

“The Art of Healing”

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Healing is about integrating, becoming whole, becoming one. It can sometimes masquerade as fixing, or even be reduced to fixing. If we open up to the true meaning of healing (and I believe this opening takes practice), it is about becoming whole. A person who is on a healing journey approaches life in a different manner, in a different *way*, and from a different perspective than a person who is on a fixing journey.

How does healing connect with art? Well, let's see what associations we might make with art. I associate art with drawing, painting, playing (a musical instrument, or a sport, or a game). What about playing science? Is science associated with art? Is it art? I would say yes, that it is. Art and science seem to be at opposite, sometimes antagonistic, poles of understanding.

So let me illustrate with an example of science as art. I remember coming across a interview on the television with Dr. Michael Smith, Nobel laureate in Chemistry. He was being interviewed in his lab. Dr. Smith was also giving a demonstration of precipitating DNA (bringing it out of the liquid solution it was in). This is a simple, routine technique in Dr. Smith's area of practice. However, the DNA wasn't coming out of solution as expected. Things were not co-operating. To Dr. Smith, this was all part of the game. He seemed to be enjoying it. He kept adding a bit of this and a bit of that to the mix he was working with. He reminded me of an inspired, inspiring cook. Dr. Smith's persistence paid off. The DNA came out of solution.

Now let me tease out a bit of the art and science in this story. Dr. Smith had a technique, some technical know-how of precipitating DNA. This technical know-how could be viewed as science, a way of doing things, a method. But it could also be art. He applied the technique and the technique did not work as he had anticipated. Thus he had to interpret conditions to better apply the technique. Improving the application of the technique might be viewed as the art or the science of persistence. Art or science is that which emerges when you practice and refine the technique. Dr. Smith's persistence paid off. His persistence reminds me a lot of him, a very inspiring, noble, and humble person I believe in his art and science. He was a person who inspired by example.

For me art or science both have technical aspects. The technical aspects are the practice. However, for art to be truly art, and for science to be truly science, in the truest sense of these words, there has to be inspiration. For each of us to be human, in the truest sense of the word, we have to have inspiration. And we have to be open to responding, even on occasion by not responding.

When we see people practicing true art or true science, or practice it ourselves, we don't just think it or know it in our watching. We feel it. There is a resonance there that we can “feel” in our bones, in our heart, in the very fiber of our being. We “vibrate” along with it, in harmony. We are one, whole. Having “witnessed” this truth, in ourselves, or in others, we feel, not necessarily different, not necessarily the same. We “just” feel!

So what does all this have to do with art and healing? What I have conceptualized with this example or metaphor of Dr. Smith precipitating DNA is a means of practicing and discerning the art of healing. It is not just a technique we practice, that we “do”. It is a means of

practicing “be-ing”. This is where the inspiration comes in. Inspiration speaks to discerning mentor, master, supervisor, teacher, student, disciple, child or parent. For example, a good teacher is a good student, or even further, a teacher is a student, still learning and explicit about that in their practice. Through inspiration we are able to feel our practice and find our way.

It is important in the art and science of healing that there relationships are supported by healthy dialogue, that the process is dialogical. Dia-logue and dia-logical are connected *through logos*, not only *between logos*. Dialogue is *through the word* that I have within me and *through the word* that you have within you. I am because you are, you are because I am, and we are therefore connected. Through this practice of appreciating internal and external dialogue, a true art and science of healing and living emerge. This art and science of healing and living is not forced. It emerges. Words that you might find associated with this art and science are faith, hope, and love. It has been said that the greatest of these is love. What happens if we practice this? I will leave it to you to find out ☺

So if you are teaching or studenting, be open to the discernment of the art and science of healing and living. Be especially open to practicing it. If you “feel” yourself beginning to really “feel”, if you feel your practice nurtures you and others, dialogically, it is a healing practice. You are becoming whole. At times you might seem like it is bit by broken bit that you are becoming whole. But that is the practice of becoming whole. Again, continue to practice. You are emerging. Keep watching in faith, hope, and love.

Thus a relationship that is healing includes, integrates, my dialogue and yours. This integration of dialogues is based in faith, hope, and love. This is the way of healing, of growth. It is the Way. But it cannot be confused with my way or your way, for then it ceases to be the way.

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Biography of Paul M. Wishart, PhD, MA:

Paul's current academic research interests lie in the area of the impact of Spirituality on illness and wellness trajectories as they influence Health outcomes. He is the president of Spirituality Research Institute (Sri) Inc. He is also an adjunct assistant professor in Surgery, in the faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary. His research interests span the spectrum from molecular recognition at the level of gene expression and protein-DNA interactions to the relationship between Spirituality and Health.

Paul has a MA in Pastoral Psychology and Counselling and a PhD in Chemistry and Molecular Biology. Paul has developed and implemented three programs based upon the practices of meditation (Qi Gong), contemplation (Centering Prayer), and narrative therapy. Qi Gong is the practice of cultivating our spirit or energy through an awareness of one's "breath and breathing". Centering Prayer is the practice of "attention of the heart" meditated by the use of a sacred word. The programs are grounded in relationships healing one breath, one word, one story at a time.