

## Integrated Therapeutic Touch

Erik Peper, Ph.D.

*Not only did my discomfort disappear, the therapist taught me some practices by which I could continue the healing I experienced during the treatment session.*

Integrated Therapeutic Touch (ITT) combines relaxation, imagery, cognitive therapy, somatics and lifestyle changes with Therapeutic Touch to enhance and support the self-healing process within the person. This approach consists of optimizing the healer-healee (therapist-client/teacher-student/doctor-patient) relationship, awareness of healing through an energetic perspective, and teaching the client self-healing practices. Therapists can use this approach to optimize clients' health or integrate it into their treatment approaches. Integrated Therapeutic Touch was synthesized by Erik Peper, Ph.D., Professor of Holistic Health at San Francisco State University, as an enhancement to treatment approaches where therapist successfully treats the patient but once the treatment is over, the benefits decrease.



Erik Peper teaching



Erik Peper demonstrating integrated somatic movements

**Healee-healer relationship.** The relationship between therapist and client supports or inhibits the client's healing process. When therapists recognize the healing potential within their clients, it nurtures the process by which clients becomes whole. The therapeutic relationship is more than a physical and emotional relationship, it includes an energetic exchange. We are part of a complex energy field which affects and is affected by every other part within and outside the person. Every physical, emotional, and cognitive change transforms the person's energy field. The changes in the energy field transform and affect the physical, emotional cognitive, and consciousness experiences. The energy field represents the whole human body and at the same time contains the blueprint for future development. Thus, by changing the energy field, therapists can directly or indirectly can induce healing possibilities within the client; equally, clients may affect their own energy field to promote self-healing.

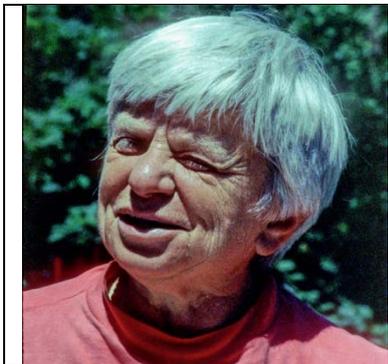


Practice sensing energy fields



Integrating therapeutic touch with touch and breathing

**Healing through an energetic perspective.** The energetic perspective underlies all treatment modalities and is derived from Therapeutic Touch. Therapeutic Touch is a synthesis of ancient healing practices that modulate the energy field for healing. Therapeutic Touch was developed by Dr. Dolores Krieger when she was professor of nursing at New York University and her mentor Dora Kunz who was a remarkably healer.



Dolores Krieger



Dora Kunz



Dora Kunz doing therapeutic touch

Dora Kunz had derived the basic concepts underlying Therapeutic Touch by observing numerous energetic healers and extracting the common processes how these healers used energy field in their therapeutic healing. Healing is different from cure--healing means to become whole while cure means that the illness disappears. In all cases patients can be healed—becoming whole—even though their illness may not always disappear. Even a dying person can become whole through acceptance and allowing a peaceful transition.

Therapeutic touch can be practiced as a technique for specific healing and as a foundation from which practitioners use their own specific healing practices. Practitioners who integrate therapeutic touch as the underlying process of healing offers patients a significant benefit beyond their specific clinical/educational skill such as such as biofeedback, massage, aromatherapy, nursing, physical therapy, or behavioral medicine.

By knowing that each of us affects and is affected by each other's energy fields, the practitioner realizes that their energy field needs to radiate a quality of peacefulness and wholeness. In many ways, patients emulate without knowing the energetic state of the therapist through the activity of mirror neurons. Thus, the first step in therapeutic touch is for the practitioners to center themselves to create a peaceful state in which they are sensitive and become aware of the clients field. Then the practitioner knows that within the person there is a potential for wholeness and the practitioner uses their intent to heal to to transform the energy field of the patient into wholeness. This process provides a heaven of safety and healing occurs most easily when the client feels safe.

**Self-healing practices.** Clients are taught self healing practices during the treatment session so that they can maintain and continue to support their own self-healing process. The specific practices are adapted for each client and are derived from relaxation, breathing, cognitive, visualization, meditation and somatic practices embedded within a holistic perspective.

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