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## Scientific, Paranormal, and Spiritual Frames in Alternative Medicine

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## Scientific, Paranormal, and Spiritual Frames in Alternative Medicine

### Abstract

Although the term “integrative medicine” is being used to refer to the merging of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) with standard biomedicine, there are some spiritual and paranormal frames for alternative medicine that are only partially integrated into standard medicine if at all. This study examines the orientations of some alternative practitioners and clients/users in the U.S. and the UK in terms of their views of science, spirituality and the paranormal.

### Keywords

Western medicine, spirituality, alternative medicine, paranormal medicine

### Disciplines

Alternative and Complementary Medicine | Medical Sciences

### Comments

Presentation given at the [Friday Forum](#) on September 7th, 2018. The Friday Forum is a series of lectures given by members of the Gettysburg College community on their personal scholarly research, creative activities, or professional or curricular development activities.

Professor Emmons has also published a series of documentaries on similar topics as the ones discussed in this presentation.

- ["Drum Dreams: Drum Circles in North America"](#)
- ["Roll Your Own Religion: New Spirituality in North America"](#)
- ["Science and Spirit\(s\)"](#)

*SCIENTIFIC, PARANORMAL  
AND SPIRITUAL FRAMES IN  
ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE*



**CHARLES F. EMMONS  
DEPT. OF SOCIOLOGY  
GETTYSBURG COLLEGE**

A pair of hands is shown from a top-down perspective, cupping a stack of gold coins. The hands are positioned on the left and right sides of the frame, with fingers slightly curled to hold the coins. The stack of coins is centered in the palm of the hands. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light green color. The text is overlaid in the center of the image, in a bold, green, serif font.

**THIS RESEARCH WAS  
SUPPORTED IN PART  
BY A GRANT FROM  
GETTYSBURG  
COLLEGE**

# Paranthropology

Anthropological  
Approaches  
to the  
Paranormal

Edited by  
**Jack Hunter**



**JACK  
HUNTER**

# ESALEN INSTITUTE



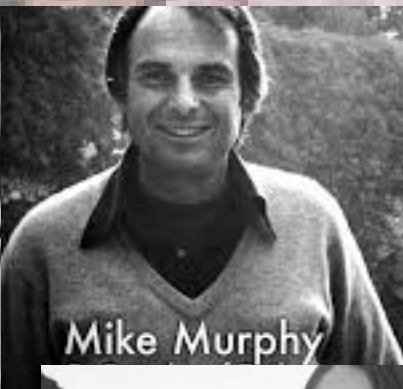
# *ESALEN INSTITUTE (1962)*

## *BIG SUR, CA*

- HUMAN POTENTIAL MOVEMENT (ALDOUS HUXLEY, ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF EXPLORING CONSCIOUSNESS)
- NEW AGE MOVEMENT, ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE, GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY



**ALDOUS HUXLEY**  
**THE DOORS OF PERCEPTION**



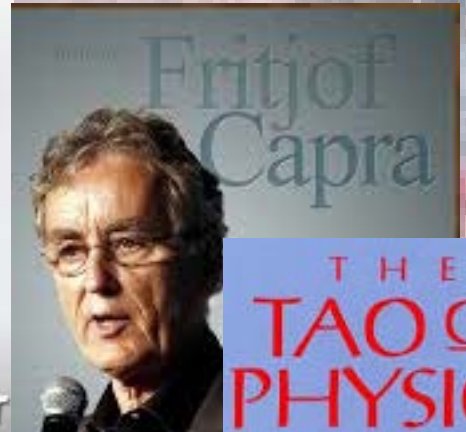
Mike Murphy



Dick Price  
Co-Founder of E



Virginia Satir



Fritjof  
Capra

THE  
**TAO OF PHYSICS**



THE  
**AMERICAN SOUL RUSH**  
Esalen and the Rise of Spiritual Privilege  
MARION GOLDMAN

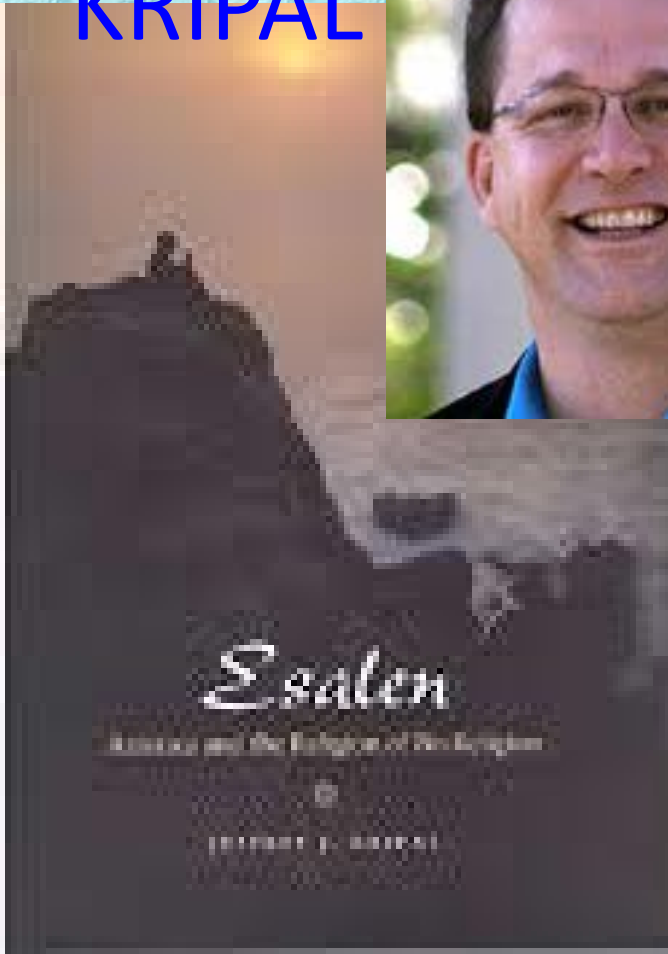
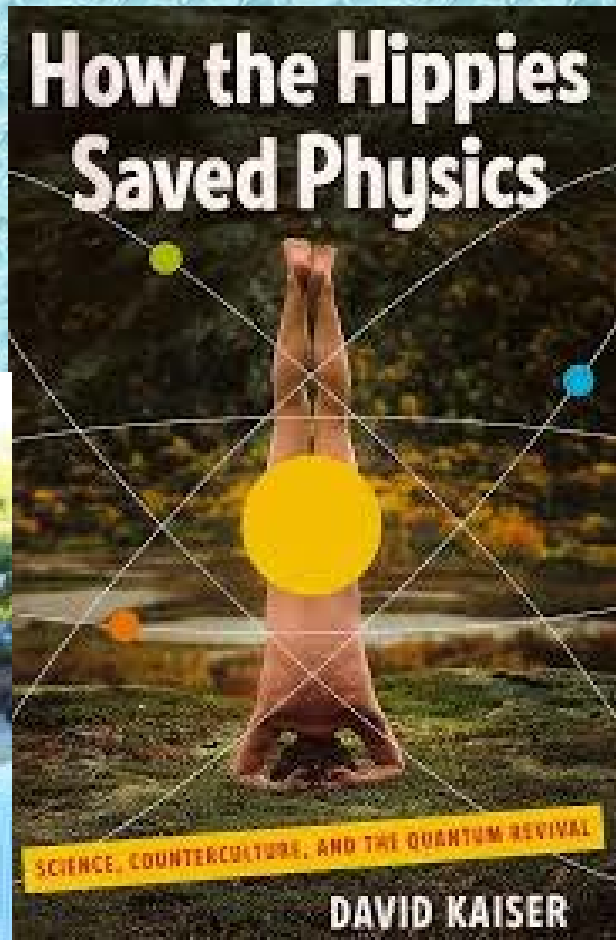


# ESALEN & “THE RELIGION OF NO RELIGION” [HIPPIES & NEW AGE]

KRIPAL



KAISER

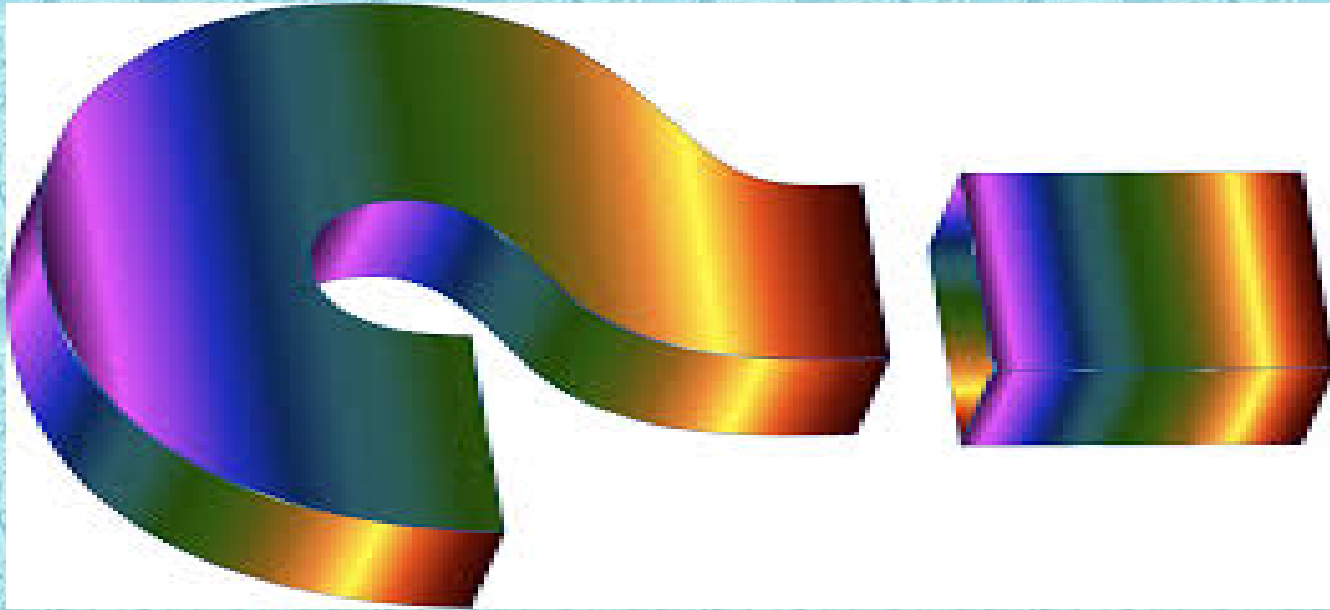




# Center for Theory & Research




**DEB FROST: HOW GET FINDINGS  
ABOUT  
CONSCIOUSNESS/PARANORMAL  
“INTO THE CULTURE”**



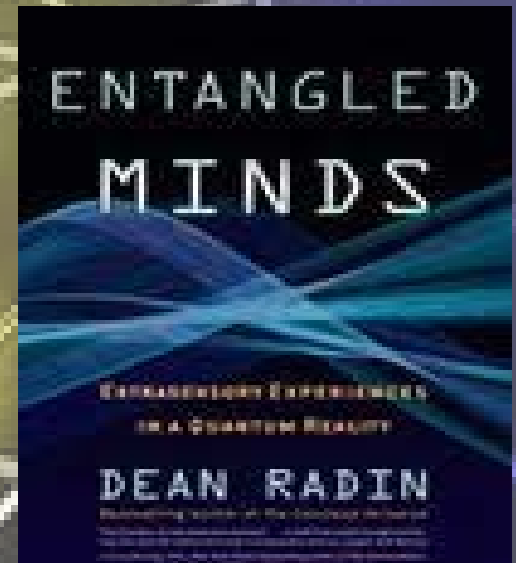
**I.E., PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS**

# *PARANORMAL PRACTICE:*



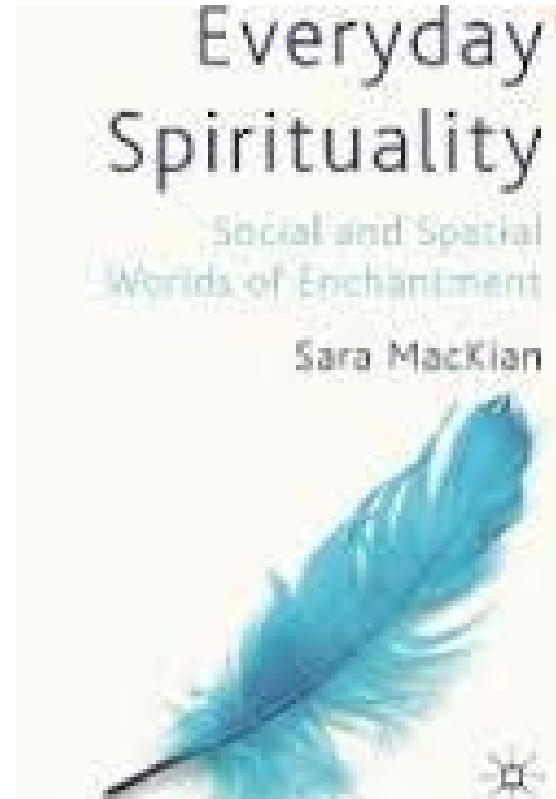
*USING THE  
UNUSUAL*

- DEAN RADIN
- RESEARCHER AT IONS



- PSI RESEARCH IN MEDICAL JOURNALS

# *SARA MACKIAN*



# *EVERYDAY SPIRITUALITY*

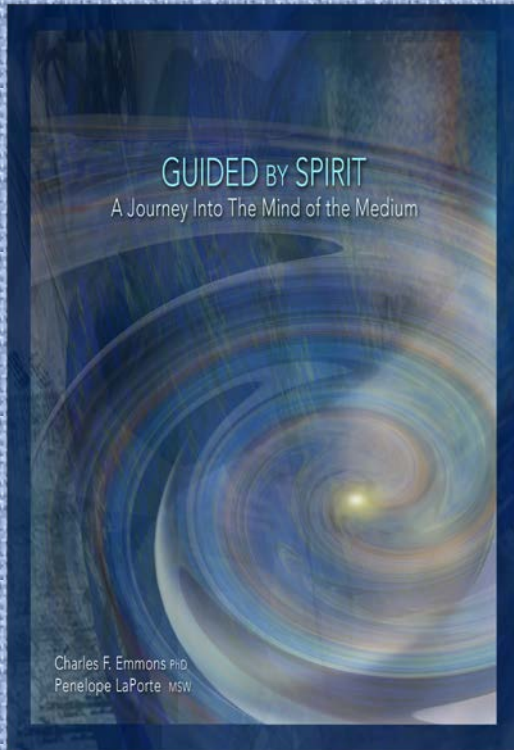
# **SPIRITUALIST CHURCHES IN STOKE-ON-TRENT, ENGLAND**



# **FIELDWORK FOR INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE STUDY (2016-2017)**

- **ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEWS &  
PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION IN**
  - **UK (STOKE-ON-TRENT, SOMEWHERE  
IN WALES)**
  - **US (GETTYSBURG, ERIE, WEST  
CHESTER; LILY DALE, PORT CHESTER;  
YELLOW SPRINGS)**

# PREVIOUS RESEARCH & EXPERIENCE



2003, 2018



1982, 2017



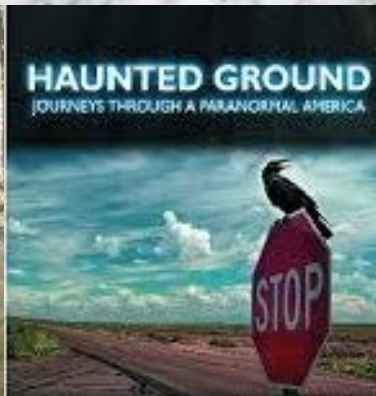
2012



# “PARANORMAL MEDICINE,”

Charles F. Emmons

- FORTHCOMING (2019), IN *THE PARANORMAL IN POPULAR CULTURE*, **DARRYL CATERINE & JOHN W. MOREHEAD (EDS.)**, ROUTLEDGE

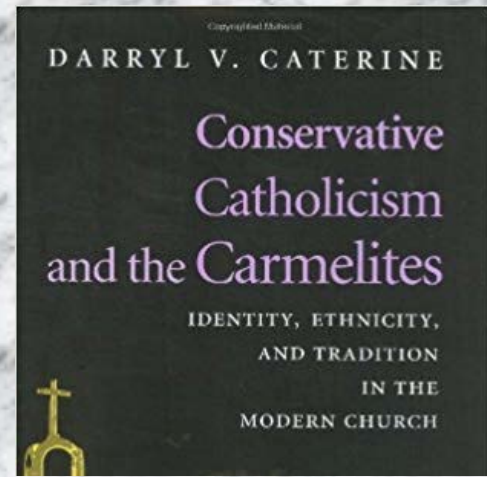


ROUTLEDGE



Routledge

Taylor & Francis Group



# *SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE*

- **MY RESEARCH: INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE (MANAGING THE MEDICALLY MYSTERIOUS), EMPHASIS ON PATIENTS & PRACTITIONERS, WHETHER THEY FRAME IT AS SCIENTIFIC, PARANORMAL, OR SPIRITUAL**



*MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION:  
WHAT'S  
SCIENTIFIC/PARANORMAL/SPIR  
ITUAL ABOUT  
ALTERNATIVE/HOLISTIC  
MEDICINE?*

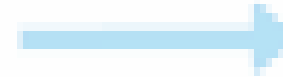
- THE MORE "SCIENTIFIC",  
GREATER CHANCE OF BEING  
LEGITIMATED IN INTEGRATIVE  
MEDICINE*
- THE MORE "SPIRITUAL", GREATER  
APPEAL TO SOME ALTERNATIVE  
PRACTITIONERS, USERS*

# *NOT MY QUESTION:*

- **OBJECTIVE EFFICACY AND MECHANISMS INVOLVED IN ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES**

- **BUT IF YOU'RE CURIOUS....**

Intervention

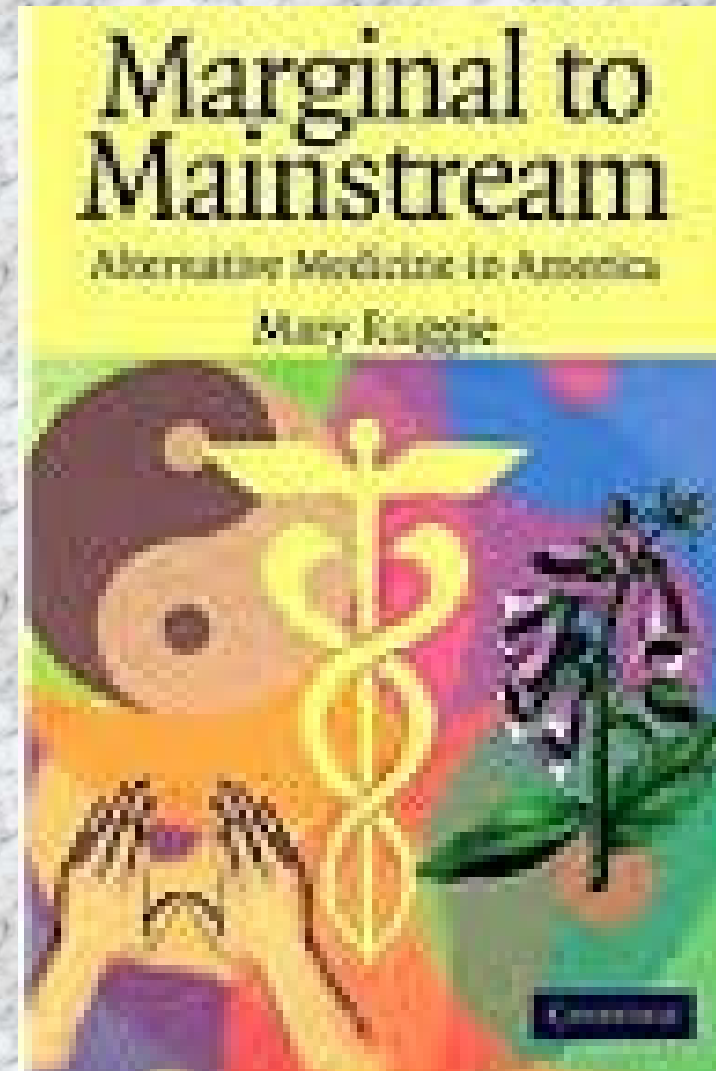


Control



# MARY RUGGIE (2004)

CH. 6: INVESTIGATING  
CAM (COMPLEMENTARY  
AND ALTERNATIVE  
MEDICINE):  
WHAT WORKS?



# *TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION (TM MOVEMENT)*

**MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI**

**HARVARD 1968**

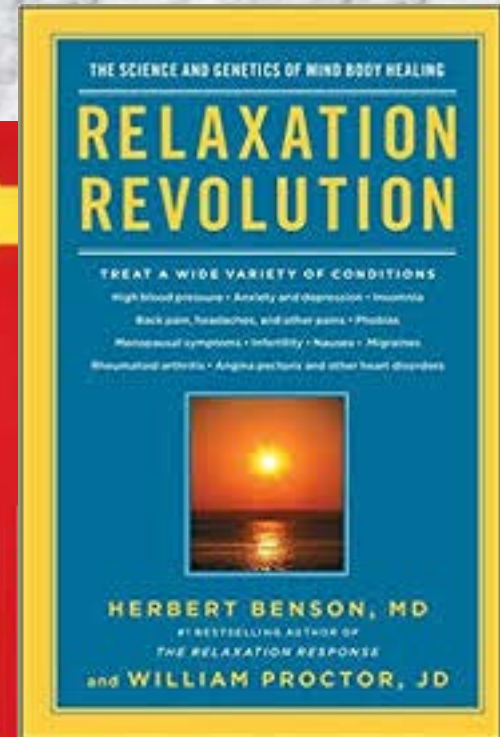
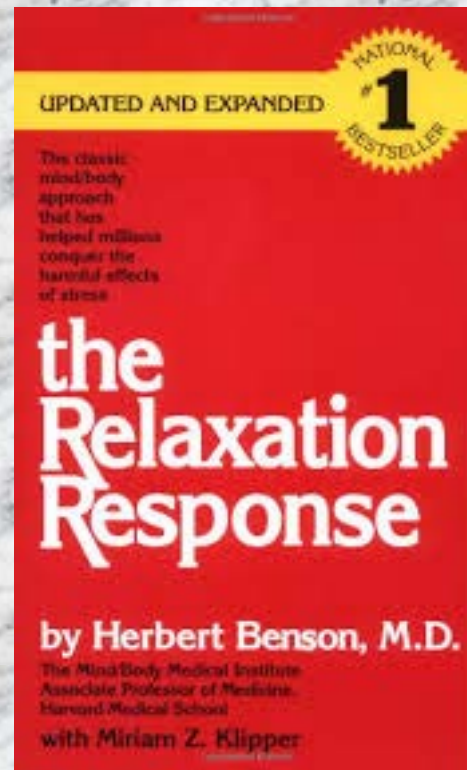


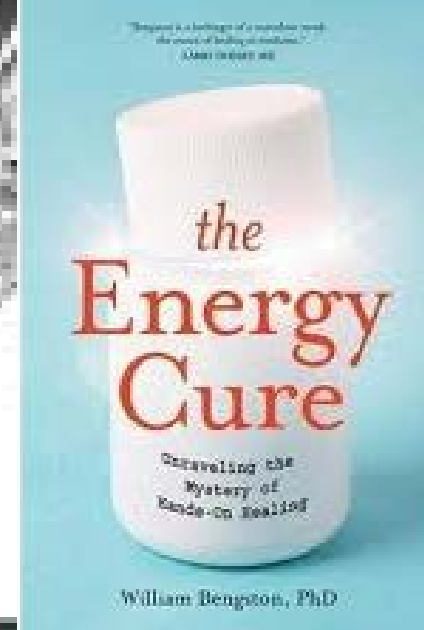
# THE RELAXATION RESPONSE

## HERBERT BENSON, M.D.

### HARVARD UNIVERSITY MED SCHOOL

1975





# DR. WILLIAM BENGSTON

INTENTION & ENERGY HEALING: DATA & RESULTS  
PRESENTED BY THE HIGHERSIDE CHATS



LISTEN TO THE EPISODE AT [THEHIGHERSIDECHATS.COM](http://THEHIGHERSIDECHATS.COM)  
LISTEN TO THE EXTENDED SHOW AT [THEHIGHERSIDECHATSPLUS.COM](http://THEHIGHERSIDECHATSPLUS.COM)

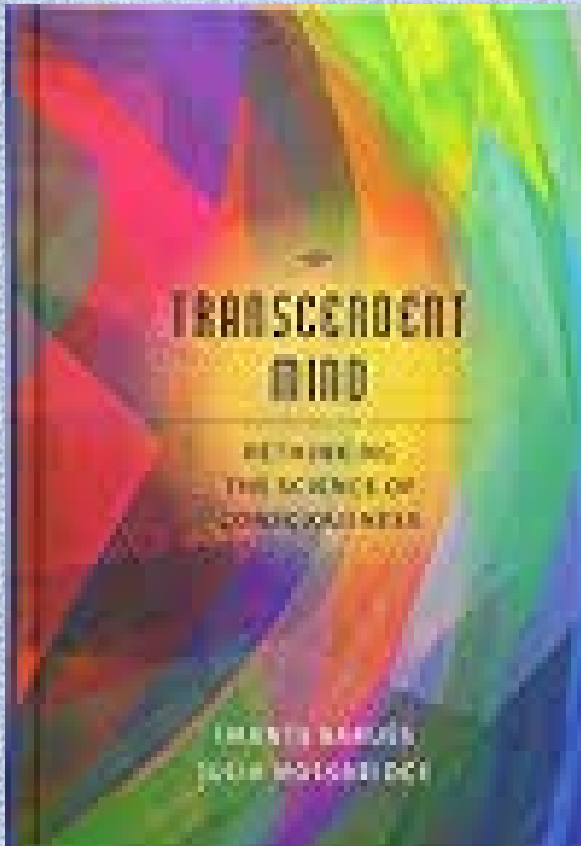


# *BEVERLY RUBIK (Berkeley PhD in Biophysics)*



- **“EFFECTS OF INTENTION, ENERGY HEALING, AND MIND-BODY STATES ON BIOPHOTON EMISSION”**
- **With Harry Jabs**
- **COSMOS AND HISTORY: THE JOURNAL OF NATURAL AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY, VOL. 13, NO. 2, 2017**

# IMANTS BARUSS



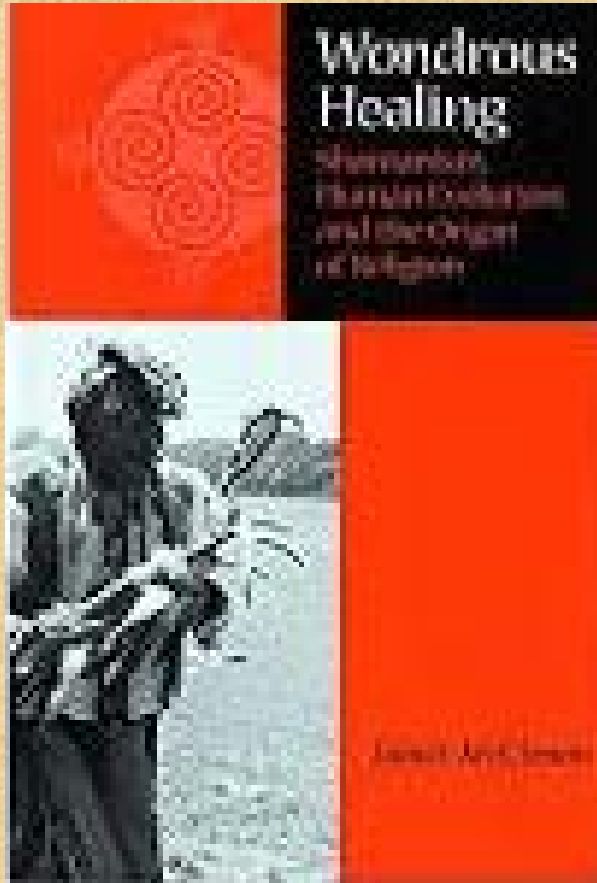
“TWO RECENT COMPREHENSIVE META-ANALYSES OF ‘NONCONTACT HEALING STUDIES’...FOUND THAT OVERALL THERE WERE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF HEALING INTENTIONS ON BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS. THE 22 NONWHOLE HUMAN STUDIES MEETING STRICT QUALITY CRITERIA GAVE A WEIGHTED EFFECT SIZE OF  $r = .12$  WITH 95% CI [0.09, 0.14]...AND THE 27 WHOLE-HUMAN STUDIES... $r = .22$  WITH 95% CI [0.19, 0.25]. THE RESULT IS STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT AND POSITIVE. IN OTHER WORDS, IT APPEARS THAT REMOTE HEALING REALLY HAPPENS.” - BARUSS & MOSSBRIDGE, *TRANSCENDENT*

*MIND*, WASHINGTON, DC: AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, 2017, p. 134.



BARUSS IS PROF. OF PSYCHOLOGY, U. OF WESTERN ONTARIO, CANADA

# *JAMES McCLLENON*



**EXPLAINING SHAMANIC  
HEALING  
IN TERMS OF PLACEBO  
AND HYPNOTIZABILITY**





# *THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL/ANTHROPOLO GICAL CONTEXT*

- **PLACEBO EFFECT ADDS TO (OR SUBTRACTS FROM) OBJECTIVE BIO-MEDICAL EFFICACY.**
- **INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC LEGITIMACY AND PRACTITIONER/USER BELIEFS & PRACTICES IMPACT WHAT WILL ACTUALLY BE USED.**

# ALTERNATIVE ?

- **SOCIETAL VARIATION**
  - **INDIGENOUS (E.G. PERU)**
  - **CHINESE MEDICINE**



– **U.S. V. UK**



# MACRO LEVEL V. MICRO LEVEL

- **MACRO: THE INSTITUTION OF MEDICINE**



- **MICRO: INDIVIDUAL PRACTITIONERS & USERS**



# **INSTITUTION OF MEDICINE**

- **ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE**
- **COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE**
- **INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE**
  
- **IN U.S.: NIH (NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH); MEDICAL SCHOOLS (YALE, HARVARD)**



# CONFLICT & STATUS

- **REJECTION (MEDICAL ARTICLES)**
- **REFRAMING (E.G., AS PLACEBO)**
- **LOWER-STATUS MEDICAL STAFF  
& VOLUNTEERS**



*MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION:  
WHAT'S  
SCIENTIFIC/PARANORMAL/SPIR  
ITUAL ABOUT  
ALTERNATIVE/HOLISTIC  
MEDICINE?*

- THE MORE "SCIENTIFIC",  
GREATER CHANCE OF BEING  
LEGITIMATED IN INTEGRATIVE  
MEDICINE*
- THE MORE "SPIRITUAL", GREATER  
APPEAL TO SOME ALTERNATIVE  
PRACTITIONERS, USERS*

# *MOST DEEMPHASIZE “PARANORMAL”*

- ASSOCIATE WITH GHOSTS, POP CULTURE
- “PARANORMAL” IS TOMORROW’S SCIENCE
- “PARANORMAL” IS TODAY’S SCIENCE (QUANTUM PHYSICS, SUBTLE ENERGY)



*IT'S ALL THREE  
(SCI/PARA/SPIR)*

- **EDD EDWARDS**
- **BIO INTRINSIC RESONANT ENERGY**
- **ELECTRICAL, AT A DISTANCE, FROM  
“SOURCE”**

*NONSPIRITUAL &  
AGNOSTIC  
APPROACHES TO  
HEALING*



# ***“IT’S ALL SCIENCE”***

- **CHI GONG AS CHINESE SCIENCE**
- **WILLIAM BENGSTON: HANDS-ON HEALING OF CANCER IN MICE**
- **HOMEOPATHIC DOCTOR**
- **NATURAL HEALTH/HERBAL STORE**
- **CONVERSATION CURE**
- **MEDITATION FROM A BOOK**

A photograph showing a man in a blue shirt performing a chi gong healing session on a woman lying on a table. The man is standing and leaning over the woman, with his hands positioned near her head and shoulders. The woman is lying on her back, eyes closed, and appears to be in a relaxed state. The background is a simple room with a framed picture on the wall.

*CHI GONG HEALING  
AS CHINESE SCIENCE*

# Curing Cancer with Intention



# *HOMEOPATHIC DOCTOR*



- **SCIENTIFIC  
FRAME**

- **OTHERS SEE AS PARTLY  
SPIRITUAL**





# HERBAL HEALTH STORE



intu

NATURTINT

Green Coffee

natures aid  
Experts in natural health since 1961

Other herbs and spices are available. Please ask.



Pepper



Tea TO HEALTH

- Sing
- Exquisite



health  
foods

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good life.  
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FORMULA

Show me  
the honey

DRAGONER  
MAGIC  
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# CONVERSATION CURE AT PENTAGE



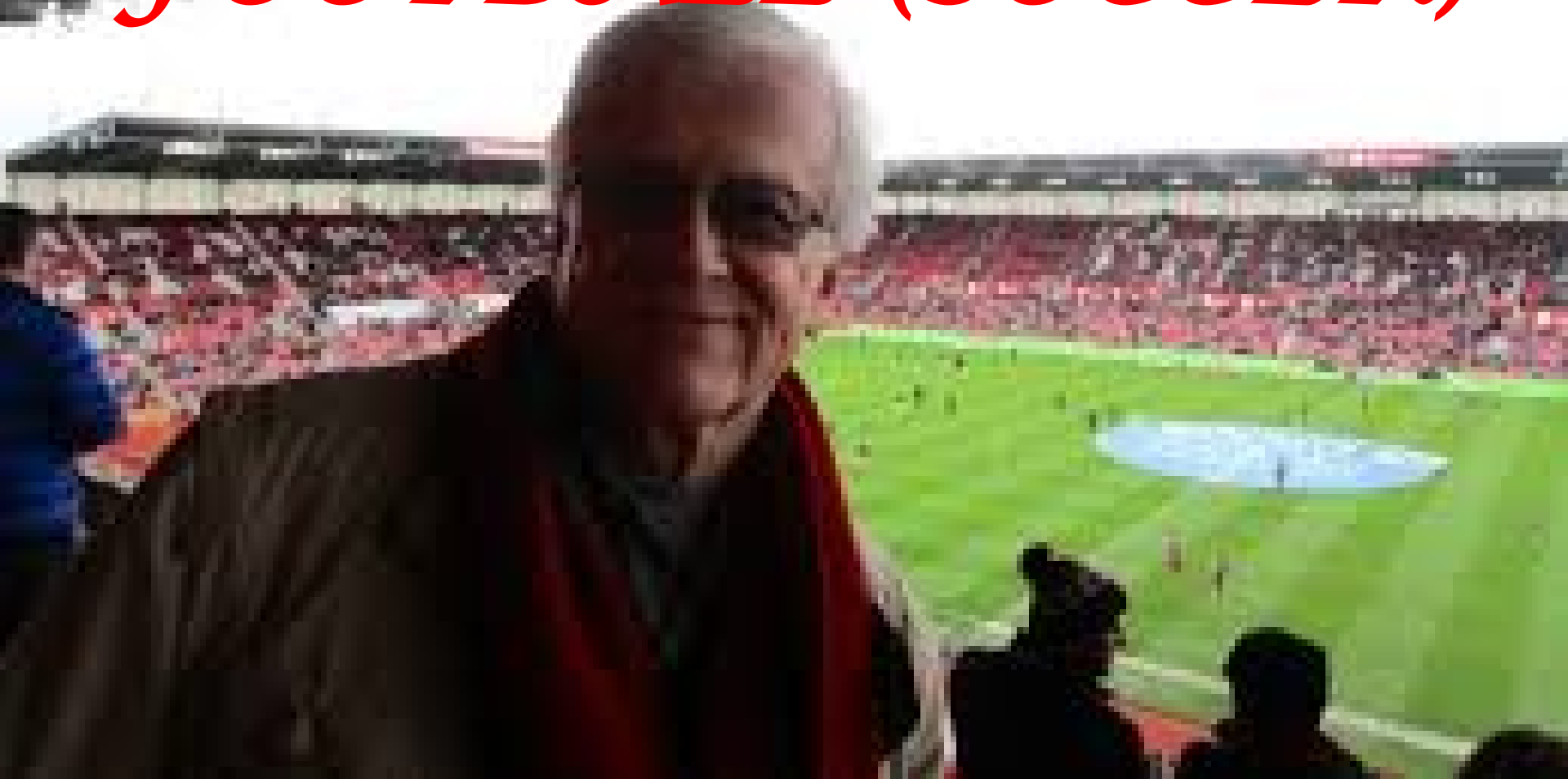
# PUBS

BLACK & WHITE STOUT	6.6	3.50
WOOD		
GOBLIN		
JOEY TAYLOR		
INDLORD	4.1	3.20
RAGE		
RECTORS	4.8	3.20
GUINNESS		
GOBLIN PORTER	3.8	3.20
OFFE		
BLONDE	6.6	3.00
IRISH WHEAT BEER		
DEGAARDEN	4.9	3.00
IRISH GOLDEN ALE		
DUVEL	8.5	4.00
HIMAY	9.0	4.50
TANIK		
WHITE STAR	4.5	





# *FOOTBALL (SOCCER)*



# COMMUNITY SOLIDARITY

A photograph of four Stoke City football players in their white and red striped home kit celebrating on a football pitch. The players are smiling and embracing each other. The background shows a blurred crowd of spectators in a stadium.

- **STOKE POTTERS: "WE'LL BE WITH YOU!"**

- **LIVERPOOL: "YOU"LL NEVER WALK ALONE."**

# WIDER WELLBEING

- HOLISTIC: BODY/MIND/SPIRIT
- HOLISTIC: COMBINATION OF SERVICES (MEDICAL, SOCIAL WORK,

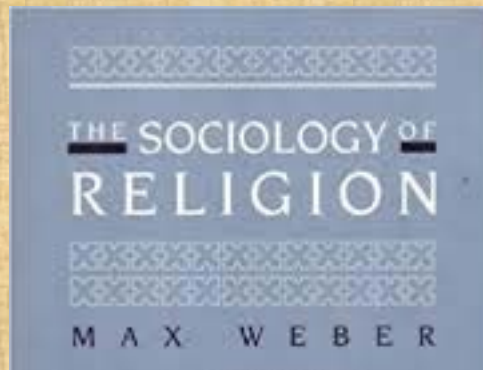
EDUCATIONAL, COMMUNITY)

- VARIETY OF INSTITUTIONS: FAMILY, CHURCHES, PUBS, FOOTBALL ETC.



# *DESPIRITUALIZATION*

- Like Max Weber's (1864-1920)  
“DISENCHANTMENT” (SECULARIZATION) OF  
THE MODERN WORLD, DECLINE OF  
MYSTICISM



# SECULAR YOGA

An aerial photograph of a yoga studio. The floor is dark grey. Numerous people are scattered across the room, each on their own yoga mat. The mats are in various colors: blue, purple, and teal. The people are in various yoga poses, some sitting on the floor, some standing, and some in more complex poses. The overall scene is a busy, active yoga class.



A Guide from the  
Harvard Community of Harvard

# Secular Meditation

22 PRACTICES FOR  
CULTIVATING INNER PEACE,  
COMPASSION, AND JOY

**RICK HELLER**

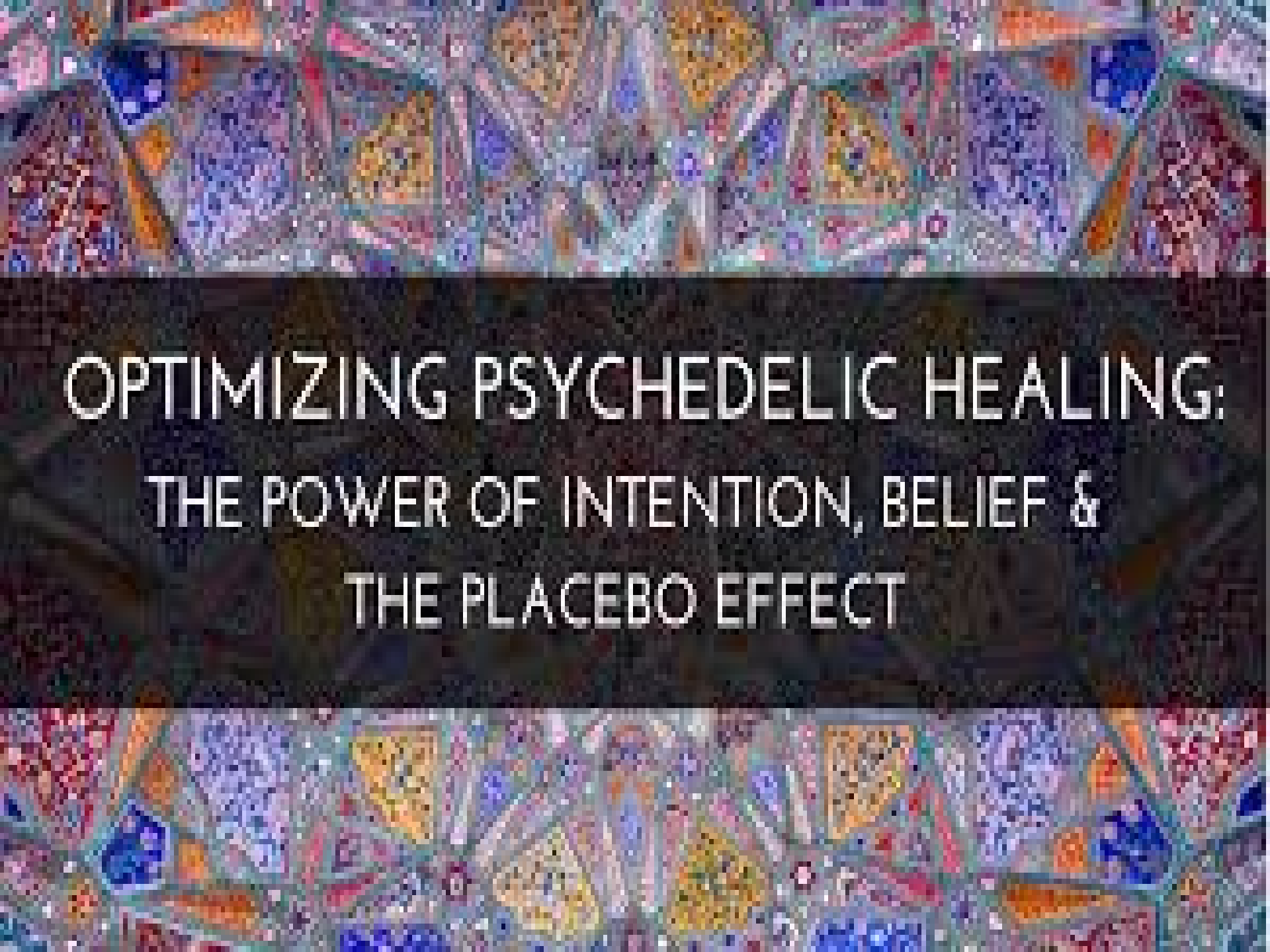
Foreword by DORIS FISH, author of *How to Think*

# *SPIRITUAL HEALING AS PLACEBO*

**REFRAMING THE  
INTANGIBLE IN  
INTEGRATIVE  
MEDICINE**



- **BODY AND MIND CONNECTIONS NOW MAINSTREAM (PLACEBO FINDINGS)**
- **(NOT BODY/MIND/SPIRIT)**



OPTIMIZING PSYCHEDELIC HEALING:  
THE POWER OF INTENTION, BELIEF &  
THE PLACEBO EFFECT



# *RATIONAL FRAME FOR SPIRITUAL/PARANORMAL*

- **“YOU CAN FEEL THE HISTORY”**



- **THE FERTILITY CLOTH**



A photograph of a baby being held by an adult. The baby is lying on its back, and the adult's hands are visible, supporting the baby's head and arms. The baby's arms are raised in the air, and the baby has a joyful expression with its mouth open. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# *SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES OF CLIENTS*

- **ADD-ON EFFECTS TO SCIENTIFIC PROCEDURES**
- **PLACEBO OR “REAL” SPIRITUAL EFFECTS**

*MASSAGE AS  
SCIENTIFIC PLUS  
SPIRITUAL/INTUITIVE*



FROM

A SKEPTIC

- *“YOGA AND MEDITATION ARE MEDICAL, BUT WE ARE ASKED [BY THE INSTRUCTOR] TO IMAGINE ‘FILLING UP WITH SPIRIT.’*

*THERE MAY BE ANOTHER DIMENSION.”*

# **IMPORTANCE OF “THE AUDIENCE”**

- ***CHIROPRACTORS***
- ***MASSAGE THERAPISTS***
- ***COUNSELORS***
- ***MEDITATION INSTRUCTORS***
- ***REIKI FOR HORSES WITH VETS***



*“SPIRITUAL” BUT  
IGNORANT OF THE PROCESS*

- *“JUST FEEL”*
- *BIOFEEDBACK (DON'T HAVE TO THINK)*
  - *LET THE RITUAL (METHOD) TAKE CARE OF IT*

FACSIMILE MACHINES  
SHOWROOM

Minerals.  
Crystals.  
Rocks and  
Fossils.

# CRYSTAL HOLDINGS

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Import/Export.  
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28





CRYSTAL

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and gemstones. Each piece is unique  
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**WARNING**  
These Products May  
Contain Lead  
and Cadmium

**Amethyst**  
Handmade jewelry from natural  
amethyst stones. Visit our website  
for more information.

SOLE COLO  
PRATER 1/4"

MAGNETIC  
\$1.16/5

ALABASTER

CAT'S PAW  
\$1.16/5

POSS  
SHALL WITH  
YESTERDAY  
\$1.16/5

MAGNETIC HEMATITE  
\$1 Per 2

RAINBOW  
SUNNY QUARTZ  
\$1.16/5

**NOTICE**  
All uncut  
Repair  
will be \$1.16  
per 12 m



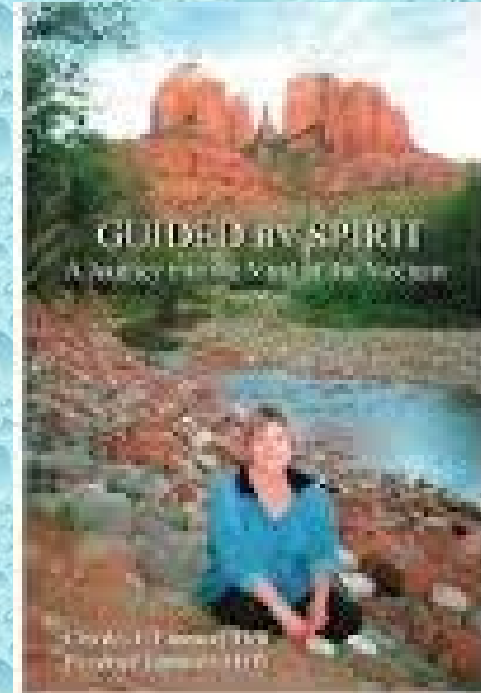
A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt, is leaning over a person lying on a table. She has her hands on the person's head, appearing to perform a spiritual healing or massage. The person lying down has dark hair and is wearing a light-colored top. The background shows a bookshelf and a door.

*IT'S ALL  
SPIRITUAL*

# MYSTERIAN VIEW

- *“DO YOU THINK YOUR (MESSAGE ENERGY WORK) WILL BE EXPLAINED SCIENTIFICALLY SOME DAY?”*
- *“GOSH I HOPE NOT! THAT WOULD SPOIL IT!”*

*“LET’S LEAVE THE  
SCIENTISTS OUT OF  
THIS!”*



- **SPIRITUALISM: SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, AND RELIGION**



*SPIRITUALIS*  
*M*





**DEATH IS NOT THE END  
WE PROVE SURVIVAL  
NORTH LONDON SPIRITUALIST CHURCH**



*SPIRIT  
MEDIUMSHIP*







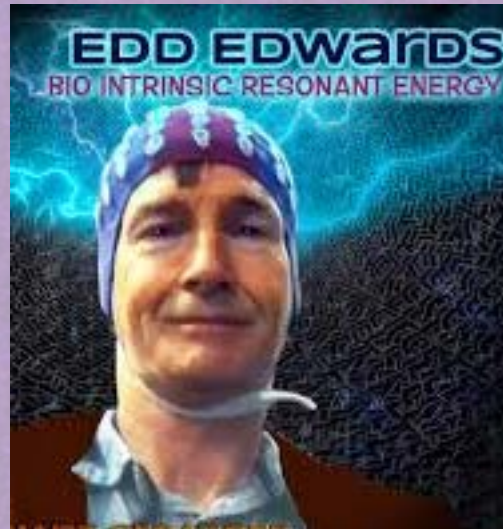
PARKING  
IN REAR  
ONLY



The laying on of hands takes place during a service at the Healing Center. Touching the head and shoulders is believed to be a way to channel divine energy for healing.

# CONNECTING

- WITH ENERGY (EARTH, UNIVERSE)
- UP THROUGH FEET, STRAW FROM COSMOS
- WITH GENERIC “SPIRIT”



# *INTUITIVE*

- *NOT KNOW HOW*

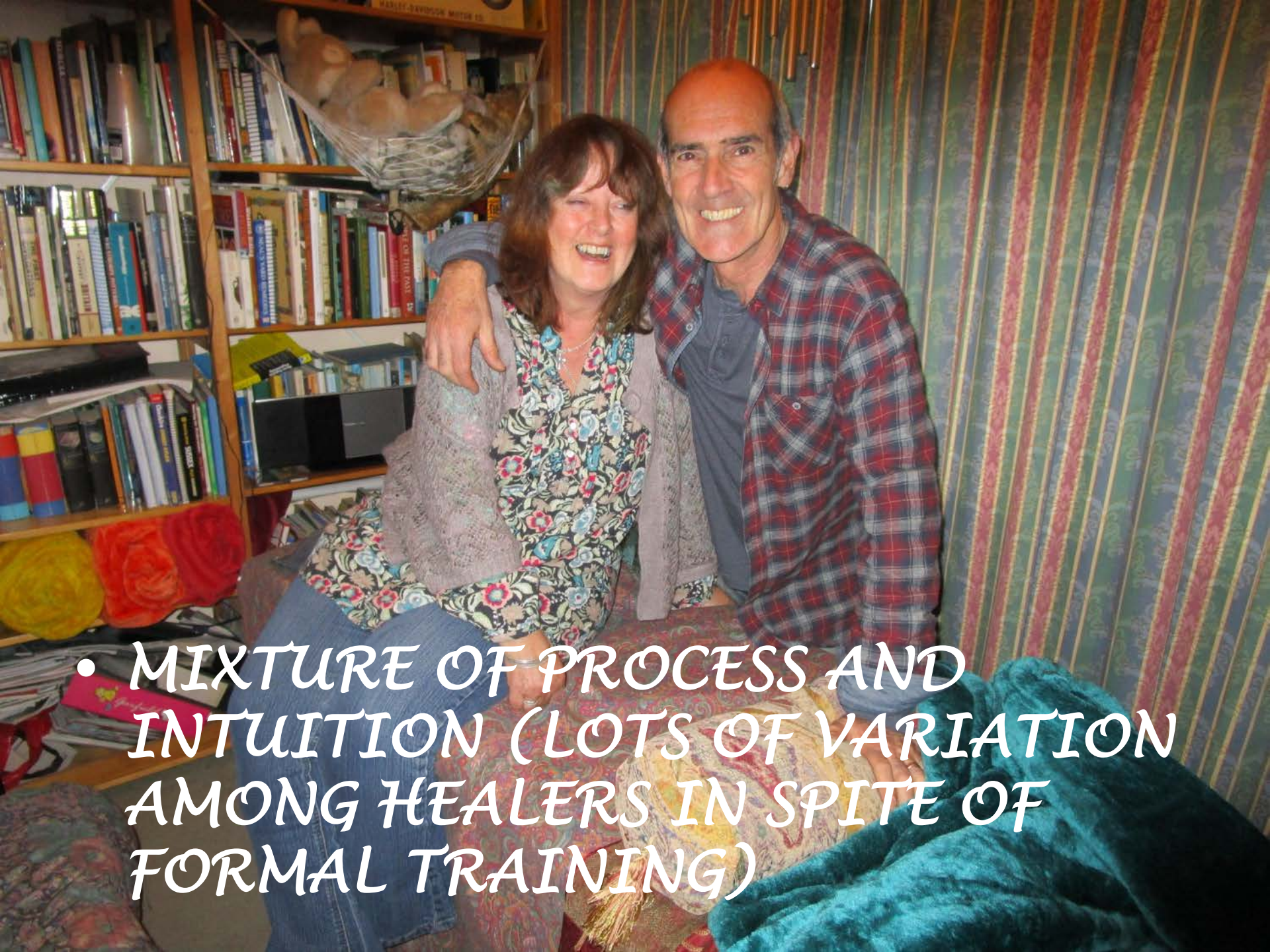
- *GUIDED*

- *IMPROVISE VS.  
REGIMEN*

A woman with her eyes closed is being held by two hands on her head, symbolizing spiritual guidance. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery.

# *SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE (INTUITION)*

- **JUST “G-KNOWING” WHERE TO PUT YOUR HANDS WHEN HEALING**
- **GUT FEELINGS (NOT RATIONAL OR VERBALIZED)**



- MIXTURE OF PROCESS AND INTUITION (LOTS OF VARIATION AMONG HEALERS IN SPITE OF FORMAL TRAINING)

# *HEALING CLASSES, METHODS & THEORY*

- **REIKI, CHI GONG, SPIRITUALIST**
- **THEORY VS. INDIVIDUAL VARIATION  
IN PRACTICE**

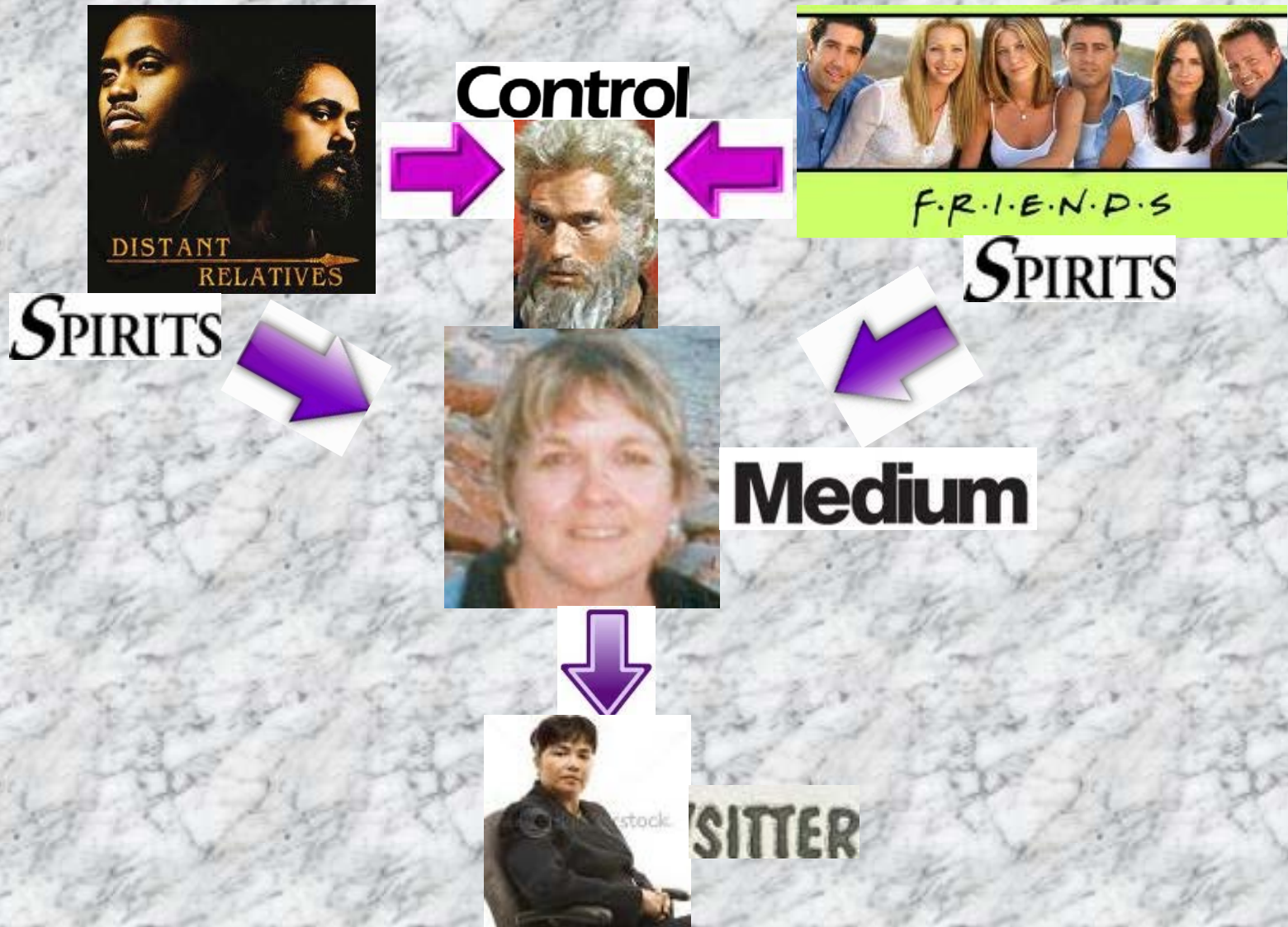


# HAND RULES

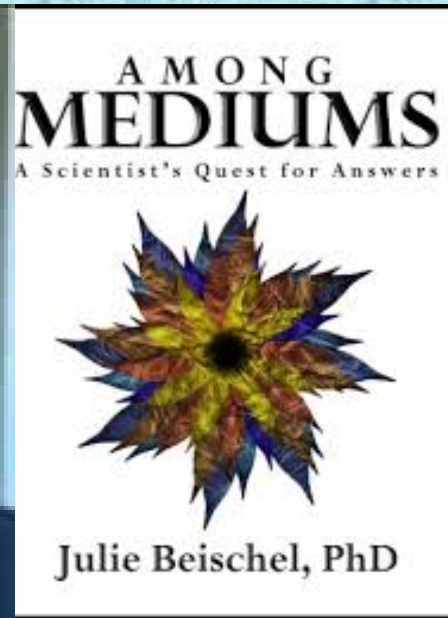
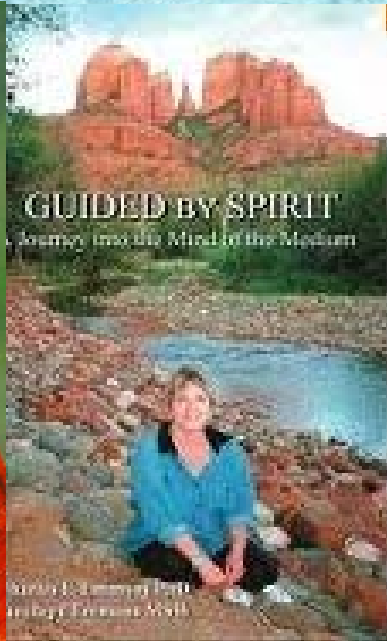




# SPIRIT MEDIUM



# APPROACHES



**PHENOMENOLOGICAL & LABORATORY**

# *SPIRIT GUIDES*

- **74% OF SPIRITUALIST MEDIUMS HAVE SPIRIT GUIDES (EMMONS & EMMONS, 2003/2018)**
- **SPIRITUALIST HEALERS MAY HAVE “HEALING TEAM” OF GUIDES**
- **NORMS AGAINST DOING MEDIUMSHIP DURING HEALING IN SPIRITUALIST CHURCHES**

# *“YOU NEED SOME TLC.”*

- MESSAGES DURING HEALING  
(VS. NORM)




# *SPIRIT MESSAGES RELEVANT TO HEALING*

- *“I AM NOT A DOCTOR AND CANNOT PRESCRIBE.”*
- *“ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT....”*



- **SPIRIT MESSAGES  
AS HEALING (GENERAL WELLBEING)**



# *PRAYERS*

- **PRAYER CIRCLES**
- **PRAYER LISTS**
  
- **SOCIAL SUPPORT, PLACEBO**
- **PARAPSYCHOLOGICAL/MEDICAL STUDIES OF HEALING AT A DISTANCE (WITH CONTROLS)**

# *THE ROSETO EFFECT*



- ROSETO, PENNSYLVANIA, U.S.
- COMPARISONS TO OTHER ITALIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES
- CHANGES BETWEEN 1935 AND 1985
- BEYOND GENETICS, DIET, LIFESTYLES: SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT & SUPPORT

# *CONCLUSIONS*

- **TENDENCY TO RATIONALIZE HEALING IN INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE (FRAMES: PLACEBO, QUANTUM PHYSICS)**
- **GREAT VARIETY IN PERSONAL PRACTICES, RATIONALES**
- **GENERAL THEORIES IN BOTH BIOMEDICINE & SPIRITUAL SYSTEMS COME SHORT OF CAPTURING THE “EVERYDAY SPIRITUALITY” OF HEALING BEHAVIORS**