

Cancer patient finds power in positive thought

By Mary Courtis
Of the Emerald

Visualization.

For most people this word invokes images of meditators and positive thinkers who try to create their own reality by visualizing it. Recently, this process also has gained recognition as a powerful aid to combatting disease, especially cancer. Medical professionals such as Carl and Stephanie Simondson have even integrated visualization exercises into their regular treatment program with positive results, according to Mary Seeman of Corvallis, a former cancer patient.

"Before I found out I had cancer, I had read 'Creative Visualization' by Shakti Gaiwan and had started to dabble with positive imaging," she said. "Then when I found out I had a malignant tumor, I read 'Getting Well Again' by the Simondsons and was encouraged by their finding that the attitude of cancer patients had a lot to do with whether they got well or not.

After finding a specialist in Portland who was sympathetic to her views, Seeman started on a program of radiology combined with daily visualizations, she said.

"I had already started visualizing my white blood

cells as piranhas attacking the cancer cells when I went to my doctor the first time," she said. "His recommendation was that we try the radiation and then think about surgery when the tumor shrunk. This gave me a lot of time to use my visualization techniques."

Seeman then went through five weeks of radiology and both she and the surgeon were encouraged when they found that the tumor had shrunk, she said.

Seeman's doctor recommended that she wait six weeks before doing her surgery. During this time she continued doing her visualizations and when she went back for her check-up, the X-ray showed that the tumor was gone, she said.

"At some point I felt that the tumor had gone, so that the news was a confirmation rather than a surprise," Seeman said. "I think I might not be here today if it weren't for the visualization work I did."

"It gave me hope and it gave me time to see and correct what was going wrong in my body. Naturally, I was so excited about it that I wanted to share my experience with others."

Seeman now works with other people who have serious illnesses and might benefit from visualization therapy. She looks at herself as a bridge between pa-

tients and the medical community, she said.

"My goal is to work hand and hand with the medical establishment," she said. "I try to emphasize that we're trying to combine the benefits of both methods, rather than seeing radiology or chemotherapy and visualization as uncomplementary."

Currently, there are no statistics on how many people with serious illnesses have been helped by visualization therapy. However, at least half the people who develop a serious illness may find visualization techniques useful, according to Lawrence Christopher of the Synthesis Training Center in Eugene.

"Studies in neurolinguistics have shown that humans receive and process information in three basic ways," he said. "Visually, auditorially or kinetically. But we usually absorb information best through only one of these mediums. For over half the people, this way is visual and they're the ones most likely to be helped by visualization therapy."

"The most important thing the visualization did for me was to give me hope and a feeling like I had some control over my illness," she said.



Photo by Shu-Shing Chen

Acupressure, like acupuncture, is based on Chinese medicine and the concept that energy blockages are responsible for most physical ailments.

Acupressure fingers roots of illness

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"It lacks the human touch!"

Such a statement is often applied to buildings, computer print-outs and other aspects of our high-tech environment that seem cold, impersonal and devoid of personal contact. All too often hospitals and doctors' offices fall into this category, and patients feel overwhelmed by the number of medical apparatuses their care entails.

As a result, many people have been drawn to alternative types of health care that emphasize equipment-free techniques and encourage communication and sustained interaction between client and therapist.

One of these forms of treatment is acupressure. Like acupuncture, acupressure is based on Chinese medicine and the concept of energy blockages

being responsible for most physical ailments.

But while acupuncturists release the trapped energy with needles, acupressurists rely only on their fingers to accomplish the same task. This "human touch" is an important factor in establishing a feeling of trust and safety in the healing relationship, according to Kamala Kielas-Quale, a certified Jin Shin Do instructor and director of the Northwest Acupressure Institute in Eugene.

"Acupressure has very different applications than acupuncture. For example, people can learn to do acupressure treatments for themselves or help family and friends on an informal basis very easily," she said. "Acupressure also can be used in combination with counseling or massage principles to treat a variety of addi-

tional problems such as stress."

Kielas-Quale calls this body-mind therapy. She prefers to see the therapy as a synthesis of ancient wisdom with modern day applications — and practical uses — rather than a mysterious or inaccessible art, she said.

"One of the most important uses is relaxation and stress reduction," she said. "Stiffness or tension in the muscles can be an indicator of mental and emotional stress and if left untreated can lead to serious health problems."

"Through acupressure, the blocked energy in the person's muscles is released and as you relax, you gain a better understanding of what is stressing you. This flow of information to the body is very integrating, and to actually feel it is more motivating to change stress producing behaviors."

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WHITEY

It's been an exciting year full of new experiences: potatoe trees, house dances?, hours of Karmel Korn and chips, questionable movies, etc. What can I say, I loved every minute of it! KELLY 6-4*

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TO: TORI, GINA, SUSAN AND BECK! Congrats Kincaid House grads! I'll miss you all next year! Love, AIMEE 6-4*

KΣ

CHRIS P.

Thought for the day: Men are like postage stamps; they're useless once they get stuck on themselves. 6-4

PERSONALS

FRANS I love you! RAY

TRI SIGHS NOOO!

School can't be over already!! Thank for a very memorable year! Have a great summer! Love, Kelly P.S. Cybil says goodbye, too! (Beep, beep) 6-4*

PERSONALS

XW

SCOTT S: Yo Pseudo-date! Thanks for the thought. It was a fun party.



Deana and Chrissy 6-4

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