

## BODY TALK

**M**ark Bans is a young gay doctor. He describes himself as a chiropractor, but the word merely scratches the surface of his work. He is a holistic practitioner. His list of clients reads like a medical alphabet. People come to him for AIDS, back injury, cancer. They credit his care with helping them heal. His pioneering treatments blend chiropractic care, neuro-emotional technique, and what some clients describe as psychic healing. Bans is not comfortable using the term 'psychic' to describe what he does.

"I don't say that I'm psychic, but I can't deny that somebody would interpret it that way, either." Bans said his ability works like an antenna picking up energy. He channels this ability into his treatments, confining it to specific diagnostic procedures. "We are all connected," he said, "we're just not always open to it or aware of it. We all have threads that interlink each one of us with one another. That's because we're all made of the same energy and from the same source. We all have these abilities. In growing up, we tend to discount them or to learn that they're not real and to not take them seriously. The word 'psychic' can take away from the experience."

The experience is different for each client. Bans lets each client's body tell him what work needs to be done. He tunes in to the individual's body through an old chiropractic method called kinesiology, or muscle testing.

"It involves asking the body itself. Each person comes with their own instruction manual. We're all individuals. We all have different issues and problems. I don't dictate what gets done—the person's own body does. Whether it be emotional, physical, mental, spiritual... I merely ask the body what it wants, and I do it."

Although "doing it" causes clients to report healings of ailments ranging from carpal tunnel syndrome to cancer, Bans does not take credit for the cure.

"I work on making people more whole in their process. I can't heal them, I can only help them heal themselves. A person's primary place of healing comes from within, and, in my own belief system, it is interconnected to a higher power. That's what I tap into."

Bans uses muscle testing to tune in to the emotional components of illness. A human being as a whole has many components—physical, mental, emotional, sexual, spiritual. If one or more of these components is out of balance, disease will occur. "A problem is often a manifestation of several components. When you break it down into just a physical thing, or just an emotional thing, you don't get a full healing. You only heal that part of it which you treated. So you don't necessarily get the root cause—or all of it—you just get part of it. This work allows us to get in and work on all different levels so your healing is more complete."

While the emotional aspect of disease is little acknowledged in Western medicine, the 5,000-year-old Chinese medical tradition correlates body organs to emotions. This ancient and effective form of medicine states that each body organ stores specific emotions. When emotions are not properly processed, the organs involved cannot efficiently process their specific physical functions, so the entire system breaks down. These blockages manifest in disease. Neuro-emotional technique is a tool used to uncover and release the emotions that have been stored since early childhood.

Muscle testing is a stimulus-reflex response. An arm is often used as an indicator muscle. A healthy or unhealthy stimulus is introduced to the body, and the body reflexively responds with strength or weakness. For example, a person may hold a vegetable in their hand with their arm outstretched. Another person pressing down on that arm would find that the arm holds strong. If that vegetable is replaced with a glob of lard, the arm will go weak when the other person presses down. Likewise, positive words or pleasant thoughts will cause the arm to remain strong. Dishonest words or negative thoughts will cause

# Healing energy

*A holistic practitioner tunes in to the body, to help his clients heal themselves*

by Risa Krivé



Mark Bans

the arm to go weak.

Muscle strength is affected because the body senses positive and negative stimuli through the millions of nerves that connect through electrical impulses to the brain.

"Your brain keeps track of everything," Bans said. "It controls your digestion, your hearing, your eyesight—everything in your body. It knows, like a computer, what's being strained, what's doing good, what's a problem and where. All we do with the muscle testing is get in touch with what the problems are and how to effectively deal with them."

**T**he Chinese originally mapped the flow of electricity through the nerves. These pathways of energy within the body are called meridians. Each meridian corresponds to a different organ. Each organ is thought to hold specific emotions—the kidneys hold fear, anger is often held in the liver, self-esteem, in the spleen. The organ points are used as a flow chart to discover which emotions are being held.

These emotions have been stored since early childhood. They are part of belief systems that were established by the young child lacking power, experience and perspective. These beliefs, and the body reflexes that correspond to them, obstruct the natural flow of information and movement.

"Most of how we perceive life goes back to the early stuff we learned," said Bans. "Problems in relationships go back to childhood. We react to our world based on the old programming instead of consciously living life now. We work on getting old belief systems up and out, so you are free to live your life fully here and now."

One concept that Bans frequently encounters is self-hatred among gay men and lesbians. He treats many gay men who are HIV positive or who have AIDS. He finds that internalized homophobia is often an unacknowledged issue involved in dealing with HIV. Homophobia is internalized at such an early age that the grown-up person does not know it exists within him. Bans said, "They never

let go of it. But the subconscious mind thinks, 'I lived this lifestyle, and now this is what I get, this is what I deserve.' If you've got the conscious mind saying, 'I want to live,' and your subconscious mind saying, 'Forget it, I don't deserve it,' you're not working completely and wholly towards healing. There's a part of you wanting to live and a part of you not wanting to live, and you're not at your best possible optimal space to do whatever it is that you need to do. We work on getting rid of things that sabotage you, out of self-anger, self-blame, self-hatred."

(Several other doctors who treat clients with HIV and AIDS agree that internalized homophobia often interferes in their treatment. It has also been reported as a widespread factor in the phenomenon of unsafe sex currently practiced by many young gay men.)

Bans encourages his clients to process the emotions and experiences he helps them to recall through various means—seeing a therapist, writing a journal, riding a bike. He does not include counseling in his work. He helps release the emotion by directing the client to create a mental picture of the emo-

tion or experience and to hold that image while he stimulates the sides of the spine with an instrument that looks and sounds like a stapler. The nerve receptors on the surface of the vertebrae correspond to the various organs in the body. The theory is that sensory input at those levels will dislodge the emotional complex that was brought up to the surface and held in the client's mind.

**A**pparently, it works. Bans' clients attest to this. Wayne has been seeing Bans regularly. He shared his experience: "Mark has been a very important component of my process of living with AIDS. He does some chiropractic work on me. The basic thing I go to Mark for is for my body to talk with him about issues that are unresolved and that I need to work with my regular therapist on. When you go to a regular therapist you can hide lots of pain. With Mark you're letting your body

talk, which probably sounds strange but it really isn't, because our bodies tell us lots of things—we just don't pay attention to them. He's pulled up some really important issues that I've taken to my therapist and dealt with. He's really helped me to get on a spiritual kind of path that feels comfortable for me. It helps me to live better with AIDS."

A woman who described herself as a "mainstreamer" working in a conservative business spoke about her experience with Bans. She was suffering from excruciating earaches, headaches, and jaw fatigue associated with temporal mandibular joint syndrome. "I was seeing a regular physician who was a specialist in TMJ, but I was not getting any relief," she said. "I left Mark Bans' office after one visit and I was driving down the highway and I realized in a flash that I was pain-free for the first time in three years. It was that fast and that remarkable."

Bill described "a congenital problem in my lower back, where two of the lower vertebrae have something missing between them. It had become very painful. I'd wake up in the morning and I felt like an old man, all stooped over. That completely cleared up over a period of three to four months of treatment."

Bill added, "His work also helped me heal my relationship with my father. We communicate much better now."

**A**lan is studying to be a chiropractor. "I'm currently alive today because of neuro-emotional technique," he declared. He was diagnosed as HIV positive in 1984. He ignored the issue for five years, while his T-cell count plummeted to 316. He began a program of neuro-emotional technique, with a different practitioner. He later continued with Mark Bans. Alan included nutritional supplementation in his health quest. Without using AZT or any prescription drugs, his T-cells have climbed up—to 449 in May. He stated, "I'm the healthiest today that I've ever been in my life."

Alan is currently a medical technologist. He has been testing blood in the laboratory for HIV and other diseases for eight years. He said, "My message is that being HIV positive is no longer a death sentence. How many people have been exposed to HIV and their bodies have fought it off and eliminated it immediately—we don't have the data, but you'd have a hard time convincing me that it doesn't happen. It's just like any virus—you get a cold, it runs its course, and it's gone. The test that's positive is an HIV-antibody test. It's not the actual virus. All it means is that your body has been exposed to HIV and it has made the HIV antibody to protect itself. Unfortunately, even though the antibody is there in the body to destroy it, this virus mutates so rapidly that in a lot of people who eventually come down with AIDS, their bodies aren't able to eliminate it. But theoretically you could have the virus, your body could fight it off, and for the rest of your life you'll have that HIV antibody because it's just a means of protection if you were ever to be re-exposed to the virus. You'd already have the antibody in place to fight it. So for me, in therapy, we didn't necessarily focus only on HIV, we focused on my body's health and ability to maintain and regain health. You release the full potential of your body's healing powers by getting rid of the emotional blocks and nutritional and chemical blocks. You create room for the body to have perfect health again."

Bans reflected, "The issue of healing is diverse. Some clients get well. Some of them may be wanting emotional healing before they pass. I don't know, and I'm not the one to say. I have clients come in working on HIV who are still walking around doing great, no problems, and some who came to me late and their bodies are getting weaker, but they're still hanging on. They're finding a peacefulness about their life, a settling of things, a coming to terms with things. The quality of life and of the spirit is so much more at ease, so how do you define health and healing—it depends on which aspect you're looking at. But I'm not the one in charge of defining what that is. I'm here to do whatever I can to help."

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