

A Pilgrim in Your Body

Energy Healing and Spiritual Process

The Evolution of an Idea



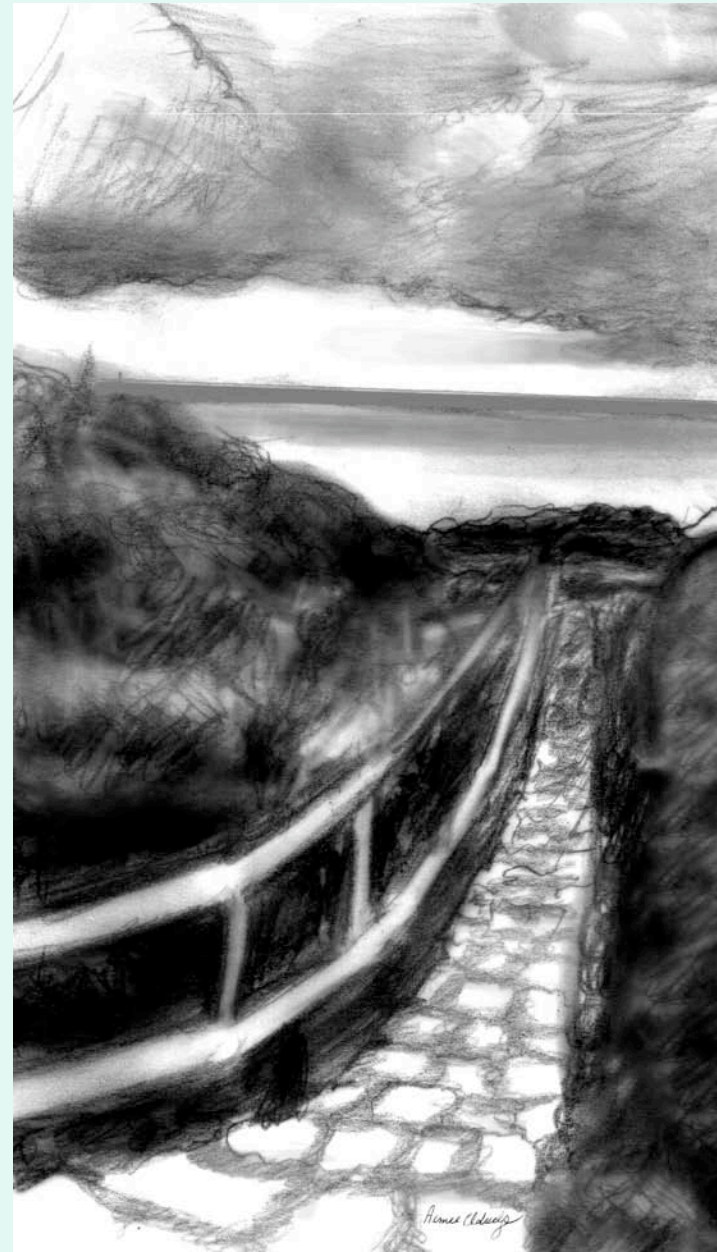
Jim Gilkeson

(A Pilgrim in your Body: The Evolution of an Idea is an unpublished work and is not for sale.)

Pilgrim

the evolution of an idea

pilgrim: a wayfarer,
explorer, pioneer,
sojourner, traveler,
wanderer



Pilgrim

the evolution of an idea

*To journey without being changed
is to be a nomad.*

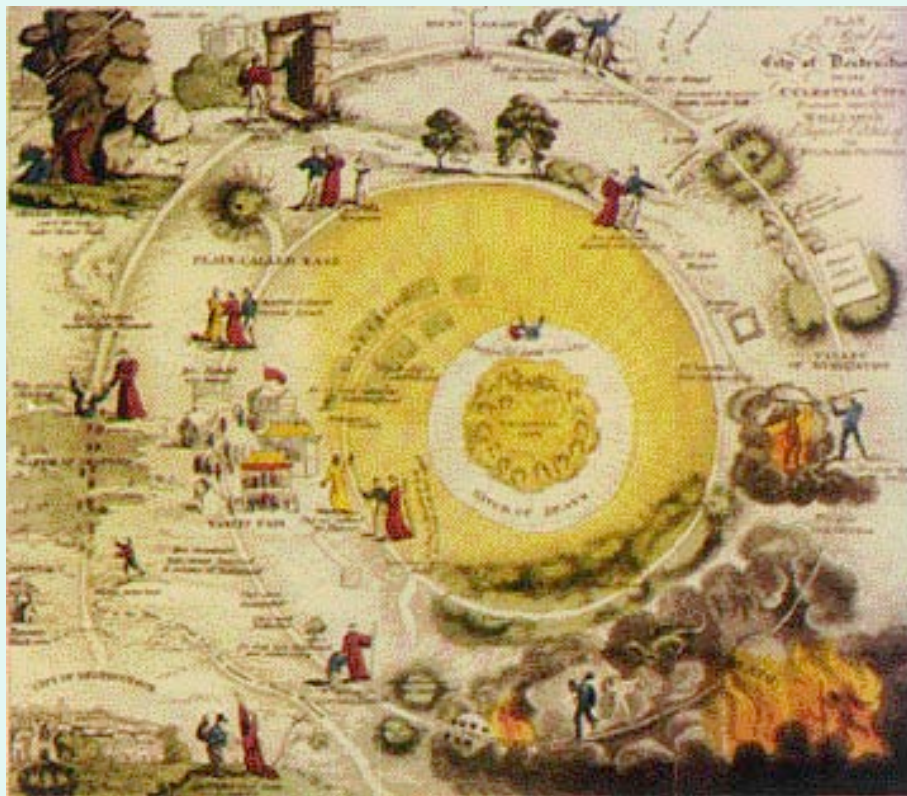
*To change without journeying
is to be a chameleon*

*To journey and to be transformed
by the journey
Is to be a pilgrim.*

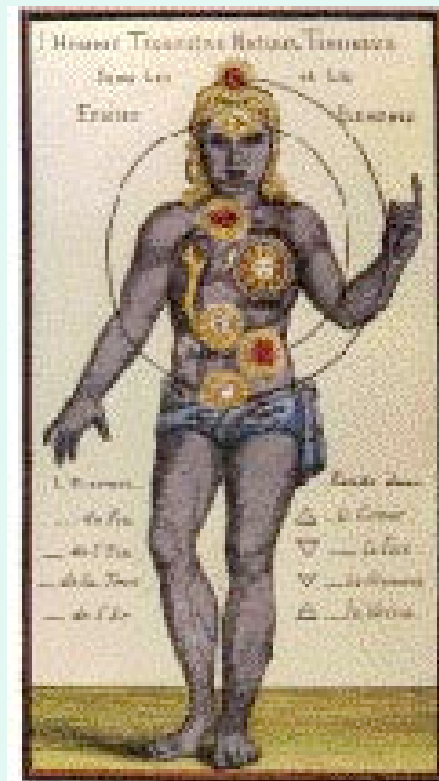
Mark Nepo



There are outer pilgrimages . . . and inner ones. Let's talk about the inner ones, the kind you take in your own body and your own energy field.



“The Celestial City” from *Pilgrim's Progress*



French 17th Century
depiction of the chakras and
their alchemical elements

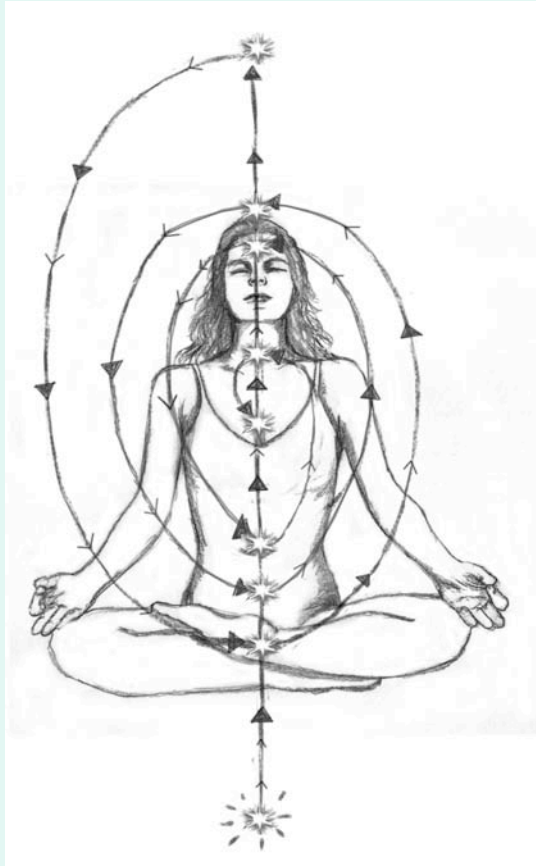
Field and Stream

What *is* this curious thing that happens whenever we link our senses with the energy that moves through us and around our bodies?



We can go for the longest time, even meditating regularly, and never even suspect it is there, this *energetic sheath* that envelopes us.

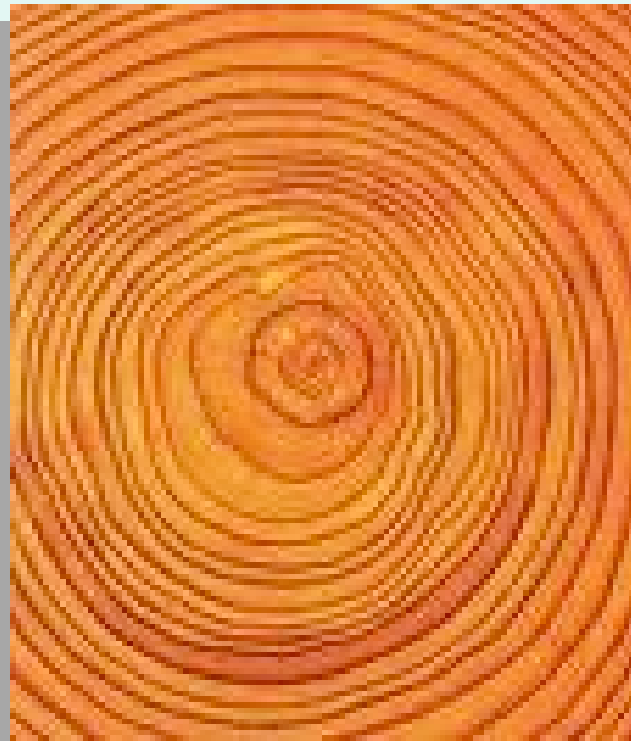
Then one day we bump into it . . .



. . . or it is touched just right,
activated somehow, and we
awaken to something about
ourselves which is *not solid*. And
yet it is there.

Not only is it there; it's *alive*.

There's *movement* in there!



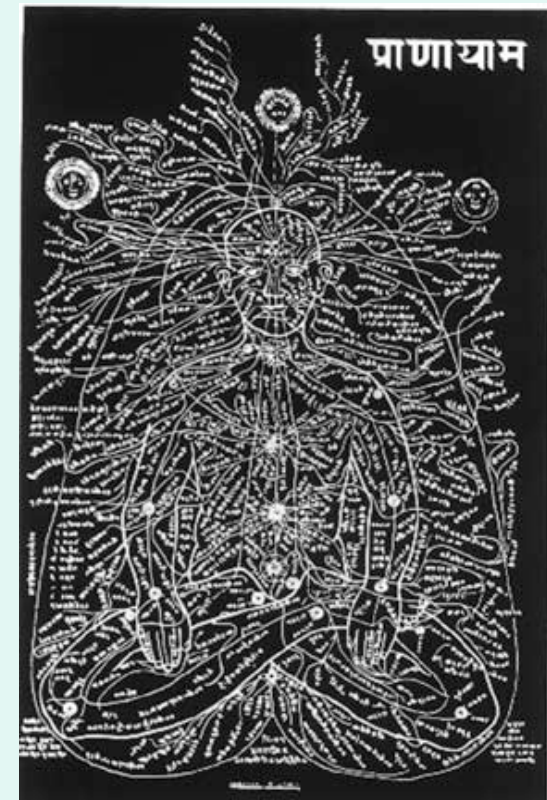
It is a place of memory. Like the annual growth rings inside a tree, each period and phase of your life is alive *right now*, . . .

It sounds fancy to say that time doesn't exist, but in the human energy field, our whole history is stored; the past is present.

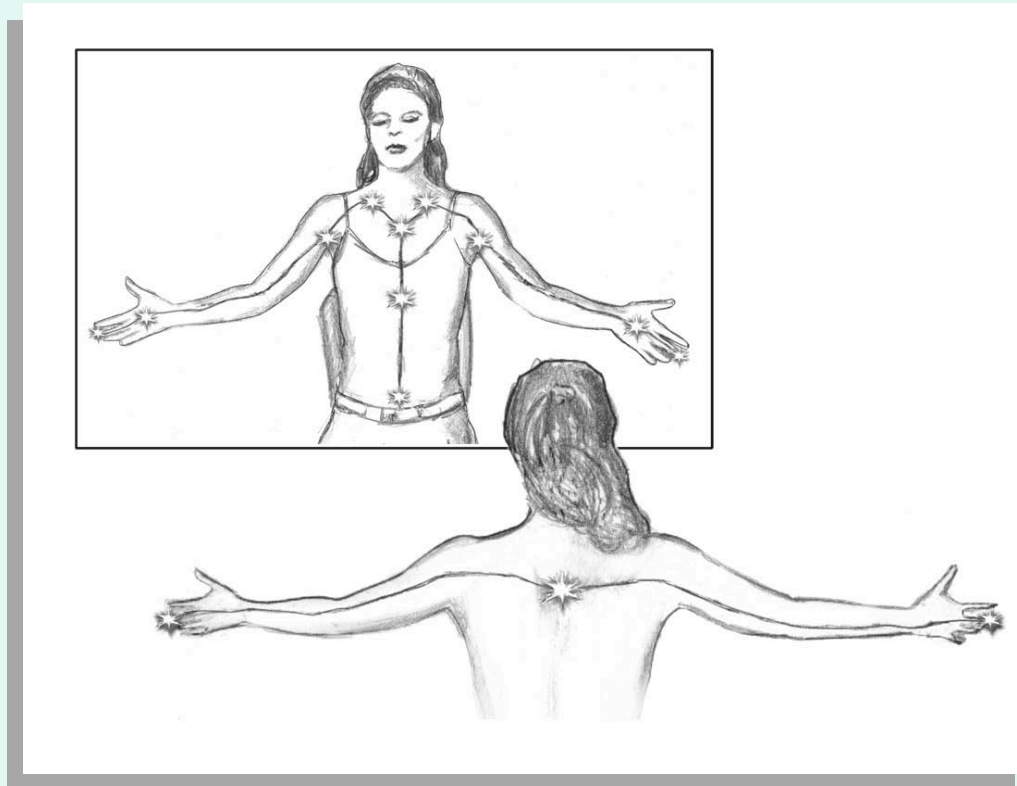
For thousands of years healers and mystics have known that we are surrounded and penetrated by intense subtle activity, . . .



. . . and dotted with points of pulsating energy and sketched with radiant pathways of energy movement.



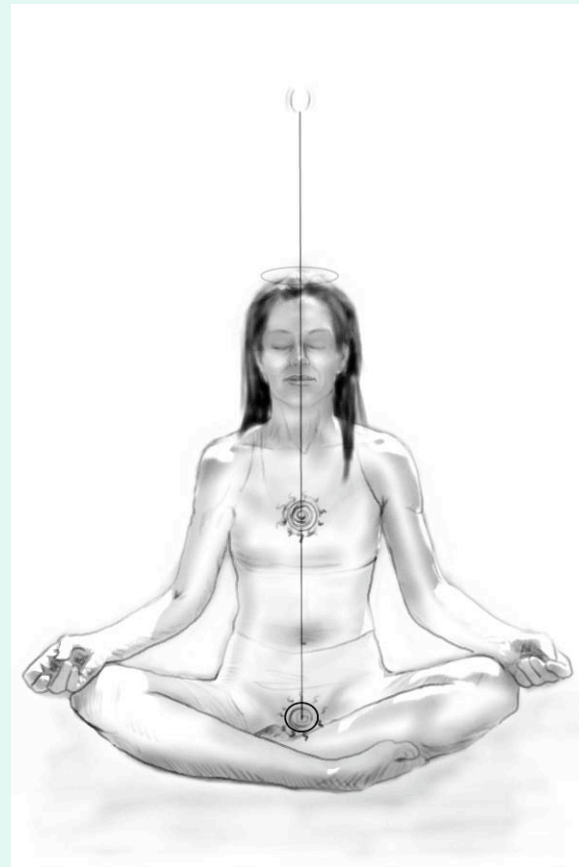
What is more, they have understood that by learning to attend to this energy and track its movement along the *songlines* of the body, . . .



. . . we can be drawn into a seaward voyage toward the hidden, but accessible wholeness that makes up each of us.

This sounds very much like a pilgrimage, . . .

. . . an inner one.



The pilgrim in your body—the one who travels these inner pathways—might be operating behind the scenes, or hibernating . . .

*Not simply a wizened husk
and pulp, but some future
wound into a vegetable
locket, some clock
waiting to be unsprung
by cold hours, water,
a star's close pass.*

-Denise Low



The pilgrim in your body
might be lost, . . .

. . . sick, injured, in a trance or
a state of suspended
animation, buried deep in
stone or ice, or incubating in a
deep wintry slumber, . . .

. . . or awaiting . . .



. . . “the searing call of one hot star.”

... or waking up (and that's where the trouble starts ...)



You see, when you wake up your inner pilgrim, stuff begins to happen.

Wait a minute. . .
stuff?

Yes, stuff. You can read all kinds of things in books, but unexpected things come up in the experiential exploration of subtle energy . . .



“I knew about the wings, but the webbed feet are a surprise.”

. . . and that’s one of the tricky things about energywork when you try to treat it as just another bodywork modality . . .

... especially if you don't know there is a pilgrim, or spiritual traveler involved ...

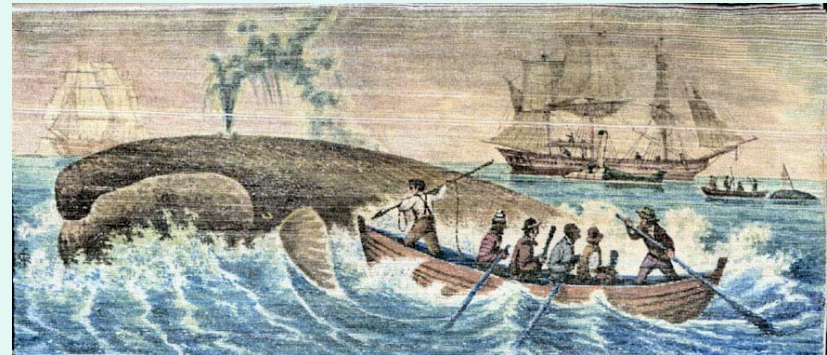
Things come up:

Memories ...

Dreams ...

Reflections ...

Repressed material
from your
subconscious ...



... and your emerging Spiritual Process.

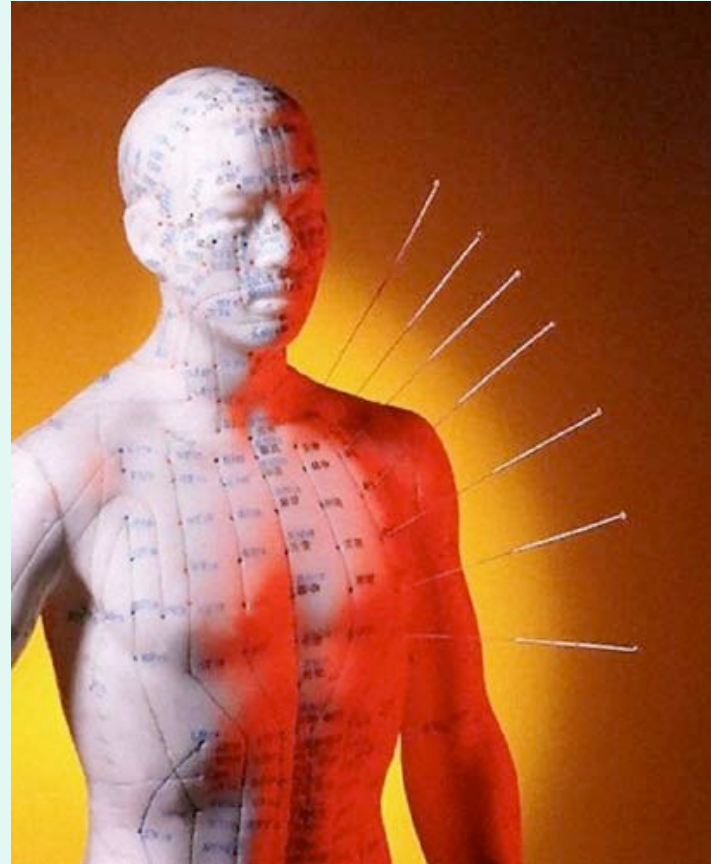
To grasp the connection between energywork and spiritual process, *begin by taking an inventory* of the subtle energetic practices you yourself are involved with already. Include . . .

. . . all hands-on and hands-off
energywork modalities like
Therapeutic Touch,
Reiki,
Polarity Therapy,
Etc.



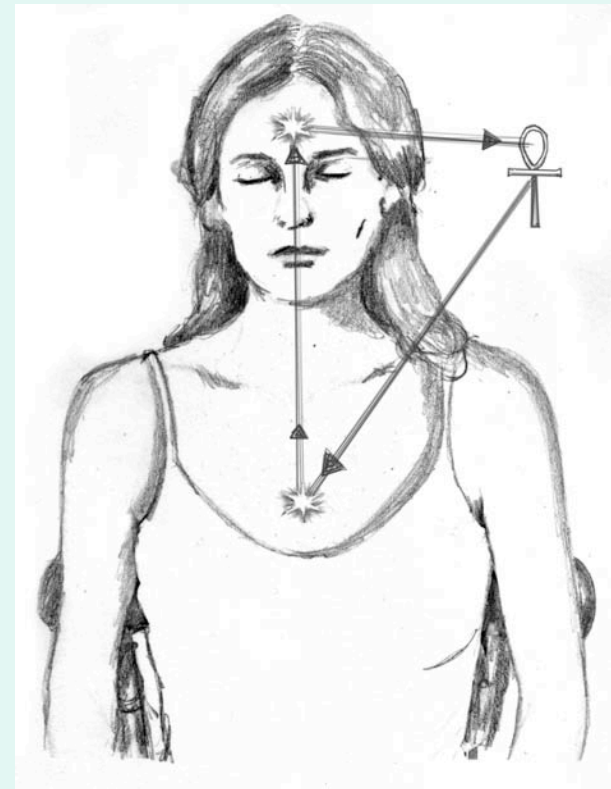
List subtle energy therapies . . .

. . . like acupuncture and
homeopathy.



Include all spiritually
oriented practices . . .

... like
Meditation,
Prayer,
Chakra Exercises,
Toning,
Breathing exercises,
Chanting and singing,
Overtone singing
Etc.



Don't leave out practices that slow down and intensify your perception of the energy movement in your body and around it, . . .

. . . such as yoga, t'ai chi, and qí gong.



Add to these all forms of spiritual
ritual you might be involved with, . . .

. . . such as
Sweat lodges,
Vision quests,
Ritual movement,
Sacred dance and walk.

Murshid Samuel Lewis



And don't you dare forget
massage, . . .

. . . which often helps you shift into
deep relaxation, essentially an
altered state of consciousness.



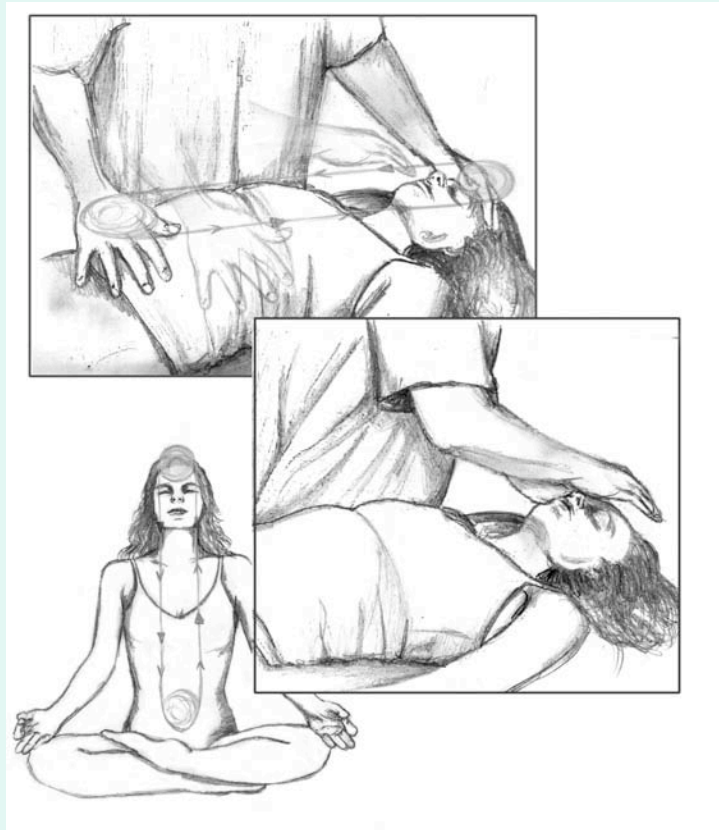
All of these practices have something in common. It's this:

Each of them steps up the interaction between your energy field and your body and enlivens the interplay between your conscious and non-conscious processes . . .



. . . and here's the kicker . . .

ENERGYWORK, basically, anything you do in a knowledgeable and purposeful way to influence the human energy field, your own or someone else's, for healing and growth of consciousness, . . .



. . . invites spiritual process, and spiritual process is ultimately about the renewal of the age-old human experience of . . .

Awakening(s)

of all kinds . . .

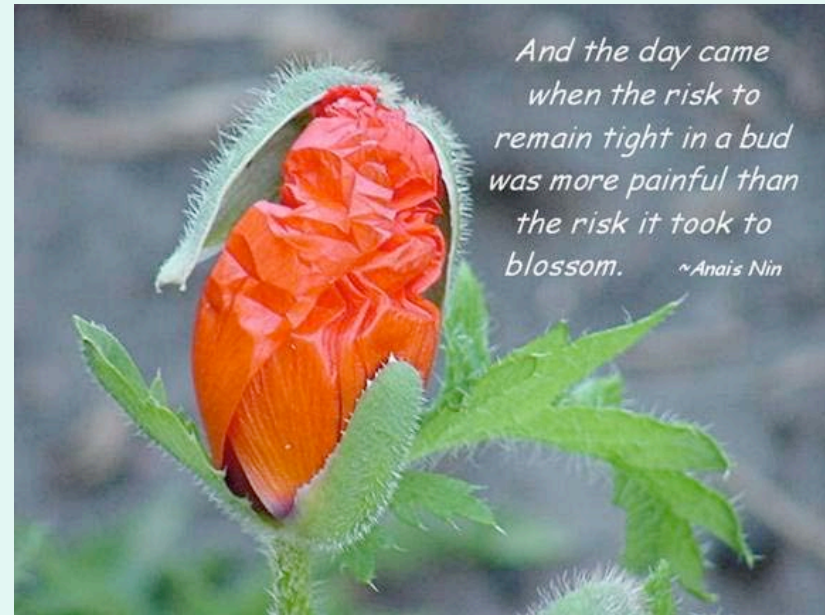
. . . gentle
unfoldings . . .



... awakenings in
unexplored parts of
yourself ...



... sometimes like this ...



... and sometimes
like this.



Sometimes, I think energy work ought to come with a warning:

Whatever
hits the
fan will
not be
evenly
distributed.
d.

With these awakenings, you just might find yourself on a bit of a journey.

At first, spiritual teachings seem vague and metaphorical. Heaven is far away and getting there is a journey of a thousand days and much hardship.



You might feel like you are leaving the world . . .

“The myth is the public domain and the dream is the private myth. If your private myth, your dream, happens to coincide with that of the society, you are in good accord with your group. If it isn't, you've got a long adventure in the dark forest ahead of you.”

Joseph Campbell



Leaving what?



A question in your nerves is lit
Yet you know there is no answer fit . . .
To keep it in your mind and not fergit
That it is not he or she or them or it
That you belong to.

Bob Dylan

Leaving the mass mind



Somehow, you are less comfy
letting others tell you who you
are.

*“drink the Kool-Aid” : To completely buy
into an idea or system, whether good or
bad.*

It's one of the things about energywork practices:

They lead you out of the mass mind, . . .

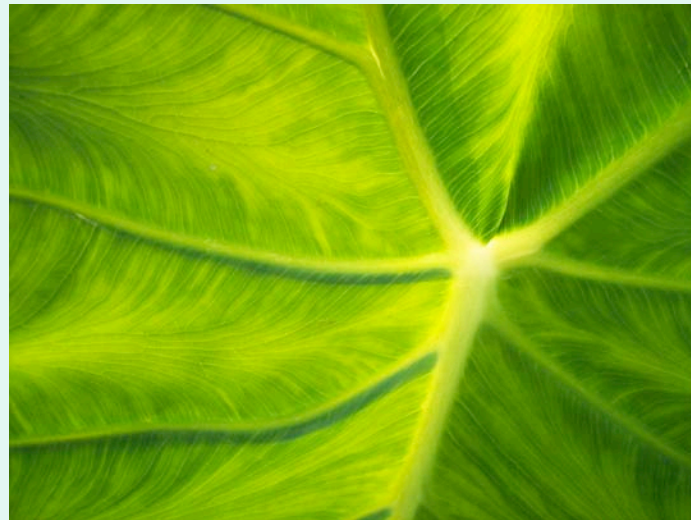
. . . into experiences that are more and more *your own* . . .



. . . including an experience you just don't get in the mass mind:

Sacred Space . . .

In sound, stillness;
in stillness, all sound.



. . . and then . . .

Returning to the World



"The modern pilgrim seeks a passionate connection to his or her individual gifts, and the grace to use them to better humankind."

Lauren Artress

There is a name for this: The Three-Fold Spiritual Path

Leaving the World . . .

Entering Sacred Space . . .

Returning to the World . . .

. . . somehow *changed*



Learning the ropes in energywork, you find that you run into the signs of spiritual process and the three-fold spiritual path all the time. They come again and again, like perennials in your garden.

You get an eye for them . . .

. . . once you have picked them out, it's hard to not see them.



Can you see the fox?

We've already looked at **spiritual process** and the **three-fold spiritual path**. Here are some more to look for:

Callings

“When you go so far as to see what you do as a calling, it is no longer a casual undertaking, . . .

“ Something would be missing if you didn't follow and cultivate it; indeed, if you don't follow your calling, your calling might start stalking you.”



“The Only Known Photo of God”
Thomas Merton

Beliefs

“Your skills and techniques will tend to organize themselves around how you see yourself and what you most deeply believe about what you are doing.”



Holism

*Imagine all things and creatures as
the cells of a single living being.
All are but parts of one stupendous
whole,
Whose body Nature is and God the
soul.*

Alexander Pope



Mindfulness

Mindfulness opens up a wider field of consciousness around what you're attending to. If your various techniques and modalities are the tools you wield, this mindful awareness is the room in which you work.



Grounding

Behind the scenes of all the conscious work you do to ground yourself, there are other, bigger stories unfolding.

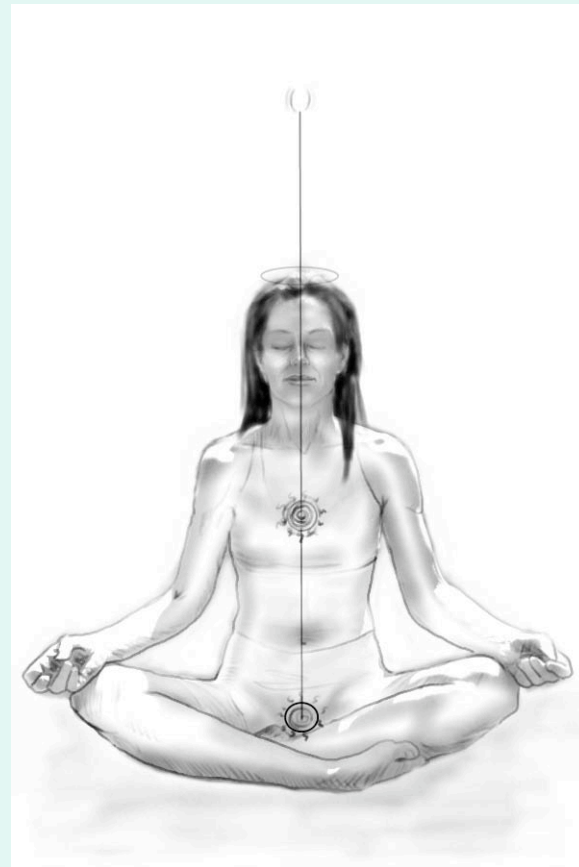
Becoming a grounded person means having found yourself in the ground of all being, the ongoing work and realization of a lifetime.

Stepping in this direction involves one of the great paradoxes of spiritual life: when it comes to opening your consciousness to higher dimensions, it is often the case that *down is up*.



Centering . . .

. . . may be another way of expressing the need to be right where you are, and to do what you do from your heart and the core of your being.



Expression: more than being able to tell off the boss

It's also your ability to

- * Release excess energy
- * Communicate and be in a relationship
- * Express your calling



Control

We can all think of people who are unable to believe that anything good can happen if things are just allowed to unfold by themselves . . .

The balanced blend of activity between your head and belly brings in an element of healthy control and makes it possible for us to let go and trust that, while we do our part, most of life is in higher hands.



Balance . . .

. . . not something static or frozen, like a restaurant saltshaker poised precariously on a grain of salt.



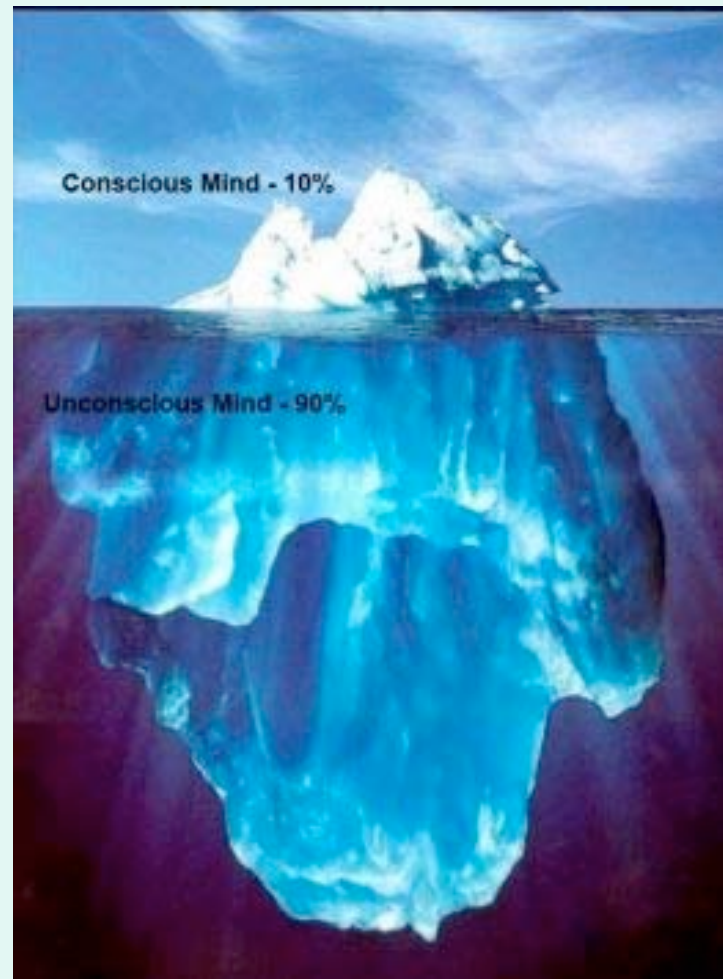
In the world of energy and consciousness, balance is a dynamic, ongoing process of blending and re-blending the forces that act upon us and within us.

Twin Structures of Consciousness

... like orbiting twin stars,
one visible, one dark,
the trajectory of what's
evident, . . .

. . . forever affected by
the gravity of
what's concealed.

Sue Grafton



Fear, . . .

. . . which has its way of
shapeshifting and
revealing its twin
structures of love,
openness, and even
wisdom. That is when
fear becomes an ally.

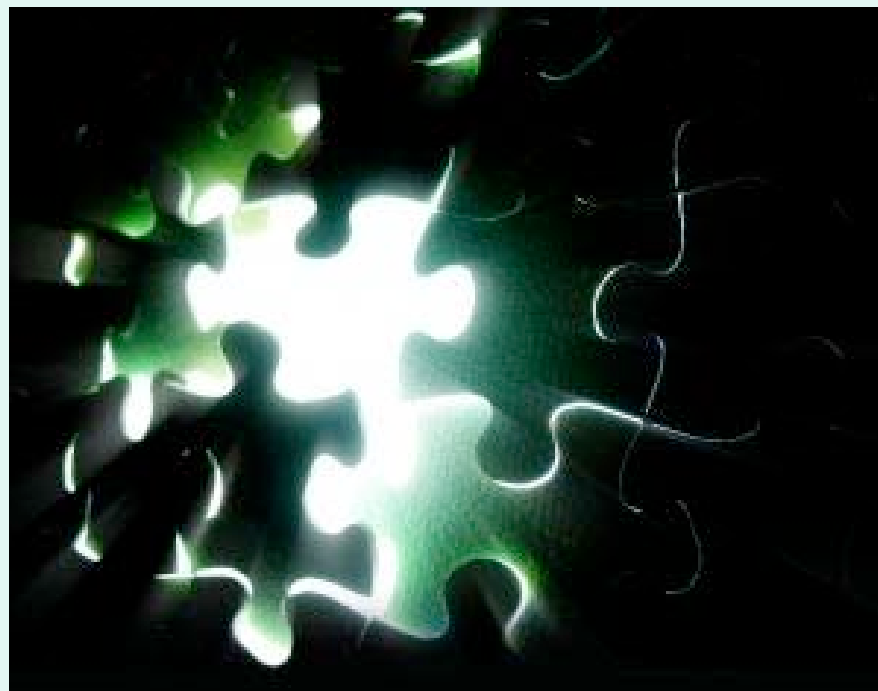


Resistance, Release and Renewal

(the three 'Rs' of energy healing):

Resistance is often a precursor to the release of excess energy from a person's body or psyche,

... followed by the potential for a move of consciousness into a new place.



Integration: Living One Life

Your energywork practice
delivers a changed person to
the world and, in its small
way, changes the world.



All this being the case, where might that leave the pilgrim
in your body?

The stars that once confused
me seem now to light a path that
is clear—one that I have, in
truth, been traveling for all these
days, where I met what came,
and left behind my sorrows and
am traveling still.

Rupert Walters



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