

## CHAKRA MAN: AIDS, BODYWORK, AND INSPIRATION

### CONVERSATIONS WITH HEALER HEROES

By Stephanie Mines, Ph.D.

Tom Sherman is a man with penetrating vision. His impressive stature and compelling voice certainly draw your attention, but what you can't ignore or forget are his eyes. They invite you into the moment, putting you in touch with the depth of his presence. When he greets you to do a bodywork session or explains his work with nature as healer, the light of his inspiration shines through. When he gives you a massage, you can feel that he is doing it to transform lives, yours and his. His message, whether spoken or felt, is "LIVE FULLY."

Tom is a licensed massage therapist, a Healing Touch practitioner, a Vision Quest facilitator, and a gay man living with AIDS. He faces his clients and his profession without compromising any part of himself. He is forthright and authentically joyful. He defines himself as a man who prepares people for life and death. "Bodywork," he says, "teaches us to let go and release as we will be required to do when we die."

I first met Tom on the telephone over a year ago. I was interested in doing a Vision Quest in Hawaii, and a friend told me about Tom and his Nature Fast, a ten day quest which included a fast in the wilderness above North Kohala on the Big Island. A clear, expanded "Aloha," was Tom's first word to me. While almost everyone in Hawaii says hello and good-bye this way, "Aloha" is much more than a greeting. It speaks of surrender to the abundance of nature. Eventually I found out that Tom was a healer and a man living with AIDS. I found myself powerfully drawn to his strength, his philosophy of vital living, and the life force he generated with unswerving clarity and unabashed sensuality. Whenever I go to the Big Island now to teach, I make sure I visit Tom. On my last visit I satisfied a desire to talk more deeply with him about his life and his work. I spoke with him at his Nature Sanctuary while the stirring winds of Kohala mixed their music with the soft punctuation of the rain.

"I acquaint people with their chakras and how to bring light, positive, powerful, healing energy into their systems. I feel one of the most powerful aspects of my practice is the balanced attention I give to the physical and energetic bodies." Like a gourmet cook combines spices to create a perfect meal, Tom combines modalities to serve his client best. Everything he does, but especially his healing work, is infused with his celebration of life. His encounter with death has been transformed into initiation.

Tom now sees his AIDS diagnosis as an asset. "I am glad I am positive," Tom declares, to the certain astonishment of most listeners. His unashamed stance shakes us out of our assumptions. Tom freely discloses his AIDS status to his bodywork clients, and uses the opportunity to educate people about AIDS. "My clients make the choice about what they want," he says. "If my AIDS status or my approach to merging energy work with massage is unappealing, I offer referrals."

"It is important for me," he continues, "that my clients feel safe." Safety, according to Tom's definition, means knowing what options you have, what choices you can make, and that you can have what you want. The greatest safety lies in empowerment. For people like Tom, bodywork and energy healing (which he combines) are designed specifically for empowerment. Beyond the benefits of stress reduction, recovery from injury, and relaxation, massage, bodywork and energy medicine awaken us to the magnitude of who we really are.

Tom has both a mainland and a Big Island practice. The Nature Sanctuary he built in North Kohala houses one; and the other is in Oakland, California. In Hawaii, Tom leads and facilitates Hawaii Nature Fast and maintains an ongoing practice in massage and energy healing. He serves the local community as well as the visitors to this vacation paradise. He creates opportunities to educate about AIDS and supports anyone who has a personal story about AIDS. He hosts fundraisers for the local AIDS organization in his small Hawaiian community, is an advisor for the Hawaii AIDS Clinical Research committee, and participated in the first Hawaii AIDS bike ride. In Oakland, Tom feels a commitment to serve the gay community. He brings a heightened spiritual awareness to all his work with touch and is consciously a model of what it means to be a full man with well-developed masculine and feminine parts. In both places, Tom lives and works as a mentor for people who can hear his message of manifesting essence as the sole purpose of life.

"Perhaps bodyworkers have something to learn from people with AIDS," Tom proposes, his forceful eyes meeting mine unequivocally. "The choice to live has been made for me," he declares, moving rapidly from the table, where he has served us dinner, to the sink. Tom does everything definitively, precisely, and with a sense of ritual and order. The table is set with care. A candle is always present in his environment, the light burning to symbolize the flame of the spirit ever-present.

"Before I went on the drugs, I didn't want to live," he continues, back at the table, referring to the protease inhibitor "cocktail" which has offered so many people with AIDS the opportunity to live longer and to reverse some of the most debilitating aspects of this epidemic. "It was a shock to know I would be getting better, and when it started to really happen, I couldn't believe it. I didn't want to be disappointed again. Most of my friends were gone. Why was I saved? The choice was made for me and I had to accept it. It took a re-examination of every aspect of my life to understand this. My life was spared for a purpose. Now, what was the purpose?"

"This year there was an Hawaiian ceremony for the Millennium. While most people were examining their resolutions or desires for themselves, a Hawaiian man guided me to explore my intentions for my culture. I am here now for other people. Everyone who comes into my life, without exception, is a teacher. My question is, how can I serve them?"

"Although I did not die of AIDS, some parts of me did. Before my diagnosis, I lived my life for myself. Now I know my purpose is to live my life for others. I feel I have gotten this clarity about my purpose from the experience of being on a different plane, from a vibrational shift in my being which allowed me to be fully in contact with the reality of this world. This has forever altered my perspective on what the meaning of life is and what I am here to do. When I am here on the Nature Sanctuary, giving a massage outdoors, sometimes the wind swirls with great strength around me. I merge with it. It is not an obstacle, a distraction or a disturbance. The wind connects me with my experience. I let go into it. It is not outside of me. Massage does the same thing. It allows connection beyond the boundaries of the body."

Jeffrey Najarian is committed to being a messenger of healing for people who struggle with substance abuse, people who have AIDS, and the gay community. Like Tom, Jeffrey has faced a multitude of challenges to his life force. These challenges include AIDS, cancer, a serious car accident, and cyclic depression stemming from a lifetime of abuse. Jeff has fought to stay alive. He offers to others what sustains him: energy medicine and bodywork, and a spiritual practice focused on ending the lineage of shock and trauma that has so impacted him.

The story of Jeff's graduation from the Boulder School of Massage Therapy (in Boulder, Colorado, where Jeff lives) is, in itself, a hero's journey. Jeff moved from Ohio to Boulder to fulfill the dream he had of being a bodyworker. He had already been diagnosed with AIDS, and he felt that as a massage therapist, he could be of great service to people in the AIDS community.

"I have buried thirty-two friends," Jeff says, his eyes full with the wisdom of loss. "Many of their lives stopped before they began. I watched people suffer and die slow, painful, even horrific deaths. I searched for anything that I could share with others who were sick."

With enthusiasm and drive, Jeff was on the brink of a successful culmination at massage school when he was diagnosed with cancer. He could barely sustain the magnitude of this challenge. He tells the story with great dignity:

"I was treated with chemotherapy and radiation. My T-Cells dropped to 77. Normal T Cells are 800-1200. I dropped out of massage school feeling defeated and overwhelmed. I also began taking HIV anti-virals. I was completely defeated. Two years later, the cancer was in remission and I was having a positive response to the HIV drugs, but my depression continued. I was desperate to find some insight into the lessons of my life, which felt like a nightmare."

For Jeff Najarian the missing piece to his puzzle was in two parts. One was the gift of energy medicine. The other was an understanding of how shock and trauma work in the body and in the brain. The link between shock and trauma and what was happening in his body was a miraculous awakening for Jeff. As he puts it: "I now understand the connection between my depression and the years of physical, emotional and sexual abuse that I experienced early in my life. As I unravel layers of buried pain, I reclaim myself and find my purpose. I feel empowered to confidently provide outreach to people with AIDS, people in recovery from substance abuse, and people with chronic illness. I have won the battle for confidence."

After almost a year spent studying energy medicine and the mechanisms of shock and trauma, Jeff returned to the Boulder School of Massage Therapy, and graduated. Now Jeff not only has a private practice in energy medicine and massage; he also is an educator. He has presented workshops at AIDS Medicine and Miracles, the National Gay Men's Health Summit, Shadowcliff Retreat for People with AIDS, and he provides training for the staffs of agencies that serve people living with HIV. He continues to study in Boulder, inquiring deeply into the dynamics of healing. He is particularly interested in how shock affects the body, weakens the immune system, and inhibits empowerment.

In 1889, Janet, one of the first scientists to investigate the physiological impact of trauma, said, "All traumatized people have the evolution of their lives checked." Now, in the year 2000, we are just beginning to accumulate information about the relationship between shock and trauma and immune function. Research done by the Center for Disease Control shows that HIV infection is two and a half times more likely to occur when there is a history of abuse. For women, childhood sexual abuse is the greatest indicator of risk for HIV. What about the relationship between shock and trauma and muscular pain, joint discomfort, and difficulties with movement? This is the frontier where Jeffrey Najarian is hanging out these days, with his community of like-minded healers.

Jeffrey is a tall man with bright eyes and an air of utter sincerity. When he teaches, the audience is held captive by his simple and genuine style. Jeff has a particular focus on providing resources for people who are in the difficult process of recovering from substance abuse. How does massage, energy medicine and bodywork play a role in this profound reclamation of self? Jeff answers this question by talking about his own life experience:

"My struggle with substance use began when I was thirteen. It cannot be separated from the feelings of shame I had about my sexuality. I was so confused. In order to be who I was and fulfill my needs, I had to use substances. There was no other way I could live with myself. I didn't know how to accept myself as I was because no one had ever modeled that for me. I knew my parents

would be horribly ashamed of me because I was gay, so I was ashamed of myself. It was not difficult to discover that sex was much more enjoyable if I was drinking and smoking."

"Casual sex and addiction are really the search for something outside of oneself that will convey a sense of connection or wholeness. I've used alcohol, pot, coke, LSD, crystal-meth, mushrooms, and extreme sex to fill the emptiness and pain I felt inside."

"After my bout with cancer, I knew that these drugs were killing me."

"In August 1998, I was introduced to an approach to healing that includes energy medicine and a compassionate understanding of the impact of shock and trauma. By using the principles of this awareness and continuing to address the shock and trauma in my life and in my body, I am restoring what I lost. I am finding options I did not know I had."

"I continue to investigate the source of my fear and my rage, my grief and my self-hatred. And slowly but surely these demons are less powerful as I shine the light of awareness upon them. The surprise is that as I am empowered to explore my past, I also discover a whole and complete self that has survived despite the horrors this body has lived through. That is the beauty of energy medicine. It has given me what I was searching for in all my addictions. It has given me a way to make a deep connection with myself, and with others. I feel that connection in my body, and I can sustain it. Energy medicine, bodywork, and an honest confrontation with my past allows me to transform the wounds of deep suffering into tools for service to others."

### **WHAT IS ENERGY MEDICINE? HOW DOES IT BLEND WITH BODYWORK?**

"Energetic medicine recognizes the power of our thoughts and of this world we are now residing in." -- Caroline Myss

Our bodies speak the language of energy in sensations, rhythms, aches and pains, joy, repulsion, spiritual expansion, depression, elation, fatigue, emotions of all kinds, and all the experiences of illness and health. These are the words we use to describe our personal energy and its response to the world. Energy medicine is about bringing all these sensations into balance. You know you are balanced energetically when you feel peaceful, empowered, and ready to meet yourself and others, clear and focused. Energetic balance gives us the resilience to meet stress and challenge. It provides a felt sense of congruence with ourselves, with others, and with our environment. Energy medicine engenders and sustains true health -- a continuous state of presence, clarity, and vibrancy. Because energy is responsive and interactive, sensitive, subtle and multi-faceted, the tools or mediums of energy medicine must likewise be responsive, interactive, sensitive, subtle and multi-faceted.

For Tom Sherman, the practice of energy medicine takes the form of Healing Touch. He includes Healing Touch in every massage session he does: "Sometimes it is the total focus and very explicit, and at other times it is not even mentioned."

"I typically do an energetic assessment of the flow of energy through the ankles, knees, and chakras as a way of determining where there are energetic blockages," Tom continues. "This is done with a pendulum and a hand scan of the energetic field. I encourage people to use their voice both in asking for what they want and in giving expression to the tension they find in their bodies during the work. They can tell their stories, and make connections between their physical pain and their emotional histories. I give them a place to truly let go."

For Jeff Najarian, the practice of energy medicine is in the form of The TARA Approach and Jin Shin Tara, which employs Oriental pulse diagnosis to read energy. While Tom reads energy with a pendulum, Jeff reads energy by touching positions on the wrist of his clients and thereby noting the pulsations of the meridians, or energetic pathways. Energy reflects not only our physical state, but our spiritual condition as well. Plotinus, the Second Century Roman philosopher, saw the body as "Spirit streaming, pouring, rushing and shining." When this natural fluidity is blocked, illness always occurs. Healers employ many different styles to assess energy, but they all read it in some way to determine the most effective intervention to re-establish balanced movement.

The integration of energy medicine with massage is a natural one for Tom Sherman.

If I work on the muscles to release holding and tension, I know that this released energy also needs to be smoothed and cleared. The Healing Touch energetic techniques are great for this purpose. I typically end each hands-on massage session with energy clearing and balancing techniques."

Jeff Najarian begins his sessions with his clients by talking with them about the stress and trauma they have experienced in their lives and how these events have effected their bodies. His training in The TARA Approach has educated him about how the nervous system responds to shock and trauma by becoming adrenalized and how that adrenalization can effect muscular behavior and tension or holding in the joints. Before a stimulating massage intervention, he offers the subtle clearing of energy medicine, guided by the direction of the pulses. He holds points along meridian lines until the pulses in the points come into balance. This creates a flow of energy throughout the body, making the body more receptive to massage.

Jeff can also provide sessions that are pure energy medicine. In this case, the client can release tension without having to undress. This is enormously attractive to survivors of sexual abuse who are frequently activated by needing to disrobe, by being touched in

sensitive areas, and by being "worked on" by someone who stands above them, fully clothed, while they are in the vulnerable prone position. This can replicate one of the fundamental attributes of shock, which is that it occurs when we are without defenses. While it is true that all adult clients have the resources of their action and their voices, they may forget that if they are activated by a situation which resembles the conditions of an earlier, invasive experience. Since people who have experienced shock and trauma tend to become disassociated when they are activated, they may fail to acknowledge this at the moment and then feel violated later.

Empowerment is the purpose of energy medicine, no matter what form it takes. Tom addresses empowerment in many ways, not the least of which is the empowerment inherent in receiving touch that is well boundaried and unconditionally healing. "Accepting and loving one's whole body and being are work we all face," he says. One of his primary commitments is empowering people, and gay men in particular, to free themselves of shame.

Tom told me the story of a session in which he felt he served as channel for the release of the energy of shame for a man who had been sexually abused by his father. "I felt and saw the dark, rough, large chunks of energy flow out of him, through my arm, down through my body, out my feet and deep into Mother Earth. The sensations were nothing like I had ever experienced before. As time passed, the energy became smoother and lighter until it almost completely dissipated. At one point, I began to feel the pain and tears came. I quickly realized this was not my energy. I didn't need to take it into me and process it. I went back to letting it flow through and out. This was a significant realization and direct experience of how I can work with other's energy and not have to take it on as part of mine. It was also a first hand experience of the psyche's release of material long buried inside the body."

While stories of energetic release are highly subjective, they should not be discounted. Just because something cannot be verified by concrete measures does not mean that it is not true. In fact, a case can be made for the efficacy and reliability of subjective reporting because it does not pretend to be anything other than that. While human experience is highly variable, it is also deeply genuine, and this makes it valuable. When these anecdotes are compiled, they are, at the very least, informative. For people suffering from illness and afflictions, mental or physical, these stories - and these experiences - can be life saving, life changing inspirations.

## **THE HEALING PROLETARIAT - HEALERS WHO HEAL THEMSELVES**

"Your body is designed to heal itself. The ability of a body to maintain its health and overcome illness is, in fact, among nature's most remarkable feats. But you've been placed in a world that systematically interferes with this natural capacity, and your conscious involvement in your health is required if you are to truly prosper."

--Donna Eden, ENERGY MEDICINE

Since Jeff Najarian learned about energy medicine, he takes care of himself every day. The TARA Approach is fundamentally oriented towards self-care. Jeff can listen to his own pulses and treat himself to find stability and balance, even under the most difficult circumstances. When he had to undergo surgery for a shoulder that was hurt in a car accident, he used Jin Shin Tara consistently and the doctors were amazed at his recovery process. The energetic shifts Jeff experiences stimulate his motivation to exercise, to eat well, to meditate, and to go for long walks with Kasha, a dog as big and beautiful as Jeffrey, his master and best buddy.

Jeff's medicine bag is now full of tools that he uses regularly so that the world around him does not undermine him. It takes courage to live a life that is different from the mainstream, and to embody the confidence in unique beliefs. Incorporating energy medicine with massage, talking about how shock and trauma influence muscles and joints, encouraging and educating people to find the healer within, bringing out the wounded healer in gay men with AIDS - these are all daring choices for a lifepath, and for a career choice. The stamina and will necessary to walk this talk requires ongoing nourishment. Jeff has gone public with his commitment by co-authoring a handbook to recovery from substance abuse, using energy medicine. In it he says, loud and clear: "Depression waxes and wanes within me. But as much pain as I have been in, I would never again reach for crystal or alcohol to numb my pain or my feelings. Now I reach within." Jeff has learned to be self-nurturing and in this regard he is a model for people living with AIDS and all of us. He is no longer a victim.

Tom Sherman feeds his own awareness of energy by being with the energy of nature. His abundant garden on his Nature Sanctuary reveals this successful co-mingling with the earth. Tom maintains a regular practice of yoga, swimming, and exercise. He receives ongoing energy and bodywork from his colleagues. His singular message to other bodyworkers is: "Take care of yourself as a primary way of serving others at the highest level of your capability."

How can we define Tom Sherman and Jeff Najarian? They are both gay men living with AIDS. They are both certified massage therapists. But I would call them frontiersmen, healer heroes, harbingers of a future approach to healing. They carry forth the mandate of their embodiment by serving life 100% of the time. Is this difficult? No. It is rejuvenating. It is natural. It is hard work NOT to live at this level of investment. One of their greatest contributions is the way they integrate and combine healing systems, designing sessions and treatments to suit the people they serve. The freedom they give themselves to do this comes out of their intimate understanding of the healing process and how they themselves experienced it.

Tom clearly defines the crucial value of this integration: "My greatest frustration comes from seeing a purist or 'us and them' attitude in healthcare. Too many practitioners focus on one approach to the exclusion of any other. My healing journey definitely underscores the necessity for diversity. I know I would not be alive today if it were not for pharmaceutical medications. But if I had only followed the

Western medical route, I would never have learned what happens when you view a medical challenge as a gift and a teaching. I would never have searched to the core of my being, into the wounds of my past, for the lessons I needed to learn. I would like to see a better integration of systems and understandings, of western and eastern wisdom, of allopathic and complementary modalities. We are moving in this direction, but we have a long way to go. I can support this change by practicing this integration in my own work and educating my clients about the benefits and values of expanding their awareness of healing."

The inspired lives of Tom Sherman and Jeff Najarian take massage therapy, and therapy of any kind, into a new dimension. Combining skill with profound compassion, these men live lives of constant transformation. Their confrontation with death has empowered them to be deeply, thoroughly, and truly alive. Can we let them be our teachers, these gay men with AIDS? Can we let ourselves learn from their suffering, just as we have learned from the sufferings of the greatest mystics, the greatest healers?

Tom Sherman, Ph.D., LMT, offers his healing services at the Nature Sanctuary in Kapa'au, Hawaii, on the Big Island. He also conducts vision quests for life transitions there called Hawaii Nature Fast: Ceremonies for Reflection, Rejuvenation and Healing. To reach Tom on the Big Island, call 808-889-0553. To reach Tom in Oakland, California, call 510-547-5449.

Jeffrey Najarian, CMT, offers massage therapy and Jin Shin Tara treatments in Colorado. Jeffrey is also available to provide training for the staffs of agencies serving people with AIDS and to agencies and programs providing resources for people in recovery from substance use. He can be reached by calling 303-926-8443.

Stephanie Mines, Ph.D., is the author of SEXUAL ABUSE/SACRED WOUND: TRANSFORMING DEEP TRAUMA and THE DREAMING CHILD: HOW CHILDREN CAN HELP THEMSELVES RECOVER FROM ILLNESS AND INJURY. She is also the founder and director of The TARA Approach to the Resolution of Shock and Trauma. This training program prepares therapists of all kinds, including bodyworkers, as well as parents and educators, to address issues of shock and trauma in their work and in their lives. For information about The TARA Approach, call Dr. Mines at 303-499-9990, or visit her website [www.TARA-Approach.org](http://www.TARA-Approach.org).

If the CHAKRA MAN illustration is used within the article or as a cover, the following citation would be included:

The CHAKRA MAN was designed as a quilt by Tom Sherman, in preparation for his participation in Hawaii's First Annual Bike Ride to Stop AIDS. The bicycle ride is a 450 mile, 7 day tour on four of the Hawaiian islands intended to raise money for Hawaii AIDS service organizations and to help raise awareness and educate people about AIDS. The quilt is created from old garments and fabric gifts from friends who responded to the request to send material that held their energy to be used as an "energy blanket" to support and energize Tom's body during the ride. CHAKRA MAN is a visible symbol that celebrates life's energy and supports health. The energy blanket has the outline of the body on it - half black and half white - suggesting the balance a healthy person holds with their light and dark sides. The seven chakras or energy centers pulsate with energy and serve to clear and recharge the energy centers of those who view the quilt.

## **RESOURCES/CHAKRA MAN**

Compiled by Stephanie Mines, Ph.D.

### **National Information Hotlines:**

CDC National AIDS Hotlines  
1-800-342-2437 - Information in English  
1-800-342-7432 - Information in Spanish

National AIDS Treatment Information Services  
1-800-458-5231

National AIDS Clearinghouse (Educational Materials)  
1-800-458-5231

CDC (Center for Disease Control) National Immunizations Hotline  
1-800-232-2522

Gay Men's Health Crisis Hotline  
1-800-243-7692

Project Inform  
1-800-822-7422

**State and National Resources - Websites:**

Gay Men's Health Crisis  
[www.gmhc.org](http://www.gmhc.org)

Johns Hopkins AIDS Service  
[www.hopkins-aids.edu](http://www.hopkins-aids.edu)

National Pediatric AIDS Network  
[www.npan.org](http://www.npan.org)

UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies  
[www.caps.ucsf.edu/](http://www.caps.ucsf.edu/)

World AIDS Day  
[www.aawhworldhealth.org/waids.htm](http://www.aawhworldhealth.org/waids.htm)

Sexuality Information and Education Council of the US  
[www.siecus.org](http://www.siecus.org)

American Association for World Health  
[AAWHStaff@aol.com](mailto:AAWHStaff@aol.com) (e-mail address)

American Red Cross  
[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)

Planned Parenthood  
[www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)

Aids, Medicine, and Miracles  
[www.inspirational.org/~amm](http://www.inspirational.org/~amm)

Mothers' Voices  
[www.mvoices.org](http://www.mvoices.org)

Names Project  
[www.aidsquilt.org](http://www.aidsquilt.org)

**Glossary of HIV/AIDS terms:**

**AIDS:** Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome - Advanced infection with HIV, marked by certain conditions that do not occur in people with healthy immune systems, or by a decrease in CD4 cells below the level of 200 copies per microliter of blood.

**CD Cells:** White blood cells that help direct the body's infection-fighting cells. They are named after the CD4 molecules they carry on their surface. Also called helper T cells.

**CD4 Count:** The number of CD4 cells in a tiny drop of blood (a microliter or about 1/5000th of a teaspoon). Because HIV attacks CD4 cells, their number falls as the infection gets more serious.

**CDC:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**CMV (Cytomegalovirus):** A virus that is sexually transmitted and can occur without symptoms or result in mild flu-like symptoms. As an opportunistic infection in AIDS patients, it can cause CMV Retinitis, an inflammation of the retina that can lead to blindness if left untreated.

HIV: The human immunodeficiency virus. It attacks infection-fighting blood cells (CD4) and other cells and can progress into AIDS.

HIV-1: Refers to the most common strain of the virus found in AIDS patients in the United States.

Immune System: The network of organs and cells in the body that recognizes and fights off infections and other "foreign" invaders.

Immunocompetent: The body's capacity for normal immune response.

Immunocompromised: A condition in which the immune system fails to defend the body against infections and tumors.

Infectious: Having the ability to get inside uninfected cells.

Kaposi's Sarcoma: A malignant skin tumor that occurs in some AIDS patients. Fever, enlarged lymph nodes, and gastrointestinal problems can accompany it.

Lymphoma: Cancers in which the lymphoid tissue, found mainly in the lymph nodes and spleen, multiply unchecked. Lymphomas fall into two categories. One is Hodgkin's Disease, characterized by a particular kind of abnormal cell. All others are non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, which vary in their malignancy according to the nature and activity of the abnormal cells.

Neuropathic Pain: Caused by disease, inflammation or damage to the peripheral nerves, which connect the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) to the sense organs, muscles, glands and internal organs.

NIH: National Institute of Health

Peripheral Neuropathy: Tingling, numbness, and/or pain in the extremities, usually in the fingers, toes and feet.

Protease: An enzyme that HIV uses to make new copies of itself inside infected cells.

Protease Inhibitors: Drugs that stop protease from making new copies of HIV that can infect other cells.

PWA: People living with AIDS or HIV.

Replication: The process by which HIV makes new copies of itself inside infected cells.

Resistance: The ability of HIV to change its chemical or genetic structure so that it resists the effects of drugs.

Side Effects: The unwanted and sometimes harmful effects of drugs.

Suppression: Treatment intended to keep infection under control and to prevent its progression.

Synergist: A substance or drug that enhances the effect of another.

T Helper Cells: White blood cells that help direct the body's infection-fighting cells. Also called CD4 cells.

Viral Load: Refers to the amount of activity of the HIV virus in the body; used the measure the extent of illness.

### **Transmission Source Myths**

HIV is not spread in the following ways:

Hugging and handshakes;

Insect bites;

Swimming in pools, using saunas: HIV cannot survive in an environment of open air, heat or chlorine. HIV can only be transmitted by blood and blood products, not by water;

Kissing: No case of AIDS reported to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) can be attributed to transmission through any kind of kissing. Additionally, saliva inhibits HIV and reduces kissing as an at risk behavior;

Shared Utensils;

Food Handling and Preparation: Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations require service workers and food handlers to wash their hands on the job, wear plastic hand covers, and cover any open wounds or sores that could transmit infectious diseases. Remembering that HIV is blood-to-blood, the co-worker, client or consumer needs an open wound or sore for transmission purposes;

Spitting: There is not sufficient virus in one's mouth during such a quick exchange for transmission to take place;

Toilet Seats: HIV depends on blood-to-blood transmission once outside the body;

HIV in the Environment: HIV does not survive well in the environment. It is a very weak virus outside the body and makes the possibility of environmental transmission virtually nil. When HIV infected human blood dries, it eliminates the risk of environmental transmission.

### **How to Help Stop the AIDS Epidemic:**

Educate yourself on how HIV is transmitted. This does away with HIV-phobia and myths of transmission.

Make safe choices for yourself and others regarding sex, recreational and drug use.

Teach others what you know about HIV.

Get tested if you have a history of unprotected intercourse or shared drug needles.

If you use drugs or excessive alcohol, get into a treatment program.

If you are a parent, discuss HIV with your children and talk about what they know about it. Don't lecture!

Call the National AIDS Hotline for answers to HIV-related questions.

Discuss HIV openly with your sex partner.

Ask about your partner's sexual and drug use history and talk openly about your own.

Correct misinformation about HIV and AIDS when you hear it.

Volunteer at a local AIDS service organization.

Form an AIDS Bodywork Team if one does not exist in your community.

Develop an AIDS education program for your professional organization, community agency, church or social group.

Explore your own prejudices and judgements about people living with AIDS and HIV.

### **BOOKS**

The Poetry of Healing: A Doctor's Education in Empathy, Identity, and Desire, Rafael Campo, W.W. Norton and Company, 1997. A gay doctor explores his fear of AIDS and the arousal of his deepest compassion.

Psychoimmunity and the Healing Process, edited by Jason Serinus, Celestial Arts, 1986. Through an examination of immune dysfunction, Jason Serinus and contributors like Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and Jack Schwarz, explore a new definition of health and healing.

Letters to a Young Doctor, Richard Selzer, Simon and Schuster, 1982. Like the essays in his other great book, Mortal Lessons, Richard Selzer writes here to educate us about the true meaning of healing. A physician who dares to go outside the limits of allopathy and touch his own deepest intelligence and humanity, Richard Selzer is a master of the art of body therapy.

Job's Body, Dean Juhan, Station Hill, 1987. Like William Blake, Dean Juhan is committed to showing us: 1) how body and soul are inseparable; and 2) how sensitive and caring hands can evoke this wisdom.

Strong Shadows: Scenes from an Inner City AIDS Clinic, Abigail Zuger, M.D., W. H. Freeman, 1995. Abigail Zuger, M.D. is an infectious disease specialist in New York City. She reveals to us the face of AIDS among the urban poor.

The Wisdom of the Body, Sherwin Nuland, Knopf, 1997. Another doctor awakens us to the power of the spirit in facing the challenges of illness.

Becoming a Man: Half a Life Story, Paul Monette, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. As in his other book, Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir, Paul Monette here used language to educate America about the nightmare that engulfed his people. This is a naked portrait of a fight for sexual freedom in a time of ignorance and bigotry. His many books and writing awards are a memorial to Paul Monette's beauty.

Compassionate Touch, Dawn Nelson, CMT, Station Hill, 1994. The photographs in this book show with absolute clarity how touch and presence can ease physical, emotional and even spiritual pain in a way that medication and medical procedures cannot. This book is essential for any massage therapist with an interest in working with people who are chronically ill, in a great deal of pain, or dying.

Touching: The Human Significance of the Skin, Ashley Montagu, Harper and Row, 1986. This is a classic must-read for every bodyworker. Ashley Montagu reveals the impact of touch on human development and the relationship of touch to mental and physical health.

AIDS, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, Macmillan, 1987. Inspiration and education about working with people with AIDS.

Healing into Life and Death, Stephen Levine, Doubleday, 1987. A guide for developing merciful awareness.

Sexual Abuse/Sacred Wound: Transforming Deep Trauma, Stephanie Mines, Ph.D., Station Hill, 1996. This book addresses the experience of people with AIDS who have been sexually abused and includes suggestions for self-healing.

The TARA Approach HIV Handbook and The TARA Approach to Resolving the Dynamics of Substance Abuse, available through The TARA Approach. These two handbooks are guides to using energy medicine for the treatment of the symptoms associated with HIV, AIDS and recovery from substance abuse. They are used in combination with the body-map provided in The TARA Approach: Jin Shin Tara Self Care.

**Thanks to Tsy Schupack, head of the bodywork team at Boulder County AIDS Project, for assistance in preparing this resource material.**