

Essential Steps to Healing: Access the Potential of Present-Time Grounding

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When a patient comes through the door of my office, it's rare that I'll find them in perfect alignment; everyone is always working on something, even when it seems they are doing pretty well. As a practitioner of this medicine, I feel it's my job and an essential piece of the healing paradigm to look to every layer of my patient before addressing them with any needles or treatment. We talk, I feel pulses and palpate meridians, but mostly I'm energetically viewing them to see where the imbalance, divergence or misalignment is coming from.

We may have touched on some techniques for feeling and sensing energy and *qi* more directly with our *qi gong* or *tai chi* classes in school, and I'm certain many of you have a practice of your own dedicated to this cultivation of intuitive ability. For me, it's an essential part of my practice and I attribute the success of any treatment to being able to simply "tap in" to a patient's energy form to help guide the direction I will take.

Helping our patients to feel safe in our care is essential to being an effective practitioner. This sense of safety goes beyond being assured of our physical skills: knowing where the points are and how to needle them. In its most essential form, it is a sense of safety that's felt on a spiritual and energetic level.

In this medicine, there is always a tendency to want to go upward and outward to access healing energies for our patients, but without access to essential grounding, we actually cannot bring it back in the way we would like. Keeping ourselves and our space grounded while simultaneously accessing healing energies that lie outside of our bodies is a key skill in giving effective treatments which go beyond a physiological response.

The Power of the Present

"Usually, people have a tendency to be caught in the worries concerning the future or in the regret concerning the past. There is some kind of energy that is pushing them to run, and they are not able to establish themselves in the present moment." — Thich Naht Hanh

While our busy mind and intellect love to fret about the future or dwell on the past, being in either place has no bearing on the facilitation of healing in its truest form: to return to our original intention and to become whole again. It is impossible to change anything when we aren't existing in present time. When we aren't grounded in our bodies and connected to the Earth, we simply cannot access the quantum levels of healing needed to have a treatment that bridges the mind-body-spirit axis.

This grounding practice is simple and bridges across many different grounding techniques. I've found

that it is easy to implement into daily life, and also teach to patients as an additional healing modality and tool they can continue to use outside of the treatment room. By consciously grounding ourselves and our treatment space, we are holding space for our patients to not only feel a sense of safety, but also to feel allowed to let go, heal and be themselves.

For many patients, this sense of safety isn't felt often in life and can be a major factor in treatment plan adherence. When our patient feels safe, even if they don't consciously recognize this, they are more willing to trust in you, your treatment plan and be committed to continuing their treatment.

A Grounding Exercise

To help facilitate grounding myself, my space and my patients, I use this simple grounding exercise. It's helpful to use imagery to help guide patients through the meditation while on the treatment table, or even during an intake when a patient feels ungrounded or is working on some emotionally charged issues.

- With your eyes closed, take a few deep breaths in and out.
- Imagine the center of the Earth - since we are imagining it, we can be creative: put a color, object or scene in the center of the Earth that makes you feel safe and at home. It may be a serene beach, meadow or lake, or perhaps a bed of crystals.
- Feel yourself sitting in your chair: acknowledge your body and focus on your sacrum, tailbone and first chakra.
- Now we will connect ourselves to this space in the center of the Earth by visualizing a "grounding cord"; this also can be made of any material and be any color. Think of it as a large tube you can sit in, connecting to the base of your spine and hips, and flowing down to the center of the Earth.
- Feel the security and stability of the grounding cord. Check in to it to make sure it doesn't have any breaks or stops short of plugging in to the center of the Earth.

Once *you* are grounded and in present time, you can visualize this grounding practice for your office space and treatment rooms: visualizing a grounding cord to the center of the room to help bring the room into present time and create a safe space for your patients.

If a patient needs help grounding, you can energetically show them this technique by visualizing it. However, it's important not to invade their space and do this practice for them; we can simply remind them of their grounding and intuitively watch to see if they become grounded. You can also use this as a visualization to lead them through while you are with them, going through the steps above once you and your space are grounded.

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