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# Reiki and Healing Touch: Implications for Trauma Healing

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# **Reiki and Healing Touch: Implications for Trauma Healing**

Cynthia Ford

A capstone paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a  
Master of Arts in International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in  
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### **Abstract**

This research explores implications for trauma healing through the energy therapies Reiki and Healing Touch. This is explored through the perspectives of women living in Tacoma, Washington who receive Reiki and/or Healing Touch and are also practitioners of Reiki and/or Healing Touch. In recent decades trauma healing has proved to be a holistic endeavor, and as the practice of energy therapies such as Reiki and Healing Touch are becoming more mainstream and even accepted in the medical community, these therapies boast a myriad of physical and psychological benefits that include trauma healing. A phenomenological approach is taken to explore this relationship while using a triangulation of methods to collect data, which include: interviews, artistic expression, and participant observation. Data collected is then transcribed, coded, themed, and interpreted through a trauma healing framework to explore implications for trauma healing, women, and community building.

## **Introduction**

Everyday women are subjected to physical and psychological violence. While this is unfortunately not a surprising fact the statistics are especially severe. The United Nations has noted national statistics as high as seventy percent of women experiencing physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime (facts and figures, 2016), and worldwide one in three women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence found that one in five women have been raped in their lifetime and every nine seconds a woman is assaulted or beaten in the United States. Not only are these unfortunate statistics relative to physical violence but also to mental violence as well: depression and suicidal behavior are linked to domestic violence (Statistics, 2017).

For women the world over, these statistics represent not only past incidences but the difficulty of living with the trauma of these events. The American Psychological Association found that women are twice as likely (compared to men) to struggle with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), be more sensitive to stimuli that set off traumatic memories, and experience the negative symptoms of PTSD for longer durations. Policy recommendations are even given specifically for helping lower the prevalence of PTSD in women (Facts About Women and Trauma, 2017).

The implications of trauma are detrimental not only to an individual woman but also to society as a whole. On an individual level trauma causes various psychological disorders such as: high levels of anxiety, depression, terrifying nightmares, alcoholism, drug use, rage, and self-harm. Trauma can

even manifest through out the physical body in various ways: pain, severe numbness, mutism, and sickness (Van Der Kolk, 2014). The list goes on and on for both mental and physical symptoms, while also affecting families, neighborhoods, communities, and also extends to society as a whole.

Trauma perpetuates the cycle of violence if it is not managed. Children of abused mothers are at risk of developing numerous psychological and behavioral problems as well: attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety, discipline issues ranging from preschool time-outs to incarceration, and run the risk of continuing the cycle of violence by perpetuating violence. Similarly, PTSD affected women struggle with maintaining a career and therefore become victim to poverty which adds to their current struggles with PTSD as well as affects their possible child or children's prevalence of experiencing trauma and developing PTSD themselves (Van Der Kolk, 2014). While the examples provided here do not represent all the negative ways trauma can affect individual women and society as a whole, the impact of women experiencing high levels of violence and PTSD prolong the cycle of violence and should be proactively managed.

### **Personal Connection**

During my practicum my interest in women and trauma was further realized. While on-campus at SIT I studied trauma and the negative effects and challenges it poses for peacebuilding during Professor Arai's *Post-War Development and Peacebuilding* class. For my final I researched the organization Project Air. This non-profit uses yoga as an outlet to heal trauma in HIV positive women who were raped during the Rwandan genocide. Since then I have been developing my overall knowledge of trauma; my practicum organization has

challenged me to further explore this interest. My practicum was with Catherine Place, a small local non-profit in Tacoma, Washington. Catherine Place's mission statement is as follows: "Catherine Place promotes long-term healing and social change in our mission to improve the quality of life for women." Catherine Place uses several programs to encourage healing, promote empowerment, and better the lives of women. One such program that Catherine Place offers women is energy healing in the form of Healing Touch.

Energy healing caught my eye in particular because I have seen energy healing services as a trauma healing technique on various websites along with powerful stories of the potency of these types of therapies. However, I have also seen it stigmatized as pseudo-scientific or being beneficial only through the placebo effect (patients find positive results because they believe in the treatment) (Post-White, et al., 2003) and not because of the practice itself. A simple Internet search for these services in my community yields numerous locations where energy-healing services are provided. Because of these encounters and the prevalence of these services in my community I became curious about this practice and its relevance for women in Tacoma Washington.

### **Energy Healing**

Energy healing is categorized under various names depending on what source is referenced: alternative medicine, spiritual healing, energy medicine, holistic health, and therapeutic approaches. For the sake of this paper I will refer to it as "energy healing" or "energy therapy." Both these terms will be used to describe Reiki and Healing Touch and the field in general. Energy healing can take on many forms including but not limited to: Reiki, Healing Touch, Qigong,

Emotional Freedom Technique or Tapping, acupuncture, the use of crystals, reflexology, and chakra balancing. This research will focus on Reiki and Healing Touch because of the use of Healing Touch at my practicum organization, the various Reiki and Healing Touch practices in Tacoma, Washington, and because of the growing use of Reiki and Healing Touch in the medical community.

Reiki is defined as “...a complementary health approach in which practitioners place their hands lightly on or just above a person, with the goal of facilitating the person’s own healing response”(Reiki: In Depth, 2015). During a Reiki session a practitioner will place their hands over or on a patient’s body to help channel the flow of energy throughout their body (Engel, 2014). Similar to Reiki, “The Healing Touch practitioner unblocks energy through the body promoting physical healing and emotional, mental, and spiritual balance.... The goal of Healing Touch is to restore harmony and balance in the energy system to help the person self-heal” (Post-White, et. al., 2003). Healing Touch is commonly used as a complimentary approach (particularly within the medical community) with other non-energy based treatments.

### **Research Question**

This research will take a phenomenological approach to analyze the relationships between women, Reiki and Healing Touch, and trauma healing. I will be focusing on the experiences of women in my community who use and practice Reiki and Healing Touch. Their experiences will be applied to trauma healing peacebuilding (more will be explained in the methodology section). It is worth noting here that while my research will be exploring the relationship

between trauma healing and Reiki and Healing Touch I will not be interviewing participants on any experiences with trauma. Instead, interview questions and will focus on an in-depth approach prompted by mostly open-ended questions. Therefore, to explore the relationship between trauma healing and Reiki and Healing Touch I will be applying a trauma healing framework to the data that I collect. This framework is composed from Bessel Van Der Kolk's book *The Body Keeps The Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. I will discuss my approach in greater detail in the methodology section.

Given my experiences, interests, and the unfortunate prevalence of women experiencing trauma my research questions are as follows:

**Main question:** What is the relationship between Reiki and Healing Touch and trauma healing through the perspective of women who use these therapies and are practitioners of energy healing in Tacoma Washington?

**Sub question:** According to these women how could the benefits of trauma healing through Reiki and Healing Touch manifest in women's everyday lives?

**Sub question:** What are the implications for the field of peacebuilding in relation to these women's experiences?

## Literature Review

### Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to create a portrait of trauma healing, particularly in terms of holistic and "alternative" approaches to managing the symptoms of traumatic memories and physical responses to those memories. Trauma and its effects on individuals and also communities will be especially highlighted. This review will also focus on the development and use of

Reiki and Healing Touch in terms of holistic trauma healing. A portion of the literature in this review will be from peer reviewed articles. However, given the relative recent popularity of energy healing in the United States as a treatment for physical and psychological ailments, a number non-peer reviewed sources will also be utilized such as energy healing websites, newspapers, and magazines.

Bessel Van Der Kolk's book *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* will be heavily utilized as a central source of information on trauma. This is for several reasons; given the literature, this book is one of the most recently published and up to date on the knowledge that is currently known about trauma's effects physiologically, as well as on the various pathways and strategies of healing. And also, while being one of the leading trauma healing practitioners in the field, Van Der Kolk also incorporates information and research from other leaders in this field making his book comprehensive in scope.

The organization of this review will be as follows: an overview of trauma, current approaches to managing trauma, the relevance of trauma healing within communities, the history of Reiki and Healing Touch, the uses of both and their differences, their relevance to trauma healing especially given the chakra system, and modern controversies surrounding these practices. This review will conclude by summarizing main agreements and disagreements, gaps in the literature, and how this research fits those gaps.

### **Trauma Healing**

Though there is no panoptic definition of trauma it is considered to be the physical and psychological attachment to traumatic memories that produce overwhelming symptoms that negatively affect individuals' lives (Bray, 2006).

One cannot say, with certainty, which events will end in trauma for an individual because each individual, consciously or not, dictates what is a traumatic event for them, and therefore which traumatic memory will remain attached to them in a physical and psychological manner. Some of the symptoms demonstrated by individuals who have had traumatic pasts or who suffer from PTSD are: flashbacks, nightmares, substance addiction, general behavior issues, involving oneself in dangerous activities, anxiety disorders, and depression. Symptoms are on a spectrum of manageability; while one individual is able to function throughout the day (being involved in family life, participating at work, etc.) another individual can experience symptoms so debilitating they have trouble getting out of bed.

Unfortunately, trauma is not just an experience from the past. The effects of trauma are imprinted not just in the consciousness but also on the brain, mind, and body. In 1893 Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud concluded that language could help trauma survivors express their trauma and leave it behind. This began the use of ‘talk therapy’ as a popular treatment for trauma and PTSD; patients are meant to talk about a traumatic event and thus bring it into normal consciousness (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 183-184). From this branch Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) was developed and is still a popular method used today. CBT is implemented by slowly exposing patients to the stimulus they are fearing: spiders, heights, accidents, etc. (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 222). However, the problem with these more ‘traditional’ approaches is that they might help but most often than not they are not enough, and can even cause “preoccupation and fixation” (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p.32) on traumatic memories and events because,

“...reliving trauma reactivates the brain’s alarm system and knocks out critical brain areas necessary for integrating the past, making it likely that patients will relive rather than resolve the trauma” (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 223). Historically trauma treatment has been rooted in talk therapy, however this type of therapy is not enough because trauma is often not just a memory but a physical manifestation.

Trauma changes the chemistry of the brain and therefore changes the physical body - talk therapy alone cannot tap into the physical body to alter the physically housed imprints of trauma (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 21). Likewise, for years pharmaceuticals have been used as a highly popular type of treatment for PTSD patients. Unfortunately, and unsurprisingly, drugs according to Van Der Kolk do not address the root cause of trauma in the body and come with unfortunate side effects. So while a PTSD patient may be numbed by drugs such as antidepressants or antipsychotics, the trauma is still present in their bodies and they must trade in numbing trauma symptoms for living with side effects that hinder a them from living a full life. Doctors and insurance companies have historically pushed drugs like these to the extent that they have become pillars in our society, but given recent statistics there is a looming issues with these types of treatments. For example, if antidepressants treated depression why has the number of people being treated for depression risen three hundred percent over the past two decades? While Van Der Kolk does agree that these types of drugs, in certain situations, can be the best option, relying solely on drugs to manage PTSD symptoms should be heavily concerning (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 36-37).

Kolk describes the physical toll that trauma takes on the body. Human bodies are programmed to run from and escape from danger (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 77). In mainstream culture this would be called the flight or fight response. For example if a person was being robbed their body might tell them to run away from the attacker or try to fight off their attacker. However, there is a third option that bodies go to if they are unable to run away or fight. This is the freeze option and is very critical because “Immobilization is the root of most traumas” (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 86). For example if the robber was to hold the victim down their body could chose to freeze in this stage and shut down as a way of survival. During these situations stress hormones are released into the body. If someone is able to run (flight) or fight during a traumatic event the body is able to process these stress hormones. However, if a body enters the freeze stage stress hormones remain circulating in the body (Van Der Kolk, 2014). When those stress hormones remain in the body then “elements of the trauma are replayed again and again, the accompanying stress hormones engrave those memories ever more deeply in the mind” (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 67). Therefore, beings lose the ability to control their body’s reactions to the memories of trauma. Unfortunately, even if people are able to utilize their stress hormones during an emergency situation there are still breaking points when trauma becomes too much and still overwhelms the body’s system (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 219).

Van Der Kolk states, “The challenge of recovery is to reestablish ownership of your body and your mind – of yourself” (2014, p. 205). Historically, Western trauma treatments have focused on talk therapy and drugs. However, other places around the world have used a number of somatic or physical treatments

which have mostly been culturally integrated: yoga was established in India, Tai Chi and Qigong in China, rhythmical drumming and dancing in places in Africa, Martial Arts in Japan and Korea, and dance mixed with forms of Martial Arts such as capoeira in Brazil (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 209-210). As discussed earlier medications to treat trauma do not address the root causes of trauma in the body and talk therapy can only go so far. Talk therapy can: provide explanation, assign blame to a perpetrator of trauma (alleviating blame on a victim), create kinship with others who have undergone similar experiences (i.e. domestic violence), and create honesty with oneself (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 239). However, trauma changes the brain so much that telling coherent stories of traumatic events is impossible. This is because “...the language center of the brain is about as far removed from the center for experiencing one’s self as is geographically possible” (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 249).

As a survival reaction the emotional brain (or limbic system) either becomes hyper aroused or hypo aroused when triggered by memories of trauma and during actual traumatic events. This often creates lashing out (hyper arousal) or feeling numb and spaced out (hypo arousal). While our rational brain understands that our over or under reaction is not how we want to be reacting our emotional brain has lost its filters and normal functioning as a result of the trauma. Our emotions are disconnected from our rational brains and therefore using language (talk therapy) to fully process trauma is ineffective. Trauma patients are unable to access their emotions appropriately or sometimes at all (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 207).

“At the core of recovery is self-awareness” (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 210). Emotions are expressed as physical feelings: a pounding heart, headaches, dizziness, faintness, etc. But if trauma has made someone so out of touch with their body how can they regulate their emotions if they are not even aware that they are being expressed as physical sensations within their body? If we can notice and be aware of what is happening in our bodies we have a much better chance at regulating those physical sensations and therefore those emotions. Then those emotions, being perpetuated by stress hormones and numbness and hyper arousal, have less power over how we react. Unsurprisingly, many traumatized people are afraid of processing these emotions because that means they have to also feel them, but once they can access mindfulness in their bodies they can begin to recognize what is happening internally (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 210-211). As Van Der Kolk explains, “Becoming aware of how your body organizes particular emotions or memories opens up the possibility of releasing sensations and impulses you once blocked in order to survive” (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 211).

In addition to Van Der Kolk, Pat Ogden and Peter Levine are two forefront trauma therapists to connect the body with the mind to process trauma (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 219). While Pat Ogden developed sensorimotor psychotherapy (Ogden, 2000) Peter Levine developed Somatic Experiencing (Banschick, 2015). While retelling trauma is in the background (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 219) both of these techniques integrate body, cognitive, and emotional processing to relive and process trauma (Ogden, 2000). During these sessions patients move in and out of traumatic memories by retelling traumatic events in doses and focus on how these memories feel on their physical bodies. Simultaneously, physical

movements are integrated into revisiting these memories. This is at first done through subtle movements but once patients are able to tolerate the physical sensations of trauma, physical movements usually become stronger (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 219 – 220). “Amplifying these movements and experimenting with ways to modify them begins the process of bringing the incomplete, trauma-related ‘trauma tendencies’ to completion and can eventually lead to resolution of trauma” (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 220).

As patients remember traumatic memories and experiences they physically move which gives their bodies the opportunities to process traumatic events with movement, which their bodies wanted to do when the initial event. As a result, the amygdala (the body’s alarm system) realizes that it can stop ringing the alarm bell as if the traumatic event were still happening (Morton, 2017), stress hormones stop being released and the body returns to its base line of arousal (Ogden, 2000). As Van Der Kolk describes, “When patients can physically experience what it would have felt like to fight back or run away, they relax, smile, and express a sense of completion” (2014, p. 220).

Trauma therapy can be as unique as the patients themselves. *The Body Keeps the Score* describes diverse methods that include the body, the mind, and the spirit to make treatments holistic and effective. However, It is becoming an ever more best practice to use the body as an integrative method to heal trauma. Body therapies such as Sensorimotor Processing and Somatic Experiencing focus on the physical body to process memories of trauma, and help patients reclaim their lives by helping them access and process traumatic memories so that a state of calmness and control reintegrated into their lives.

## **Trauma and Community Building**

The literature concerning trauma is expansive and mainly covers the consequences of trauma within individuals as well as in post-conflict societies especially areas that have seen horrendous acts of violence. However, this research is concerned with the implications of trauma healing (and the lack of healing) in communities and how trauma perpetuates the cycle of violence and therefore also perpetuates trauma. Present literature in trauma and community development engages with vulnerable urban communities whose residents struggle with poverty as well as trauma. In urban neighborhoods studies have shown that PTSD prevalence is on par with military veterans. A strong link between violence in these neighborhoods and psychological problems illustrates the cycle of violence. While PTSD causes various psychological disorders (depression, anxiety, addiction, etc.), these disorders cause learning problems, and therefore difficulty learning how to make healthy relationships and the ability to be autonomous and independent. To make up for these feelings of inadequacy and life barriers (fulfilling personal relationships, holding down jobs, obtaining adequate education, etc.) individuals will often times join gangs and become involved in or cause violence that perpetuates the prevalence of trauma and continues the cycle of violence (Ramilo, 2014).

Bridge Housing and the Health Equity Institute partnered together to assemble an in-depth report on the effects of trauma in communities in their efforts to support community building. They sum up the effects of trauma in communities in the following six points:

1. Lack of trust and social cohesion: neighbors isolate themselves creating mistrustful relationships. Fear of the other is passed through the community and reproduced. This creates isolation and helplessness to solve communal problems.
2. Lack of stability, reliability, and cohesion: because of the lack of trust, and strong relationship building in a community relying on community members to participate in community building activities becomes difficult.
3. Inability to envision the future: the state of the community seems so dire and relationships within the community feel so distant that a positive future feels impossible especially for those trying to manage symptoms of unhealed trauma.
4. Disempowerment and lack of sense of community ownership: the lack of relationship building in communities results in attitudes of complacency. Families and individuals think the only option they have is to protect themselves and their families and those most close to them in exchange for taking a chance on reaching out to the larger community.
5. High levels of personal need: Individuals and families suffering the consequences of trauma cause so many barriers, especially in poor communities, that individuals do not have the additional capacity to participate in community development.
6. Depth and breadth of community needs: Over time the needs of a community become so great because of the historical lack of neglect that feelings of disempowerment are common (Weinstein, Wolin, Rose, 2014).

Unhealed trauma and its damaging consequences for community development becomes even clearer and more concerning when inter-generational transmission of trauma is considered. Unhealed trauma can be passed from parent to child, which can take place through several outlets. It can manifest itself in learned behaviors such as violent outbursts or aggression, through clinically diagnosed symptoms like hyper vigilance and anxiety, and learned cognitive philosophies that conceive the world to be a menacing place. Vicarious traumas can also be passed inter-generationally by stories and behaviors and disruptions in biology and development, which hinder a child from reaching healthy

development both cognitively and physically. Parents with unhealed trauma are more likely to suffer from addiction and violent outbursts passing along trauma by actually becoming the perpetrator of their child's traumatic experience (Coleman, 2016, p. 562). This is especially devastating with unhealed trauma in women because it is not uncommon to find women as the primary care givers of their children. Unfortunately, the trauma of one individual is not only their own but becomes passed along to those close to them (both in proximity and relation) and so on until the impacts are felt on a communal level. At best trans-generational trauma is like an unwelcome stranger who enters your home and familial life, therefore it is vital that all avenues of plausible trauma healing be explored.

### **The Development of Reiki**

Reiki, a Japanese originated word, can be understood by splitting the word in half; the prefix 'Rei' means "God's Wisdom or the Higher Power" and the suffix 'Ki' means "life force energy" (Rand, 2016 -a). Together Reiki translates to "spiritually guided life force energy" (Rand, 2016 -a). Reiki is meant to support the body's own natural healing process and has been credited as safe way to help overcome both physical and psychological ailments and is often used as a complimentary approach with other treatments.

It is unknown how long Reiki has been around though some sources say for thousands of years or even the beginning of time. However, most sources credit Dr. Mikao Usui as the father of modern day Reiki (Rand, 2016 -b). Dr. Usui, from Japan, grew up in a wealthy Buddhist family and developed interests in medicine, energy movement, and religions. After traveling to pursue studies he

became a Buddhist monk and lived in a monastery near Mt. Kurama. While at the monastery Dr. Usui went on a training to seek enlightenment where he spent 21 days meditating and praying (Reiki Light, 2008). While nothing noteworthy seemed to happen the first twenty days on the morning of the twenty-first day it is said that Usui experienced a revelation of sorts and above his head he felt the life energy of Reiki (Rand, 2016 -b). With this new revelation, Usui began practicing on family members and then decided the benefits of Reiki were too important to keep private (Rand, 2016 -b) so he opened a clinic in Kyoto which posited Reiki as a way to heal oneself. Dr. Usui trained sixteen Reiki masters including Dr. Chujiro Hayashi before passing in 1926 (Reiki Light, 2008). Dr. Hayashi became a Reiki master at the age of forty-seven. He developed Dr. Usui's work further and trained approximately fourteen Reiki masters.

One of the most famous Reiki masters, who is credited with bringing Reiki to the West, is Mrs. Hawayo Takata. Before Dr. Hayashi died in 1940 literature says he gave Mrs. Takata all his Reiki knowledge. Mrs. Takata came to Reiki as a Japanese-American living in Hawaii. On a trip to Japan she was suffering from physical ailments. When she consulted doctors they told her she would need surgery to treat her sickness. Mrs. Takata wanted to find a less evasive way to heal. The doctors she consulted recommended she go to Dr. Hayashi's Reiki clinic in Tokyo. Though she had never heard of Reiki before she began receiving energy sessions and the literature says she was cured of her sickness within months. Mrs. Takata took Reiki back to Hawaii where she opened her own clinic and trained twenty-two Reiki masters. Literature says that due to World War Two she

changed the practice of Reiki to be more palatable to the West. Today Reiki is the fastest growing complementary therapy (Reiki Light, 2008).

### **The Development of Healing Touch**

Nurse Janet Mentgen, who practiced energy therapies from 1980 in Boulder Colorado, developed Healing Touch (History of Healing Touch). Mentgen “...wanted to deepen and expand the connection between nurses and their patients.”. In 1989 Mentgen formally created Healing Touch. In 1993 she founded the Colorado Center for healing Touch and in the same year a Healing Touch certificate program was endorsed by the American Holistic Nurses Association. In 1997 Mentgen then founded the Healing Touch Worldwide Foundation Inc., which receives and disburses grants around the world to support the work of Healing Touch. Today Healing Touch is growing to become commonplace in the nursing and the medical community (Founder’s Story).

### **Reiki Versus Healing Touch**

While Reiki and Healing Touch are similar in theory and practice there are key differences between the two. The Healing Touch system stems from a primarily Western medical tradition and subscribes to standardized procedures while Reiki is more dependent on the style of each practitioner. To become a Reiki master one must go through a process of attunement, while to become accredited in Healing Touch one must take classes and become certified (Pages, 2010). From its history it is no surprise that Healing Touch is more commonly practiced in hospitals in the United States than Reiki, which is more commonly found in private practices (though it may still be found in medical settings).

### **Reiki, Healing Touch, and the Chakra System**

When Reiki was first discovered it used the concept of tandens or energy centers in the body. Reiki originally focused specifically on one main tanden located in the lower abdominal. However, in modern day energy therapies the Hindu chakra system has taken over. Chakra is a Sanskrit word that translates to wheel, vortex, or whirlpool; chakras are centers in bodies where energy flows and can be manipulated by energy therapies like Reiki and Healing Touch. Tandens and chakras are the same thing, but instead of focusing on one main tanden the chakra system focuses on seven main energy centers (Chakras.info, 2017): the top of the head, the forehead, throat, heart, solar plexus, navel, and the bottom of the pelvis. The seven different chakras correspond to and affect different organs, glands, bodily functions, and psychological and emotional conditions (Reiki.nu). Reiki and Healing Touch are meant to unblock and balance the seven chakras and in doing so help heal an individual in a holistic way, similar to trauma healing practices that incorporate the physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual aspects of a person.

### **Complimentary Approach**

Both Reiki and Healing Touch are often classified and used as complimentary alternative medicine (CAM) and therefore used in conjunction with other treatments. This is especially covered in the literature on Healing Touch because of its use and acceptance in hospitals where “...an integrative approach may be particularly important for patients with complex or chronic conditions” (Schlefman, Rappaport, Adam, Stubblefield, 2016). Reiki is also used as a CAM to help curb negative symptoms in more serious cases but more so in non-medical clinics.

The symptoms that Reiki and Healing Touch assist with mainly surround issues of negative physiological issues that result from serious disease and include: pain (Kemper, Fletcher, Hamilton, McLean, 2009), reduced stress and heart rate variability (Schlefman, Rappaport, Adam, Stubblefield, 2016), lower blood pressure, respiratory rate, less mood disturbances, helps with relaxation, helps with a general sense of well-being (Post-White, et al., 2003), reduced anxiety (Kemper, Fletcher, Hamilton, McLean, 2009), drop in PTSD symptoms, greater quality of life, reduced depression and cynicism (PR Newswire, 2012), fatigue (Schnepper, 2009), less stress, and a reduction of seizures for those prone to seizures (Bukowski & Berardi, 2014). Most if not all of these symptoms originate from the stress and anxiety of dealing with significant ailments. For instance there are numerous examples of Healing Touch being administered in hospitals for patients battling cancer and undergoing chemotherapy (Schlefman, Rappaport, Adam, Stubblefield, 2016; Post-White, et al., 2003; Kemper, Fletcher, Hamilton, McLean, 2009; Schnepper, 2009). While Reiki is also practiced in hospitals most of the literature focuses on Reiki being used in private practices.

### **Trauma and PTSD**

Reiki has been used in shelters for women survivors of domestic abuse as well as at military camps for veterans who struggle with trauma. Practitioners using Reiki in women's shelters have allegedly seen success: "Reiki therapy brings violent memories and painful emotions to the surface" and "you can't do any harm doing Reiki, because if that person isn't ready to deal with it, it won't work" (Calgary Herald, 2009). In this situation Reiki was administered to domestic violence survivors and had an immediate effect, as one shelter

counselor said, women were “glowing” after their Reiki session (Calgary Herald, 2009). Similarly, Healing Touch as a complementary therapy has seen great strides in reducing PTSD symptoms in combat-exposed marines. In one study at Camp Pendleton, Healing Touch and guided imagery therapy, “...actually decreased symptoms below the threshold for PTSD diagnosis” (PR Newswire, 2012). Reiki has also been discussed in terms of targeting each chakra in the bodies of veterans. Each chakra was blocked or put off balance as a result of being a soldier in a combat exposed zone. Reiki was used to clear these energy fields to restore overall wellbeing for the veteran (McCutcheon, 2014).

### **Controversy**

Though there are reported positive effects, energy-healing therapies are met with controversy. While some literature claims that Reiki is scientifically based other sources claim that even if energy therapy does have positive results it still cannot be scientifically proven to work. However, certain attitudes in the energy healing community are seemingly unconcerned with what science has been able to prove: “...certain things you just can’t package into a scientific research project, but that doesn’t mean it doesn’t work” (Calgary Herald, 2009). In addition to this, some literature states that energy healing can be proven with brain mapping and research (Roberts Stoler, 2014). Nevertheless, most of the present literature concludes that energy therapy cannot be scientifically proven.

Studies done on energy healing have produced mixed results (Schlefman, Rappaport, Adam, Stubblefield, 2016). Only partial effectiveness has been reported in some studies while other studies have reported greater findings. An improvement on reporting has been asked for in light of the inconsistency seen

through out studies (Hammerschlag & Marx, 2014). Therefore, “controversy exists over whether... Healing Touch intervention itself produces the desired response or if the patient responds to the presence of a caring professional” (Post-White, et al., 2003). Whether or not the beneficial effects of energy healing are due to factors outside of the practice itself there still remains a strong and dedicated following of patients and practitioners using and practicing energy healing who have seen substantive results solely from the therapy itself as shown by various forms of literature.

### **Summary**

In recent decades because of such practitioners’ work such as Bessel Van Der Kolk, Pat Ogden, and Peter Levine trauma healing has moved beyond solely using talk therapy and medications. Today best practice for trauma therapy is found using the physical body to help access and process the imprints of trauma physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Trauma healing has taken a holistic approach to not only manage symptoms but to address root causes of trauma and PTSD.

Reiki and Healing Touch have become more popular in recent years as complimentary alternative medicine approaches. While controversy still surrounds the scientific relevance of Reiki and Healing Touch, the use of either approach does not seem to be slowing down. By manipulating energy through the chakra system, Reiki and Healing Touch help clients use their own healing systems to encourage physical, emotional, and spiritual health, which is similar to the goal of holistic treatment that Van Der Kolk (2014) presents in his book for trauma healing.

While most of the current research on energy healing is done in medical settings, whose patients are suffering from serious medical ailments, this research approaches the matter from women's perspectives in the form of in-depth interviews. The exploration of their experiences will be the forefront of this study. This approach will enable data to represent a more holistic approach to women's lives and the effects of Reiki and Healing Touch. As a result, this research will analyze implications for trauma healing and the field of peacebuilding by exploring a holistic lens in women's lives through the use of Reiki and/or Healing Touch.

## **Methodology**

### **Phenomenological Approach**

This research uses a phenomenological approach to collect data and a triangulation of methods to do so: interviews, aesthetic expression, and participant observation. A trauma healing framework is then used to interpret the data. Phenomenology seeks "...to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who experienced it so as to understand the meaning participants ascribe to the phenomenon" (Teherami, Martimianakis, Stenfros-Hayes, Wadhwa, Varpio, 2015). Therefore, the phenomenon being researched is energy healing through women in Tacoma, Washington to explore the affects of Reiki and Healing Touch on these women, their lives, and their communities.

These experiences and descriptions are then analyzed through a trauma healing framework to pursue possible connections between Reiki and Healing Touch and trauma healing. While this research is ultimately concerned with the

relevance of Reiki and Healing Touch as a trauma healing modality, participants will not be asked through any data collection processes to re-visit past trauma for ethical and safety purposes. This process is also explorative and seeks to create a holistic picture of Reiki and Healing Touch in the lives of women and their communities as trauma healing and peacebuilding takes place through diverse faucets within communities.

### **Data Collection Methods**

#### **Interviews**

This research utilizes in-depth unstructured interviews to collect data on the experiences of women who receive and are practitioners of Reiki and/or Healing Touch. Interviews were, voice recorded, transcribed, coded, and then themes were assigned in relation to the research questions and the codes collected, and then interpreted through a trauma healing framework. Every interviewee was asked the same set of questions though some additional questions were asked to support each interviewee to describe their experiences and perspectives; transcribed interviews and questions can be found in the appendices. Energy practitioners were interviewed as part of this research for several reasons. Given the short timeline this research had to be completed, energy practitioners were accessible to contact as their business information can be found on-line. Energy practitioners who use this profession as their livelihood also felt comfortable sharing their experiences with energy therapy and acted as advocates of the practice. Furthermore, energy therapists have had a longer history using energy therapy and therefore have an adequate perspective of energy therapy's affects on their lives in a holistic manner. Also important to

further explain here is that participants will not be asked questions about traumatic events or memories in their lives. This is for several reasons: the researcher is not qualified to handle any negative responses that could occur mentally or physically with participants re-visiting past traumas, and the researcher did not want to re-traumatize participants, and by using a phenomenological approach interview questions are explorative and not meant to direct participants answers specifically towards trauma healing. Therefore, interviews will be interpreted through a trauma healing framework as explained in the upcoming section: “Trauma Healing Framework.”

Interviewing energy therapists also opens the door to bias. Since the energy therapists interviewed make at least a portion of their income doing this type of work, casting a positive light on this practice could be beneficial for their practice. As energy therapy is still a contested practice in the scientific community the energy therapists interviewed could have wanted to minimize negative experiences with energy therapy and maximize on positive experiences. However, most if not all participants, while describing the various positive effects of Reiki and Healing Touch, were sure to mention the limitations of energy therapy as well.

### **Aesthetic Expression**

To compliment the interview process and in the spirit of a phenomenological approach, this research asked interviewees to create a simple artistic expression representing their over-all lives before they started receiving energy therapy and after they had begun to receive energy therapy. Two blank sheets of paper were given to each participant. One sheet was for ‘before’ energy

therapy had become a regular part of their lives and the other was for ‘after’ energy therapy had become a regular part of their lives. Again, given a phenomenological approach the artistic expression was left rather open-ended to be executed under the discretion of the participant. Examples of what participants could do were given: i.e. a short poem, words, colors, or simple pictures; and each participant was asked to spend no more than fifteen minutes completing this.

The aesthetic expression was meant to give participants an alternative approach to communicate information; some participants may find it easier and more useful to communicate their experiences through this medium. This was also meant to provide diversity in the data collected process. However, it is important to note here that while all participants received instructions on this process and most agreed to complete this ‘expression’ and send it in the mail (with a stamped envelope given to them) only one participant decided to complete this exercise. Because of this, the data collected does not represent as full of a picture as it would have if all six women, who were interviewed, had participated. Like interviewing, the aesthetic expression also presents bias: the negative aspects of energy therapy could be minimized while the positive aspects are magnified.

### **A Note on Selecting Participants**

Participants who were asked to participate in this research are energy therapists who practice Reiki and/or Healing Touch. They had to identify as a woman and practice in Tacoma Washington. I selected participants through e-mail. Therefore, the selection process presented bias because I chose women who

were available to contact and participate during the data collection timeline.

When they were first asked to participate in this study they were asked to share experiences from the perspective of a client. However, unbeknownst at the time, energy healing affects both client and practitioner during a Reiki or Healing Touch session, so most participants considered giving an energy healing session close to receiving energy healing. Participants also were also motivated to share (and often did in depth) their stories about clients as well.

### **Participant Observation**

Participant observation is the last method utilized in conjunction with interviews and aesthetic expression. A Reiki session and not a Healing Touch treatment was received. Notes were taken before and after the session on the effects of the session, as well as a general description of the session itself. Participant observation allowed information gathering from a first hand perspective and added to the perspectives illustrated by the interviews and aesthetic expression. In no way is this approach meant to mirror research participants' experiences, it is analyzed on its own and is intended to add to the research and not to define others' experiences. This strategy for data collection is inherently biased because all of the information collected from the Reiki session was processed through an individual lens (the researcher) and interpreted based on learned perspectives. In addition, the participant observation was also created around one Reiki session, because of the scope of this research and timeline, whereas several Reiki and Healing Touch sessions would have provided more accurate data.

### **Trauma Healing Framework**

“Nobody can ‘treat’ a war, or abuse, rape, molestation, or any other horrendous event.... But what *can* be dealt with are the imprints of the trauma on the body, mind, and soul...” (Van Der Kolk, 2003). As Dr. Bessel Van Der Kolk expresses in his book, terrible traumatic events do not go away, but the symptoms of how those experiences are expressed in the body and psyche can be healed or at least managed. To offer a definitive outline for trauma healing would be impossible and inappropriate as each individual’s healing is unique. However, Kolk does offer indicators that he has witnessed and found to be crucial to his patients’ recovery. Therefore, a framework can be established and implemented to indicate the healing process is taking place:

1. Finding a way to be calm and focused
  - Dealing with hyper arousal
2. Learning to maintain that calm
  - Mindfulness
  - Self-regulation
  - Overall psychological improvement (addictions, attention span, ability to learn, etc.)
3. Finding a way to be fully alive in the present and engaged with the people around you
  - Communal rhythms and synchrony
  - Feeling safe
  - Feeling your physical body in a healthy way – feeling like “some body”
4. Not having to keep secrets from yourself
  - Daring to tell the truth
  - Self-discovery/self-leadership – knowing yourself
  - Rescripting your life
  - Self-compassion (Van Der Kolk, 2012, pgs. 205-306)

Since the overall data collection process follows a phenomenological approach, and uses rather open-ended questions so participants explore their

experiences and perspectives without being directed toward a particular answer, this trauma healing framework facilitates interpretation of the data to explore possible implications of energy therapy has for trauma healing. Therefore, by using this framework, bias is minimized because research questions are not directing participants to confirm Reiki and/or Healing Touch's merits for trauma healing if they in fact have not experienced any. And, importantly, questions about traumatic experiences are not asked which could have negative affects on participants.

### **Limitations**

This research presents several limitations that are important to consider. One of the most impactful limitations of this research faces was time constraints, especially given the in-depth explorative style of data collection. If time had allowed for more interviews, a more well rounded illustration of women's experiences with energy therapy would likely emerge. As previously mentioned, it would have been unsafe and unethical to ask participants to bring up any traumatic experiences of the past. Therefore, I did not directly ask women about trauma. Another limitation that my research faced was the identities of the interviewees I contacted. As noted earlier I asked energy therapists to be interviewed because it was a simpler and more appropriate population to contact, the idea was that they would be more open to talking about this topic, and additionally more knowledgeable as most likely having undergone extensive energy healing sessions themselves. However, this group of interviewees also limited my research in that this group could likely be "sold" on the experience

and benefits of energy therapy and therefore may offer little negative perspectives or embellish any benefits they have felt. Furthermore, my research will be conducted in my community, Tacoma, Washington, and represents only the experiences of women in this area.

## **Findings**

### **Interviews**

Six women who practice and receive Reiki and/or Healing Touch were interviewed. One woman asked to answer interview questions by e-mail while the other five were interviewed in person. All women are from the United States and live and work in the Tacoma, Washington area. As previously mentioned, when these interviewees were first asked to participate in this study they were asked to focus on their experiences as ‘clients’ or ‘receivers’ of energy therapy. However, all interviews incorporate perspectives from both a client and practitioner’s point of view. This is due to the inability decisively separate between the experiences of receiving and administering energy therapy. According to participants, practicing Reiki and Healing Touch is also a form of receiving because everyone’s energy fields affect the space they are in and the people they are around. One participant demonstrated this through an anecdote. She gave Reiki to her infant daughter every time she breast-fed: “With an infant in particular you’re so energetically intertwined and your well-being, there’s not much of a difference between you. So, my interpretation of that experience giving my daughter Reiki... I was both a giver and a receiver of Reiki.” Therefore, findings for this study move between perspectives of a giver and a receiver of energy therapy and often crosses over into both perspectives.

Of the six interviewed, two women identified with practicing Reiki, two with Healing Touch, one with a combination of sorts, and one identifying with both Reiki and Healing Touch. The participant who uses both Reiki and Healing Touch refers to Healing Touch as Therapeutic Touch in her interview, which is often interpreted as a different practice however she still identified with practicing Healing Touch. All women note a positive and varyingly profound experience with their early Reiki and Healing Touch therapies. These early experiences motivated them to explore energy therapy further to heal loved ones as well as themselves. Most women described their first sessions receiving Reiki or Healing Touch as “deeply peaceful” and that it felt like a “door opening” to something they had not known before. Some said it was a feeling they did not know they could have. These feelings were so influential that interviewees set out to become certified practitioners. For one woman, practicing Reiki and Healing Touch was an intuitive practice and she remembers practicing as early as the age of six. Four of the other women came to energy healing in adulthood after having spent years in other professions.

Four main themes were common through out the interviews in relation to this research: holistic effectiveness, accessibility, relationship building, and Reiki and Healing Touch as complimentary modalities. Throughout these themes several sub-themes were present. Self-care is one sub-theme that was highly regarded and contributes to most of the other themes. Vulnerable populations and vulnerable life experiences or phases was also another sub-theme throughout that ranges anywhere from those with stress to those struggling with homelessness and drug addiction. Furthermore, when participants were asked if

they have critiques of Reiki or Healing Touch most felt that the actual practice of Reiki or Healing Touch, in its true and correct form, is without critique, “It can do no harm” was a common sentiment. However, critique of Reiki practitioners was stated if they completed a fraudulent course. Healing Touch was not so harshly criticized because in participants’ perspectives Healing Touch requires strict standards and acquisition of ability to become a practitioner. Another common criticism was the competitive culture surrounding Reiki and Healing Touch; the ego and the business of making money in these professions was a common negative experience that these women described.

### **Holistic Effectiveness**

Reiki and Healing Touch treatments were seen to be effective in participants’ lives in a holistic way. Participants’ overall quality of life was bettered with energy therapy: physically, emotionally, spiritually, relationships with family and friends, and within their personal and professional lives. A few participants shared stories of when Reiki and Healing Touch helped them overcome physical problems. One participant was surprised to find that Reiki healed intense pain in her heel that she had been experiencing for months: “[It felt] pretty physical to me, it didn’t seem like something that was very energetic or psychological, but my husband did an energy healing on it. Then it was better, and in a couple days it was gone.” That same participant practiced Reiki on her young daughter’s hemangioma. Even though doctors said it would clear between five and nine years it disappeared within a year. This participant also found that Reiki helped her recover from pneumonia much faster than it had previously taken her. Three participants (two of which are nurses) found that Reiki, and

especially Healing Touch, are assistive in hospital settings: stabilizing vitals and helping patients when medications were not enough to get the patient to stop vomiting, helping an alcoholic patient who could not take medications, or helping a someone through the dying process. However, as one participant stressed: “[Energy therapy] doesn’t replace medical care, it doesn’t replace psychological care, but it provides a unique way to help and support people in states of imbalance and distress...”

All participants stated they experienced deep emotional calmness, peacefulness, and balance from their first receptive energy therapy. All participants spoke of calmness, not only during energy therapy sessions, but also in a transcending way that beneficially affected their overall lives. One participant finds that this calmness has affected her a great deal: “If something goes wrong in my life I’m shocked because I’ve gotten enough Healing Touch treatments in my life that my insides are calm so my outside world is calm.” However, this sense of deeply integrated calmness was not something that happened with the first session “...it wasn’t over night, let’s talk about over a 3 year time.” Likewise another participant stated: “...it’s not easy, your stuff can come up like old traumas, old abuses...” One participant in particular discussed her experiences with energy therapy and emotional connection: “...it brings you right back to center, grounds you, gets you to your body, and connect to the emotion that is causing the problem.” Similarly this same participant also found that energy therapy was a key modality to helping her and her clients with stress: “... just doing [energy therapy] will drop your cortisol levels in your body so that you can begin to stay in your body longer to heal.”

One participant in particular found Healing Touch serves as a foundation for her spiritualism. “It’s broadened my spiritual horizons and Healing Touch was the stepping stone. It’s changed everything about how I think and I feel. I know myself better and I’m able to be myself more than I have since I was a young girl.” This same participant also acknowledged that energy therapy harmonizes well with other forms of spiritualism and perspectives: “...[it can be] integrated into a way of thinking and being with any religion you want to put it with. It’s not opposed.” While energy therapy was spoken of as an enhancement and pathway to experiencing spiritualism, one participant did not stop there but described how energy therapy or spiritual healing can manifest in everyday life including the emotional and physical: “...this is my theory, I haven’t been proven wrong yet. Based on experiences, all illness is a spiritual crisis, or an energetic crisis... an energetic imbalance. All illness... it starts in the energy field first. When they first started teaching that as a nurse I thought: ‘Yeah but it’s a migraine, a broken leg is a broken leg,’ but when you start questioning [clients] a little more, like what was going on in your life when you broke your leg?” This participant found physical maladies were preceded by emotional or spiritual distress. The point being, that energy affects beings physically and emotionally to the point of physical injury and sickness.

### **Accessibility**

Accessibility was also a common topic during interviews. Accessibility was spoken of in terms of Reiki and Healing Touch being an instinctual and natural everyday exchange. Simply put one participant said: “We all are exchanging energy with each other all the time and aren’t aware of doing so.” Another

participant echoed this sentiment by saying: “If someone interacts with you with a good intention they are doing energy work in a way.” Every time we have a conversation or even share the same space with someone else this we are having an energetic exchange and that can improve others’ energy with our own positive energy. As mentioned by several participants, when someone is hurt emotionally or physically people: “...do [energy work] spontaneously and naturally...they put their hands on people and people feel better.” Furthermore, participants find that Reiki and Healing Touch are accessible for both themselves and their clients because of its simplicity and everyday use. One participant said: “I do Reiki everyday.... You would take a vitamin everyday, your calcium or your iron, so if you do your Reiki and Therapeutic Touch everyday it is no different.” A few participants find Reiki and Healing Touch to be so straightforward and relevant for daily self-maintenance that they stressed the importance of teaching it to their clients so that they have their own ability to practice as much as needed on their own. Echoing this sentiment one participant said: “...I really encourage people to become Reiki initiated or Healing Touch trained because those are actually the most accessible and incredible forms of energy healing right now.” She then went on to describe how she recommended a potential client become trained in Reiki or Healing Touch instead of paying for a session for her friend.

### **Complimentary Modality**

Participants find Reiki and Healing Touch to be vital complimentary modalities in terms of not only medicine, but also in various aspects of their lives. Similar to effectiveness, energy therapy is a holistic complimentary modality in that it affects various aspects of ones life when paired with other therapies.

Medically, participants find a strong connection between the healing properties of energy therapy when paired with more traditional Western medicine. One participant even found through her work and experiences that “Science, energy, and spirituality are now being reconnected, because science has demonstrated without a shadow of a doubt that you cannot separate them. All must be necessary for health, all must be necessary for humanity.” One participant who practiced as a nurse when she was first acquainted with energy healing discovered that she now wants to: “...normalize this work, because so many people go to the doctor and they can’t find out what’s wrong, but then they get an energy balancing and what was bothering them stops bothering them.” Another participant, who was also a practicing nurse when she received her first energy healing, finds that energy healing even compliments surgery. She gave this example to illustrate: “I always knew that some 82 year olds walked out of the hospital after open-heart surgery and some 50 year olds died on the table. Why was that? There was another physical factor... the state of the person’s will and their relationship to life and themselves had a lot to do with it.” She then went on to describe how energy therapy has done just that – positively influenced her life.

This concept of something else, the relationship between life and the self was a thought voiced by other participants as well. One participant noted: “I was aware of myself mentally and physically, but becoming aware of myself energetically was like seeing the world with a new dimension.” All participants spoke of a kind of “opening” to themselves and the world around them, which they had not been aware of before. One participant in particular, who had been undergoing dramatic “paradigm” shifts in her life, found that energy therapy

offered a key perspective to the new experiences and viewpoints she was already adopting: “It changed everything. It just took time and it was my own resistance that caused the worse problems for me personally. But I didn’t have to throw anything away except for fear-based hard-edged judgment, and hatred, criticism, and ego.... Healing Touch was the doorway.” It was not only during times of medical duress that participants found energy healing valuable, but as a constant contributor to an overall improved quality of life. As one participant summarized, “You usually can’t quantify it. It’s usually very holistic and it can have an effect on any part of someone’s life... the physical body... your emotions... your thoughts... it can have an impact on your relationships. It can change your life.... I would define all of that as you.”

### **Community and Relationship Building**

All participants noted a strong connection between Reiki and Healing Touch and a collective benefit by building relationships on an individual level those relationships extend outwards towards communal change. One participant described this effect when she said: “It goes out like ripples in the water so that you begin to build community.” These women have built trust and strong bonds with family, friends, other women, clients and even marginalized populations

One participant reflected on her experiences practicing energy therapy: “When I give someone a Reiki treatment, there is an instant bond between us. There is trust from the recipient, after all, they are coming to me as a complete stranger, closing their eyes and letting me place my hands on them.” Another participant echoed this by saying: “It’s a lovely way to be with people. It’s really intimate in one way and in another way it doesn’t feel invasive.” Both statements

mirror an attitude that Reiki and Healing Touch are modalities that facilitate relationship building in a person-to-person fashion. In one interview this was especially true when it came to family and friends. This practitioner used Reiki to help her father through his dying process and uses it to help her mother with her heart arrhythmia.

One participant stressed the importance Reiki and Healing Touch when communicating with others in a meaningful way. She recognized that: “In this day and age we communicate but we do not have community.” She followed this by stressing the importance of Reiki and Healing Touch as a higher means of communication: “Touch is still the most powerful mean of communication.” She spoke of touch within Reiki and Healing Touch as a way of breaking boundaries and connecting with others in a very close way that promotes healing and positive connections. Later she also spoke of Reiki and Healing Touch as self-care modalities that, while individually essential, can also expand outwards to the wider community: “When you do self-care you begin to connect emotions to your body and your pain. So if... you feel like you’re carrying the burdens of the world or things in your life have become a burden. When you understand that [you can recognize], ‘oh, maybe I need to look at how I do community, how I do family, how I do self-care.... I can relax, I can [practice Reiki], and breathe... and the solution will come to me and I can facilitate change within myself, which facilitates change within family, community, and the world.” Consequently, this participant uses energy therapy to practice mindfulness in a way that allows her to be aware of her body, take care of herself, and cultivate the ability to reach out to her greater community by employing that same mindfulness.

Most participants also find that Reiki and Healing Touch are able to assist populations such as: the military and veterans, women, people struggling with addiction, people who are homeless, and those with mental afflictions. One participant in reference to the opioid crisis said: “There’s a lot of pain and a tremendous amount of suffering, whether it is physical pain or psychological or emotional suffering, people are really needing to medicate themselves to the point of to death and it speaks of a tremendous problem that isn’t being met by medicine and by the medical world.... I think energy healing has a role to play in that....” In fact the role of energy therapy in marginalized communities and with vulnerable populations was one of the most common themes in the interviews.

One participant described her experiences with teaching Healing Touch as a self-care modality for those taking care of people dying of AIDS in Alexandria, South Africa, she stated: “...we can help empower someone [with Healing Touch]. I’ve always enjoyed my patients and I wanted to help them feel empowered in a really disempowering situation.” Another participant also told a story of a young woman who wanted to take Healing Touch classes but did not have a lot of money because she is the daughter of a homeless family who grew up living in the woods and on the streets: “And she said that after she tried energy healing she said ‘I have more options. There’s some opportunity for me to turn this childhood trauma around’.... I mean that’s amazing to give someone hope.” Although diverse populations are being assisted with energy therapy one participant realizes that some communities still do not accept energy healing. She stated: “It’s weird to a lot of people. It’s a lot more accepted then it use to be, but it’s weird to people.”

In addition to this, women were also described in most interviews as a population that can significantly profit from energy healing. A few interviewees also mentioned that women are more likely to be energy healers than other identities because of the acculturation of being a woman and subsequently as one interview participant put it, “Doctor Mom.” Another participant summarized this by saying in regards to receiving energy therapy that, “...as a woman... we are caregivers and we put ourselves last every time. So, it is very important for us to have tools that we can use that require no tools.” One participant also finds energy therapy to be beneficial for her health concerns such as developing breast cancer and cervical cancer because it runs in her family. Furthermore, a couple participants also stated that energy healing has helped them overcome childhood sexual abuse. One participant noted that after receiving energy therapy: “I don’t have to spend my energy getting them (the perpetrator) to take responsibility or be afraid or anything....” Needless to say Reiki and Healing Touch has had substantial and diverse results in the lives of women.

### **Artistic Expression**

The artistic expression portion of the data collection gives insight to the complimentary modality theme. As previously mentioned, only one participant decided to complete the artistic expression. Though participants were informed that this artistic expression was meant to be simple (even a word or color would suffice) a couple participants seemed uneasy with the prospect; they seemed to think that a ‘good’ piece of art had to be thoroughly completed.

Recommendations for using this data collection method in the future would be to gather participants from diverse generations (participants were mostly from the

same generation), scaffolding the artistic expression to make it easier and not so open-ended, and have participants complete the short project right before or after being interviewed. However, a stamped envelope was left with participants so that they could complete the artistic expression on their own and send it by mail; this was meant to give participants time and space to complete their expression, but ultimately probably encouraged interviewees to forget, decide not to do this portion of the data collection process, or become too busy to participate.

Nonetheless, the participant who completed the artistic expression offered a unique insight into energy therapy as a complimentary modality in her life. The 'before energy therapy' sheet of paper features a colorful heart and the 'after energy therapy' features a similar colorful heart but is much larger in size. The participant who completed this told me in person that energy therapy has enhanced and strengthened the love that she felt for the world and humanity. This feeling of love had been there her whole life but was greatly reinforced with energy therapy.

### **Participant Observation**

For this research I received a one-hour Reiki treatment. I took notes about half an hour before the session and about an hour after the session on the experience itself and the initial after affects. A day later I added some short notes as a follow-up. The two themes that I found to be present during my session, and shortly after, were effectiveness and relationship building.

Over the last few years I have felt elevate anxiety symptoms. So, I felt rather anxious before the Reiki session. However, about five minutes into the

session I felt much more at ease, and after the session I felt very tranquil and stopped experiencing anxiety symptoms. The practitioner directed my attention to the room's energy and how it had changed. I remember agreeing and even said: "It feels like Christmas." After the session a deep feeling of calm stayed with me even though I was in a busy environment. This feeling lasted for about an hour and a half, and felt similar to when I had gotten a massage in the past. My anxiety symptoms did not return until two days later. I would not say that I experienced any huge paradigm shifts, however if I think if I had more sessions I would be able to experience more substantial results.

I felt like this Reiki session was a positive one not only because of the treatment but also because of the practitioner. She made me feel very comfortable and seemed to be excited to have me as a client so I felt welcome and excited myself for the session. I can understand why interview participants discussed a sense of relationship building and connection to the wider community through energy therapy. I feel like I created a strong relationship with this Reiki practitioner even though she is more or less a stranger. Looking back to the literature review, in other studies done, researchers thought that energy therapy induced calmness not because the energy healing but because of the attention from a caring practitioner. However, in my experience, while my Reiki practitioner's personality was warm and added to my overall experience I feel that the Reiki process was responsible, at least in part, for my feelings of peacefulness and temporary resolution of anxiety.

## Discussion

In this section the three research questions will be revisited and answered. Van Der Kolk's trauma healing framework will be applied and the themes extracted from the data discussed in the previous section will be considered when applicable. The main question this research seeks to explore is:

### **What is the relationship between Reiki and Healing Touch and trauma healing through the perspectives of women in Tacoma Washington?**

To answer this question the trauma healing framework will be applied starting with the first attribute, *finding a way to be calm: dealing with hyper arousal*. To explore this attribute requires reference back to how participants described their first energy healing session as well as subsequent sessions which lead participants' to their current Reiki and Healing Touch professions. All participants used words like "calm" to describe their experience. Some participants even expressed feeling "deep inner-peace" and feeling like what they think a "normal" person should feel like. One participant stated that she did not know that she could feel that level of peacefulness and calmness after her first energy healing session. This calmness is represented in the theme "effectiveness." I too felt a sense of calm during my first Reiki session. This deep relaxation lasted about an hour and a half and my anxiety symptoms drastically lessened for about forty-eight hours.

The next section of the framework stems from the previous section, *learning to maintain that calm: mindfulness, self-regulation, and overall psychological improvement*. While my Reiki session did help decrease my stress level the same anxiety I had felt prior to this session did return. However, one

interview participant who had been using energy healing for a few years (as discussed in thematic section “effectiveness) felt that her overall life had gradually grown calmer with additional years receiving energy therapy. One participant described the ability of energy healing to promote healing because it made her mindful and aware of her emotions. This participant went on to describe that once someone is able to connect to their emotions and support themselves in a healthy way (using modalities like energy therapy), they are more likely to cultivate the awareness that it takes to build relationships with others. In this way energy therapy creates mindfulness, and is applicable to the trauma healing framework; mindfulness helps sustain calmness and provides a pathway for interaction within communities.

Similar to mindfulness, self-regulation was spoken of by the participants in how it related to the theme of accessibility. Learning to do self-Reiki or Healing Touch and having these modalities can connect a person to their emotions as well as offer an accessible means to receive the proper amount of energy healing, and additionally making the practice financially affordable as well. Overall psychological improvement was also a prevalent topic within community building and accessibility. Two participants explained at length about the communal application of energy therapy in terms of those dealing with various psychological barriers including: addiction, anxiety, and depression. One participant stated that in her experience, clients dealing with psychological problems usually experience a major shift their first energy session but it is with multiple sessions that most experience lasting improvement. Energy healing is also accessible in the sense that Reiki and Healing Touch is simple to use (once a person is taught) and

empowers those who need it because they do not have to rely on others or additional resources (money, travel, time, etc.) to receive the benefits and practice self-care.

The next section, *finding a way to be fully alive in the present and engaged with the people around you*, was described in many of the interviews within the themes relationship and community building, and effectiveness. The first indicator of this section is *being aligned with communal rhythms and synchrony*. Kolk explains in his book that exercises such as rhythmic drumming circles can help bring trauma victims into awareness to the flow of groups and social situations. During the interviews participants explained that energy healing can serve as a pathway to communal synchrony. By first developing a trusting bond with an energy healer, learning how to practice self-care, and do energy healing to oneself, and eventually acting as a vessel being to assist friends and family with their own health, Reiki and Healing Touch can foster and align an individual with their community. In this way, trauma survivors can find a pathway and modality to take self-care to a communal level and therefore reclaim a sense of flow and ease in social situations while also creating communal connections. Though Reiki and Healing Touch are not the same as drumming and other rhythmic exercises, energy therapy does offer an accessible healing outlet for trauma survivors to reconnect with others and expand connections to the community at large.

The next section in this framework is *feeling safe*. One participant discussed how energy therapy affected her life by creating the foundations for a spiritual pathway after her once Christian religious background “blew wide

open.” For her this seemed to offer solace in the sense that she was able to learn more about, and accept, herself for even though she was going through significant life changes and upheavals. This same participant also finds comfort in energy healing given her fight to overcome alcoholism and her experiences with being sexually abused. Another participant echoed this by briefly speaking of how energy healing helped her overcome sexual abuse from her childhood. Feeling safe on an everyday basis through the alleviation of burdens was also a way that energy therapy helped one participant and her clients. These burdens were both physical and emotional in nature, and once these burdens were alleviated, this participant found that living a higher standard of life was achieved.

The next indicator of healing in this framework is *feeling one’s physical body in a healing way*. Most participants went into detail about the ability of Reiki and Healing Touch to heighten their bodies’ healing abilities in terms of physical pains and ailments. One participant also spoke of energy healing as an effective modality for connecting emotions to the physical body which is what many who have undergone severe trauma struggle with (as explained by Van Der Kolk in the literature review).

Finally the last section in this portion of the trauma healing framework, and similar to the previous section, is *feeling like ‘some body.’* All of those interviewed expressed that, due to the effects of both Reiki and Healing Touch, they are able to feel healthier in their physical bodies as well as their overall lives. This was often described in that participants often times came to Reiki and Healing Touch as a means to heal those close to them and then found that they

were also healed, some even reclaimed their lives and their identities which allowed them to experience a higher quality of life.

The last section in the trauma healing framework is, *not having to keep secrets from yourself*. The characteristics that define this are: *daring to tell the truth, self-discovery, self-leadership, knowing yourself, and rescripting your life*. This section and the following sub-sections were described in most interviews.

Once interview participants started using energy therapy and discovered how effective and accessible it was the trajectory of their lives changed. For one interviewee it helped her discover new pathways in several aspects of her life: she found that energy therapy gave her the spiritual foundation she needed, it helped her manage her stress and insecurities, and gave her a new paradigm that promoted love and positivity in her life. For all participants using energy therapy for loved ones as well as themselves provoked them to pivot toward a new career path, even after years of working in other fields. One participant found energy therapy so effective that, instead of pursuing a master's degree in nursing, she decided to pursue energy therapy and is now making Healing Touch accessible for marginalized populations.

The last sub-section in the trauma healing framework is *self-compassion* which all participants exemplified to some extent. Whether it be practicing self-care, healing from sexual abuse, or using energy therapy in times of high stress or crisis, participants use Reiki and Healing Touch as modalities not only to receive care but to enhance the health and well being of those around them.

While Reiki and Healing Touch can help overcome trauma, according to the data collected and the trauma healing framework, there are limitations to energy healing's ability to do this. Similar to what current literature discusses, as well as the perspectives in the interviews and the artistic expression, energy therapy works most effectively when it is used as a complimentary approach and not used as the sole healing modality. This was reflected in the interviews when participants described using energy healing in times of crisis or illness but also stressed that it was used in conjunction with professional medical treatment, medicine, and professional psychological assistance. This was also mirrored in the artistic expression. While the participant concluded that her compassion for humanity was enhanced by energy therapy, she admitted that it was still an interest and talent of hers before energy healing came into her life. I also experienced this during my participant observation: while my Reiki session was a positive and helpful experience it did not cure my anxiety. Furthermore, energy healing, according to interview participants, works best when used consistently especially if there is a serious concern someone is trying to heal from and work through. However, according to the data collected, Reiki and Healing Touch do act as a missing part or an enhancement, to other healing modalities and treatments. Also, in terms of working with trauma survivors, Reiki and Healing Touch may not be appropriate as early stage treatment options. Some trauma survivors may find that they are unable to fully relax and close their eyes and let a stranger place their hands on or near them. However, once they are able to allow this, Reiki and Healing Touch have the potential to help them (in combination with other healing modalities) in a significant way.

**According to the women interviewed how could the benefits of trauma healing, through Reiki and Healing Touch manifest in women's everyday lives?**

While manifestations of energy healing are apparent in these women's every day lives (careers, paradigms, and interests), energy healing, in terms of trauma healing, are apparent in the calmness participants feel, a greater sense of control, and various life improvements. As discussed earlier, energy healing has nurtured calmness and inner-peace in these women's lives through continued use and self-care. Not covered explicitly in other sections is the sense of control that energy therapy has provided for these women in their daily lives. The trauma healing framework points to an overall sense of control when gaining back one's ability to regulate emotions as well experiencing life in a fulfilling way. As Van Der Kolk states: "Our sense of agency, how much we feel in control, is defined by our relationship with our bodies and its rhythms.... In order to find our voice, we have to be *in* our bodies – able to access our inner sensations" (Van Der Kolk, 2014, p. 333). As previously touched upon, Reiki and Healing Touch have encouraged emotional connection within the women interviewed. Physically, emotionally, and spiritually this connection has affected most facets of these women's lives: building spiritual foundations, enjoying community interactions, and self-care. Through the connection with oneself, energy therapy has given these women a greater sense of control over living the way they want to and to the standard they want. Also apparent is that this sense of control is holistic – it permeates to most if not all aspects of these women's lives and is experienced every day. Just as trauma infects every aspect of a person's life, Reiki and Healing Touch have the potential to be strengthening agents in the struggle against

trauma. Reiki and Healing Touch allow women access to a transformative self-care tool that can help turn traumatic memories into just that, memories. So that these memories no longer dictate the way women live their lives and the quality they seek to live it by.

**What are the implications for the field of peacebuilding in relation to these women's experiences?**

According to the data collected, energy healing works best as a complimentary approach to support breaking the cycle of trauma. It is especially applicable for assisting marginalized and trauma-affected populations including women. As mentioned earlier, energy healing has assisted with: addiction, ending the cycle of homelessness, managing childhood trauma, and providing women a tool for self-care. One participant noted the importance of energy healing in Tacoma because of the high volume of military employees present. Similarly, another participant explained that energy therapy has caught the attention of the Veteran's Administration. This is important given the prevalence of traumatic experiences within the military, especially for those with combat experience. Through the perspectives of women energy practitioners in Tacoma, Washington, and my own short experience with energy healing, Reiki and Healing Touch are effective and accessible modalities that should be considered along with other treatments for trauma healing (and therefore community building) because of energy therapy's ability to not only offer a missing piece to emotional and physical health, but to also support marginalized and trauma affected populations.

### **Practical Applicability and Recommendations**

Since energy therapy is accessible and offers holistic effectiveness it is a healing modality that is applicable to everyone. However, and unsurprisingly, Reiki and Healing Touch are particularly applicable to people, groups, and organizations that deal with trauma-affected populations. Examples of these institutions are as follows: Veterans' hospitals and services, addiction counseling centers, social workers, any group that wants to or does offer supplementary or alternative approaches to prescribed drugs, and domestic violence survivor groups and organizations to name a few.

To expand and normalize energy healing services like Reiki and Healing Touch for trauma survivors, continued studies on this subject is warranted. In particular, work between psychiatrists specializing in trauma healing and energy therapy would expand on the affects of Reiki and Healing Touch for trauma patients. Further research into the biological and physiological affects that Reiki and Healing Touch have on the body, especially in terms of cortisol reduction and its application to trauma survivors, is another topic that should be studied. Finally, while Reiki and Healing Touch are accessible in the actual practice, they could be more so. If insurance companies were to cover these practices and more work is done to make Reiki and Healing Touch available to people with disabilities as a self-care tool, this would improve the relevance of these healing modalities.

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### **Appendix A: Interview Questions**

1. What brought you to Reiki and/or Healing Touch as a client?
2. What were your initial or early reactions/experiences with Reiki/Healing Touch?
3. How have your initial experiences changed and/or remained the same over time?
4. How has Reiki/Healing Touch affected your life in a holistic way: for example personal, family, etc.?
  - a. Were you surprised to see this/these affects? Why or why not?
  - b. From your experiences could you see Reiki/Healing Touch having an effect on communities? If so how?
5. Is Reiki/Healing Touch especially important for you as a woman as a part of the community in Tacoma, Washington? If so how?
6. What critiques would you give Reiki/Healing Touch or your experience with Reiki/Healing Touch?
7. Do you have anything else to add?

\*\*Participants will be asked to focus on their experiences from a client perspective.

## **Appendix B: Interview 1**

### **1. What brought you to Reiki and/or Healing Touch as a client?**

What brought me was I had a white German Shepard named Shotsie who owned my heart and she was ill and she had had a surgery. She wasn't doing well. And I was talking to someone on the phone that I met and she said (name) you should learn Reiki you could help your dog. And I had never heard of it. So, I got on the computer, Googled, researched a little bit and went to someone in the area and took my first Reiki class and fell in love with it. And ya that was about 12 or 13 years ago.

M: Did it (Reiki) still seem like a new thing?

P: It's like it just opened something up and I then took a couple other classes one with (name) that's like a top Reiki guy in the world. I took my master class in Peru, and then added the Shamanism and some other things. It's like once I began that Reiki what I saw, my dog could barely walk, and you know what after I learned Reiki and started giving her Reiki I had her two more years. So I saw what it did for her and my other rescue animals. I saw what it did for myself and oh my gosh I know here in later questions I'll talk about how it's effected my life and I can just go on for hours but that is the reason why I got into it, for my dog, but when I began I had no idea how life changing it would be.

### **2. What were your initial or early reactions/experiences with Reiki/Healing Touch?**

Initially I was nervous. I didn't totally understand it but as I practiced it and learned more about it I became intrigued. I also like to study the scientifics of something and I have enjoyed the learning, the research, and the scientifics of it. Reiki is in our energy field our luminous energy field and I just became more fascinated and loved it. I saw the benefits it gave me and others around me, my pet, and my reaction was like opening a door. I had no idea it even existed.

M: So before you really knew what Reiki was, you went and got it done, and would you say that's what "sold" you on Reiki and not necessarily the scientific information surrounding it?

P: What sold me was when I read about it and saw the potential of how I could help my dog and then when I went and received it I was like okay I get an idea of how this works and I feel good and I'm going to learn to do it. I want to learn more, but what really sold me on it was the possibilities and the potential of this healing modality, what it could do for myself and others.

M: Was there any part of Reiki that you really liked in terms of its practice? Was it simple to use for example?

P: Yes that was one thing. It is quite simple, powerful, but still quite simple. It wasn't very complicated and it was a matter of learning and trusting. Ya, it was simple but yet fantastic. And it sold me that it's something I can do, anyone can do this. You know, I'm a busy girl, I have a lot going on and I can do this.

### **3. How have your initial experiences changed and/or remained the same over time?**

It's never stayed the same. It began at one point at one level and with the more I learned the more I practiced the more I widened my research the more I trained it just expanded and became more fulfilling and more rewarding and it continues to do that to this day. A good 12 years later, it continues to do that. And I feel it continues to help me grow and do for others and it's never been stagnant.

**4. How has Reiki/Healing Touch affected your life in a holistic way: for example personal, family, etc.?**

You know, I've always been a very grateful minded person, I've always been very spiritual grateful, a happy person, and I've always even though I've had challenges in my life I've always felt happiness is a choice and was a preemie baby, not suppose to survive, so I've always been grateful for my life. And it's like bringing in that Reiki I've already felt grateful for my life and it's like God wanted me to live and it's like it just.... Even though Reiki isn't religious it's spiritual and it has opened up that connection, it's become stronger. What it's done for my vibration and my health it's been so many years since I've been sick because of what it does for our immune system but I've seen it effect the health of family members. I've seen it affect the health of pets.

M: And this is the Reiki you've gotten done to yourself?

P: Ya, and I see the difference of the effect, Reiki does, Reiki raises our vibration, so when my vibration is raised that effects those around me and I've seen that effect with family members with lifting their spirits and opening their eyes like: "Oh I want to learn more about nutrition, I want to learn more about energy, I want to know." Because we're all contagious, what we put out there. Medically it affects those around us, so I've seen that, you know with others around me. I've seen it with clients and students that I've been honored to work with. I've seen it with community with things like I'm big on fundraisers. I've given Reiki to homeless people.... And to be able to do that it's not only fulfilling to me but I see what it does for others, which you can't even describe.

M: So you'd say those close to you and even maybe not close to you can pick up on a higher would you say vibration or energy field? And that makes them want to live healthier lives or be a more positive person?

P: Yes. Absolutely. Because there's various levels of vibration like anger and fear keep you at one level, love and compassion you know those are different levels and Reiki is about raising those vibration levels for you and those around you.

**4a. Were you surprised to see this/these affects? Why or why not?**

To the degree yes. When I began I had no idea how huge this would be and how life changing this would be. I mean I had my hopes and I was excited but I had no idea on the journey and the path that it would take me, and the effect it would have. It was a surprise.

**4b. From your experiences could you see Reiki/Healing Touch having an effect on communities? If so how?**

Yes and also it's exciting to see, I've interviewed nurses that give Reiki to patients. There are centers that, like one in Chicago, where they offer Reiki to cancer patients and families for free. Reiki is becoming more known in hospitals and areas like that in communities. I'd love to see Reiki practitioners going into nursing homes, I mean there are so many things we could do. Reiki can help with drug addicts; I'd love to see Reiki practitioners coming into that type of rehab. I mean it's beginning and it's starting to get out there but it could do so much for communities.

**5. Is Reiki/Healing Touch especially important for you as a woman as a part of the community in Tacoma, Washington? If so how?**

Yes, it really is and I'm really attached to Tacoma. I moved up here in college and began working at a restaurant and became a restaurant owner for 27 years and I love Tacoma and I love the people. So, it's been priceless for me to be one of the tools or one of the practitioners in Tacoma offering Reiki. And it's important for me to see more positive modalities becoming available for people in Tacoma.

M: Do you think that's especially important for any particular reason that people have this practice available in this area?

P: Ya, because it's so beneficial and especially in this area because we have so many in the military. I'm very passionate about our military. So, I love offering Reiki and teaching Reiki to our military people and it helps them so much; the more Reiki knowledge and the service of Reiki we can get out there. I would really love more insurance companies to cover Reiki. That's a huge passion of mine that I've wanted to work on but haven't had time to do, because it would benefit so many.

**6. What critiques would you give Reiki/Healing Touch or your experience with Reiki/Healing Touch?**

There are no critiques of Reiki. Reiki is totally awesome and life changing. It can do no harm. But the only critiques are just the humanality in it. You can see competition or ego that type of thing, which you see in any type of business or practice. I don't like seeing that, because really we're all a team, we're all a team. So, that's my goal, for everyone to see it that way. I don't think anyone's Reiki is better than anyone else's, because it's not yours, it's an energy coming through you, it's a connection.

**7. Do you have anything else to add?**

Well, I guess I would just add, as a woman, a mother, someone who was a single mom due to her husband passing away. I wish I had known Reiki when my husband was ill, I think it would have made a big difference. And I think this is something that is absolutely fantastic. I'd love to see more and more women using Reiki. It's something that is a beautiful thing for the community. It's a beautiful thing for the planet. I'm really happy to be involved in it and I just want to be a vessel for getting more and more information out there. And I want to say thank you for doing this study and getting more of this information out there.

### Appendix C: Interview 2

#### 1. What brought you to Reiki and/or Healing Touch as a client?

Well my first memory as a practitioner was when I was 6. So I know that it works, I have used it on myself all my life. One of the first major experiences I had was when I had a 6 ½ pound cyst. And my friends came up and said oh no no no, so they did surgery and my friend (name) came into the ICU and did a Reiki and Therapeutic Touch session on me and the nurse came in and her eyes got as big as saucers and said "What are you doing?" and I said "I'm getting Reiki and Therapeutic Touch," and she went "uh uh." So she went and got my attending physician and he said, "Yes that's fine, I know exactly what that is." And he goes "Did her vitals stabilize and come down?" and they said "Ya." It was a big relief for me personally to have that caring touch to have that energetic connection. So, when you go from being very stressed, and a 6 ½ pound cyst is very stressful. And when they came back and said it is benign but you have no more female parts I said "Hallelujah that's great news I can heal from that." However, you cannot go home until your vitals are stable and you have a bowel movement. Well, I had been there for four days without food. And so one of the things that my Reiki person did was rub olive oil on my feet and I had a bowel movement within 6 hours. So, that worked.

M: This was when you were 6 years old?

P: No, this was when I was 32. But I've been doing Reiki myself since I was 6. When I was 6 my sister got kicked in the head by Fuzzy The Mule and opened her head from her eyebrows to the back of her head, and I did Reiki on her all the way to town, which was an hour away. Then the doctor said "oh my God just let her do it," because I would get away from Mom and crawl up on the bed and lay my hands down, and he said "just let her do it because everything drops and they're calm." And he let me do it for 30 minutes then he gave us ice cream or popsicles. But I bugged my mom everyday to let me go do it.

M: So how did you learn about how to do it since you were only 6?

P: I didn't know that other people didn't know how to do it. So, my mom wouldn't let us have TV growing up because when I was 8 or 9 we were at someone's house and I saw a documentary on people from Ethiopia that were sick and the doctor was asking for donations for medical supplies and he was crying. And I was standing in front of the TV telling mom tell him to put his hands down; all he has to do is put his hands down. And they finally turned the TV off and I bugged my mom for 2 weeks and we finally wrote a letter and gave it to the mailman and I don't know what he did with it. I don't know if he delivered it or what he did. But, I didn't know other people didn't have the same gifts as I did.

M: So it was very intuitive for you?

P: I was told by my friend (name's) dad who is full-blooded Native American that I came in with healing gifts and that I've been a healer in many life times.

M: That was your friend's father right?

P: Yes, he was full-blooded Yakima Native American.

M: So, when I was 16 I went to go get my oil changed. And there was a lady there that said nothing while I was there, and the little gal doing paperwork said oh my God I have a headache. Well, I saw she was drinking water. And I said "I could help you with that," and she said "Really?" and I said "Ya." She said she'd had it for 3 days. I said, "Okay," so she sat down in the chair and I put my hands down on her head. And 10 minutes later, I said, "How do you feel now?" And she said there is no pain in my body anywhere. And the lady in the corner said, "who taught you Reiki," and I said "What?" and she said, "Who put the Reiki symbols in your aura" and I said "What?" And she

said, "I just studied with the master, with the lady master in Hawaii and I spent \$15,000, just for the course and not for room and board and transportation for the month." And she said "You need to come home with me," and I said, "I don't know you lady, aw uh." So, I instantly called my friend's dad and he said "Don't worry about it, when it's time you will learn what it's all about. In the meantime don't worry about it because you already know."

And so I ran into that same lady when I was 24 at a party and she said "Do you remember me?" and I said "Yes, you were the one that asked me about Reiki." I said "Now we can have that discussion." In the meantime I had met some other people and went through it and I was like oh you do this this and this. And they were looking at me like how do you know and I was like I don't know the symbols are right there, I use them. Oh are that what they're used for? Okay. But I've always been able to do it, but for me as a client it is just second nature.

It is truly one of the best things that you can ever do for yourself. Especially as a woman because we are caregivers and we put ourselves last every time. So, it is very important for us to have tools, that we can use that require no tools. You have your hands we instinctively do Reiki and Therapeutic Touch everyday as women, men do it too. But we are not trained to recognize that we are doing Reiki or Therapeutic Touch right? So when your child says, I got a fever, what do you do? Put your hand down and say "Let me feel." Aw, Reiki, feeling the energy, Therapeutic Touch, is it hot, is it cold? Is it so hot that I need to put you in the shower or is it so hot that we need to go to the ER? Your child gets a scratch, oh let me look at it, you put your hand down on it, you clean it, you put your hand down on it and go oh here's your Superman Band-Aid, you'll be fine. Right? What's the other thing that we learn, oh let me kiss it and make it better. Right? All of those are energy based, all of those are Therapeutic Touch Based. All of those are Reiki based. We use it everyday we're just not taught what we're doing. And we don't consciously work and make the connection with the healing energy.

That is changing, there has been a lot of work done in the last 20 years to bring it out from, oh my God you do woo woo, to oh my God I had a massage with Reiki it was fabulous, oh my God I had Therapeutic Touch it was fabulous, I learned how to do it to myself, I put myself to sleep with it every night, how fabulous is that? I had a headache, I put my hand on my head, one on the forehead and one on the back and I just took a couple of deep breathes and within 5 minutes it was gone. How cool is that? It's awesome, it's very interesting. It is worthwhile.

M: So, do you feel like you do it to yourself everyday?

P: I do Reiki everyday. Everyday. I Reiki myself before I get out of bed in the morning, I Reiki myself when I get into bed at night and if I'm having a stressful day I will Reiki myself several times a day, because it brings you right back to center, grounds you, gets you to get your body and connect to the emotion that is causing the problem. All pain, all fear, is based in unprocessed emotions; 95 percent of all disease in this country and worldwide is because it is unprocessed emotions. And we work in a society where it's pretty much mandatory that we work 40 to 60 hours per week and in some cases more. And the kids that are under 28 have stood up and said, "We're not working for minimum wage and we're not working 40 to 60 hours. You posted 3 trillion dollars worth of profit the first quarter and I'm working 3 to 4 jobs to make \$1,000 per month. We're not doing it." And it's not just the United States it's global, it's worldwide. When we as women come together and learn a healing system like this and we consciously connect to what we know instinctively it has a huge impact in our communities, it has a huge impact in our families.

## **2. What were your initial or early reactions/experiences with Reiki/Healing Touch?**

It's always been positive. I've used it on animals. I've used it on people. I use it on my car. I bought a new car and the first thing I did was went my hands over from hood to bumper and the salesperson said, "What are you doing?" and I laid down and I put my hand underneath the car and I went, "Okay let me try the other one" because I had narrowed it down to 2. And I went over to the other one and said no I'll take that one. And he looked at me and I was like "It's an

energetic thing this one suits my energy better. This one has no problems.” But you begin to use it everyday. You instinctively use it when you go to the store and stop for fruits and vegetables. What do you do you pass your hand over the top of them, you pick them up, you set them down, you dig to the back, and pick up another one until the energy signature of whatever you’re buying matches yours.

So, it makes a huge difference it’s empowering and the thing that they don’t tell you about empowerment is that when you consciously create with yourself you can consciously create with others and that creates change. That creates that which we all wish to experience. So, the shift in 2012 was from switching from 3rd dimension to 4th. And how we did that was through karmic action and re-action. We’re in the 5th dimension now and when we go from 5th to 7th we will do it through communication and energy. We are now moving out of the age of communication and going into the age of vibration. So when we look at the politics and they say we’re going to abolish Obama Care and Medicare and Medicaid and anything related to the insurance companies, and the insurance companies say we’re not supporting or participating in any of those programs and if you want us to cover it this is how much it is; this is exactly what we’ll cover. Most of us do not have the money for medial care every month.

So when you learn Reiki and Therapeutic Touch it becomes important because you can do self-care. If you do nothing but put one hand on your heart, and it does not matter which hand, and one hand on your belly button and you breathe, and you’re quite, and you say “Why do I have this pain in my knee?” If you are quite the answer will pop into your head. In the meantime just doing that will drop the cortisol levels in your body so that you can begin to stay in your body longer to heal. Stress is an overload of cortisol and other fight or flight chemicals. So when you do Reiki and Therapeutic Touch you immediately drop those. So it becomes an important tool because all you need is your hands. When women come together and say oh my God I learned Reiki or Therapeutic Touch, give me your hand and your elbow, and they go “Wow I feel much calmer so much more relaxed; I feel centered. That was really cool I’m going to have to try that, I’m going to have to learn that.” It goes out like ripples in the water so that you begin to build community. And in this day and age we communicate but we do not have community. It is that we are building our strengths and our ties those in our community and this is one way to do it.

M: Do you feel like we have a shallow means of communication?

P: You have to be very very good at discernment when you communicate over the telephone, well not even the telephone but the Internet you have to use your intuition, your inner wisdom to discern what the message is, what the subtleties are of the message. So when computers came they were a big as a room or a house and now they fit in a little earring. We’ve gotten better at it, but I still don’t think we have the communication and the touch. People need touch everyday and if you do not have touch and babies do not have touch within the first 2 or 3 minutes of their lives and continue to not have touch then they do not thrive and some just die. Not because they’re ill, but because they do not have connection. Touch is still the most powerful means of communication. When world leaders shake hands it means there is an open communication and dialogue. We may not agree on what is being said or discussed and there may be anger and discussion, but when they shake hands they open that up for communication. When people do not use touch, communication is there but it is much harder.

M: So by using touch or Reiki or Healing Touch and things like that, it’s almost like a higher level of communication.

P: It is the highest level of communication.

M: What about different cultures that don’t touch but bow instead of shake hands? Is that still a form of higher communication?

P: It is a form of communication, but it is that it shows respect, it shows that you have cultural differences, like women who wear the coverings when they’re in the Middle East, it is a sign of

solidarity, it is a sign of communication, but it comes with restrictions; it comes with a sense of boundaries, and boundaries are okay as a starting place. So it is a form of communication and energy work but not the highest form.

### **3. How have your initial experiences changed and/or remained the same over time?**

My absolute unconditional love has not changed. My commitment to Reiki and Therapeutic Touch and other healing modalities has not changed it has only gotten stronger. My comprehension for what they do from a child till now has gone several times 360 degrees. It has gone through many changes, but the initial wonder and joy and the effect of it on everything has not changed, it has only strengthened my commitment to it. I use it everyday, my patients come in and say I have never had a massage like that – no because you get Reiki, you get unconditional love, you get Therapeutic Touch. We are doing many other things to facilitate your care and I am educating you so that when you leave you will have tools that you can use to help yourself, because if you are in the mountains and you are swimming and the nearest doctor is 2 hours away what are you going to do? If I show you nothing else but to put your hand on your heart and your belly button you will remain calm and the solution will come to you. Right? It is still the highest form of self-care and self-love that you give to yourself.

M: So you try to give clients at least some instruction on self-treating Reiki or Healing Touch to practice on themselves?

P: Right. So you would take a vitamin everyday, your calcium or your iron, so if you do your Reiki and Therapeutic Touch everyday it is no different. Your body needs light. The big push right now is for fresh whole colorful foods. The main reason is because of the toxins and the chemicals, but what they do not tell you which is the ultimate explanation and gives you the control and the power to your health, is that fresh whole, live, colorful food carries the highest light signature, water signature, and nutrice. When you choose things that are living you feed your body light. You can go to any continent and there's a tanning booth on every corner. We equate tanning and being dark with being healthy, when in fact it is not about being tan to be healthy, it is about the ability to integrate light. Reiki and Therapeutic Touch are about integrating light.

M: Do you mean light in the actual sense of light?

P: Actual light from the sun, and the photon energy belt, actual light, healing energy is light.

M: That sounds similar to things I've read about the chakras.

P: The chakras, yes, we have many more chakras than the 7 that we deal with, and within each 7 there are multiple chakras within each of the 7 centers. And when you begin to study energy work or Reiki or Thought Field Therapy or anything else you begin to work with light. Doctors work with light but not on the same scale because they have separated science from spirituality and light so that they could understand the body and how the body worked. When they add Reiki before and after surgery the recovery time is half. When they add Reiki before and after and during surgery or Therapeutic Touch it is 90 percent. It is that when we recognize that our bodies are wonderful and that we can heal them and that we have the control and that it is truly up to each of us to take an active interest in healing ourselves and maintaining ourselves that you begin to make the connection. Not only to yourself but to the community, the world, and the universe for we are all one.

M: Is it because we all share the same energy?

P: The energy, the prana, we all share the energy. Quantum physicists published scientific data that we now know without a doubt that we are all connected and that the energy and the brainwaves are connected and truly we are all connected from the heart. The heart is responsible for all things energetic and for all things that are emotional, for our inner wisdom, and intuition is

run by the heart. The water is the super information highway for your body. So, when you're not drinking enough water you're not getting messages for healing your body, repair, rest, and integration. The heart sends messages to the brain which correlates everything and the gut says wait a minute I think we need to throw-up, slow down, and think about it or we're going to stand here and shake and cry until we can sort through it; that's the message that's going through the brain, okay I've got all the information, let's crunch the data and do it. It all works together.

**4. How has Reiki/Healing Touch affected your life in a holistic way: for example personal, family, etc.?**

When I was living in a small community, it was mostly agricultural, farm-based, they did have a university, but they were not really open to the idea of Reiki or Therapeutic Touch or any of the other healing modalities. They did not at that time have an acupuncturist, they did have a naturopath, but they had only myself and a couple of my friends and we practiced for 10 years and it made a huge difference in that community and there is now lots of naturopaths, there are lots of Reiki people, massage people, energy people, it has a ripple effect. When you share the information the knowledge grows whether the person does it, when you need the information it will come forward. You may not need Reiki or Therapeutic Touch or remember about it until you have a crisis: you're out camping and a bee stings and you're allergic and you don't have Benadryl or an Epipen what do you do, oh I remember put my hand on it, tap the side of my hand, put Reiki in it, send love, and have somebody drive me. You will get better. One person when we were out camping chopped the end of his finger off, we stuck the finger in the ice chest, and I put my hands around his finger with compression and did Reiki. And by the time we got to the hospital it had already started to heal. They were barely able to get the finger re-attached. So it is very powerful, and when you are learning there is a self correction so if you don't know what to do, you can just say I need Reiki, I need Therapeutic Touch, please help me, and your body knows what to do. And your body will not harm itself, it is only designed to function and be well. It is only designed for homeostasis.

**4a. Were you surprised to see this/these affects? Why or why not?**

No, no, because I knew without a doubt that it worked. I knew that it would have a tremendous impact. I also knew that it would take time to catch on. People have to have time to process complex ideas that are new. When we first started it was in the 70's and we did not have the technology and the knowledge of quantum physics and computers like we do now. But when you look back to the 70's we were the state of the art compared to our parents and grandparents for medical and energy work. So, all has its time and place. Our great grandkids and our great great grandkids will be doing phenomenal stuff with energy, phenomenal. We already have people that will manifest things off of a page. We already have people that can bring their hand down and bring a plant to life. We already have people that can regenerate bones. We will have kids that will think themselves to grandma's house through energy and teleportation. So, our phones went from big things that only companies and the government had to community based phones, to the party lines, to every house having one, and now we have one that what, fits in your ear, on your wrist.

M: So in this way, technology has grown and so will energy therapy in a similar way?

P: The ripple effect. It will grow in a similar way, yes. Science, and energy, and spirituality are now being reconnected, because science has demonstrated without a shadow of a doubt that you cannot separate them, all must be necessary for health, all must be necessary for humanity.

**4b. From your experiences could you see Reiki/Healing Touch having an effect on communities? If so how?**

Well right now Reiki and Therapeutic Touch, most all of the nurses have taken either one or both or others. They are very open to it. It has made inroads to the hospital system, inroads into the VA system. It is now dime store novels: I went and got a massage and saw my Reiki person. When it

reaches that level of population and saturation people begin to integrate it and when we talk about it it becomes integrated into communities and it becomes matter-of-fact. If you go to a hospital they're going to give you a CAT scan, an x-ray, and now they're asking you along with your religious preferences do you have an energy person, do you have an alternative medicine person that needs to be on the team and in the group. It is becoming commonplace. The Medicare system has had a code for Reiki since the 70's, however they do not pay for that code and it is not public knowledge because no one uses it because they can't get paid for it, but there is a code for it. So, it is inching its way closer and we have such a crisis for health care right now that if you do not begin to do self-care you will be behind because you are responsible for your health. You would not get a car and start it and not drive it. So, you must take an active role in your health, and Reiki and Therapeutic Touch is simple, it's easy. It's instinctual to us, we need to learn the rules to work with it consciously. Our intuition and inner wisdom knows how to use it.

M: So when you say you must take responsibility for your self-care, is this a switch in mind-set compared to "traditional" Western medicine?

P: Well we can see that, and we have scientific proof, that 85 percent of all discomfort and disease is emotional based. When you do self-care you begin to connect the emotions to your body and your pain. So if your shoulder hurts, then you know you are not moving in a graceful direction and you feel like you're carrying the burdens of the world, or things in your life have become a burden. When you understand that oh maybe I need to look at how I do community, how I do family, how I do self-care and realize that I'm not flowing as gracefully as I can, then you go "Oh I can relax, I can put my hands on myself and breathe and the solution will come to me and I can facilitate change within myself," which facilitates change within family, community, and the world.

M: Would you say in a way it's like meditation or like a type of meditation?

P: They start on the same wavelength, but Reiki and Therapeutic Touch go to a deeper state and it's not that you can't obtain that meditation, but it is much easier to obtain that through meditation with binary beats, with hours of concentration and meditation. Therapeutic Touch is that you put your hands down and the Reiki turns on and you begin to heal. It is not that you have to spend hours and hours and hours. All you have to do is put your hands down. Meditation requires that you quite your mind, step aside, and that is very difficult for most of us because we have a very full and busy life and nobody wants to spend hours doing that. We rarely take time for ourselves to rest, restore, and integrate. We race from one moment to the next. And meditation, and reiki, and Therapeutic Touch and all energy and breath is important, because it helps you rest, restore, and integrate.

### **5. Is Reiki/Healing Touch especially important for you as a woman as a part of the community in Tacoma, Washington? If so how?**

Absolutely, absolutely, no matter what community I am in I always do Reiki. I always promote Reiki, Therapeutic Touch, some form of energy. It is that, it is the greatest gift of self-love that we can give to ourselves, which we can turn to make a difference within the community. So when you walk down 6th Avenue and you say "Okay I am putting in the master symbol for all who walk down 6th will know unconditional love and the Reiki and the Therapeutic Touch energy will touch their lives in a way that they can see, feel, hear, and they will notice a difference." It is that simple to make changes in the community, then those who are on the street driving their car, riding the bus, or their bicycles or the homeless will have the ability to tap into that energy and make a change in their lives. Not all will know they tapped into the energy to change their lives, they will just notice that something shifted.

M: So does that mean these people are able to make better decisions or?

P: Exactly, in our inner-wisdom, our intuition, everybody, every being, plant, animal, everything on this planet has inner-wisdom and intuition. Everybody taps into it we just don't consciously

understand that's what we're doing. But when you walk into a pocket of cold air from 107 your body goes oh cold air yay we don't have to work so hard at sweat and perspiration to cool the body down. It cues you to drink more water but you did not say "Okay I'm hot and we need to do this," our body instinctively knows what to do and how to do it. We just need to provide the opportunity and the change comes when we begin to work with it consciously, which is what the shift in 2012 is all about, it about us working consciously, integrating light, and working with it.

M: And why exactly 2012?

P: That's when we shifted from 3rd dimension to 5th. So when a cell divides it begins to separate and pull apart, 3rd would be one side, 4th would be the cleavage point, the dividing point, and 5th would be the other side. In 2012 the scientists said wow there's two Earths side-by-side we have pictures, two Earths side-by-side, and how is that possible? The one Earth in 3rd and one in 5th, 4th is still there but you don't see it. All programs in 3rd, 4th, and 5th are still running the same as all programs to infinity, all dimensions run at the same time.

M: I'm not very familiar with that.

P: That's okay. It is, not all information given today will make it into your paper, this is for you because you will be doing more work, okay? So that you begin to understand that it is more than one thing. So you have to integrate light, water, food, sleep, rest, exercise, pleasure, family, our work, all of it plays a role in our health, it all works together at the same time. Sometimes it does not work that well. If your bathroom drain is plugged with hair and soap it plugs the drain and it may take two hours to drain, it is just not working efficiently. And when you go in there and scrap out the hair and the soap it works better. When we use Reiki and Therapeutic Touch it helps with the things in our lives, we are healthy, things run smoothly.

M: Like self-maintenance.

P: Ya, it's self-care.

## **6. What critiques would you give Reiki/Healing Touch or your experience with Reiki/Healing Touch?**

It is the best and easiest way to learn about energy and about self-care and how your body begins to work with other things in our lives: exercise, family, pleasure. Those things come together and when you consciously begin to work with it it becomes a concept like breathing, you do not think about breathing, you do not think about it, it just is. And when you integrate Reiki and Therapeutic Touch you begin to expand your knowledge of self and community and the universe.

M: Would you critique not necessarily the practice itself but the culture surrounding it?

P: Well our perception of Reiki and Therapeutic Touch is changing because it is becoming commonplace. In the past you went to a specialist who specialized in it, and those specialists learned from the masters, but now you can go on-line and study and become attuned in a matter of months instead of years. So, it is to let go of the dogma that is associated with it, and understand that it is just about the light and the unconditional love. Every practitioner has their concept of it, just like if I said to you "Let's walk in the park," your concept of walking in the park is not the same as my concept of walking in the park. Neither one is wrong it is just a perception, it is just an energy. Perceptions are thoughts that create the next experience we wish to experience.

## **7. Do you have anything else to add?**

7. No, but do you have questions, worries, or concerns?

M: No no I don't, I mean I have lots of questions just in general. I didn't grow-up knowing about energy therapies or anything like that. So, ya there are I think a lot of questions but I'm learning a lot as I go through interviews, but also the literature I found on it, and things like that. So, I think lots of questions but for the scope of this I think you gave me a lot of really great information. So, ya thank you for taking the time, I really appreciate it.

P: Oh, you're welcome. So if you have questions, worries, or concerns, going back in, I'm here Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at (name) usually Tuesdays and weekends I'm usually at a fair someplace.

M: Thank you so much.

P: You're welcome.

### Interview 3

#### 1. What brought you to Reiki and/or Healing Touch as a client?

I do Healing Touch. I've actually never gotten a Reiki treatment before. Let's see, it was back around 1998, I was a hospice nurse at the time and one of my fellow hospice nurses was taking these courses and she was flying around to different levels, different Healing Touch courses. She needed someone to practice on and I was going through a lot of stress, ya I had a lot of stress going on and I had actually purchased a book on meditation to see if I could figure it out, because at the time there weren't meditation classes. I mean I didn't know anyone who meditated. So anyway when she offered I thought sure I'll help her out to get her practice in, and then when I had the treatment it was like I just felt, I don't know, it wasn't even a familiar feeling, it wasn't a feeling I had ever had in my entire life. It was like "Wow I can feel like this?" And you know because I was an intensive care nurse and a hospice nurse it made me really curious because we're always, I'm always, looking at things from a health care perspective, what can help people. And so I knew when I had that experience that I have to take these classes and try to figure out what's going on. And ya that's kind of how it all started.

M: Was it after your first Healing Touch session that you felt like you really wanted to do this or was it after maybe a few sessions?

P: Oh no, it was instant, and mostly because I'm a nurse, and I'd worked 20 years or 15 years in intensive care and 8 years in hospice. So, it was like I don't know what just happened but if I can feel like this, immediately I could see the application for everyone. So I wanted to figure out, and all the ways, and that's why I love the Healing Touch program because it's from a medical, more medical perspective, and their certifying board are all either master level nurses so that appealed to me. So, ya, I just had to figure this out, I thought for patients especially in the intensive care unit and their hooked up to all these machines and it's like, this is really cool stuff.

#### 2. What were your initial or early reactions/experiences with Reiki/Healing Touch?

I didn't expect it to, I felt really good at the time, and it was really peaceful, and there wasn't anything intimidating about it. I didn't have to share anything personal to this person that was doing it. And I remember afterwards the world looked different. Getting in my car, it was just like everything, something happened but it wasn't like, I couldn't even describe what happened. I just felt more centered I felt more at peace. I felt more like, like a normal, what I think a normal person should feel like. It was a long time ago, but I still remember it.

#### 3. How have your initial experiences changed and/or remained the same over time?

With Healing Touch, I definitely make sure I get Healing Touch at least once a month. And it's to help me balance, and again I don't even think I need the balance, I think aw I'm feeling pretty good, I'm feeling good today, and it's like once I do a Healing Touch session I'm like wow I didn't realize how off I was. Like I didn't know that I could feel better than what I was feeling beforehand. So, it's you know, it's my first go to thing as a nurse, if someone is feeling off I highly recommend that they have an energy balancing to anybody that will listen. I decided as a nurse that I wanted to take the fear out of it, to normalize this work, because so many people go to the doctor and they can't find out what's wrong but then they get an energy balancing and what was bothering them stops bothering them.

M: Do you feel like for some people it takes multiple treatments to set-in or do you find it typically works on the first time?

P: Ya, it's interesting because the woman who started Healing Touch always said don't talk about it just do the work, let the energy speak to the person, don't try to convince them to have an experience. So I would say everybody has some experience even if it's a small, ya everybody feels something, they're always like okay this feels strange, I can't put my finger on it but this is really strange.

M: Do you usually do Healing Touch to yourself or do you usually get it done by someone else?

P: I usually get it done by someone else. I mean this is my full time job doing Healing Touch. So, I keep trying to come from the perspective, since this is your study, as someone trying to receive it, but no I receive it from someone else. And it's interesting if things are off if I go to start my car and it's not starting and if it's just one thing, but usually you have those chain of events like loosing your car keys, you've over slept your alarm, and if it's like several things it's like oh I need to get on the table, is what I call it; I need to get on the table because that means my energy field is off if events don't fall into place.

#### **4. How has Reiki/Healing Touch affected your life in a holistic way: for example personal, family, etc.?**

So before Healing Touch, I was definitely a full time mom, a full time wife, and more than a full time nurse, because there's plenty of time to work over-time, or with a hospice patient, you don't go home, or if they're in the middle of the dying process you end up sitting there until late evening and then PTA and football or soccer and helping your kids with homework. The stress level was really high, and then I had my own family members undergoing their own dying process so I was very stressed, and something always seemed to be going wrong with my kids, or my husband, or at work. And what I can say once I started receiving Healing Touch treatments that led to a more consistent, I went back to practicing meditation, because before my head was too busy, but with Healing Touch I felt like I could get more of a consistent meditation practice that felt like it was working.

Everything started to calm down in my life, that's where I started to notice it the most, and it wasn't over night, let's talk about over a 3 year time. It just got calmer and calmer and calmer. Now of course I've been involved with Healing Touch for about 20 years now and having Healing Touch treatments; and now if something goes wrong in my life I'm shocked because I've gotten enough Healing Touch treatments in my life that my insides are calm so my outside world is calm. Ya, things really fall into place. But it's not easy, your stuff can come up like old traumas, old abuses, you know when the old abuse or memories came up in the past I would make sure to get a balancing more often or a clearing to help with that. The person doing the Healing Touch, they're not a therapist, and I had been in therapy before as a nurse and I'd kind of process through it then. It definitely brings your stuff up but then you get it cleared and I've been so distressed by these memories but then you get it cleared and it's not even a thought again. At least not for a while, there's no magic pill. And I work with clients, and every client usually has a pretty major shift right away and they're like hooked. Once anybody tries it they're like hooked because no one is trying to convince you, you feel better, and everyone wants to feel better, it's stressful right now.

#### **4a. Were you surprised to see this/these affects? Why or why not?**

I was totally shocked, because I'm a nurse and I'm very scientifically minded, and for me it was so dramatic at the time I was registered at the time at the University of Washington to go, they have a bridge program, I have an associates degree in nursing, and they had a bridge program where in a year and a half I could get a master's degree in nursing so because they take your experience as a nurse and apply your credits. So, I had been accepted, I took the pre-test and all that, and then when I got a Healing Touch treatment it dramatically shifted. And I was going to get my master's in physiology of the body and it was after that it was like no I want to know about the physiology of the energy field and that's how dramatically it changed my life.

M: How long had you been practicing when that happened?

P: Maybe after about 3 or 4 months. I just thought there's something more than just the body here and I just couldn't do it. I thought at first I would just postpone it a year but it really captured me from that curiosity place because it's like how can someone go from throwing up for example, because I did Healing Touch in the hospital too, from throwing up, I get a report in the morning that the patient is throwing up for the last 14 hours, we've given them all types of medication, they're exhausted, and can't stop throwing up. I go right in there to place my hand on the front and the back of the belly and I just sat there really calmly and I felt the energy shift and the person stopped throwing up. And like an hour later they got to eat some food, so why don't we integrate that more? If this woman was loaded up with drugs she's up all night and anybody could have, it was no more than 5 minutes. And so it was that, I still 20 years later am trying to convince people in the medical field. So that's why I'm really excited about your study.

**4b. From your experiences could you see Reiki/Healing Touch having an effect on communities? If so how?**

So, definitely, that's why we do free healing Friday, we offer once a month to the community, and it's pretty amazing too, people catch the bus to come because it's always this 3rd Friday of every month. We had a homeless woman with a cart last time that came and just kind of hung out in the space, the mentally ill come, and they all come and it helps shift their energy fields so they're not having anxiety, having the stress. One woman could barely stay out of Western State Hospital. And we are volunteers, I always talk to them and say don't do more than 20-30 minutes with each person because we don't want them to drop into some kind of space and have them sent home, you know, some kind of trauma come up, just like a simple balancing.

Like we had one woman, and in this story her daughter came in, so her daughter was probably 30 and had 2 little girls with her, and she came in with her mother, and that's not uncommon; we have families come in. But her mother was kind of like walking, she was shuffling, not smiling or anything like that. Then the daughter explained to me, I thought I'd try this, and my mother agreed to come with me. She's been severely depressed all my life and she's been in bed for, you know, she's probably spent 60-70 percent of the time in bed when I was growing up. The father helped make the meals and stuff like that, and that's normal for me and I'm used to living with my mother like that but now I that I have my own daughters I really want a grandmother for my daughters. So, I found a volunteer that was very experienced, she happens to teach various levels of Healing Touch. So I walked over to her and asked her and she said no problem and I said let's just keep a simple balancing. And what the volunteer who was doing the Healing Touch said was that she felt like a pop, like it was almost like an audible pop, and all she was doing was a balancing, and her energy field shifted into place. And the woman got up and the daughters and the granddaughters had a little healing session as well and then they left, and then the daughter called me a couple of days later and said my mother called me and said to me why don't we take the daughters shopping at the Tacoma Mall and have some lunch. And she said never in my life has my mother done that, and she was smiling, and this was after no more than a 30 minute treatment. On depressive drugs for 30 years, do you see what I'm saying? It's like it still blows me away when something like that happens and it's like that's what we need to get into our communities.

M: Did you ever follow up with her? Did she come back in?

P: She's come in a couple times, her mom hasn't come back in, but she's come in with her girls and her mom is doing well. And I have seen when people have depression they'll have that initial pretty big release, it doesn't go back to how it was, but continued treatments would be, it's not for the rest of your life that's for sure, every person is individual. And it's interesting that we think of depression as an emotional issue but it's an imbalance of issues around the head. It's like the sad thoughts initiate in the brain not the emotions. So, it's interesting from a nursing perspective to see, to see that.

And I know even for me, when I'm super worried, you know, I had a son who struggled with drug addiction, and it's just like, you always worry, like are they going to die and how can I get them into treatment, or has he eaten? I would make sure that I was getting weekly Healing Touch treatments then just to make sure that my mind was centered and focus, but it would calm my mind and like the worry would stop. And my son who now has been sober for almost 5 years now, comes to free healing. And like we had another guy come and when his brother walked him in he just looked gray and (name) was there and I matched him up with (name) and I said "I don't know he looks really sick," and turns out he was coming off heroine and had only been off of it for 3 days. And he did a treatment with her and afterwards and I asked "what's going on he looks really gray," and she said "Heroine," and I think a couple days after I think it was, he called her and said he's been off of it ever since and he wanted, she sent him some mediation CD's and encouraged him to keep coming in. Cool stuff. Probably more than you want to know but I like getting to talk about it.

**5. Is Reiki/Healing Touch especially important for you as a woman as a part of the community in Tacoma, Washington? If so how?**

So, definitely I was sexually abused so, for ten years, as a child, so it's helped me that way and then it has helped in concerns for my health, like breast cancer. I have cervical cancer in my family, so there have been times when I have asked the practitioner to really focus on that area, helping to clear the energy out of the pelvic area. It's helped that way, and it's helped tremendously with insecurity that a lot of women have insecurities I know I have. After I have a treatment the insecurities take a backset more, and then over time they get less and less, so I'd also say confidence.

But it's interesting that you're here, because we've been working for the past year creating this non-profit and it's at the attorney's office, he's finishing up the last things. The whole thing is about getting Healing Touch to deal with PTSD and trauma, and getting into child protective services, and we worked with the staff that worked with trauma at first then when the staff started getting comfortable with getting them to take the clients, the women and the children, because I have worked with a couple of CPS people referred to me, and I have done it pro bono and kind of under the table. Everybody knew about it at the office but they couldn't document it or talk about it, and it helped release some significant trauma. So, it's interesting that you're doing this study, because we've finally decided that we think people are ready now at the social agency levels. We think, they are more than they were 20 years ago.

**6. What critiques would you give Reiki/Healing Touch or your experience with Reiki/Healing Touch?**

I don't know, I mean Healing Touch, I don't think I could really critique them on anything because it is an excellent program. They really make sure that you have a lot of experience and they are really particular about their standards, their certification standards. It's nice because of their certification standards, they don't fudge on them, every body has to work just as hard. You know they don't give you "Oh that's enough," they're very strict nurses and so that's really really good. Definitely you can have some practitioners who, you know, want to follow things to the letter, black and white, but energy isn't black and white. But really no, with Reiki I have a little bit more, because I think it used to be in the olden days you do a level I Reiki and then you had to wait awhile and practice and then you did level II but now you do Reiki Master I, II, III, IV, you know, just in a weekend, people walking around and they're not even taught how to get someone on and off a table which is really important after someone who has a hard time balancing, they might feel a little dizzy and need to ground a minute. In the Healing Touch, because it's a nursing driven program, you don't have to be a nurse to take it, but they have a lot of safety measures in place. But so we have volunteers that do Reiki, and it's funny because people will say I only want Reiki and so ya, it's just different. It's all the same but different things.

**7. Do you have anything else to add?**

No, I'm just excited that you're doing this especially with the trauma piece. One of the things I realized as a nurse as I started giving and receiving Healing Touch treatment all illness, this is my theory, I haven't be proven wrong yet, based on experiences, is all illness is a spiritual crisis, or an energetic crisis, we can put it that way, an energetic imbalance. All illnesses, you know, from cancer, to Parkinson's, all kinds of things, it starts in the energy field first. When they first started teaching that as a nurse I thought ya but it's a migraine, a broken leg is a broken leg, but when you start questioning them a little more, like what was going on in your life when you broke your leg? You know, my daughter was walking in a cross walk and was hit by a car and thrown 50 feet and she said my life's been out of balance for about 3 months and I knew that I needed to make some changes, and, so people know when you start questioning them, when these things happen. And there usually is a job change or a divorce, a child died, there's usually something.

So, that's why I'm excited, because, okay I just have one more story, I have a million stories. But this to me sums it up. We had this gal who came in and she wanted to take one of our classes, and she said, she didn't have a lot of money. She came to the class, and doing energy work she said both my parents are homeless and drug addicts and I was raised in the woods in a tent and on the streets. And she was in her 20's, and she said statistically speaking my chances of repeating exactly what my parents are going through is very high for me. You know, statistically speaking I'm kind of a lost cause and I should start doing drugs and all this stuff. And she said that after she tried energy healing she said I have more options. There's some opportunity for me to turn this childhood trauma around. Since then she's gotten her degree in community, I don't know service or social services, and she works for child protective services now and she has 2 kids, and she's just thriving and doing well. I mean that's amazing to give someone hope. Remember I said you can't describe it but ya you do feel hopeful that there's something else that can help, and that there's something else for people.

## Appendix E: Transcript 4

### 1. What brought you to Reiki and/or Healing Touch as a client?

I never had a treatment until I went to a class. I was a nurse. Basically I was compelled to try different healing modalities because at that point I had been in recovery for about 5 years. I'm a recovering alcoholic. My whole family suffers from that disease. And I had a lot of fire; I was a typical cranky ICU nurse. I guess I wasn't really looking to heal myself as much as I was, no there was an "I" to that; I was tired of AA, and I needed to keep on a spiritual path, and the fundamental Christian path that I was raised in blew wide open when I got sober. There was just a lot of family stuff so I was looking. I came out, and that didn't go well, so my family disowned me, and so I needed to heal myself and get out of nursing because the system was becoming more and more broken, in my opinion. And that pissed me off because I was born to be a nurse, but I had to leave. Nurses after being in education and work, I wanted to bring it into, after I did it.

So what I did was I saw a poster in an elevator and I had worked with (name) as a nurse for years. She worked the night shift and I worked the day shift, and I knew she was a solid person, but it scared me, and I know that sounds funny now but that was in 2000, the year 2000. And she was giving a talk at Marlene's health food store on metaphysics and Healing Touch and energy, and I thought if I could ask, because she seemed to be a really grounded person to me and not all woo woo. And so I called her up, I hadn't seen her in a few years, and she invited me to go to a Healing Touch class, and I had an experience on the table that took me to, in class, it took me to a really really deeply healing place; like I left but I was really present and I mean I was aware and so it touched me. That kind of peace was not something that I had experienced often, and it was an expansive peaceful place. I couldn't even tell you what it was.

So, then I wanted to learn more and they invited me to go to Africa to help the teachers teach and hold space and I did that. So I took all the levels multiple times, especially the first 3. It was such a switch for a very scientific literal mind, because of the literal fundamentalism that I grew up in. All that broke apart just before... so I was in the process of rebuilding my foundation I think. And that seemed like two strategies a good exit but I didn't really see how you could make a living on it, so we did work on getting into the hospitals. We helped create Caregivers Day, they use to call it Nurses Day, so we had administrators on the table receiving Reiki, Healing Touch, and acupuncture, and that was in 2002. That was the first time someone saw me. I use to see people, I was in the educational department system, the director of nurses, and teaching, but I had worked through pastoral care and they would tell me who wanted the treatment. And at the time I could go do that. And nurses would actually back out of the room and shut the door when they saw me waving my hands. But they called me again because there was someone in their late 30's and he was a late stage alcoholic and was hallucinating and they couldn't give him drugs so they were kind of in a bind and I could come. So that spoke to me, even though my scientific mind had a hard time letting me, but I couldn't deny what I felt. So, I didn't understand it but I kept doing it and I did get certified which was quite a process to your process. And I did present at a conference. But I'm Sagittarian and I do get bored after awhile.

### 2. What were your initial or early reactions/experiences with Reiki/Healing Touch?

A lot of peace, it brought me a lot of peace. They didn't talk much about grounding, and it was sort of a stepping stone for me to get into an even more ethereal world, like the world of psychic healing, because you can heal something with your mind. I studied with a medical intuitive. And I've re-built several knees so people don't have to get surgery and that's still a mystery to me. You think you're playing with your mind, like you're playing but.... Like I have a client in Texas whom I've never met but weighs 500 pounds and I've re-built her knees several times.

M: From a distance?

P: Yep. I don't understand it but I picture the anatomy and physiology and you sink down in it, the tai chi or Daoist use to do it in China... there's a video on their website where they heal with their mind and that really intrigues me. And I know it can be done, but I still have skepticism and sometimes it holds and sometimes it doesn't and that's true with surgery as well. I think it's dependent on the person's will also, and whatever spiritual contracts and agreements they might hold with their experiences.

### **3. How have your initial experiences changed and/or remained the same over time?**

I've say they've deepened, and I continue to relax the literal part of my mind. But I think we limit ourselves a lot with what we've been taught, what they call in psychics school programming; we adopt believes that we don't even know. And so it actually changed the trajectory of my life is what it did. I never thought even as I was going to the psychic school, I was going because I was intensely curious about what she was doing and I never wanted to go grace the doors of a church again, but I did for 2 ½ years. It was like a boot camp for going through your own stuff and examining, a deep self-examining process. So now when we teach, just like a nurse, we can help empower someone with their own health for my patients after these catastrophic events I've always enjoyed my patients when it came to other things. I've really enjoyed my patients and I wanted to help them feel empowered in a really disempowering situation. Teaching people how to transform energy and see things from a spiritual perspective.... It took me a long time to get over, by the time I left I was an expert at what I did, you get lazy and don't want to give that up and start over as a novice again. I think there's no end or no limit to what we could do energetically. I think we are just limited by our attachment to illusion. But it's taken me a long time to say that with any confidence. Mostly I know how much I don't know and understand and it's more okay. I come out of really tight small boxes and build bigger and bigger boxes and you just break them again and again. You know when you get attached. (Name's) mom is a Buddhist and that sense of attachment, I mean I think we create our own illnesses and it like makes you want to slap yourself up-side your head sometimes. So the sooner you can zero in on the spiritual lesson for what you're experiencing and how you created it and what lesson you chose to learn from that, then I think you stop attracting things that stop you from getting through that lesson then you can move on.

It's completely changed almost every paradigm I've had, which frightens my family to know that. They think I'm a witch of some kind. And I keep picking women so that's the other thing, oh my god. I went to the deepest darkest Africa and they're sure I brought back some kind of cootie from there. Just the difference, and I carry a lot of fear and I don't know where it comes from and I think it's religion. I'm still clearing religious programming; I get sever headaches and I puke when another round of that comes up and this is 17 years later. And I was also sexually abused so I've put that into a place that's beyond forgiveness it's just an understanding that I've created it and the other person can be held responsible they get to deal with it. I don't have to spend my energy getting them to take responsibility or be afraid or anything like that so this kind of thinking that everything is energy.

And everything is divinely guided and there is free will, and that's puzzling how that works and weaves through that and possibly karma and other lives. But I do believe love is the answer to everything. At the Healing Touch complex we were out smoking and he said, tobacco cleared his aura, he didn't know what mine did. All illness or any issue originates in the heart and the answer for that malady or that issue is in the heart, and I've never forgotten that and I think he use to feel that way as a child, that love was very important. So that speaks to me though I don't always act like I know that.

If you believe that Jesus died for your sins and now everything is taken care of I guess you can behave however you want then ask for forgiveness. So, I think I've picked out the pearls from my religion, but included others from travel to India and all those places. It's broadened my spiritual horizons and Healing Touch was the stepping stone. It's changed almost everything about how I think and I feel like I know myself better and I'm able to be myself more then I have since I was a young girl. Every great writer says, "Know thyself," but no one tells you how there's no checklist. You have to spend time; it's lazy to adopt an entire dogmatic line of thought. And we're all about convenience in the U.S.

**4. How has Reiki/Healing Touch affected your life in a holistic way: for example personal, family, etc.?**

Well we're nurses, and we don't really go to the doctor. The first thing we do is if the car breaks down or if we become sick is, we think how can we change the energy of this? How can we heal this? And it's not always; it's rarely through a pill, though pills are medicine too. But it's more broad than that: plants, animals, people are medicine.

M: It sounds like energy healing has integrated into most aspects of your life?

P: My whole base of where I come from completely. When we figure out a price to charge for a course, we look at the energy of it, and that started with Healing Touch. It didn't teach me how to do all of that but it's a great way, it's a very safe way for a scardy cat person who is entering into that world to start, and I always felt energy as a nurse and it helps you build on confidence around your intuition. I was new and as we say, as we use to say, started to circle the drain. So I would start to look for what was not obvious that wasn't right. I always knew that some 82 year olds walked out of the hospital after open-heart surgery and some 50 year olds died on the table. Why was that? There was another factor besides all the physical factors, there was sociological factors, you know, the state of the person's will and their relationship to life and themselves had a lot to do with it. There's a strength there. If you're tired, if you're emotionally physically tired it's not a good time to go into surgery. So it wasn't about, I mean we had all kinds of tricks in our bag to help people live, to get over those rough humps: machines – blood pressure machines. And I use to work in the room with the most amounts of machines because it was some how thrilling I guess. But when it came down to it we didn't have the control we thought we had. So, it's just interesting, it's humbling to see life from an energetic point of view. It takes a long time to make the switch. Where do you go and what do you do... how do you see that, what just happened?

**4a. Were you surprised to see this/these affects? Why or why not?**

I resisted it at every turn because that just means there's so much that we just don't know and in medicine we like to act like we know a lot and "A" equals "B."

**4b. From your experiences could you see Reiki/Healing Touch having an effect on communities? If so how?**

Yes, we went to Alexandria. I think it was our first trip to Africa, we went to the poorest shanty-town and of course the poorest in I think Africa, in Alexandria it's close to Johannesburg. It's just a series of tin shacks, an unauthorized township. It's where the poorest of the poor live. You know they have stuff out on boards, slaughtered animals. And we were teaching the kids there Healing Touch. Most with an eye towards, and I learned a lot there, with an eye towards healing themselves. It was the height of the AIDS crisis in 2000, because I basically went straight from class to Africa. So I feel like I've been on a bullet train ever since. Listening to the experiences they made my issues seem like Cadillac issues. They were graduated from school and they basically, from a community center, formed into a group who functioned as hospice in Alexandria because there was nothing. So they would hold space and help people hold space for people dying of AIDS and they had no way to clear the sadness and heal the energy and to heal themselves and so we taught them ways to do that because people who are caregivers are some of the sickest people in the world; shamans, nurses are very, well 80 percent of nurses come from, well I read this article probably back in 2002 or so which is when I left nursing for the first time, 80 percent of nurses come from drug addicted or alcoholic families so who makes a better caregiver, and they have been very resistant to....

I got my boss at Francis Hospital to pay for people, this was probably 2001 or 2002 just before I left, and (name) taught him, I got her to pay for the nurses to go and we could barely scrap together a

class. It's like people could feel what that change could, you can feel energy if you're not aware of it, and they could feel a change coming and didn't want to go to it. I mean if I'd have known how it would have blown up in my life I don't know if I would have been, that I would have been so eager, I was just curious about it. That's often what happens to me, often I will be so curious about something, and give no thought to the consequence. And psychic school just did more of that. So, ya, it's, it alienated me from a lot of people because they were afraid.

But over time I integrated it into a way of thinking and being with any religion you want to put it with. It's not opposed. Even in psychic school we don't, in the work we do, we don't name people's god. I believe god has many names. I think we're all talking about the same creative being. But it's taken me a long time to be able to say that out loud. It seemed blasphemist. I mean I came from a cult. All my cousins over generations wear this Plymouth rose and my brother. And through 23 and me I'm starting to get some of the kids "Did you go to that church?" because it split because women couldn't wear pants in one of them.... So, ya, it changed everything. It just took time and it was my own resistance that caused the worse problems for me personally. But I didn't have to throw anything away except for fear based hard edged judgment and hatred, and criticism and things like that, and ego, some very strong ego, keeping everything neat and tidy so I could feel like I was in control. Yes, Healing Touch was the doorway.

**5. Is Reiki/Healing Touch especially important for you as a woman as a part of the community in Tacoma, Washington? If so how?**

Absolutely, most of the women, (name) and I since we've been teaching Healing Touch, she's more of the foam on the edge of the wave and I'm more of the support that comes behind and keeps the momentum going. Most of my friends in my community-family are women who do energy work because you don't have to explain how you're thinking and you can have these wild conversations about anything that might come to mind and it's not going to shock or they won't judge you, you know maybe they would be, but less likely to be. It might shake them up a little bit.

When we first started Tacoma was not ready and that's when we moved to Africa and that's when we spent a month in Thailand teaching Healing Touch, in Nepal as well. We taught psychic techniques in Thailand as well, again to a group of 90. There was a top notch beautiful Shiva Sum beautiful resort and there were 90 staff members who we taught to meditate and clear their energy after seeing people because they felt so heavy. Thailand was a group of men mostly, that was the biggest group of men we worked with, they were acupuncturists. And they were really happy to add Healing Touch to their repertoire. Then we really started leaning more towards the psychic work than Healing Touch but they dovetail nicely together. And developed our own courses in that.

Healing Touch had a lot of politics. And I just exited the hospital and I still don't deal with it.... I mean how can people fight and be divisive? It's like the church. We're human I guess, but based on what you think you should know you could do better and so that left a tough taste in my mouth, but I still love people and the different camps, I just think they're wasting a ton of energy.... So anyway, our goal was always to build a community here coming back to your question, and it wasn't ready then, and we finally landed, we stopped traveling, and landed back here. We started in 2008 working with groups. (Name) is like I said, a foam rider, she didn't have church programming and she was out there from the get-go, getting people, and bringing all of this work out of the closet. And for the last 17 years, I taught classes too but it's not my forte, she's a gifted teacher. She doesn't teach Healing Touch anymore, she could but she doesn't she teaches... that we learned in psychic school, because it teaches self-care. And healing Touch doesn't really do that and that's a really important piece. It's easy enough to get in trouble but if you have that self-care piece it's much easier to stay in balance.

**6. What critiques would you give Reiki/Healing Touch or your experience with Reiki/Healing Touch?**

(Name) and I have always been more inclusive than not, like we would bring a teacher, our teacher the person who has taught both of us, who just landed back in this town, well she moved here just last year. That scarcity mentality when you go to have a business like a bunch of our students just opened a studio just 2 blocks away from us. And so we showed it and posted it.... You have to know there's enough and there's an order, and the competition and the typical advertisement and that sort of patriarchy based business model, I don't think it has a place. It's hard to advertise but don't over-sell what you do. Know that whoever comes to you for healing brings a mirror so you can see in them what you cannot see in yourself and let the healing go both ways. So the culture of bringing someone to town to teach.... If someone wants me to advertise I say just give me 50 bucks and I'll make a poster and put it out to my peeps. It's an exchange and it's not a big secret things, and if somebody new moves to town I will refer to them, and I will post and like the opening of a new healing center. This is good news for Tacoma, even if it's right down the block. Sometimes it's difficult to maintain that because old thinking gets in the way. I think really, so that part of the culture is old and really needs to come into present times.

There are not enough healers. And it is hard historically... you're never going to be rich even if you're in business for over 10 years. (Name) is really good at pushing us every couple of years, I mean she's a creative machine in terms of putting out there new ways to think about things, new ways to present things, from a webpage, the old one we have one from the 2000's she said we have to become more interactive and it's a huge cost. Almost everything now doesn't look like it because we have this house but this is kind of, I mean we really shouldn't have this house, logically speaking, but that's the kind of magic that can happen when you let go. So instead of being grabby or grabbing, and that's where real trust in things comes in, and divine guidance takes a lot of trust which is really hard for me. I like to think I'm putting my trust and faith into something 2,000 years old and unmovable. That's really something different when you apply it to a day-to-day basis. I mean it's really challenging and you have to keep growing that part of yourself. That conversation with the universe changes as you do. It's very dynamic. I always want to find my ottoman and put my feet up and feel like I've got it and feel like it's finally clicked in and I've gotten it right but nope. Constant change.

So that would be my, all the fighting between HGI and Healing Touch the attitude of specialness that you can think of. I believe everybody has healing energy and I believe that everybody is intuitive and it's about developing it and we use it all the time and it shouldn't be the scariest, wherever they put it, wherever the church put it. We have to examine all the things that the church stops us from moving forward on, it's where the real mystery is in my opinion. I'd love to break into the fault of the Vatican, because if we could get that information and build on that how far we could go. But instead I'll keep meditating and see what I get. So, that's the main thing, but you know, you put humans in charge of anything and... we're flawed and that's okay too.

### **7. Do you have anything else to add?**

I feel very fortunate that it came along when it did and it opened that door to the energy world for me and healing, what turns out to be healing myself. And it's a great way to stay honest and on a path and it's great for my sobriety.

## **Appendix F: Transcript 5**

### **What brought you to Reiki and/or Healing Touch as a client?**

Okay, so my entry to energy healing was Reiki and I may have had really early experiences receiving Reiki like the early 80's because that's when I had friends who practiced Reiki but it's been so long honestly I don't know. But in the early 90's a whole lot of my friends became Reiki initiated and were really excited about it. It was definitely on my radar and once again they may have practiced on me but it was so long ago honestly I don't remember.

Then when my daughter was born in 1993 she had a big hemangioma on the side of her head, it was on her face and into her eye. Well technically it wasn't life threatening but it was quite a problem. There was nothing medically to be done about it so I became Reiki initiated. With an infant in particular you're so energetically intertwined and your well-being, there's not much of a difference between you. So, my interpretation of that experience giving my daughter Reiki because of her hemangioma, I was both a giver and a receiver of Reiki. And it was really desperation and lack of other resources that brought me to it, which is what brings a lot of people to energy healing when they've exhausted all their other resources. So I guess I'm pretty similar in that regard. So it was a really good experience and I just gave her Reiki every time she nursed which was very often, and the doctors had said that it would probably go away in 5 years or 9 years, they gave us a 5 to 9 year range, and it was gone in a year, so it was a really good experience and introduction into energy healing.

### **2. What were your initial or early reactions/experiences with Reiki/Healing Touch?**

So I would say they were all good. They were all really positive, and as a client, I'm trying to think, mainly when you become Reiki initiated it's a community and there's this thing called Reiki Share where everyone shares Reiki so that was an early experience when I was receiving just for myself. And for me it was a really peaceful thing, I felt really peaceful. And that was good because that was at a time when I wasn't feeling particularly peaceful. So it was really a relief to receive Reiki and I really like it also both as a giver and receiver because of its simplicity and its accessibility. It's so simple yet so powerful and its teachings are also very simple and accessible and powerful when applied to your life. I really like that, I really like the sense of community around that; doing Reiki with other people and talking about that, so that was really nice.

### **3. How have your initial experiences changed and/or remained the same over time?**

Well, I think I kind of stopped receiving Reiki, I mean I did it to myself, you can do it to yourself, a lot of self Reiki, but I was more giving it to people, giving it to family and friends that sort of thing. So, I became Reiki initiated in 1993, level I, and I didn't feel the need to go beyond, I just did level I and that was good. Everyone I knew was going on and doing more and I just didn't feel called to do that. It had worked for me and I was really happy with that, but at some point, and I don't remember the exact sequence of all this, I continued to get more and more interested in energy healing.

And at some point I started receiving energy healing from someone who is a teacher and mentor to me. It was not a brand name. So there's lots and lots of different types of energy healing; Reiki and Healing Touch are just 2 of the most well known. And people just do it spontaneously and naturally and there's no need for it, they put their hands on people and people feel better. So I started receiving energy healing from someone who was my mentor and that was really powerful for me. Reiki seemed so gentle, it was really gentle, and the work my mentor did seemed so powerful and pronounced in the moment of receiving it.

I wrote down a story for you about receiving it so you'll get that. So, I think in 2003 or 4 I decided to, I learned about Healing Touch which I wasn't familiar with before. I learned about Healing Touch and I took a Healing Touch class and I liked it and I liked receiving it. So, as a receiver my experiences have

changed partly because I'm a more sensitive and an informed receiver than in my early days as a receiver. Early on sometimes people feel more and you know that what I could feel. So, and at some point I started receiving acupuncture from a really really gifted healer. They are so much more than what you would think of as an acupuncturist. They have done some amazing work for me.

Then also, over time, my husband is also an energy healer though he won't talk about it much. Primarily the work that he does is, he works on spaces actually. He works with space more, and with calibrating experiences. Calibrating situations more. But he gives me energy work so that's primarily who I receive it from at this point, and usually it's just, it's not anything regular at all, when one of us just starts feeling sick or you know we're out of balance or you know just not feeling right then the other one will give energy healing and it's almost always really helpful. It always surprises me and I don't know why I mean I've been doing this now since 1993 so you know I don't know why it surprises me, but it always surprises me.

Last winter, I think, I had this really sore heel, I was really crippled, and could hardly walk on it and this went on for months and I figured it was probably a bone spur. So, pretty physical to me it didn't seem like something that was very energetic or psychological, but my husband did an energy healing on it then it was better and in a couple days it was gone. So I mean sometimes it's just flat out amazing what energy work can do. I still receive energy work from friends sometimes too and because a lot of my friends do energy work, not many of them professionally, but you know, as kind of part of their lives.

#### **4. How has Reiki/Healing Touch affected your life in a holistic way: for example personal, family, etc.?**

So how has it affected my life in a holistic way? I mean it has really integrated into my life so it is really holistic. And I mean we do, my husband and I we do, like I said we integrate into our lives, in ways like calibrating our work space, before the beginning of the week, or after a difficult situation or something like that we'll calibrate and set intentions before we go on vacation or do anything like that. It's part of our conversations; we'll talk about the energetics of situations, the energetics of people we know, our own energy, just sort of the whole subtle non-physical meta-physical world, as just a general part of our lives and our conversations.

It's, I believe that, energy healing to me is, because we are all energy and that's all there is, I mean right now we are having an energetic interaction, on the most basic level that's all there is. So we are constantly being affected by energy by someone else's energy. If someone interacts with you with a good intention they are doing energy work in a way. They're not on a table and you're not waving your hands over them but they are still doing energy work. And part of my mission in life is to make energy healing more accessible and demystify it. So, I talk with people a lot about that when they're like "Oh I don't feel anything," or they're like "I can't do that it's so special," and it's like no it's really not, it's a human thing and you do it all the time and if you want to you can be more intentional about it but you're doing it right now.

So, and I use it a lot for my family and it's a wonderful way to interact with family to be, I have used it a lot with my parents who are surprisingly open to it. My father passed away in February but he always really liked receiving it and he always felt better. And I used it in the period when he was dying during his illness. And I use it for my mom who loves it and just thinks that it's the best and always feels better afterwards. She has heart arrhythmia problems and she always says that her heart is fine a couple days after I do a healing for her. So it's a lovely way to interact with people. It's really intimate in one way and in another way it doesn't feel invasive so it's a lovely way to be with people.

#### **4a. Were you surprised to see this/these affects? Why or why not?**

I think I mentioned before that I'm always surprised and that's part of the fun. It's never dull. You never know what the energy is going to do, and it's not you who is doing it. Maybe that's why it's a surprise; you're more of a facilitator or a channel for it. It's just as amazing to you as a practitioner as someone who is receiving it.

I'll tell the story because it seems to fit now, one of the times, it was really powerful when I was receiving energy from my mentor, and I had the appointment for a couple weeks but by the time I came to her I knew I was coming down with pneumonia because I had had pneumonia several times so I knew what it felt like. So I went in to see her and before she would even work on me she made me promise that I'd go call the doctor right away and she was very ethical as she should have. But, she did an energy healing for me and in the middle of it I started to laugh. And I laughed and I laughed and I laughed and at some point she started laughing and we were nearly rolling on the ground laughing, I was on a chair not a table and I laughed till my sides hurt and I can't remember laughing like that since I was a young girl. And it was an energy release, it was a really powerful energy release and after it was all over I called the doctor and it was pneumonia, but it went away really quickly and my experience with it was that it lingered and made me exhausted for months and it just didn't do that. It was over and gone really quickly so I guess energy healing, it worked.

**4b. From your experiences could you see Reiki/Healing Touch having an effect on communities? If so how?**

That's an interesting question that I don't have a perfect answer for. It's so, when the chips are really down it's nice to have an energy healer in your community, or family, or friendship group because it can be really powerful in ways that nothing else can be. It doesn't replace medical care; it doesn't replace psychological care; it doesn't replace a lot of things, but it provides a unique way to help and support people in states of imbalance and distress including illness, including grief, including dying, transition, anxiety, depression. I think that it can be, yes of course I think it's a valuable impact on communities. It seems very individual so I don't know how it, so that would be the impact I think from person to person, but any kind of healing of an individual, a person impacts the community they're in. So I think that could be a way it impacts, it has an effect on communities.

It also, it's an alternative way to work with pain too and clearly with the opioid crisis that I read about, I don't have personal experience with it in my family or my friends but I read about it. So there's a lot of suffering out there. There's a lot of pain and a tremendous amount of suffering, whether it is physical pain or psychological or emotional suffering people are really needing to medicate themselves to the point of death and it's speaks of a tremendous problem that isn't being met by medicine and by the medical world or by the psychological or psychosocial world as well. I think energy healing has a role to play in that, I think all the alternative holistic modalities have a role to play in that, and I think energy healing in particular, well not in particular but it has a role to play. So, ya, I mean it does have a role to play, and I think there is an epidemic of depression and anxiety and a lot of the people I see in my practice come in with anxiety and depression and some of them are referred by psychologists who are prescribing mental health care who don't want to prescribe anymore drugs and they've run out of options or they just want people to try something else instead of loading them up with something more. It's very effective as is hands on therapy like massage therapy also is really valuable.

And I think energy healing it particularly effective than a less hands on modality because it combines the two; it combines touch which is so powerful because so many people are so touch deprived in our culture, but it really can help, and it's especially helpful when you're, there's a role for professionals to play but there's also a role for the family and friend in community practitioner to give because most people aren't going to be able to afford a weekly visit to a professional. But Reiki is so easy and simple to do that people can learn to do it. In a weekend you can learn to become a level I practitioner and I'm here to attest that it's enough to do a world of good for the people you love and so if somebody in your family is a Reiki practitioner they can give you a weekly treatment without it being you know a real hardship on them, and you can receive the quantity of care that you need.

Sometimes energy healing can be amazing and make remarkable changes in one session but it is more effective I think when it is on-going for awhile, and so I really encourage people to become Reiki initiated or Healing Touch trained because those are actually the most accessible and incredible forms of energy healing right now. In fact, I've had people call me up and wanted appointments, and recently someone called me and wanted to get the appointment for her friend and I actually talked her out of it and told her to take the money she would have spent on that and go get Reiki or Healing Touch trained and give it to her friend herself. So, anyway....

So healing people from trauma also seems really interesting and particularly because there are some communities that are so traumatized, and I haven't really thought about it. I mean people come to see me having been traumatized and it's generally helped.... I think the main problem there would be in getting people to accept it. It's weird to a lot of people. It's a lot more accepted than it use to be but it's weird to people. I had someone call me and have a long conversation with me when he was deciding whether he wanted to come in or not and basically asked me how do I prevent demons from entering me while I was doing it or something like that. He didn't end up coming in. So I think that would be the main problem.

M: Do you think that in some communities or cultures it would be more accepted than others.

P: That's an interesting question, I don't know. The medical community is actually pretty accepting of it. I mean I have a lot of medical people who come to see me, so I don't know, that's the one I wouldn't expect. Laying on of hands is an old tradition and it comes from, well it's a Christian tradition. In fact I have a family member that my grandma told me about that, I don't know who she is a great aunt or something, who did laying on of hands. So I would think that that might be, I don't know, a way to access acceptability. It's a good question.

### **5. Is Reiki/Healing Touch especially important for you as a woman as part of the community in Tacoma, Washington? If so how?**

I mean my husband is an energy healer and he is very powerful so my experience is not that women are more powerful healers than men but I think that there are more women healers than men and it's probably acculturation that we are more open to it and that we are more culturally and historically we have been the healers in our homes and our communities, the non-professional healer Doctor Mom. I think probably it just feels like less of a stretch to most women than I guess it would be for most men. My husband is not a usual kind of guy so. So do I know many male energy healers? No. No. I know a lot of women energy healers. It's still pretty true (that women are the primary healers for children). Ya, so other than that. It's a wonderful way for me to as a healer to trade support with my women friends. So, ya, again, it's so intertwined with our lives. It's kind of hard to separate it out.

### **6. What critiques would you give Reiki/Healing Touch or your experience with Reiki/Healing Touch?**

I have a critique of Reiki, and it's not Reiki itself, anything can be used... so I think there are some unscrupulous people who do fast track Reiki Masters program and they take advantage of people. And the people out there claiming to be Reiki Masters have very little experience or depth, they don't really know what they're doing, and it gives energy healing a bad name.

I don't think I have any critiques of Healing Touch, it seems very credible, their program of learning is very structured and has a lot of accountability, it comes out of the nursing community. I don't know; it has a certain amount of credibility. I like their program, I think it's a good program.

I think there is one thing in particular with energy healing that I think is really important is that people do come to you when they are desperate, so if you have somebody who comes to you who is desperate and gravely ill, I think that it is important to not make promises to that person that you can't keep. Basically, in energy healing because you don't have control of it you can't promise

anything. I've heard of energy healers who have promised dying people that they can save them and that's really really bad.

### **7. Do you have anything else to add?**

Well, ya. My early experiences with energy healing were, I was still kind of on the medical model: there's a problem let's fix it; and now the way I approach it is not on that model it's really more of a spiritual one, and so it's much more about non-attachment to outcomes. You're not attached to outcomes, being open, staying humble, because it's not you doing it, and just being open and having good intentions, and broadening the definition of healing to being very very broad so that it might not do anything for somebody's illness but it might get them to change their relationship to work or to stop being a perfectionist so much or to feel better about themselves perhaps. So you usually can't always quantify it, it's usually very holistic and it can have an effect on any part of someone's life; so it can have an effect on the physical body but it can also have an effect on your emotions, it can have an effect on your thoughts, it can shake loose entrenched thoughts that are limiting you, it can have an impact on your relationships it can change your life. I would say all of that is you, I would define all of that as you; the physical body is not just you and everything else that is separate is not you, it's all you. My definitions of many things have changed over the years. So back to the community thing also, one more thing: it can be a really powerful thing when people are dying, through the dying process.

M: Is that because it supports the person dying and those close to the person?

P: Yes it can be good for the loved ones of the dying person as well as really good for the dying person in terms of helping them be more at peace, helping them not be afraid, helping them be less anxious, helping them rest, helping them live until they are actually dying, because sometimes when people have a prolonged dying process they start the dying early, in their mind they're already dying. So, it helps them to live as high a quality of life as possible until they are actively dying so what you will often see is people who are dying who are receiving energy healing will do very well right up till the end and the end will be very sudden. And that's a good thing.

## Appendix G: Interview 6

### 1. What brought you to Reiki and/or Healing Touch as a client?

I actually first came to Reiki as a student. Back in 1993, I must have seen a flyer or article about training as a Reiki healer. The class was taught by (name), who was a Reiki Grand Master. My first experience receiving Reiki was by my classmates during the weekend training. It was a long time ago, so I don't remember the experience of receiving Reiki at that time, I just remember the training itself.

After the training, I learned about something called a "Reiki Share". A Reiki Share is a group of Reiki students or practitioners who spend an evening giving each other Reiki treatments. I remember this happening about once a month at (name) house down near Old Town in Tacoma. There would be several massage tables set up and we would take turns giving and receiving Reiki. I do remember feeling very energized after the treatments; sometimes I felt like running home!

### 2. What were your initial or early reactions/experiences with Reiki/Healing Touch?

My initial reactions to receiving Reiki treatments was feeling very energized. Not a caffeine buzz or hyper-type of energy, but a balanced, full-of-life kind of feeling.

### 3. How have your initial experiences changed and/or remained the same over time?

Surprisingly, it has changed. Twenty-four years after my first experience, I now feel more calm and peaceful rather than energized after receiving Reiki. My mind is clearer and I feel more balanced emotionally.

### 4. How has Reiki/Healing Touch affected your life in a holistic way: for example personal, family, etc.?

I think Reiki has been part of a path with other teachings that have improved my life. Being introduced to energy work opens up this whole new way of looking at the world. As a very sensitive person, I would react to others' energy, not know it was theirs and not mine. I took classes with (name) at (name) in 2008 and learned how to differentiate my energy from others using grounding techniques, meditation and just practicing looking at other people's energy. These classes made a huge difference in my life.

I think being a sensitive person, people unconsciously unload their own emotions that they can't deal with, on me. Learning to differentiate energies, I could see this happening and not take on their energy. We all are exchanging energy with each other all the time and aren't aware of doing so.

Of course, learning about energy has greatly helped me as a Reiki practitioner as well. But that's another story.

#### 4a. Were you surprised to see this/these affects? Why or why not?

I was surprised to see how energy work affected me. I was aware of myself mentally and physically, but becoming aware of myself energetically was like seeing the world with a new dimension. I think anyone can see or feel energy; it's just exercising that muscle to become aware of how we use energy.

#### 4b. From your experiences could you see Reiki/Healing Touch having an effect on communities? If so how?

Yes, I do. Human touch and contact is really healing. Having a healer place their hands on you with the intention of giving comfort, balance and love is very powerful. When I give someone a Reiki treatment, there is an instant bond between us. There is trust from the recipient; after all, they are coming to me as a complete stranger, closing their eyes and letting me place my hands on them. I would say the majority of people who I give a Reiki treatment to, fall asleep.

As a Reiki practitioner, I am sending healing energy to someone, with the intention of giving them a feeling of well-being.

Imagine if we all gave and received positive, healing energy to everyone we came in contact with. That would be a different world!

**5. Is Reiki/Healing Touch especially important for you as a woman as a part of the community in Tacoma, Washington? If so how?**

I don't really think in terms of separating myself out as a woman. I tend to steer clear of women's groups and feel a bit out of place when I'm in them; it feels like something is missing. I do very much realize that women aren't treated as equals and are marginalized, but I believe in raising everyone up together. Treat the people who perpetuate the inequality as well as their targets.

**6. What critiques would you give Reiki/Healing Touch or your experience with Reiki/Healing Touch?**

Like anything, Reiki can be corrupted by ego and delusion. I never make any claims or promises and I try to leave out any expectations as a Reiki practitioner. As a receiver of Reiki, I also try to avoid having expectations and just keep an open mind to the experience.

### **Appendix H: Participant Observation Notes**

#### **One-Hour Reiki Session July 25, 2017**

##### **Before the Reiki Session**

- Feeling a bit anxious, I know I struggle with anxiety and sometimes meetings like this can spike my anxiety
- Probably because of the anxiety I'm afraid that the Reiki could work so well that I bring up past burdens and begin crying and feel embarrassed or something embarrassing along those lines
- Even with the anxiety still feeling excited and really curious about experiencing Reiki first hand as my first time

##### **During**

- At first I was still feeling anxious but I was told all I had to do was lie down face up on a comfortable massage-like table and just relax
- I wasn't sure if I should be trying to be in a meditation-like state or just let my thoughts drift or do what felt best in the moment, so I went from trying to meditate to letting my thoughts drift through out the session
- Perhaps I would have fallen asleep if it wasn't for this project – trying to stay awake to see what would happen with the process
- A weighted eye mask was put over my eyes, a pillow under my head as well as a pillow under my knees
- The Reiki practitioner put large crystals over me secured by metal holdings connected to a metal stand
- Though my eyes were covered I could make out that the crystals lit-up with and changed colors
- Practitioner began lightly placing her hands over the top of my head/forehead, then neck, upper fore-arm and wrist, wrist and right side abdomen, right ankle, left ankle, left wrist and forearm, left wrist and side abdomen, and back to the top of my head
- I could hear her breathing deeply
- The strong warmth/heat from her hands surprised me
- After getting over my initial anxiety I felt relaxed and not quite in the state right before you fall asleep but close to it

##### **At the End of the Session**

- Practitioner used a sound bowl for what seemed like a few minutes
- Practitioner said something over me that sounded like "halowi"
- I believe she also used feathers bundled together by leather with small stones and a small dream catcher attached to the handle (I saw this after my Reiki session was over) – she used the feathers to barely touch my neck and abdomen
- At the very end she said something along the lines of "I seal this session with love and light" and repeated it about three times

##### **After the Session**

- Overall I felt very relaxed similar to when I've gotten an hour long massage
- The practitioner and I spoke for a bit
- I told her I was feeling relaxed and she said that state of relaxation expands the gray matter in our brains
- I asked if there was a set pattern to Reiki. She said it is somewhat intuitive but she does a similar sequence most times
- She directed my attention to the feeling of the room and said that the energy of the room changed and that it seemed more comfortable. I agreed with her and said something like it felt kind of like Christmas morning in the room

- I asked if there was anything I should know about my energy and she said just that I have beautiful energy and that the session (I think the benefits of) should last a few days

**Later That Same Day/The Next Day**

- Felt pretty relaxed (even when I was in a busy area) for about an hour or so after the session
- The same day and the day after I didn't have any "big revelations" but haven't felt as anxious to the level of what I have felt before since the Reiki session