

## Getting Out of the Way: How a Doctor Learned to Heal by Patty de Llosa

“The body tells us where we need to go and what we need to do to support healing at the deepest possible levels if we listen deeply enough to hear what it’s saying.”

In the last 30 years Dr. Steven Weiss has earned a reputation for successfully treating complex clinical conditions by integrating what he learned from many cultures, including native American traditions, Tai Chi, Qigong, and the ancient Bön religion of Tibet, into his osteopathy practice. What’s more, every patient who walks into his office is seen first through the eyes of an engineer. That’s because Weiss was a builder before he became a board-certified doctor in neuromusculoskeletal osteopathic manipulative medicine. As a young man he was taught Physical Law and the supreme importance of structural integrity for all weight-bearing structures by an old Maine lobsterman and retired civil engineer. “Focusing on how people bear weight and their relationship with gravity is a major aspect of my practice,” he says. “If we humans are spiritual beings inhabiting a physical body, then the physical laws of the container exert a tremendous influence upon Spirit’s ability to manifest in the body. Conventional medicine essentially ignores the structural integrity that affects a person’s capacity to self-heal and self-regulate. On the other hand, the healing community, which attends to Spirit, is often poorly trained in matters of the physical body. Troubleshooting engineers are trained to solve structural integrity problems better than doctors.”

Native American traditions, particularly those of the Zuni pueblo tribe of western New Mexico, have been important to his evolution as a healer. During his first year at osteopathic school, he spent a summer at the Zuni Indian reservation in western New Mexico, where he was adopted into the Zuni Bear Clan. Weiss describes vividly a healing event he witnessed by Jimmy

“wa-sheh”, a Zuni bone doctor and healer: “A boy had been hit in the head with a baseball and was unconscious, convulsing lightly, with a lurid egg on his forehead. Jimmy sat down behind him, closed his eyes, and started chanting. After a while, I became aware of a change, not in Jimmy’s body, but in the air around it. As Jimmy kept rocking back and forth and chanting, I watched this glistening, gold cloud emerge out of the ground and wrap around his legs and then up his body. When the cloud had filled the space around him it arced over and around the boy’s body like an imperfect shroud—full of holes and tears. Jimmy worked on those holes and tears with his hands until the cloud grew smooth. When everything was smooth and the cloud was circulating evenly, Jimmy stood up, spit in his hand, pulled an arrowhead out of his pocket and put it on the boy’s forehead. There was a remote sort of sizzling sound and the boy opened his eyes. The color had come back to his face and he looked around alertly. Jimmy said, ‘You can go.’ When everyone else had left the room, he turned toward me and said, ‘I understand you’re in some kind of medical school where they teach doctors to heal. They thought you might have something you wanted to ask me.’ So I blurted out, ‘How do you protect

yourself?' Jimmy jumped out of his chair, got real close to my face, and yelled at the top of his lungs: 'Who do you think you are? Do you think you can heal? Do you think that any person can heal? What more is a human being than just a bag of mud brought to this space by Great Creator to do the work of his ancestors? All you have to do is get out of the way and you'll never be hurt. There is nothing to be afraid of and nothing to protect yourself from if you only get out of the way.'"

Weiss had the opportunity to watch Jimmy do further healings while completing a clinical clerkship with the Indian Health Service hospital in Zuni. The hospital director told him they had a file in the basement with x-rays of cases in which Jimmy had done inexplicable things, such as re-crystallizing bone fractures overnight. When Weiss asked Jimmy what he did to heal, the answer was always the same: "I told you. I get out of the way. Creator comes through me; the spirits of my ancestors come through me and they heal."

A graduate of Washington and Jefferson College with a B.A. in biology/pre-medicine, Weiss completed several years of graduate study in insect ecology and zoology at the University of Maine. During this period he established an environmental consulting business and was supported by the National Science Foundation for environmental curriculum development at the University of Maine. In 1985 he graduated from the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine with a doctorate in osteopathic medicine, honored with The Dean's award "for possessing those qualities that faculty would seek in their own family physician." He was trained and mentored by such legendary figures as Dr. Ruby Day, Dr. Robert Fulford, Dr. Anne Wales, Dr. Larue Kemper, Dr. Carl Schoelles, and Dr. James Jealous (founder of the Biodynamic Disengagement movement). They were all followers of Dr. William G. Sutherland, developer of cranial osteopathy, and masters of his subtle but profoundly powerful methods of supporting the power of the body to heal itself. "For the most part they are all dead," says Weiss, "but before they passed on they crammed as much training and guidance down my throat as they could and for that I am deeply grateful. I am first and foremost an osteopathic physician. That is the glue that holds together all the different strands of my healing practice. The science of osteopathy is my grounding in the body as a physical healer."

### "Energy Precedes Tissue"

Early in his practice Weiss realized that he was treating the tissue side of an energy-tissue interface and that he needed to get to the other side. He went to a body symbology workshop led by the Rev. Rosalyn Bruyere, founder of the Healing Light Center Church in California and one of the most celebrated healers of our time. Revered by several native tribes as a high medicine woman, and enthroned as a living oracle of the Bön — the pre-Buddhist, indigenous religion of Tibet — she was capable of generating and directing enormous amounts of qi. Weiss stepped forward when she asked the audience if anyone had a knee problem, and carefully described a football injury to his left knee: a torn anterior cruciate ligament, medial collateral ligament, and medial meniscus. She looked at him—actually he says she looked through him—and asked, "What was her name—the girl you were in love with when your knee was hurt?" He whispered, "Linda," and she said, "Yes. She's in there too."

Muttering to her student assistant, "Check out how suspicious and resistant he is," as he lay on her table in front of some 300 people, Bruyere put her hand on his chest. He felt a huge electric shock, as if he were being defibrillated. Says Weiss, "The treatment she gave me changed my life and the things she taught me helped guide me to a place where

I heal from a completely different reality that looks at the human body without the usual distinctions that separate tissue, energy, and Spirit. Rev. Bruyere says, 'Energy is all there is,' so if we are spiritual beings inhabiting a physical container, it is vital to take Spiritual Law and energy (qi) into account in our healing work in order to address the needs of the whole being. After thirty years of study with her, my approach to diagnosis and treatment includes considerations of the human energy field, the chakra system, and Spiritual Law. Energy precedes tissue. Does it initiate tissue or is tissue pulling energy? It's a dance. And it's always changing!"

Some years later Weiss was shown a particular osteopathic procedure by Dr. Ruby Day, one of the principal cranial osteopathic practitioners in the country. He was having trouble getting the technique right and they were both becoming frustrated, so he asked Dr. Day how she originally learned to do it herself. "Why, Dr. Sutherland just showed me how to get out of the way," she replied. Weiss says he felt another electric shock in his chest, remembering Jimmy's words. Dr. Day then led him through the Sutherland technique, which, while similar to some of the meditative techniques he used, seemed more practical, altering and balancing his nervous system while at the same time deepening, expanding, and clarifying his perceptual capacities.

### Allowing Creator to Flow Through Us

Hoping to trigger more details on this exercise, I asked Weiss, "Why get out of the way?" He explained that basically it was to listen more deeply: "One of the major dilemmas of treating people with pain and especially chronic pain, is that the source of the problem is almost never where it hurts. To understand, solve, and support the healing of complex pain conditions we need to see pain or symptoms in the context of how the body works and what it requires to be healthy, by using embryology, anatomy, physics, and engineering. We must transform ourselves from 'practitioners' to listeners, as well as diagnosticians who can sense the whole body and its various units of function. To do that, we must listen deeper, recalibrate ourselves, and do the work that removes ourselves and our filters from the equation so we can perceive without bias or prejudice. Left to themselves, our eyes are doomed to see only what the mind knows, so one way of looking at it, is that getting out of the way creates the possibility of our eyes and hands informing our brain. To get out of the way, remove your attention (and ego) from your hands and mind by creating a freely-floating hook out in space behind you and then hanging your attention on that hook."

He took me through the actual exercise he does every day, before and sometimes several times during a treatment session. Here it is in an abbreviated form: "With your sitz bones balanced on your chair and feet resting comfortably on the ground, follow your breath from the tip of your nose down into your body, and continue to follow it to where it turns and flows back up and out of your body, then turns again and comes back into you, creating a circle. Follow that circle of breath for a few cycles. Now, while you continue to follow it, extend your awareness to your heartbeat. Just listen to the beat of your heart within your chest while you follow the circle of your breath. Then place a small ball of Light (ping-pong ball size) way down your spine into the middle of your sacrum. Lift that little ping-pong ball of Light out behind your body, floating it out there eighteen inches or so in space, freely suspended and automatically shifting (that's an old osteopathic idea of what health looks like). Your next task is to fashion that little Light ball into a hook. Make sure when you're done that the hook is also freely suspended and automatically shifting. Then imagine you are coming indoors from a sleety winter storm, wearing a heavy wool greatcoat. Somehow that ice has frozen through the coat and into your body. So very carefully pull that coat off of your body... slowly, slowly, pulling all the ice off with

it. Then turn around and hang it securely onto your hook.

“Now that hook with its icy greatcoat is still freely suspended and automatically shifting, floating out there eighteen inches in space behind the middle of your sacrum. At this point the only work you have to do is to make sure that the coat remains on the hook. However, whatever the "it" is that we have removed and hung on that shifting hook behind us, you can be sure it doesn't want to stay there! It likes to slip off the hook and get back into my hands and brain, and create trouble. So my job is to keep it there, on the hook, because this is the way to allow Creator and our Ancestors to flow and work through us.”

“At first when I did this, sometimes the room seemed to expand and I would become hyper-aware of my surroundings. Sometimes my body seemed to get very small or very large. There were also other perceptual shifts and sometimes even a sense of shifting boundaries. Often I would suddenly be aware of an enormous fire-hose-type surge of qi running through my body and out my arms and hands. My patients, and subsequently my students and their patients, would report sensing this surge of energy when I underwent the getting out of the way practice. From this out of the way place I am able to listen and see more clearly and solve complex problems with increased success. Eventually you may discover that there are more hooks and, potentially, a more extensive, lengthier practice of getting out of the way. However, I've described this one hook as it was originally presented to me.”

## Refining the Practice

Weiss has honed this practice for many years and on many different levels. He describes his map or model as the combination of physical law (physics and engineering) and spiritual law (sacred geometry, embryology, energy medicine), stressing that any successful diagnosis and treatment program must include a combination of both. Now Medical Director of the Medicine Lodge Clinic and founder and educational director of The Altar of Creation ([www.altarofcreation.com](http://www.altarofcreation.com)), he teaches what he has learned to other healers as a powerful tool for listening to their patients' bodies, along with meditative practices to calm their minds and physical movements to support their own healing. His long-term goal is to change the way in which healthcare is practiced, so that it reflects how the human body really works and what it requires to heal and regulate itself, on both the physical or tissue level and the energetic or spiritual levels. “Consciousness molds our anatomy and physiology,” he says. “It controls how we heal and self-regulate. Listening deeply is only the beginning. The real issue is how to understand what you're hearing and to have a map, a GPS monitor or an algorithm to help you develop eyes and hands that can work with the data.”

Internationally recognized for his uncanny ability to help people suffering from complex and seemingly unsolvable clinical problems, he currently consults in the fields of chronic pain, sports and performing arts medicine, and the treatment of prenatal and pediatric problems. His clinical model is always evolving, especially in formative periods like post 9/11 New York, when he gathered his students and offered free clinics to the population of first-responders. He tells his patients the only thing he can guarantee is that he will create change by “connecting them back into their blueprint, helping them to re-member themselves.” Driven by the need to listen deeper, perceive more, and be more present as a healer, he treats both the physical body or tissue anatomy and the luminous body, to guard and nourish healing at a much more profound level. That, he says, “has been the fire that has propelled my journey to becoming a better healer as I integrated many different healing traditions, from biologist to engineer, to ecologist, and to osteopathic physician.”

Music has always been a strong thread running through his life since he first started playing instruments at age four; primarily harmonica, Jews harp, 5-string banjo, and native American flute. He has won several competitions, and currently teaches at the Maine fiddle camp every August. "Music is vibration," he reminds us. "... and vibration is the nature of the universe, and who we are, and how we heal."