

# Bringing New Energy Into the Operating Room

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In the past 10 years or so, I've come to think about and understand energy in very different ways. Now I am bringing this new understanding of energy into the operating room, when doing so meets the needs and wishes of my patients.

My “new source of energy” is a woman named Alessandra Shepard. Although I've only known her for a short time, I am already aware that she is a gifted healer—truly a remarkable practitioner of energy medicine.

Dr. Shepard has a doctorate in clinical psychology, was a university professor for a dozen years, and—mostly importantly, she would agree—has earned certification at the Barbara Brennan School of Healing after completing a rigorous four years of training. Beyond that, she is fully qualified in the fascinating field of core energetics, which is perhaps best described as a form of physical psychotherapy. *(There's more information about Dr. Shepard's background and experience in the accompanying article.)*

Why, I've been asked would I consider inviting an energy healer into the operating room, where the demands of surgery require that the minds and talents of surgeon, nurse, and support staff work in perfect unison and harmony? The answer is simply that I am convinced that energy healing can be of significant benefit to my patients preoperatively, during the procedure itself, and post-operatively. And, because I believe this is true, I feel a responsibility make this option available to my patients. Not only that, I am willing to sponsor Dr. Shepard's work in the operating room, when patients, prior to surgery, schedule an energy assessment with her for which they are responsible. Doing so expresses their healing intention, and intention as well as assessment is a critical part of this work.

## **FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE**

There is not a day that passes, I'm happy to say, when I fail to learn an important lesson from one of my patients. That held true for learning about energy medicine, as well. I was first introduced to the concept of the healing power of subtle energies when a patient gave me a copy of Dr. Bernie Siegel's book, *Love, Medicine, and Miracles*. The message of the book was that our mind can influence our immune systems. It was an epiphany for me. I went on to read *Molecules of Emotion: Why You Feel the Way You Feel*, by Dr. Candace Pert and Dr. Deepak Chopra. She has shown very clearly, as have other investigators, that there is a powerful communication system between our immune systems, our organs, and our brain—and it's a two-way communication system. It is, in fact, a dance of life with subtle energy as a mediator.

I got so excited by this new knowledge about energy medicine that I became a student of Reiki, back in the late 1980s. I could see immediate positive results in my own life and in my patients. This highly effective therapy promotes the free flow of energy, with intention—and the intention is one of love. I came to understand that disease occurs when the free flow of energy gets blocked. It is at the point of blockage that disease develops in our body. When it's possible to free up the energy flow, healing occurs. That's the concept behind subtle energies and energy medicine.

Another milestone in my understanding of energy medicine came from Barbara Brennan, in her book *Hands of Light*, where she described in a compelling and deeply spiritual way that all of us, without exception, have a God-given ability to focus energy healing for our own good and the good of others. Her school of healing teaches these skills to thousands of students from throughout the world. I had the opportunity participating in an introductory workshop with her, as well.

Cheri Elliott, RN, my partner and co-founder of Landmark Urology and Complementary Medicine, and I had come to agree that it was important to consider introducing energy medicine into our practice. No sooner had we come to that place of understanding than the phone rang and Alessandra Shepard, new to the area, introduced herself and became a presence in our lives.

After a period of getting acquainted, I invited her to demonstrate her skills on me! What better patient could I bring to her? I was scheduled for an exploratory colonoscopy (that revealed a few benign polyps). Alessandra spent time with me before the procedure, learning more about the energies in my body and deciding how best to direct those energies to promote healing.

Colonoscopies are not fun. But with Alessandra on hand, I felt a sense of calm and peace. I had several medications intended to make me groggy, and they did. Usually the effects last for a day or more, and often induce nausea. In this instance, these effects cleared very quickly after the procedure and I came through the experience with a deep sense of peace, which led to a quick and smooth recovery—thanks in great measure, I feel certain, to Alessandra's presence and skillful work.

Soon after, we had our first opportunity to work in the operating room together, with a patient who needed to have a bladder tumor removed. The experience, both for the patient and his wife, was positive in every way. He let us know that Alessandra's work contributed to his health and healing.

I hope that you, the reader, can forever escape the need for surgery. But I encourage you to nevertheless consider energy work and energy medicine into your life, in the way that works best for you.