

# Energy Lite

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## The Self-Care Issue

**Love is Greater than  
the Pandemic**  
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**What to Say to People  
Who are Skeptical about  
Energy Healing**  
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*Plus more articles,  
energetic techniques  
and practices  
focused on  
Self-Care*





What to Say to People  
Who Are Skeptical About  
*Energy Healing*



*“Subtle doesn’t mean delicate. In fact, science is beginning to suggest that the subtle — the as yet immeasurable — actually directs the measurable and forms our physical framework.” - Cyndi Dale, The Subtle Body*

Donna Eden and David Feinstein

**D**id you know that an estimated 174,000 healthcare professionals in the U.S. provide services which explicitly address the body’s subtle energies, drawing on ancient approaches such as acupuncture, medical qi gong, and Ayurveda, as well as more recent developments like Healing Touch, Reiki and Touch for Health? And some 16 million people in the U.S. utilize these services! Yet many in the medical establishment remain unconvinced that these activities are anything more than pseudoscience in the hands of charlatans.

We have had this discussion with more than a few skeptics. While some maintain that the research is not persuasive (an argument that can be decimated, as shown below), the fundamental division has more to do with a worldview — a paradigm — than with any particular evidence supporting or not supporting a subtle energy perspective.

## A Clash of Paradigms

Max Planck, who was awarded the 1918 Nobel Laurette for his discoveries in quantum mechanics, was faced with a community of physicists who could not accept the counter-intuitive concepts of quantum physics. How could the behavior of

a particle in one location affect the behavior of a particle in a different location when there was no visible connection between them? Even Einstein called this “Spooky action at a distance.” Frustrated with the reception of the new discoveries by so many of his colleagues, Planck finally reconciled himself to the realization that, in his famous phrase, “science advances one funeral at a time!” In other words, a new scientific truth does not carry the day by convincing its opponents but rather because its opponents eventually die, and another generation that is familiar with the new thinking replaces them.

Energy healing practitioners are also finding themselves in a paradigm collision with traditional forces within science. The worldview of energy medicine resembles that of cultures which are closer to nature. This includes an attunement to subtle energies that impact health and well-being; an appreciation of the invisible life force that causes an embryo to become an infant or a seedling to break through cement; and a resonance with the energies of the Earth, its plants, its animals, its seasons, the sun, the moon, and other elements of the environment that surrounds us.

This worldview comes into sharp conflict with a scientific method that is based on the observation



of and experimentation with the material world. Because that approach has led to cell phones, flush toilets, airplanes, and visits to the moon, its basic tenets have an almost hypnotic appeal. Any talk of invisible energies that have never been detected by established scientific instruments is readily dismissed. In fact, even acknowledging energies we don't know how to reliably identify with existing scientific devices undermines the credibility of the prevailing materialistic view and is fiercely countered, even ridiculed by the gatekeepers of conventional science. Prior to the invention of the microscope, the notion that invisible germs had a role in illness received the same reception from the medical community as that which the notion of subtle energies has endured. Willem Reich, the crazy genius whose ideas about a "biological energy" pushed against medicine's materialistic paradigm, died in jail in 1957 for not obeying an injunction by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to stop distributing his energy healing devices. More than six tons of his publications and apparatus were publicly burned by order of the court in what the major New York publisher that brought all his published works back into print called "one of the most heinous acts of censorship in U.S. history."

All of this is, however, changing in relation to subtle energies. As Cyndi Dale observed in her book, *The Subtle Body*, "Subtle does not mean delicate. In fact, science is beginning to suggest that the subtle — the as yet immeasurable — actually directs the measurable and forms our physical framework."

### The Debate in Microcosm

We find our own personal version of the subtle energy debate, at least at this point in our marriage, to be amusing. When we met more than 43 years ago, David had just left Maryland where he had for seven years been teaching and doing research as an Instructor in Psychiatry at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Donna, for her part,

had been able to see the colors and movements of the body's subtle energies since before she could talk (a relatively rare gift in Western cultures that do not cultivate this ability, but by no means unique). You can imagine the dinner table discussions. About 19 years into our relationship, Donna signed a contract to write her first book, *Energy Medicine*. She asked for David's help. David had already written one highly successful book and had an organizational mind that would complement Donna's more intuitive approach. We each cut back our private practices — David's as a clinical psychologist, Donna's in energy healing — to half time so we could give proper attention to the challenge of discussing invisible forces in tangible language. David posed to Donna the same types of tough questions he had brought to the innovators of new therapies when he was studying them for one of his research projects at Hopkins.

*By analogy, just because we cannot hear frequencies that other creatures can hear doesn't mean those frequencies don't exist.*

At some point within our two years of working together every day on the book, it occurred to David that while Donna's approach appears to be highly intuitive, and that is certainly part of its power, it is also highly empirical. Empirical means "based on observation and experimentation." A client would lie down on Donna's table. Because of her ability to see the body's subtle energies, she could observe where the energies were blocked or weak or too forceful or otherwise out of harmony with the body. Then she would *experiment* with her hands or by putting the client into a particular posture or by taking other steps to get the energies into a better flow. She would next see if it worked. If not, she would adjust the intervention or come up with an entirely different one. She would then see how the shift in the energies impacted the client's symptoms. Observe.



Experiment. Observe. Experiment. Observe. Of course Donna's version of "observe" is different from that of David's or most people's. But Donna can demonstrate the real-world consequences of what she observes. For instance, the subtle energies she describes have consistently corresponded with diagnoses that had not been revealed to her. So the fact that her observations are more vivid and nuanced than David's is not a weakness in her approach but a limitation in the reach of David's senses. By analogy, just because we cannot hear frequencies that other creatures can hear doesn't mean those frequencies don't exist. Plus the overwhelming success of Donna's approach, which led to her services being sought from people all over the world, was a level of "empirical evidence" that David could not ignore. Because of David's skepticism, however, we have been able to speak not only to skeptical colleagues, but also to the skeptic within each of us who don't see energy but are considering an Energy Medicine approach."

## Putting Our Practitioners to the Test

Fast forward a few decades. We have trained more than 1,600 qualified practitioners at the Certification Level. In 2017, we were contacted by neuropsychologist Melinda Connor, who had in 2004 initiated a research program at the University of Arizona to determine whether healers are able to make objective changes in the physical world through their intention and/or through the energy of their hands. For instance, can a healer change the length and frequency of the waves in a magnetic field? That would tell us something about the impact of that healer on the body's electromagnetic energies. Or the pH of water? Because 73% of the brain and heart are composed of water, it is not too much of a stretch to envision the implications this could have for healing. Since her original experiments, Dr. Connor has carried out 15 formal studies which have involved more than 1,200 healing

practitioners. She had already demonstrated beyond any reasonable doubt that healers can indeed create changes in the physical world without direct touch.

She was now inviting us to put our practitioners to the test. David, as our organization's administrator, felt both honored and a bit nervous about this plan. What if our people couldn't turn water into wine, or the healing practitioner's equivalents! It turned out, however, that our group produced among the most impressive results of any healing specialty Dr. Connor had investigated. Our practitioners were able to produce the intended effect 97% of the time on Dr. Connor's test suite. By contrast, a control group that had no training in any type of energy healing had, with only one exception, a 100% failure rate on the test suite. A subgroup of our practitioners, limited to our faculty members, attained a 100% success rate, including on the pH test, which is considered the most difficult of the various tests used in Dr. Connor's most current research. By now, David's doubts had completely dissolved.

## Bringing the Debate Across the Great Divide

When given the opportunity to explain to a skeptical colleague how Energy Medicine works, we do not start with the paradigm debate. We begin with the direct evidence which an open-minded professional needs to see.

### CLINICAL EXAMPLES

For starters, we always have a few case histories in our back pocket that we can provide as compelling examples: the elderly man who was irate that Donna had persuaded his wife to postpone a surgery but then participated in helping her heal with energy medicine so the surgery was not needed; the champion swimmer who was told that the



doctors could do nothing more for a fast-growing lymphoma that had become widespread, but who was cancer-free after a series of Energy Medicine treatments; the woman who had suffered from a multitude of health issues most of her adult life — irritable bowel syndrome, multiple allergies, chronic back pain, endometriosis, TMJ problems — who became symptom-free and went on to become one of our most vibrant practitioners; Donna's own story overcoming her multiple sclerosis after her doctors had told her to "get her affairs in order" because her organs were breaking down. These cases are described in detail in a journal article that is cited below.

The National Institute for Integrative Healthcare *lists more than 600 studies that assess hands-on healing interventions.* The Subtle Energy and Biofield Healing Publications Library *maintains a database that includes more than 6,000 entries.*

### EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

While a story that vividly illustrates the steps by which a serious illness was overcome may be worth a thousand studies in its emotional impact, case histories of course provide only anecdotal evidence. They do not conclusively establish cause-effect relationships. So the next step in presenting our case is to turn to systematic research. Acupuncture, one of the earliest forms of Energy Medicine, has been studied in more than a thousand peer-reviewed clinical trials. In a comprehensive analysis of this data, the *Acupuncture Evidence Project* concluded that "it is no longer possible to say that the effectiveness of acupuncture is because of the placebo effect,

or that it is useful only for musculoskeletal pain." Applying the stringent guidelines of the National Health Medical Research Council's standards for demonstrating clinical effectiveness, the analysis found moderate to strong evidence that acupuncture was effective in treating 46 medical conditions, including asthma, hypertension, insomnia, irritable bowel syndrome, osteoarthritis, constipation, stroke rehabilitation and various types of pain. In a non-needle variation of acupuncture, more than a hundred clinical trials show that energy psychology treatments, which involve tapping on acupuncture points to address emotional issues, result not only in reduced anxiety, depression and other psychological conditions, but also in physiological changes such as decreased production of stress hormones and favorable shifts in the expression of genes involved with learning and emotional regulation. Studies of Healing Touch provide evidence that the approach enhances immunity, reduces pain, counters fatigue, complements more invasive treatments such as radiation, and generally enhances the quality of life. The National Institute for Integrative Healthcare lists more than 600 studies that assess hands-on healing interventions. The Subtle Energy and Biofield Healing Publications Library maintains a database that includes more than 6,000 entries. References to all the assertions made in this article can, again, be found in the journal article cited below.

### EVIDENCE FOR THE EFFECTS OF SUBTLE ENERGY

After describing documented cases and well-designed, peer-reviewed empirical studies demonstrating that an energy approach is effective — which is speaking in the skeptic's language — we can turn our argument to the more contentious topic of subtle energy. But even here we have a solid empirical footing. How else but that the heart carries an energy we do not know how to measure can you explain the many well-documented instances of heart transplant recipients taking on their donor's food





preferences or musical tastes and, in one case, having enough detailed information about the identity of the donor's murderer and the circumstances that the police were able to make an arrest that led to an easy conviction. In fact, heart transplant recipients begin to exhibit preferences and skills of their donors so frequently that some physicians prepare their patients and their families for this possibility prior to heart-transplant surgery. And how else but that a person is able to transmit healing energy can you explain the empirically-established impact of focused thought on plant growth, crime rates and tumor activity? A hands-on healing technique developed by Bill Bengston produced an overall cure rate of 87.9% in experimental mice that had been injected with a mammary cancer. This outcome is particularly noteworthy in that the injection is known to produce 100% fatality within 27 days. Medical intuitive Carolyn Myss was studied by neurosurgeon Norm Shealy. Her clairvoyant diagnoses from a distance, after having been provided only the patient's name and birthdate, matched Shealy's medical diagnoses in 93% of the cases. Myss' statements were specific, such as "left testicle malignant, spread to left kidney; venereal herpes; and schizophrenia." If your skeptical colleague is willing to take empirical evidence into account, much is available that supports the worldview that subtle energies are a significant force in health and healing. Some, albeit, will still heatedly dismiss such findings because they clash so strongly with their long-held paradigms — the "one-funeral-at-a-time" problem — but in our experience, most find that their perspective widens a bit.

## A PUBLISHED RESOURCE

We generally follow up these discussions by offering a paper published in a well-respected journal that includes clinical cases, empirical research and evidence for subtle energies. We have just replaced the paper we had been using for the past dozen years. *Advances in Mind-Body Medicine*, a prominent journal, recently made an editorial decision to

include Energy Medicine as one of its major areas of focus. We were honored to be invited, in the first issue that reflects this change, to contribute an article describing the development of our approach to Energy Medicine and where Energy Medicine fits within the larger scheme of healthcare. You can download it from <https://eem-overview-paper.edenmethod.com> to read and also share with colleagues, interested clients and health-providing institutions.

## ENERGY MEDICINE'S PLACE IN HEALTH CARE

We do not believe that Energy Medicine replaces conventional medicine. Hospital emergency rooms and operating rooms perform miracles every day. But an energy perspective does warrant a respected place in the healthcare spectrum. We think the noted physician, Christiane Northrup, summed it up nicely in her Foreword to one of our books: "In the medicine of the future, as I envision it, working with the patient's energy field will be the first intervention. Surgery will be a last resort. Drugs will be a last resort. They will still have their place, but shifting the energy patterns that caused the disease will be the first line of treatment. And before that, teaching people how to keep their energies in healthy patterns will be as much a part of physical hygiene as flossing or exercise." €

*References:* The claims in this article are backed by the references in a paper published in the summer 2020 issue of *Advances in Mind-Body Medicine*. <https://eem-overview-paper.edenmethod.com>



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