

NEW LIFE: TOUCHING THE CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE **By Stephanie Mines, Ph.D.**

Author's Note:

A revolution in women's consciousness was in full swing when I had my first child in the early 1970's in San Francisco. Home birth was being rediscovered and my experience with it stirred me so thoroughly that I wrote *Two Births* (Random House, 1972), sharing my deep feminine initiation. I did not know then that my pregnancy, labor and delivery could have been even further enhanced by the use of conscious, intentional touch, not only to support me as the carrier of my child, but also to stimulate my child's optimum development. The use of touch to support new life, the subject of this article, is a second revolution, now on the rise.

"The basis for all body form is embryology. Embryology doesn't stop at birth. In a sense we are embryos throughout our lifetime."

--R.L.Schultz, Ph.D. and R. Feitis, DO, *The Endless Web: Fascial Anatomy and Physical Reality*

Education about embryological and fetal development combined with the use of touch in the forms of massage and energy medicine empowers the services of bodyworkers, parents and all birthing care-providers, including nurses, doctors, doulas and midwives. In addition, awareness of the impact of stressors on the developing fetus and what eliminates them maximizes the baby's overall health. Research in a variety of related fields, from public health to neurology, suggests a link between stress during pregnancy and violent behavior later in life. (1)

Soothing touch lowers uterine stress hormones. Mothers touched in gentle, supportive and non-invasive ways during pregnancy experience fewer complications during labor, have fewer post-natal complications and fewer premature births. These are the finding of Tiffany Fields, Ph.D., after over twenty years as Director of the Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine. Massage therapy for premature babies increases weight and reduces

distress. However, more severely traumatized infants (and adults) cannot tolerate massage and, for them, energy medicine is the welcome resource.

A number of subtle touch approaches are being explored for survivors of shock and trauma and specifically for pregnant women and babies. This article will focus on one, Jin Shin Tara, which is the hands-on component of the TARA Approach for the Resolution of Shock and Trauma. (2)

TOUCH

*“Pregnancy is the only time when mother and child are biologically one single entity. This relationship is the fundamental unit of **all society** and forms the pattern for **all** future relationships.”*

■ *Suzanne Arms, Author, Immaculate Deception*

Touch during pregnancy is a unique way to care for two people simultaneously, with a single touch! The exquisite bond that links mother and child is life’s most precious blessing, perfectly designed by Nature, industrialized by Man. In touching the mother, we communicate with the child. Birthing is unavoidably traumatic and extremely challenging. The four-inch passage through the birth canal is the human being’s most dangerous journey in life. What greater compassion exists then to support the being that must make this journey to survive?

Select members of a family birthing unit staff in Hawaii are now employing the TARA Approach for the Resolution of Shock and Trauma and its energy medicine component for distressed babies and their families. The early and as yet unpublished statistical data from this study reveals that using energy medicine helps babies to overcome obstacles to their complete wellbeing. Melissa’s story illustrates this.

Energy Medicine to Relax the Pelvis

Melissa had a blissful pregnancy. She and her husband Gordon conceived on the very night Gordon proposed. Their baby was their love child – wanted, welcome and spoken to from the moment of discovery. At nine months, Melissa was a Madonna, bursting with abundance, revealing the couple's devotion to pure health. But, when Melissa went into labor, her contractions suddenly stopped, just after her waters broke.

Gordon called the hospital and was told they had to report immediately if contractions did not resume. Lono, a friend of the couple who studied the TARA Approach, had been invited to be part of the at-home labor time. Gordon and Melissa had always planned to deliver their baby at the hospital. As a paramedic Lono had used energy medicine to help many patients he had to transport over the long distances between his small rural town and the nearest major hospital on the other side of the island. He had learned the treatment to relax the pelvis for agitated mothers. It had also helped asthmatics struggling to breathe as well as those with acute, unbearable hip and lower back pain. Lono knew that fear of any kind inhibited oxytocin, the hormone essential for successful labor contractions. Allowing Melissa to relax enough to decrease her adrenaline was the key to reopening the door to the uninhibited flow of oxytocin.

The reasons for Melissa's fear were unclear. Perhaps it was just the imminent reality of motherhood, or something undisclosed in her history? Perhaps it was knowing she would soon go to the hospital or the unexpected magnitude of pain in her contractions? Maybe it was her baby's fears being communicated to her through their connection? Maybe her child was stuck and confused on his journey? Whatever the cause, supporting Melissa to relax was the antidote.

Lono instructed Gordon to place one hand above Melissa's iliac crest and the other hand on the outside of her upper thigh on one side, while he did the same on the other side. They placed the palms of their hands gently on these potent sacred sites of the body (Point/Area #2 and lateral high 1 – see map of the body). Within the hour Melissa's contractions resumed with strength. The couple went to the hospital and their marvelous baby boy was born without any complications and without the use of chemical interventions.

Drugs of any kind administered during labor and childbirth overwhelm the baby, and frequently interrupt the bond between mother and child that we now know is crucial for neurological development and psychological health. Finding ways to safely deliver without the use of drugs or mechanical interventions (forceps, for instance) is one of the most important ways to prevent unnecessary shock and trauma for the children of the future. (3)

Calm Touch: Palming the Calves

Another deceptively simple use of energy medicine involves placing the palms of the hands on the calves of the legs. One family birthing unit nurse used this treatment for a newborn that had been removed from his mother whose severe bleeding made her condition grave. Deeply distressed at this separation, the baby cried imploringly, despite being held by his father. The nurse not only placed the palms of her hands on the calves of the newborn, but said, as she did this, "Welcome to the world. I am so sorry your mother can't be here right now. She'll hold you as soon as she can." Everyone in the room watched in amazement as the baby calmed down and directed his eyes, with trust, first to the nurse, and then, finally, in a moment of pure bonding, to his father.

Words+Touch=Complete Healing

The energy medicine that reduces shock and trauma is quite easy to practice. It consists of learning the map of the body provided here, and the specific treatments for pregnancy and birth. However, it is not energy medicine alone that stimulates the healing response. Empathy for both the suffering and merger of mother and child combined with specific knowledge of the physiology of the process and the use of appropriate and authentic language is essential, even for a newborn. You may question the value of a cognitive approach for such a little one, but words, and the tone in which they are delivered, have energy, and babies are acutely sensitive to energy. (4)

Words and touch interact similarly with energy fields. Touch transmits its message via connective tissue and words travel on the air, but both produce vibrations that resonate where

they are directed. Words and touch awaken two kinds of intelligence, sensory and cognitive. Both are evolving rapidly for a newborn, and we must acknowledge both. The chart “Hallmarks of the First Environment,” provided here indicates the themes we can address with our words and our awareness at each prenatal stage.

Specific energy medicine treatment is available to nourish each of the developmental sequences illustrated in the Hallmarks of the First Environment. Those interested in learning these can do so by training in the TARA Approach for the Resolution of Shock and Trauma (www.Tara-Approach.org). Awareness of these cycles deepens and focuses our services to pregnant women profoundly. In fact, I believe strongly that education about these cycles should be required for everyone serving the birthing community. Energy medicine supports and nourishes every aspect of procreation, from fertility to lactation. While the study of these treatments can be extensive, including education about embryology and organogenesis, there are some general energy medicine treatments that are readily available to all, such as those already given in this article and those that follow.

During Pregnancy: Bodyworkers, family members, and healthcare providers can put their attention on Point/Area #13 (see Map of the Body), holding it gently on both sides, and also in conjunction with Point/Area #14. Holding two areas together is called a “flow.” This flow opens both the lungs and the heart. It allows mom to breathe fully despite her body becoming more and more crowded. It also opens the avenue of expression that encourages her to speak her words of love and welcoming.

During Labor: Midwives, doulas and family members can hold Points/Areas #5 and #16 (see chart) on both ankles. When these are held together, they help relieve pain. These vibrational fields also strengthen the muscles of the uterus, assisting in the demanding work of labor. **This treatment should be used only if labor is overdue and during labor itself, never early in pregnancy.**

For baby after birth: As soon as they are born, babies must learn to digest quite differently from the first nine months of their lives in-utero. Holding Points #10 and opposite #2, first on one

side and then the others, will stimulate and support emergent digestive function. Palming the calves, mentioned earlier, helps digestion as well. These treatments are very effective later for colicky babies. When babies cry a lot they may be communicating the distress they felt during birth, along with their digestive struggles. How else can they tell you their story? These treatments, or flows, soothe them and assure them that they are heard and that you are responding. Maintaining empathic eye contact during treatment and speaking from the heart increases the potency of energy medicine, especially for babies and young children.

For mom after birth: There are many flows to help Mom after birth. Here are two:

For post-partum depression: Hold Points/Areas 15 and 6, together, first on one side and then the other. This will not only clear the energy of depression; it will also tonify and nourish the tired reproductive system.

To stimulate lactation: Hold the High 19 area and the opposite High 1, first on one side and then the other.

“When a child enters the world, it experiences perhaps the greatest shock of its entire life.”

--Jan Reynolds, Mother and Child

The touch that we offer a mother and her baby before, during and after birth, is the touch that reaches into the future. This touch is imprint, entrainment and transmission, conveying messages about life encoded in our hands and our intention. Modern equipment and all the great achievements of science which justifiably win our admiration, gratitude and awe, still cannot convey the love that our hands and articulation carry when we allow authentic compassion to flow through our bodies.

As we touch a woman’s pregnant belly to nourish the child within, we are saying that we are all connected. Conscious touch is the statement that we are not alone. We are saying, “You are going on a long and difficult journey, which I have also made. My touch will help you. It is a light, a guide. I will be waiting for you on the other side to welcome you here.”

The transition from the in-utero environment to the world outside is sudden and dramatic, in all cases. Wouldn't you like to be received with gentle touch, a loving gaze and words of welcome after a long and arduous journey?

Offering the treasures of sensitive and aware touch and presence for mother and child is active faith. It links the past with the present and points the way to the future. We enter the continuum of time and remember that we are part of a long and honorable lineage, conscious of the healing voice and the touch of hope.

Footnotes:

1. Laucht, Manfred, "Behavioral Sequelae of Perinatal Insults and Family Adversity," *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, October 2000; Prescott, James W., Ph.D., "The Origins of Love and Violence," *Journal of Pre and Perinatal Psychology and Health*, 10(3), pp. 143-188, Spring 1996; Schore, Allen N., "The Effects of Early Relational Trauma on Right Brain Development," *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 22, pp. 201-260, 2001. These are just a few of many references relevant here. Another resource that begs to be included is Karr-Morse, Robin and Wiley, Meredith S., *Ghosts from the Nursery*, New York, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1997. For additional information on the benefits of eliminating trauma during pregnancy and at birth, and how to do this most effectively using energy medicine, see Mines, Stephanie, *We Are All in Shock*, NJ, New Pages, 2003, inter alia, but especially Chapter Six.

2. The TARA Approach is an integration of Eastern and Western wisdom about how to heal from shattering experiences. It was developed by Stephanie Mines, Ph.D., a psychologist and energy medicine practitioner. Dr. Mines was an advanced student of Mary Iino Burmeister (who is no longer teaching) who brought Jin Shin Jyutsu to the United States from Japan. Mary was the direct student of the Master of the system, Jiro Murai. Jin Shin Jyutsu is Japanese in origin, but bears a striking resemblance to Chinese medicine, Taoist healing practices and Five-Element Acupuncture. It references a map of the body that is closely aligned with the Extraordinary Meridians, also known as the Rivers of Splendor and the Psychic Circuits. Its basis is subtle

touch on vibrational fields held in polarity. Dr. Mines adapted Jin Shin specifically for the treatment of shock and trauma.

The TARA Approach has been integrated into many other practices, such as massage therapy and CranialSacral therapy. Psychotherapists recommend it for their clients. It also stands on its own as holistic mind-body healing. There are no contraindications in its use, other than care around the use of specific points/areas of the body in relationship to the early stages of pregnancy.

The TARA Approach provides contact hours and CEU's for nurses and massage therapists. Certification is available at both practitioner and teacher levels. For information visit www.Tara-Approach.org. or call 303-499-9990.

3. Arms, Suzanne, *Immaculate Deception II*, Berkeley, Celestial Arts, 1994, inter alia; Borysenko, Joan, *A Woman's Book of Life*, New York, Riverhead, 1996, see especially pp. 93-94.

4. Field, Tiffany, *Touch*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2001, inter alia, but see especially pg. 10.

Sidebars:

Organizations that Support and/or Teach Touch for Pregnant Women and Babies:

Alliance for Transforming the Lives of Children

901 Preston Avenue, Suite 400

Charlottesville, VA 22903

888-574-7580

206-666-4301

www.atlc.org

Association for Pre- and Perinatal Psychology and Health

340 Colony Road
Geyserville, CA 95441
707-857-4041
www.apppah@aol.com
www.birthpsychology.com

American Association for Pre- and Perinatal Psychology and Health
PO Box 1398
Forestville, CA 95436
Apppah@aol.com

Birthing the Future
PO Box 1040
Bayfield, CO 81122
970-884-4090
www.BirthingtheFuture.com

Emerson Training Seminars
4940 Bodega Avenue
Petaluma, CA 94952
707-763-7024
www.emersonbirthrx.com

First Nurturing Touch Communication and
Baby Steps (an early intervention program that introduces families to the world of touch and the
importance of bonding)
Elaine Fogel Schneider, Ph.D.
540 W. Lancaster Blvd., Suite 106
Lancaster, CA 93534
661-945-7878
drelainefschneider@hotmail.com

Foundation for Healthy Family Living

PO Box 1665

Sonoma, CA 95476

707-996-3545

www.healthyfamily.org

International Childbirth Educator's Association

PO Box 20048

Minneapolis, Minnesota 55420

612-854-8660

www.icea.org

The TARA Approach for the Resolution of Shock and Trauma

2910 County Road 67

Boulder, CO 80303

303-499-9990

www.Tara-Approach.org

Books for Bodyworkers Serving the Birthing Community:

Mines, Stephanie, *We Are All in Shock: How Overwhelming Experience Shatters You and What You Can Do About It*, NJ, New Pages, 203. Contains an entire chapter on energy medicine treatment during pregnancy, birth and the post-natal period that bodyworkers.

Field, Tiffany, *Touch*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2001.

Some', Sobonfu, *The Spirit of Intimacy*, NY, HarperCollins, 1999.

Schultz, R. L., Ph.D. and Feitis, Rosemary, DO, *The Endless Web: Fascial Anatomy and Physical Reality*, Berkeley, North Atlantic Books, 1996. This remarkable book provides the

broadest perspective on structural disharmonies, tracing them back to embryonic development. In so doing, the book opens an important window onto successful and thorough treatment.

Waters, Bette L. *Massage During Pregnancy*, Melissa, NM, Bluwaters Press, 1998. This gem of a book can be ordered directly from Bluwaters Press, PO Box 878, Melissa, NM 88046.