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From Lorna Small (member 9029)

## REFLEXOLOGY AND THE MIND-BODY LINK

Having qualified as a Reflexology Practitioner in 1999, I went on to study and ultimately qualify in Hypnotherapy, Psychotherapy and Counselling.

Over time, I began to instinctively integrate all these disciplines in working with clients and have found new methods to enhance both the client's experience of treatment and it's effectiveness. This combination of reflex-healing and hypno-healing has developed into a new technique called

“Reflexology and the Mind-Body Link”.

By using therapeutic skills usually associated with deep hypnosis, the reflexology practitioner enables the client to visualise their healing process through self-hypnosis, thus strengthening the effect of the reflexology treatment they are receiving.

I describe the process to my clients as “zapping the problem from both ends!”

The whole procedure is very empowering for the client and enables them to become important participants in their own healing process. It turns even the most passive of clients into active “Recoverers”, “Survivors” into “Thrivers”.

### CASE STUDY – “JENNY”

Jenny, aged 18, is referred to me by her GP with symptoms of anxiety. Jenny's mother attends the initial assessment with her and explains that the only medical option that has been suggested, tranquillisers, is unacceptable to them both. The first thing I do is explain, as I do to all clients, the difference between the way we, as holistic practitioners assess, and the way a medic assesses. This, I tell them, will mean that I will be asking questions about life style, diet, emotional as well as medical history, unresolved physical or emotional traumas etc.etc. At the end of this exchange of information, I always discuss with the potential client whether they feel and whether I feel, that I am the right therapist for them. This is the most important interaction that ever takes place between a therapist and a client in my opinion, because the moment that an agreement takes place, my client takes responsibility for working as hard towards their recovery as I, their therapist will. If the commitment doesn't match, it's not going to work.

In Jenny's case, her condition has persisted for some time and was worrying her and her family considerably. I felt she would benefit from a course of reflexology and so we agreed to begin a four week course to see how things went.

#### *Session 1*

Due to her anxiety, the client has not been driving recently and so her mother drops her off for her appointment. Jenny exhibits classic symptoms of anxiety and in particular tension headaches and so, as I make her comfortable, I decide to encourage

her to relax through a gentle visualisation, whilst beginning to work the feet. During the session:

She tells me: that she was teased with “scary” stories as a child, that she has a fear of flying and a fear of going out without someone she trusts with her

Her feet tell me: of imbalances in head, neck, eyes, ears, eustachian areas; considerable stiffness and inflexibility in upper thoracic area of spine

I give her homework of loosening neck and shoulder exercises, and to practice the gentle visualisation each night on going to bed to ease her into a more relaxing sleep.

### ***Session 2***

The client presents in a more confident way, pleased with her improving visualisation skills. Her regular headaches have only returned towards the end of the week, but her fear of going out is still there. We discuss this at length, “unpicking” until we get to the root of the fear.

She tells me: that she has felt dizzy, nauseous and faint when out shopping in busy towns and is afraid of becoming vulnerable and embarrassed. This fear has led to an overwhelming anxiety which has grown into other areas of her life until it has reached the point where it threatens her daily functioning.

Her feet tell me: similar to session 1 but with noted blockages and tenderness in the oesophagus reflex.

When I query this with the client, she tells me of a virus she experienced some nine months ago (around the onset of her presenting problem) which affected her throat and ears and which she feels has never cleared up properly.

Some of the pieces of the jigsaw are starting to fit – YOU know that feeling!

For her homework, I teach the client some hypno-healing techniques to use on her throat, ears, and sinus areas.

### ***Session 3***

This time the client has driven herself for her appointment and has been to the shops with a friend. Her attitude is much more positive and whilst the headaches are persisting, her condition is improving overall.

She tells me: about the goals she is setting for herself – to visit her friend at University, to go shopping for a present for her Mum who has been so supportive and so on. It is as though she has suddenly experienced a mind shift that is empowering her to take control of her life.

Her feet tell me: that the blockages and imbalances around the throat, ears and in particular the eustachian tube are significant. These would, of course, tie in with the dizzy, nauseous symptoms which were the trigger for this cycle of anxiety.

As such, I get permission from the client to write to her GP with my findings.

The client’s homework is geared to build on her new positive attitude and determination to recover.

The power of this client’s MIND-BODY LINK is now harnessed for her benefit.

### ***Session 4***

As a result of my letter to the GP, the client has received an appointment with an ENT Consultant. This is, to her, a huge step as it symbolises medical recognition of the possibility that there is a physical root to her “mental health” problems.

The effect of using the MIND-BODY LINK with REFLEXOLOGY in this case probably has changed this young girl's life, for, even in these modern times, there is a stigma attached to the "mental ill health" label which may have "stuck" to the detriment of this client.

In the event, Jenny continued to improve, took control and made significant lifestyle changes.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Yesterday, Jenny phoned me on her return from her specialist's appointment. She was crying with joy at having received a diagnosis at last – "the balance organ still affected by an unresolved virus, but in the process of recovery". She will continue to attend for reflexology treatments to speed up the recovery process, but much more importantly, this young person's attitude to life, to herself and to others has changed in a positive way for ever. She now knows that she has the tools and resources within herself to take control of her life and this awareness has come through visualisation and recognition of the power of the MIND-BODY LINK.