

## `Care of the Therapist - Soul Management

### **The Soul Management Project**

The well being of our therapists play a pivotal role in the success and overall quality of energy within a therapeutic environment and the level of customer satisfaction experienced. When we look closely at the workings behind the success of our health centers and spas it becomes very clear that there are two distinct avenues through which care of the therapist can be expressed and integrated into the fundamental principles that support its happy functioning.

On the one side of the scale the key rests within the body and mind of the therapist themselves. In the ability to take responsibility for their own state of mind and well-being which means that they need to have the necessary resources within themselves to maintain balance and equilibrium.

The other counter balance rests in the hands of the management. In the minds of those who are responsible for the organization and structure through which the therapist channels his or her work and creativity. Here there needs to be an empathy with the nature of `hands on` treatments so that an appreciation of the ongoing need for supporting the individual therapist can be shared. This in turn enhances and unites the team spirit by actively caring for the soul of your business; the people who work with you.

As the levels of stress build up in our life-styles so does the depth at which people need more balance in how they give and receive of their energy. This fact not only draws more of us to create lifestyle changes and experience treatments that promote the essential feel-good factors of well being, it also attracts many to explore new professions away from office environments, computer technology, competitive and unhealthy environments. It is in this light that many are choosing to develop new skills and find personal fulfillment in the numerous holistic therapies now acknowledged throughout the world.

Consequently the level of giving and taking within a therapeutic, hands on treatment often goes beyond expectations, both from the level of the giver and the receiver, simply by virtue of the nature of hands-on therapy that puts the two involved directly in touch with that fundamental need for nourishment, release and balance.

### **The role of the therapist**

Within a busy salon or spa where the client-base may be quite transient, therapists are exposed to a multiple of varying energies and situations each day that often require careful consideration and skill.

Viewing this situation from a holistic perspective the body can be seen as a storehouse of all our conscious and subconscious (life) experiences. Consequently our physical body becomes the vehicle of our emotional and psychological well being, it reveals `the body of evidence`.

When the therapist touches the clients` body she/he is not just feeling the physical matter, but also connecting up to the `story` of that persons life. Each cell that makes up the tissues, bones and organs of the body is known to carry an innate intelligence; a real sense of ones individual identity and self awareness; containing the memory, history and journey of that individuals life. This touches the many levels of sensitivity we experience as human beings. Hence, during hands on therapy the therapist is not only effecting physical changes but also helping their client to develop a deepening self-awareness, to dissolve hidden tension, restoring and balancing the body, mind and soul.

This experience reveals why so many more people are requesting holistic treatments and why any form of touch therapy is an important area of continuing development to consider from the point of view of `care of the therapist.`

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### Self awareness in Treatments

Many therapists are unaware of how this phenomena is happening, yet we see, on the one hand a more satisfied client floating out of the spa and often on the other hand, a drained and de-energized therapist. So what is happening here? The nature of the therapists work is *to give*, and the nature of the clients position is *to receive*. In the words of Lao Tsu from the Tao de Ching, Book of Changes he wrote, `Before receiving, there must be giving.` There is a way of working, of giving, whereby the therapist is also re-charged whilst processing the stress of the client. As in this situation the therapist is initiating, and in fact facilitating this process, they become the leader and need to learn how to circulate the release of this energy to make it a mutually beneficial experience.

The key lies in the therapists` own self awareness and fundamentally in their training; in the way our therapists are educated to work. If a therapist is not sufficiently trained in understanding how to center themselves, create appropriate boundaries and circulate energy, they may find it very challenging to channel the tensions of someone else and `hold the space`. This dynamic can then drain and tire the therapist limiting the resource of valuable energy for regeneration and upcoming treatments. Beauticians whose massage training maybe quite basic can be most vulnerable to the stress-related factors of repeated massage therapy sessions. Their training often does not embrace the principles of an holistic approach that acknowledges the more subtle and energetic aspects of hands on therapy.

**Vital training in maintaining good posture** for spinal alignment that prevents back pain and injury, to more subtle techniques of how to avoid `short circuiting` and running out of energy before you have adequately completed a session. By learning how to use subtle energy, rather than relying on muscular strength and physical pressure to sustain an ongoing flow of vitality, the therapist will develop self empowering techniques that benefit both give and receiver. Of equal importance is making sure that fluids (internal hydration) are maintained for balancing the electro magnetic field and encouraging a natural de-toxing process to flow harmoniously.

**Breathing awareness** is at the root of enhancing the experience of release both from the perspective of the therapist and client. The breath is at the pivot of any transformation. It is the bridge between the body and the mind directly affecting the central nervous system, autonomous nervous systems and stimulates the release of neuro-chemicals; the feel good factors that influence our thinking and sense of well-being.

Correct circulation of the breath empowers the process of tension release giving the body and mind vital nutrients and alkalining the blood. Excess tension and toxicity, whether mental, physical or emotional creates acidity and agitation. Breathing deeply generates a positive boost to all energy systems thereby relaxing and creating an acceptant state of mind where changes can be integrated and digested more harmoniously. Breathing consciously also contributes to building fresh energy for both therapist and client.

In a spa setting, massage treatments make up 50% of the treatments given, and in some places a good percentage to men. By nature men require more impute as they absorb more energy. Here the use of the breath is a powerful tool that both maximizes the release from the client and minimizes the energy expenditure of the therapist.

Equally important is the quality of ones **concentration, intention and compassion**, which all contribute greatly to enhancing the dynamic principles of holistic therapy. These three principles make up the ingredients for **the attitude** one holds, and play a critical role within the whole experience for both therapist and client. Massage takes two (at least) and the therapist is responsible for setting the tone for them both whilst being receptive to the clients needs. If the therapist carries negative or

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dispassionate feelings into the treatment room this acts like a magnet attracting more tension and hence disharmony. A smile and sensitive manner go a long way.

The principles within this subject have broad and far reaching influence for everyone concerned and here I have just touched upon the tip of a huge growth area for many individuals as well as our industry.

From the point of view of the therapist learning to take care of themselves, and by management caring for our therapists as we would wish them to care for their clients, we are imbuing this evolving spa culture with a soulful mind, that is in itself a powerful force for successful regeneration. A warmth and welcome beyond words.

### The role of management

The prime objective of the management is to *Unite the Vision* of the staff; creating a tangible team spirit that has a soul all of its own. Giving your spa soul by unifying the focus of your team to view the bigger picture of how they influence their environment is the cornerstone of your success. The management set the tone of how well the team will unite by the active participation they play within the organization and interaction with staff.

A treatment and a spa, no matter how good the set-up and the products is really only as good as the therapist and the people who work in the environment. The whole is equal to the sum of the individual parts. Each member of staff represents the quality of the whole spa environment and the philosophy you uphold.

Staff meetings with management present, sharing valuable time as a group focusing together, brings a sense of camaraderie and commitment.

By holding a monthly staff meeting (or quarterly) where every one is expected to attend creates a forum for working on the team spirit and empowering individuals.

I highly recommend beginning every meeting with a meditation. The still silence of meditation calms and centers the mind, and deepens the level of participation and group awareness. Meditating together acknowledges *the soul of the group*, creating a peaceful atmosphere and balance on a practical level where everyone is united in a receptive state of being. This is the foundation upon which to build good relations and there are some wonderful simple techniques that everyone can share.

An agenda that includes basic financial awareness on how well the spa has done plus keeping abreast of new staff, treatments or programs being introduced keeps everyone formally in touch with these primary issues. Voicing comments from clients and providing time for an open forum where any member can contribute ideas or express thoughts and feelings about their work individually or as part of the team all makes for a more cohesive atmosphere. It is helpful for minutes to be taken and circulated to all members including absent staff.

Completing a meeting with a short visualization of how things could improve for the spa is a positive way of making necessary changes and empowering the group dynamic.

Management further support their team by giving personal assessments in a one to one situation. This creates a perfect opportunity for individuals to assess themselves, and both parties to give and receive valuable and confidential feedback.

This puts the spotlight on the skills and ambitions of each member of the team and helps to advance *their* potential and how you can both advance your business and careers. This creates a mutually

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beneficial situation where ultimately, everyone wins.

It is wonderful to *reward* your staff with treatments from fellow therapists or at other spas. Rewards can be measured by performance levels or simply (to avoid competition) by rota. This not only benefits the energy of the therapist, but also raises awareness of the quality of fellow employees work, keeps everyone in touch with the spa environment, appreciating it on a personal level thereby improving relations and encouraging further sales.

In the same way, if possible, offering a staff night in the spa, once a week, where they can all enjoy the benefits themselves raises morale and circulates profitable energy for everyone.

On a basic level taking into consideration the demands on the therapist, rotas should keep to firm principles of awareness of the amount of hours a masseur can work effectively. The optimum shift being 7 to 8 hours, with breaks accordingly. Shifts should be reviewed periodically to see how well these serve to generate the best performance from the staff and a harmonious relationship within the team.

Ideally, management should provide opportunities in advanced training to improve your teams skills and self confidence, enriching their work experience which gives more job satisfaction and allows the individual to evolve and continue to contribute at higher levels. This shows that your concern touches their ambition and aspiration to advance their careers and personal development.

Additional guidance on topics such as the best foods to eat whilst working to prolong energy; how to avoid occupational injury and stress, practice deep relaxation and meditation, to the benefits of exercise, and receiving treatments themselves are all ways in which the therapist can balance and maintain good energy levels in body, mind and soul.

The ultimate success of any center for health, beauty and well-being rests in the attitude of the management, which reflects back to staff and clients alike



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WHEN GRAPES TURN  
TO WINE, THEY LONG FOR OUR ABILITY TO CHANGE.

WHEN STARS WHEEL  
AROUND THE NORTH POLE,  
THEY ARE LONGING FOR OUR GROWING CONSCIOUSNESS.

WINE GOT DRUNK WITH US,  
NOT THE OTHER WAY .  
THE BODY DEVELOPED OUT OF US, NOT WE FROM IT.

WE ARE BEES, AND OUR BODY IS A HONEYCOMB.  
WE MADE  
THE BODY, CELL BY CELL WE MADE IT.