arrington

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