

When registered nurse Marty Minniti Hill allowed healer Barbara Brennan to give her a hands-on demonstration session at one of Brennan's workshops, she was astounded by the immediate rush of energy she experienced. "Every cell in my body changed," Hill recalls.

But Hill was even more surprised when, in a private meeting after the demonstration, Brennan drew a picture of her cervix that pointed out abnormal cell growth at "12 o'clock and 3 o'clock" on the circular surface. Indeed, medical testing later revealed dysplasia, an abnormal and often precancerous growth of cells.

In subsequent sessions with Brennan, Hill came to see the relationship between the dysplasia and unresolved feelings about a terminated pregnancy. "I had many other realizations after my work with her," Hill recalls. "For me it was a life-changing event."

To heal the human body with the touch of the hands; to transform disease from crisis to personal awakening—this is the lifework of Barbara Brennan, a former NASA physicist who has studied the human energy field, or "aura," for more than 20 years.

During her 15 years as a practitioner and 10 years as a teacher of hands-on healing, Brennan has helped heal cancerous tumors, emotional problems, and blood cell disorders such as leukemia. She chronicled her experience of working with the human energy field in her first book, *Hands of Light* (Bantam, 1988), which has 225,000 copies in print in nine languages. This November, Bantam will release her second book, *Light Emerging*.

Illness, says Brennan, initially arises from an imbalance in the multileveled field of energy that surrounds the physical body. Such imbalances—which can come from current situations or experiences in a past incarnation—manifest as physical, emotional, and spiritual distortions.

To treat these imbalances, Brennan generates a flow of energy, or love, from healer to client while touching the client's body. She probes the energy field and its numerous layers, sensing the energetic blocks. "Internal viewing," she

claims, also allows her to "see" what is actually happening in the physical body, including blood flow and cellular structure. Further touch then helps to release the blocks, producing a stronger energy flow which facilitates healing.

Such healing abilities, Brennan asserts, are available to all

of us. In fact, she has dedicated the past 10 years to teaching others her techniques. At the Barbara Brennan School of Healing in East Hampton, New York, a four-year training program covers a wide range of topics: techniques to read and clear the energy field, psychology, spirituality, and anatomy. The 450 students include 15 medical doctors.

Brennan realizes her views on healing are controversial and generally unproven, and she has joined the effort to establish more scientific testing of energy healing techniques. Recently the National Institutes of Health (NIH), impressed by her credentials as a former NASA physicist, asked her to cochair a committee on structural and energy therapies. Her efforts will help the NIH's Office of Alternative Healing, opened in 1992, document the effectiveness of such modalities.

While Brennan concedes that the two million dollars earmarked by NIH to study alternative practices is a small portion of their overall budget, she is encouraged by their desire to better understand her efforts and the work of others. "This is going to open the door to integrate holistic healing methods with medical science," she says.

Brennan has already been doing her part to integrate the two. Last fall, for example, she participated in a seminar on cardiovascular disease sponsored by the Russek Foundation in Boca Raton, Florida, which supports research into the relationship between the emotions and physical disease.

A group of cardiologists, psychologists, and alternative healers were invited to look at the same two cardiac cases and give their

diagnoses. "We couldn't see the chakras or the flow of energy the way she could," admits foundation head Dr. Linda Russek, a clinical psychologist who is researching the relationship between stress and disease for Harvard University. "But she added something important."

Healing Ourselves with Hands of Light

*For Barbara Brennan,
a former NASA physicist
whose first book,
Hands of Light, is a classic
guide to the art of hands-on
healing, illness is the result
of an imbalance
in our multileveled
energy field.*

By Jean Marie Angelo

second between the pubic bone and the navel; the third an inch or so above the navel; the fourth at the heart; the fifth at the throat; the sixth at the forehead, or third eye; the seventh at the crown of the head. (Brennan contends that there are actually many more chakras than these seven, but for simplicity's sake, she concentrates on these in her teachings.) Brennan describes these chakras as vortices of energy that spin at the front and back of the body.

A dysfunction in a chakra, she says, affects a person physically and emotionally. Chakras that are "open" spin clockwise, allowing for a healthy flow of energy. When chakras get out of balance, they spin counter-clockwise or barely move.

The major chakras correspond with seven "layers" of the human energy field that surrounds and penetrates the physical body. These layers are not as simple as the layers of an onion, which are neatly divided. Rather, they overlap and intermingle with each other. Each layer resonates with a unique frequency. The higher the level, the higher the frequency, and the farther the layer extends from the physical body.

In *Hands of Light*, Brennan gives instruction for healers on how to use what she calls "high sense perception" to feel, clear, and balance the chakras and the energy layers. With *Light Emerging*—which she refers to as a "cookbook"—Brennan speaks to those being healed, focusing on the role of self-care and personal process. The responsibility for healing, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual, rests with the individual, she says. While doctors and healers bring a specific knowledge about the body and energy field, it is the crucial "dance" between healer and client that facilitates the release of blocks. *Light Emerging* concentrates on the client's steps in the dance.

"The gift of healing rests within everyone. It is not a gift given only to a few," she asserts. "It is your birthright as much as it is mine. Everyone can give healing to themselves and to others."

Self-healing, she says, comes in many forms: eating well; living in a healthy environment; connecting with spiritual truth through meditation, yoga, and other practices; giving self-love messages; nourishing relationships; and seeking a trusted team of helpers and healers.

To help people with their healing process, her new text gives detailed information about the human energy field. According to Brennan, our behavior and thoughts (in this life and in past lives) profoundly affect our energy field, which in turn affects our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Brennan provides extensive descriptions of the role each layer of the energy field plays in overall health. For example, the first level of the aura is related to physical sensation. Taking care of the physical body makes this level strong and enhances all the sensual pleasures of life: tasting, listening, seeing, sex, smelling, and touch. Those who do not care for the body create a weak first layer and have difficulty feeling pleasure.

The second layer is associated with emotions, she says. Brightly colored clouds of energy connote positive feelings about the self; darker and dirtier colors are a sign of negative and stagnant feelings. Allowing feelings to flow and move through us makes for a healthy, "highly charged" second level. An undercharged second layer brings a lack of awareness about feelings, or even self-hatred.

Brennan describes the third level as reflecting our mental or rational world. A charged third layer brings clarity of mind, an interest in learning, and the ability to work with both the rational and intuitive minds. A weak third level leads to lack of clarity and disinterest in learning or academic pursuits.

The fourth, or heart, level displays liquid flows of many different colors. This is the level on which we carry out our relationships. Brennan says these colors connect us with others. In viewing a loving interaction, Brennan sees rose colors exchanged. A loving interaction charged with sexual passion will have rose mixed with orange. Jealousy will look slimy and green, while anger is jagged, penetrating, and red. A person with a charged fourth level will tend to have strong relationships with others. Those undercharged on this layer may tend to be loners or overwhelmed by other people because the field gets overpowered.

The fifth layer reflects our level of connection to divine will. A charged fifth level brings a sense of purpose

and divine light, a sense that we all play a part in the order of things. People may manifest this connection by being orderly, punctual, and attentive to their work no matter how detailed. An undercharged fifth layer may result in difficulty accomplishing tasks, observes Brennan.

Through the sixth layer, we connect to divine love. Meditation, chanting, and other spiritual disciplines help charge this level and bring spiritual bliss and peace. Those charged on this level may have spiritual experiences and feel spiritually inspired. Those undercharged may believe spirituality does not exist and that those who believe are naïve.

The seventh level forms a protective, golden egg that holds the entire field together, says Brennan. A strong seventh layer provides a feeling of creativity and understanding of broad concepts. It brings the ability not only to think creatively, but to put creative thought into action. An undercharged seventh level might mean a minimum of creative thought.

Brennan stresses that healing requires attention to all layers. One way of healing our energy layers is to work with a trained healer who can adjust your field as a physician might set a bone. Another approach is to visualize the field healing, or work on the area of your life that that field reflects. Disciplines like meditation and yoga help us learn to "hold" our layers in the proper adjustment.

If one layer is overcharged and others drastically undercharged, an imbalance will result. For example, if the third



Author Barbara Brennan

layer is highly charged, but the second and fourth layers are undercharged, the third will have to work overtime to pick up the slack. This situation may result in a tendency to trust only what seems rational and logical and to distrust intuition about people or situations.

If the seventh layer is more charged than all the rest, it will be hard to make all the creative ideas practical. A person may reject the physical world instead of accepting it as part of the spiritual realm.

Uncorrected distortions in the energy field eventually ripple through each layer until they manifest in the physical body. The better able we are to accept the highest spiritual truth and allow it to shape all the energetic levels—through honoring our inner guidance—the healthier we will be physically.

Underlying the layers of the energy field, Brennan says, is an even deeper level of reality. "If you go one quantum leap deeper than the human energy field, you get to your life's purpose, or the *hara* level," she explains. The health of that level is related to our ability to carry out our life's task. "The *hara* level is actually the foundation for the aura, just as the aura, or the human energy field, is the foundation for the physical body."

The *hara* is actually a line of energy that runs through the body. Along the *hara* level are several energy focal points, including the "soul seat," which is located slightly above the heart chakra. "Here we carry our spiritual longing that leads us through life," explains Brennan. A dysfunction at the soul seat point can lead to a feeling of meaninglessness and chronic sadness, which manifests on the physical level as a sunken chest.

A healthy *hara* line is straight and deeply rooted in the earth, she says. Dysfunction in the *hara* line causes confusion: We may believe we truly want something but be unable to bring about the desired result.

But wait—there's more. "One quantum leap deeper than the *hara* level is the core essence," Brennan says. "In other esoteric literature it is like the *atman*. Some theologies might call it the soul," she explains.

The core essence is the source of creativity. Brennan sees it as a bright star located one and one half inches above the navel. This brilliant star is always shining, but in our fear we cover and block it. The initial action of blocking the core essence is what creates the resulting distortions on the other levels.

How do we know if our essence is shining through or if it is blocked? We simply look at our lives, says Brennan. Those areas that move freely, without conflict, are the areas in which the core essence is shining through. They reflect the true person. The areas that are problematic serve to show where we are blocking ourselves—and provide the opportunity for learning.

"Wherever the core is blocked, you will eventually get illness, or a 'learning cycle,'" she explains. She likens the process to a cosmic Monopoly game. In those areas that are unblocked

we can "collect \$200 and go straight to divinity." Our blocks tell us "do not collect \$200, go to this learning cycle."

Viewing illness and emotional challenge as a "learning cycle" instead of something that has to be fought can lead to personal rebirth, she adds. New beliefs emerge and relationships grow richer. In the end we can create a new life, in which many of the things we have longed for will come more easily.

Why do we block our energy? "Because we don't know any

better," she explains. We believe blocking will protect us from pain. The blocks we place in our energy fields are related to past hurts, or our "original pain," which we carry in our energy field and in our physical bodies. The original pain usually goes back to early childhood and is related to some distorted message we gave ourselves.

For example, if a father was cold or ridiculing to a daughter, she may have responded by telling herself that "men can't be trusted." She may not have connected at the heart chakra in a healthy way with her father. She will continue to give herself the message into adulthood and consequently find it difficult to fully open her heart to a man. Keeping the heart closed may seem "safe," but it will only cause further distortions.

As we grow in awareness, we more clearly see our original wounds. A true commitment to healing them can

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bring release on all levels.

Past and present relationships play a crucial role in illness, because our energy fields are all connected, says Brennan. Cords of auric light connect us at each chakra to everyone we have ever been in a relationship with. The cords on the left side of the chakras connect us to our mother and other women; the cords at the right connect to us our father and other men. It is best to work with the cords—through meditation, visualizations, and regular trips to a healer—to make them healthy and free of tangles, so that interactions will be less troublesome.

Often people in our society have damaged the cords at the third chakra, which relates to personal power, she says. Thus, many relationships become power struggles.

We damage these cords in many ways, she observes. Some people "rip" them in an effort to break an energetic connection with a controlling parent. Ripping, however, doesn't solve the problem; the cords literally dangle in space, seeking a connection. If untreated, they may energetically connect with another person who is similarly controlling or hostile, thus repeating the pattern between parent and child.

In other cases, people take the cords and bury them deep inside the energy system in an effort to feel safe. This may help in the short term, but will result in a feeling of not being "connected" to others. Relationships become difficult.

If a client is willing, a trained healer can help straighten the cords and make the connections healthier. On our own, we can meditate on the cords and visualize our connection to a person

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For example, one case involved a woman suffering from cardiac disease who initially appeared very sweet. "She smiled a lot and was courteous, but she had much held-in anger," explains Stephan Sinatra, M.D., a cardiologist and psychotherapist from Manchester, Connecticut. After interviewing the patient, Sinatra concluded that held-in anger was having a deleterious effect on her cardiovascular system. Through her hands-on approach, Brennan independently reached the same conclusions—and drew a picture of the blocked heart chakra for her colleagues.

The Path to Healing

Brennan has been aware of auras and energies since she was a young girl growing up on a Wisconsin farm—when, as she recollects, she saw a "haze" around people, trees, and other living things. Keenly aware of nature, she would sometimes go into the woods and let animals walk on her feet. However, she never spoke of her visions, believing that everyone "saw" what she was seeing.

During adolescence, these experiences diminished as she turned her attention to her studies. After earning undergraduate and graduate degrees in upper atmospheric physics from the University of Wisconsin in Madison, she spent six years at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. Among other tasks, she measured the intensity of sunlight reflecting off the Earth's surface. While working for NASA, she spent much time in airplanes, studying the effect that surfaces such as cloud covers, the Pacific Ocean, and the ice at the Arctic have on light.

During the late 1960s, while living in Washington, D.C., she got swept up in the changing social and political climate of the times. In 1971 she cut her ties with NASA, opting instead to travel to Mexico with her current husband in a Volkswagen bus. There she finally reconnected to her childhood spirituality and commenced a daily meditation practice.

Eventually she moved back to Washington, D.C., but she continued to meditate. As she grew more fascinated with her "inner world," her interest in understanding human emotions led her to a second career as a counselor and licensed massage therapist. She concentrated on bioenergetics and core energetics, bodywork therapies that release stored emotions through certain movements and postures.

Continued meditation led to "beautiful visions" that Brennan says spoke to a deep longing in her. As in her childhood, she began to see auras again; and when talking with clients, she began having spontaneous visions of their past lives.

Knowing that she needed help in understanding her new experiences, she turned to a spiritual community in Phoenicia, New York, called the Pathwork Center. There she studied the lectures of Eva Pierrakos, a woman who channeled messages from an entity she called "the Guide." The more than 250 lectures contain guidance on many topics, including releasing guilt, finding self-esteem, and connecting to God and spiritual guidance.

During her nine years living and studying at the Pathwork Center, Brennan went through a deep personal process of integrating her healing gifts and understanding their meaning. Her abilities to see others' past lives and auras—her "channel"—had opened too quickly, she realized. "I was getting a lot of pleasure from being psychic," she says, referring to her early adult experiences. "I was getting off on being special and was using it to avoid dealing with important issues in my life."

Brennan made a conscious decision that for the time being she would use her gifts only for personal issues. She spent the next two years focusing on "divine will," praying and meditating on how to bring her own will in line with divine guidance.

She followed this phase with a two-year practice of concentrating on "divine love." "In doing this I found that many of my actions were not so loving," she says. After these two years, Brennan says, she was able to be more loving in all aspects of her life.

Next, she spent two years concentrating on "divine truth." She explored what truth is and where it was missing in her life. She questioned her willingness to speak up for what she believed in.

These practices taught her to listen to what she calls "guidance." We all have guides who speak to us, Brennan says. This guidance can take many

forms—some hear it, others see it, and others may have ideas and insights that shed light on a situation. "The question is not how we receive guidance, but do we listen to it?" she laughs. "My guides wouldn't tell me anything more until I did what they said. Sometimes it would be three months before I would follow," she says, bemused by her own stubbornness at the time. "What, someone telling me what to do? Are you kidding?" More inner work helped her to stop resisting and listen better.

Eventually she felt ready to work with others again. She left the center and set up a private healing practice in New York City. Soon business was booming. "Without advertising I was booked a year in advance, and people were dying before they could see me. Those who did see me could come for one session, and then they would have to wait a year," she recalls.

To spread healing to more people than she could work on individually, she began teaching and writing. After 12 publishers rejected her first book, *Hands of Light*, her own "guidance" instructed her to self-publish, raising the \$50,000 needed by selling her house. After her first, modest print run sold well, Bantam picked it up. Today, it is a widely consulted textbook on energy healing.

Energy Healing

In *Hands of Light*, Brennan describes her vision of the human energy field and its seven major chakras, or wheels of energy. Students of Eastern spiritual practice are familiar with the seven chakras: the first located at the root of the torso; the

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becoming more healthy. This is a much better strategy than "cutting" a cord, which often makes a situation worse: A wounded connection will often keep you in relationship to another person until the cords are healed.

"We all give and receive healing energy from one another; in many cases we are just not doing it on purpose," Brennan observes. As we grow more mindful of our own energy and the energy fields of those around us, we can become more adept at transferring energy at will, through our conscious intention to do so.

A Vision for the Future

Brennan's work speaks of the intimate relationship between body, mind, and spirit. It is the task of each of us to find this intimate link and take responsibility for it. As a society, she says, we are moving away from the collective model that places our well-being in the hands of professionals into a more collaborative view of health.

Championing a new paradigm for healing that marries science and spirituality has become part of Brennan's message. "I want to build bridges, not walls," she states.

"I know there are healers who don't want to talk to the medical community, but I don't want to be one of them. Most doctors I have met are positive about my work. They are surprised and curious. In general, I find physicians to be pretty open minded. The ones I know are interested in healing people and helping people get well," she says.

Brennan also encourages those seeking healing to form a team composed of their physicians, therapists, and energy healers, choosing people who are open-minded and willing to work together. As the physician tends to physical ailments, the healer can work with imbalances in the energy field. Each plays a vital role in healing, and each can assist the client in coming to new understandings and acceptance of personal healing energy.

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Above all, Brennan says, we must love ourselves. The choice to go through a learning cycle—whether it be a physical illness or an exploration of new emotional territory—is an honorable one. As human beings, we inevitably block our core essence to some degree. To heal ourselves, we need to accept the unique journey we have embarked upon. "It takes courage to be here," Brennan says. □

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