



~ My Healing Journey ~



It is said that people enter our lives for a reason. Whether to teach or inspire, for good or for bad, easy or difficult, to stay or to go; we learn valuable lessons from those we meet along our life's path. Seldom does someone enter our life to heal and guide us to a new path of wellness and serenity.

I had injured my back twenty plus years ago and have long since figured I would be seeing a chiropractor for the rest of my life. No one could tell me just how I injured myself, but every so often, a slight turn, twist or bend would render me immobile. Someone would need to carry me to the chiropractor and then for a few weeks, I would need the help of a cane to walk or to just get up or down. I kept a cane in the trunk of my car, "just in case". And I have a spiffy collapsible cane to pack when I traveled.

In September of 2009, I was unhappy with my current chiropractor. My regular chiropractor had retired and this new one seemed to be making matters worse. Not only was I dealing with the lower back problem but had developed sciatica during my treatments as well. The pain was constant. So while deciding about a new chiropractor, I thought I would treat myself to a massage.

I found **Jim Fazio, LMT, CSI of Integrative Bodywork** listed on my insurance plan's alternative medical practitioners and when I called, he told me a bit about the Unified Therapy™ work that he did. Not what I was expecting, but figured I would give it a go and see if he could help me with my back. Looking back, I am sure I did not really hear what Jim was saying and all I heard was a new way to manage my back problems.

The physical changes were immediate. After the very first session, I realized I had full range of motion in one of my shoulders; something I had forgotten I had lost. The sciatica began to go away and soon I realized I was no longer babying my lower back. I realized I had subconsciously – and for twenty years – held a fear that my back would go out. As that feeling of fear went away, I felt a new freedom and as a result, I was becoming more active.

As I continued with the sessions, I found myself making small changes in my lifestyle. Jim had quietly encouraged me to begin exercising. Having been thin most of my life, I never developed that habit, in fact; I avoided exercise and as I got older and heavier, was not going to start an exercise routine now. I did however, rediscover my love of music. And how can you sit still when listening to good old rock and roll? I was having fun. Imagine my surprise when Jim reminded me that dancing is exercise! I also began to make better nutritional choices. Now more open to some positive influences around me, I stopped the junk food lunches and found I was less hungry, eating less and feeling better. Without realizing it, or even trying, I began losing weight. Thirty pounds in six months! As my body began to regulate itself, I was returning to a more normal weight and my physician couldn't be happier with the resulting effect on my overall health. I had accepted the "fact" that as we age, we just gain weight and begin to have health issues. I was learning that I was wrong.

Through all this, I still did not really understand what Jim kept telling me about the Unified Therapy™ process and how the ability to activate a systemic or whole body, righting or healing reflex was so much more than the changes on the outside. Healing trauma was not something I thought I needed. After all, I am pretty easy-going, have a positive attitude and am generally happy. I am good at handling stress and really have not had any major traumas or hurts other than the regular stuff life throws at everyone.

So after about six or seven months of sessions, I was happy with the way I felt physically, but wondered why I should continue? I was not seeing what I considered progress and figured I had either stalled out, or was done. I discussed this "lack of progress" with Jim, who wiser than me, patiently listened and guided me, telling me he understood and how we are each on an individual journey and while we can not control the pace, we can allow the body to take us to a deeper healing from within.

I had a free weekend and spent the time thinking. What had I learned from the sessions, from the printed and audio materials Jim had shared, from how I felt about the changes that had occurred? What changes



would I still like to make? What seem to be the promises of this therapy? It will change your life. Yeah, we hear that a lot these days from a variety of sources. Learn tools to handle stress, trauma and hurt. I'm strong and can cope – always have, thank you. You will see things differently. Sure. You will be more open to attract health, more positive relationships, abundance, and peace. Skeptical, I decided to make a list of just what had changed for me in the last several months

– physically, spiritually, mentally and emotionally. The list surprised me.

I decided to have faith. In things I did not really understand.

As the sessions continued, I slowly began to understand some of the things Jim had been patiently teaching me all along.

While I am good at handling stress, I discovered I was only dealing with stress mentally. Bring it on! This tough girl can take it! Our parent company was in the process of being sold and as a result, the fate of



our division was uncertain. Rumors flew, assurances were dubious and the economy was tanking. While I maintained a positive attitude that things would work out and I would continue to be employed, I began to become aware of how the stress affected me physically. Learning new skills to recognize and release the effects of stress allowed me to focus my energies in more healthful and positive ways. My co-workers began to notice a calmer, more peaceful, and even “luckier” me. As the sale of the company suddenly fell through and our business plans were turned upside down, we struggled through a long and difficult summer.

Learning to interact with my body’s sensations, I was better able to dissipate my own stress – both mentally and biologically – with the result that I was not only better able to focus on my own job in sales, but also take on a few tasks from a co-worker who was overwhelmed with added responsibilities. The ability to be supportive in a tangible way not only felt good, but had a positive effect on me as well. I was beginning to understand and to experience the some of benefits of Unified Therapy™. I was becoming more open.

During this time, Jim talked in one of the sessions about how as we allow ourselves to become more open to opportunities, abundance will come in various areas of our lives. While I was beginning to understand that under Jim’s guidance and through Unified Therapy™, that my life was indeed changing, I really did not pay much attention to this “abundance” thing Jim talked about during the session. Until I got home and checked my email. I had just received confirmation that I had won my first statewide contract – a major sale for our company! A couple of days later, I closed a second statewide contract. Talk about abundance! My sales figures spiked significantly that month and I have continued to exceed my monthly sales goals. As a result, I have gone from the uncertainty of sales bonuses to a guaranteed salary. Maybe there is something to this concept of pro-actively working with our body’s biology and in learning to interact with stress as potential energy for change in our life.



As much as I was learning, it was not until a loved one was diagnosed with kidney cancer that I realized just how much I kept my emotions under control and dissociated from any form of painful feelings. I had learned to be strong and that it was not okay to cry in front of anyone. I was scared of losing my friend, afraid for the pain he would suffer.

In the safety and gentleness of a session, I began to truly feel the fear and pain within myself. The fear within me would not stop and I began to cry uncontrollably. As Jim reassured me that I was okay, I was able to allow the tears to come and release the feeling of helplessness inside. While I was exhausted at the end of the session, I was more at peace. My friend’s surgery was remarkably successful and through it all, I was able to be more supportive rather than focused on hiding my own fears.

That was the beginning of recognizing that it was okay to feel the hurt and to allow my body to feel it instead of boxing it away and ignoring what I felt. I was starting to understand the healing from within

and that we all have unresolved pain. It does not have to be major or extremely traumatic, just how our body stores and remembers the hurts we all face in life.

While I once considered ending the therapy, I now was ready to find and confront my inner demons. I wanted to be able to learn healthier ways to deal with and to direct my life and free myself from old, limiting and destructive patterns in dealing with the things that hurt us; from the deaths of family and friends to the feelings of hurt or disappointment from the people in our lives that are important to us. Issues long since resolved in my mind, but not resolved on a biological level. I know I am experiencing changes on a much deeper level now, more spiritual and emotional.

As I have grown and learned more about healing from within from this remarkably wise and patient man, I began to notice a new, nagging and persistent pain has appeared. Sometimes it grabs me, sometimes it just hovers quietly. But as we work through this, the sessions have become very intense and emotional. Unexplained feelings of loss, abandonment and overwhelming heartbreak keep reoccurring. While not afraid of the feelings and emotions that have come up, I have been impatient to figure out what and why. The answers do not seem to come and learning about implicit memories and their effects seem to be only part of the answer. As Jim suggested, I try to remain quiet after each of these sessions and observe what I am feeling, but the answers will not come. Instead, I seem to be dropping into a deep, dark abyss with memories of past sadness that were difficult and overwhelming. Despite the intensity of the emotions, Jim has kept me anchored while I explore the dark path I seem to be traveling that present more questions than answers. Then finally, toward the end of one of these sessions, I had the sensation of waterfalls and calmness around me. The frustration of not knowing the answers was being washed away.



A few days later, I emailed Jim, *“thanks for not throwing me back into (or was that pulling me out of?) that deep, dark abyss that I have been living in lately. Yes, I know I need to go back in there and the pain in my back is still there but just whispering now. Really wish I knew what it was all about, but for now, I am okay with that.”*

“I am so much calmer after the last session. When I got home, I threw an afghan over me and fell into a deeper sleep than I had for a long time. Dreams have been disturbing and exhausting lately but this time, can you believe it? I was dreaming about waterfalls. I actually feel pretty peaceful. Great timing, too. The days are just beautiful and I am off work for the week, so I can really enjoy the beauty of the days ahead and whatever adventures they bring. Hard to explain, but things just look and feel different.”



Something seemed to have opened up in me. Over the next few days, I caught myself stopping and looking at things as if I were seeing them in a new way. It finally hit me as I was outside and again experiencing how "things just looked different" and I realized – there was just such **clarity** to everything. It was an "aha moment". Not the ambiguous "looks different", but I was experiencing a new clarity in what I saw visually and maybe even what I see in my heart.

And I understood one of the promises – that you will see things differently.

Yet the pain kept nagging at me. I knew nothing was physically wrong as the pain kept moving around, as if taunting me. Jim tried to explain it was there to bring my attention to something and my body needed me to take notice. Sometimes it felt like my body was being broken in two pieces and Jim talked about a new me emerging, like a snake shedding its skin. Still, I was becoming anxious about the sessions yet determined to figure this out. It took a dissociative reaction – physical numbing and inability to focus mentally – after a session to realize just how much scars left many years ago had changed me and how I structured my world to never get too close or be too vulnerable. Jim was softly opening up my very soul and I was trying to shield myself even from his gentle guidance. Images flashed through my head of all the times and ways I kept myself isolated and safe. It would be a surprise to everyone who knows me – upbeat, confident, happy go lucky, a real “people person”. It was a surprise even to me.

I took a drive this weekend to the beach – “my beach” – where I spent so many days in my youth when I was a free spirit, fearless and ready to take on the world. When my heart was open and cares were few. My own little spot where I would go to figure things out and gain strength and reassurance from the waves crashing against the shore. There have been many changes, both in my beach and in me over the years, but after so much time away, it was like visiting a long lost friend. I walked for a while, feeling the resistance of the sand, and then sat for a while, feeling the warm sun on my back while the cool breeze was blowing off the ocean. And I remembered what it felt like. How I want to feel again.



Some people say they can see changes in me, some see a new me and some are perplexed at who I am becoming. Sometimes I feel I have recovered some of the old me, before the scars and changes. There is still much work to do. I have gone beyond the back pain that originally brought me to Jim and his work with Unified Therapy™. While I have learned so much, there is still a lot I do not yet understand.

Wellness and healing requires our own participation along with the work done in the sessions as we gain the insight, skills and the tools to be mindful of the messages. Reading, meditation, and yoga are some of the ways to help with the healing. Nutrition and exercise are other ways Jim has guided and encouraged me.

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I once said this process was like saying, “I will guide you on a journey that will change your life. I don’t know where that journey will lead, or what we will find along the way, but I can promise that it will be painful. And by the way – keep your eyes closed.” But as I close my eyes and try to mindfully observe, I am beginning to understand the messages of the pain as I learn to open my heart with Jim’s wisdom and gentle touch to guide me along the way.

It is changing my life.

