

Energetic Hygiene

By Colleen Deatsman

Suzi is a great client, but there is a frustration in working with her that you can't quite identify. Over the years two thematic issues have continued to arise. The first is she never improves for more than a few days after treatment and shows little hope of approaching full recovery. The second is at the session's end Suzi exits the office feeling full of energy and free from the pain she brought with her, but you crumple into the chair, exhausted.



Every Thursday before 10:30 you feel great and Suzi comes in hurting. Every Thursday at noon Suzi leaves feeling energized and healthy, and you feel like you have been hit by a Mack truck. It usually takes an hour or so to recover. Some weeks several hours. And on a bad week, up to a full day or more.

Without proper attention to your energy system, fatigue and energy congestion can intensify into chronic exhaustion, professional stress, and burnout. Full recovery of your personal energy and vitality might never be realized.

This scenario is one example of the many ways unchecked energy exchange can affect how you feel. In this case, your powerful work is helping Suzi to release the energy blockages causing symptoms, but because you did not power-fill and fortify your own energy boundaries before the session, your energy field is weak and porous, and Suzi is absorbing the

is your personal energy field, which is organized into a nurturing protective conscious field that keeps you alive and connects you with other energies, including other people's energy fields.

This energy field forms a semipermeable boundary around the body that looks like a luminous egg. Your energetic egg extends out from the body about three feet, or just beyond your outstretched arms. This is your personal space or personal bubble and often you are uncomfortable if someone enters that space without permission. This energetic boundary provides an invisible shield that screens incoming and outgoing energy, keeping your energy field a closed, contained system. Without this boundary, your energy field might readily dissipate instead of staying in and around your body, where you need it for vitality and protection. A healthy luminous energy boundary is essential for having vibrant physical energy.

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energy. You are unconsciously opening up your energy field to Suzi and using your own personal energy to help her heal.

This situation happens often without practitioners' consent or knowledge because too frequently massage therapists aren't trained to work with energy systems and energy hygiene. What would be common knowledge to a qigong practitioner, an ayurvedic doctor, or an acupuncturist is often not addressed in bodywork curricula in this country. This phenomenon is a subtle, natural occurrence that takes place underneath practitioners' everyday radar until they can become consciously aware of energy and make some simple additions to their work preparation routine.

Silent Defender

Awareness and utilization of the energy system is important for the health of both therapist and client because whether one consciously works with energy or not, the energy systems of the therapist and the client intimately interact. The physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and energetic aspects of your being-ness cannot be separated or treated individually.

Energy is the essence of life. It is the sustenance that feeds you and is the key to reclaiming and maintaining vibrant health and well-being. It is the source that creates a balanced whole self, integrating body, mind, emotions, and soul. To be whole and healthy, your energy must be constantly flowing and moving throughout your system. The energy system is comprised of layers, wheels, and meridians forming a field of life force and vitality that surrounds and permeates you. This

This wonderful luminous egg is one of the instruments you use to sense, feel, and interact with the luminous eggs of others and the environment. Your energy field automatically scans every vibration that comes near or enters it and sends messages in the forms of sensations and feelings. You experience these messages daily and usually respond to them without realizing where they come from. Consider the good vibes/bad vibes designation of what you feel when you are around certain people or places. You sense things like, "This place feels warm and comfortable," "I could cut the tension with a knife," or "That person feels cold and angry." This is the energy of people, animals, places, and things you are sensing. Many therapists sense their clients' body "talking" to them about where to place their hands and how much pressure to use. The effect is like a magnetic push or pull. This response does not happen in the head as a thought; it occurs in the felt senses of the body's energy field.

In so many ways, your energy boundary is your silent defender as long as it is working properly. Healthy energy boundaries are semipermeable to allow for exchanges of energy. If your energetic boundary is too porous or becomes torn or leaky, you may find yourself easily absorbing unwanted energy from others or giving away too much of your own. When this occurs, you may struggle with a variety of issues depending on the severity and location of the weakness or leak and which layers of the energy system are affected.

One of the main sources of energy loss is a weak and leaky energetic boundary. When your energy boundaries aren't

strong, you're also more vulnerable to incoming energy from external sources and become overly empathetic and highly sensitive, tending to absorb the feelings, problems, or pain of others. This is called the sponge effect. When you do this, you are unconsciously absorbing another person's energy, causing an energy blockage or overload. You then feel like you are taking on someone else's stuff. This phenomenon is typical of healers.

Your energy field is dynamic. It is in its healthiest state when in constant motion. Should this energy flow become walled off, tied up in knots, or energetically congested, you will find yourself experiencing energy flow blockages. Energy blockages are obstructions in the energy body that prevent the free flow of personal life force energy. Low energy, fatigue, illness, disease, pain, and chronic emotional discomfort are physical manifestations of energy that is congested or no longer moving. This stagnant area impedes the natural flow of life force energy, thus reducing the amount of energy available.

shallow pool of crystal clear water in a beautiful tropical paradise. Exquisite, lush gardens surround you. The air carries a hint of moisture, and the faint perfume of orchids lingers around you.

From the top of the mountain a warm waterfall, sparkling with droplets of rainbow prisms, cascades down onto, around, and into your body. The soft colorful waterfall penetrates into your energy field and body, washing away any energy blockages or congestion as it flows down through you and into the pool. With each inhalation, feel and fully sense the energy of the rainbow waterfall flow in through the top of your head and glide down through your face, back of your head, neck, shoulders, arms, chest, upper back, torso, stomach, lower back, legs, knees, ankles, and move out through the bottom of your feet into the pristine pool. The unwanted energy that caused the blockages and congestion washes out of your body and energy field into the clear pool and flows away down a small trickling stream. Breathe deeply, relax, and feel the warm

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You can easily rectify this problem by activating and cleansing your energy field to resume energy flow. To accomplish this, it is important to become cognizant of your personal energy.

You may need to develop your responsiveness skills and use all of your senses to feel the energy's subtleties. This takes practice. Begin by trying the following exercise. With palms open and hands relaxed, rub your hands together. After doing this for a few moments, slowly pull them apart, really sensing what you feel. Do you feel the heat and pull of the energy? It may feel rather sticky, making it subtly harder to pull apart. You may also feel the pulsing and vibrating of the energy.

The following energy moving exercises are designed to facilitate this same flow of energy throughout your entire body. You may feel the powerful energy right away as you perform these exercises or it may take time and practice to notice increased awareness of and ability to tangibly feel energy.

Energy Exercise: Rainbow Waterfall

The Rainbow Waterfall is a powerful energy cleansing exercise that utilizes intention and visualization to cleanse energetic blockages and congestion from your body and energy field.

Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and relax. Allow your imagination to take you on a tropical vacation. See, feel, sense, and experience yourself standing or sitting in a warm, calm,

soothing energy of the waterfall cleanse and heal you. Take in another deep breath, and feel, sense, and experience the energizing colors.

On your next inhalation, tangibly feel and fully sense the energy of the rainbow waterfall flowing in through the top of your head, gliding down through the inside of your body, sliding over the outside of your body, and flowing down through your energy field into the pristine pool. Breathe deeply, relax, and feel the warm soothing energy cleanse and energize you. When you are finished, take a deep breath and open your eyes. Stay open and connected for as long as you can and remain aware of the different sensations you are having.

Energy Exercise: Lighted Energy Egg

The Lighted Energy Egg will literally light you up. Through visualization and intention, your personal energy will be stimulated to light up, swirl around inside and outside of you, and form a powerful energy boundary.

Take a few moments to relax and release any stress or tension from your mind and body. Picture yourself sitting on top of a round rock with a smooth flat top. The rock is glowing brightly and when you sit on it, it makes you light up and glow inside. Take a few moments to see, sense, and feel the light glowing through your entire body and energy field. The light inside of you illuminates your energy and looks

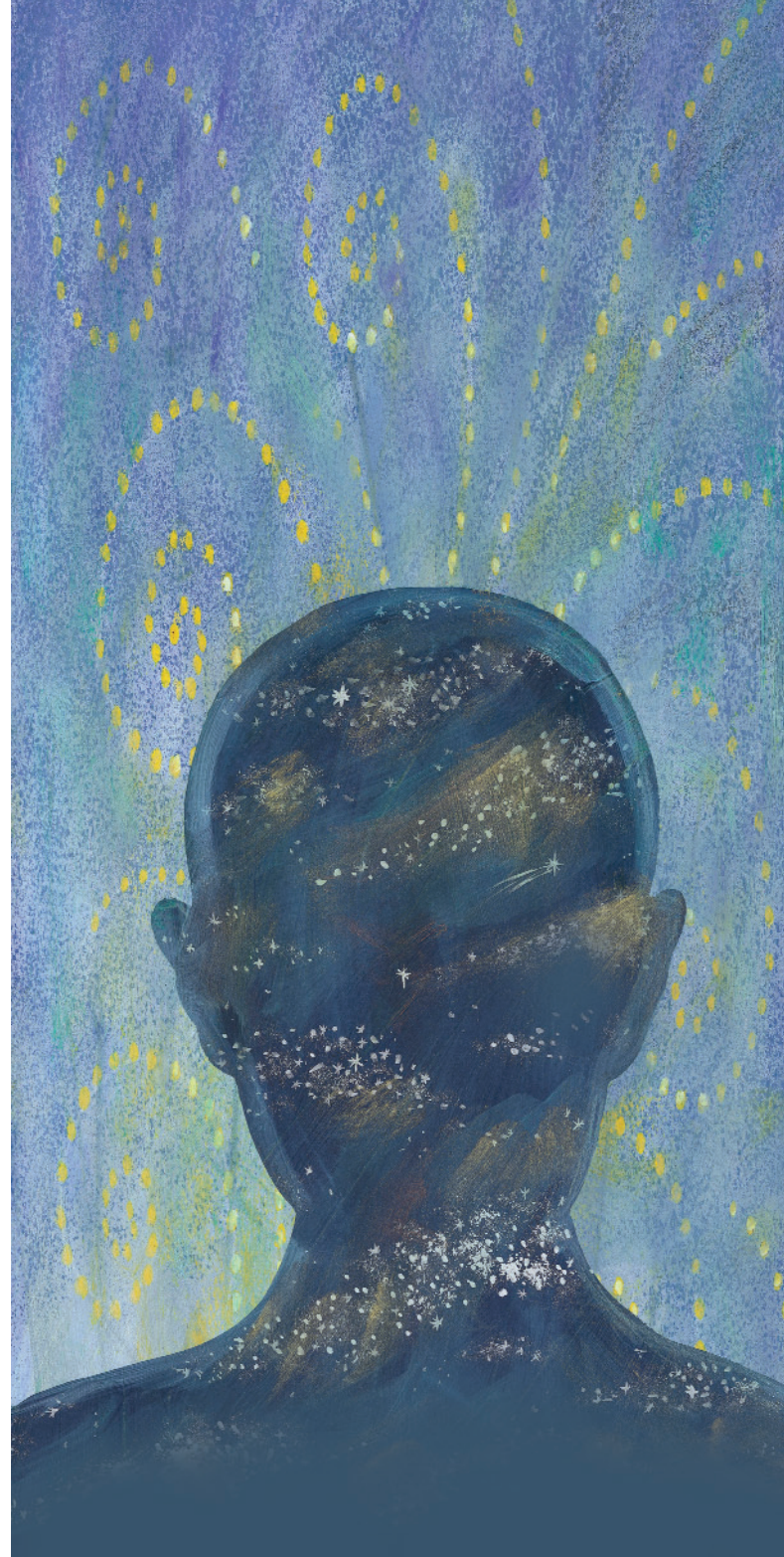
something like swirling moist steam wafting up from hot water. Take a few moments to bask in this glow. You will also notice any holes, leaks, and congestion. These may appear as spraying energy, empty holes, or dark, dirty, or smoky looking patches. You don't need to do anything about these, just notice them for a few moments.

Using your will and intention, begin to stimulate your energy field by stirring the energy at your base where you are seated on the lighted rock. After a few moments, send this clear translucent energy spiraling up the inside of your body. The nourishing energy looks and feels like warm steamy water bubbling up out of a small internal geyser from your base through the top of your head. Relax and use all of your senses to experience your energy as it continually spirals up your spinal column and billows out through your entire body, clearing away blockages and congestion, sealing leaks, and filling holes. Experience the effervescence of your internal geyser in your body for a few moments. When you are ready, allow it to move just beyond the edge of your skin into the first layer of your energy field. As the energy continues to flow, it grows in strength and becomes more dynamic and fills each layer of your energy field one at a time until reaching the outer boundary.

At the outer boundary, an energy membrane surrounds the layers of your energy field and you feel it thicken and intensify from the power of your gathering personal energies. This luminescent perimeter appears like a flexible rubbery egg shell that continues to allow the exchange of gases and energy. Inside of your egg shell energy boundary your body is the yolk and the layers of your energy field are the white. Reach out and feel the edges of your energy boundary and give your luminous egg shell a color that feels right to you. See, sense, feel, and experience it radiating and shimmering in its reclaimed strength and power. Inside of your radiant energy boundary, your personal energy nourishes your body and energy field and fills you full of vigor and vitality. You are energized.

You now know a bit about the energy system, what it is, how it works, how to perceive it, and how to activate your personal energy system to help you stay vital, healthy, and energetically clean. The easy-to-do energy movement techniques can also be taught to your clients to help them with energy cleansing and self-healing between sessions. Feeling vibrant and full of abundant energy is our natural state of being. **DS**

Colleen Deatsman is the author of Inner Power: Six Techniques for Increased Energy and Self-Healing (Llewellyn, July 2005) and Energy for Life: Connect with the Source (Llewellyn, June 2006). She is a master's degreed licensed professional counselor, registered social worker, reiki master, certified hypnotherapist, certified alternative healing consultant, and shamanic practitioner, dedicated to empowering and guiding people toward self-healing and self-actualization through individual sessions and national workshops.



Recommended Reading

Hands of Light by Barbara Ann Brennan (Bantam, 1998), *Kundalini Awakening* by John Selby (Bantam, 1992), *The Energy Medicine Kit* by Donna Eden (Sounds True, 2005).