Exploring a Conflict Healing Theoretical Framework within a Locate,

Describe and Transform (LDT™) Self- Applied Energy Healing Session

by

Karen Morton
B.A., University of Windsor, 1983

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Abstract

Healing from conflict allows us to bring the best we can be to each relationship and situation, however current healing techniques focus on the involvement of other people. A self-healing road map could be beneficial. The goal of this research was to examine Locate, Describe and Transform (LDT™) and its potential to provide just such a guide. This qualitative case study examined a single, self-applied LDT™ energy session in order to explore what might be revealed about its underlying conflict healing theoretical framework. Using Moustakas’ heuristic methodology, the LDT™ process was formulated and linked to research in embodiment, metaphor, and energy healing. The concept of universal energy was then compared to four conflict theories of connection, including Maslow’s Self-Actualization, Redekop’s Mimetic Structures of Blessing, LeBaron’s Connected Ways of Knowing, and Gopin’s Eight Steps. LDT™ was found to be theoretically grounded and worthy of further exploration.
Acknowledgments

I began with an intuitively-guided process and a feeling deep within that I was supposed to critically analyse it. Without the ongoing support and direction of my supervisory committee and their willingness to risk, I could not have created a bridge between intuition and academia. For this, I offer my deepest gratitude.

I would also very much like to thank Lois Pegg in the IDR office for her tireless administrative guidance. It can’t be easy to field non-stop questions from graduate students, yet she has always done so with ease and good humour.
Dedication

To Tracy, whose unconditional belief in me and what I do helped me to find the determination to continue to try and merge two worlds;

To Kristin, who loves her mum just as she is;

To Nathan, who calls forth the best in me even as I work through my worst, and

To Ari, whose natural sense of connection sets a standard worthy of living up to.

I thank you all for allowing me to expose a part of you as I open up my own experience of conflict healing for scrutiny.
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“What I need is help to explain in a concise and simple way the human connection with Nature. I need something that people can relate to. Something which is easy to understand and accept.”

The smile became more pronounced.

You are suggesting some written material which does not stretch the imagination, something simple enough for the mind to comprehend.

“That’s it,” I said triumphantly. “Just the thing.”

The smile vanished.

Forget it. How can we write of unseen realities, hint of unheard concepts, or even demonstrate the practicality of inner truths, without disturbing the slumbering Self within?

A long, deep sigh.

We have a choice, my friend. Either you write it as it happens, as it is revealed, or forget the whole project. I can offer no compromise. Accept it. This will be written as a synthesis of [hu]man and Nature.

Talking with Nature (Roods 1987, p.21-22)
Chapter 1 – Introduction

CONFLICT: A PERSONAL STARTING PLACE

I was raised in tension and conflict. It wasn’t always loud, and most often wasn’t directed at me, but it permeated my being and taught me how to be in relationship. I learned when to be silent and slip out unseen, when to apologize despite not having done anything wrong, how to hide my feelings with sarcasm, and how to lash out, either with words or fists, in what I perceived to be self-defence.

It’s funny what remains in our memory, and how that memory shapes us, sometimes unknowingly. When I was about ten years old, my parents bought The Family Doghouse plaque. We all giggled and thought it was cute… I didn’t think that way for long. Imagine a plaque about four inches high and ten inches long. On the left was a little dog house with a hook inside; the rest of the plaque contained five hooks, each with a little dog figure, and each dog labelled with the name of someone in the house. When somebody was ‘bad’ their dog was put into the doghouse, to be removed only when they were ‘good’ again. What may have started as a joke became a model for ridicule and sibling taunts as it was used in real-life situations. Despite the short duration of its existence, this plaque explicitly set up what was already a developing implicit message – whoever had ‘done wrong’ was fair game for any of the siblings to pick on. It was then that I became aware of how I didn’t fit in with my family’s version of conflict management.

At fifteen years old, I began a conscious move away from conflict as a way of life. It was a Friday after school, and my siblings and I were to have the house
cleaned before my mum came home from work. It had been one of those weeks where my mother had decided that I was in the metaphoric doghouse, and I hadn’t even had any idea what I may have done. The plaque no longer existed – I’m certain my younger siblings didn’t even remember it. But we had all internalized the message, and I had endured a week of sarcasm and nastiness from my older sister and two younger brothers. This day was no different, and at some point my frustration boiled over, and I started screaming uncontrollably. I did not think – I knew – that I could kill the brother who was provoking me. Something inside me gained enough control to place myself on one side of the kitchen table while I screamed at my sister to get him out of the room. Another voice inside my head reasoned that I didn’t want to go to jail, and after some minutes, I calmed down. I promised myself that I would not live in violence, and spent the rest of my teenage years doing my best to suppress the anger that had spilled over that day.

The language here is important – I didn’t learn to release my anger and hurt in a healthy way, I simply learned how to not let it manifest against somebody else in a physical or purposefully hurtful manner. This was an effective conflict management technique given my environment, my lack of role models, and my desire to act more positively than I had been taught and practiced in the past. However, it couldn’t last if I was to develop healthy relationships, including, most importantly, a healthy relationship with myself. And so it was that in my mid-twenties, I began the slow road to change, and in my early thirties, single parent to a young daughter, I found myself in a counsellor’s office, intent on doing
whatever was necessary to not re-create learned negative patterns with my own child.

My life was not extraordinary in the amount of conflict I lived with. I believed then, and do now, that my childhood was no different from many of the kids around me – we were another ‘normal’ family struggling to cope against the pressures of what was perceived by my parents as an unrelenting world. They had not been taught how to be healthy in relationship and did not have the skill set to pass healthy behaviours on to their kids. Their experiences became ours, and ours blended with the rest of society’s – individual faces representing the social problems of bullying, child abuse, alcoholism, poverty, crime, divorce, workplace stress and the traumas of war.

Conflict is everywhere, in everyone’s lives. If we are in a negative relationship with it, we draw negative conflict toward us. If we open to its lessons, we can learn to release our own negativity and embrace the messages of change that bring peace toward us at a more rapid rate. The social problem we face is that negative conflict in our own lives is brought forward into our current and future relationships. As the cycle of negativity grows and expands, individual conflict becomes group conflict. To heal the group, we must first heal ourselves. Pioneering therapist Virginia Satir is quoted as saying “The family is a microcosm. By knowing how to heal the family, I know how to heal the world” (as cited in Wikipedia Contributors 2007, p.1). And, as Satir also acknowledged, healing the family starts with the individual.
My optimism and belief of a better way led me to search unusual pathways to heal my Spirit. I had taken the traditional counselling method as far as I could; what I needed was a day-to-day self-healing process. Unknowingly, and step-by-tiny-step, I entered the world of energy healing.

**Energy Healing**

Energy healing “encompasses a variety of ancient and modern practices, some of which conceive that they tap universal healing energy or the energy of God, Christ, or another spiritual source. All of these practices take as a given the existence of an energy to which everyone has access” (DiNucci 2005, p.260). The term energy healing is comprised of two concepts: a life force energy, and the use of this energy for the purposes of healing.

**Life Force Energy**

[A] factor in connection with the nature of [humans], which must be taken into account in high-level wellness, is the fact that [we are] made of energy… Every part of the tissues of [our] body is a manifestation of organized energy… everything in the universe that is material is made of energy… since we are made of energy, we must recognize the laws of energy in connection with our bodies. (Dunn 1973, p.vii)

The Chinese call it Chi, the Japanese, Ki, the Hawaiian’s, Ti or Ki, and the Hindu’s, Prana (Rand 2000). Polynesian cultures know it as Mana, ancient Egyptians knew it as Ka and the Inuit see it as Inua or Sila (Wikipedia Contributors 2007), while First Nations’ cultures believe in a connection to the natural universe “which is comprised of positive and negative energy forces” (Lee...
2005, p.101). In short, the belief in a “non-physical energy that animates all living things” (Rand 2000, p.I-1) exists across cultures.

Healing

Healing means “to restore to health or soundness; to restore (a person) to spiritual wholeness” (healing.Dictionary.com 2004) – it is a holistic process that brings balance to our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual selves. Healing means transformation – it is a “rite of passage” that opens to a new consciousness (Lane et al. 2005, p.394), and that can “create greater openness to other people” (Staub 2003, p.13).

Energy healing is founded in the belief that the body (including physical, emotional, mental and spiritual) was designed to be self-healing and that the ever-present life force energy can be accessed by each of us to assist us in the self-healing process.

CONFLICT HEALING: FORGING AN UNUSUAL PERSONAL PATH

Over time, I moved from a person who did not believe in a universal energy force to one who feels deeply connected to it. I hear voices of guides, receive messages via imagery and readily interpret their metaphors, and assist others in moving energy through their bodies to help them heal their own wounds of conflict. In retrospect, I would have to say that my ability to make such a significant shift in my worldview depended completely on my willingness to tackle my arrogance. As we have seen, cultures around the world have been connecting to universal energy and using it to heal for millennia. It is, perhaps, a
limitation in Western thought that we believe this ability does not exist, or view it with much skepticism.

Desperation helped to break down the wall of arrogance, as I found myself searching for answers to why a particular conflict was so pervasive in my life. None of my old ways of managing conflict seemed to work, and I found myself immobilized with a herniated disc. My body finally spoke loud enough that I had no choice but to listen. Away from the conflict, my body healed, but my desperation didn’t. This led to my first Reiki session, at the insistence of my friend, a Reiki practitioner. I felt nothing (that’s not unusual), I certainly didn’t relax (that is somewhat unusual), and I left more unsettled than when I arrived (that is completely unusual); I was, it turns out, her toughest client. But, it seems, a switch had been turned on, and following my move to Victoria two months later, I spent the next six years attempting to come to terms with the concept of universal energy, learning to heal and becoming a healer.

On the West coast, I quickly resonated with the First Nations’ belief that everything has a life force. I couldn’t yet feel the energy in rocks or trees, but its existence suddenly made sense to me. Synchronicity took over, and I found myself connecting with people from this ‘other’ world of universal energy. One woman who channelled messages from guides told me things that she couldn’t possibly know – things I knew to be true – as well as gave me insights that I could use to heal. About one year later, another person introduced me to a book on self-healing entitled MAP: The Co-Creative White Brotherhood Medical Assistance Program (Wright 1994): apparently, not only did I not need to be able
to feel energy to have the process work, I didn’t need to believe in anything – merely following the process was enough to bring healing! This suited me, as at that time although I was willing to search in unusual territory, I was still quite uncertain about my beliefs.

Although I read the book, I quickly forgot most of the information, remembering only the four-step connection process, for the language of *Overlighting Diva of Healing* and *White Brotherhood Medical Unit* didn’t really reflect me. What I do know is this: 1. During my second MAP session, as a firm non-believer, and having felt no previous energy movement through my body, my right heel, which had been quite problematic over the previous year, clicked easily into place, and was never out again. I felt the click... it was freaky. 2. By my third session, with my head talking non-stop and vying for control, I was quickly and easily ‘knocked out’ – the sessions are typically around 45 minutes long, and I would find myself drifting off near the beginning and awakening peacefully at the end. One might argue that I was simply having a nap, but naps were foreign to my world, and certainly didn’t occur at any other time outside of the healing sessions. 3. As I began working on my deepest historic conflict, I would lie down pain-free, but would instantly feel pain for the entire length of the session in the place where the issue manifested physically; the pain would stop as the session ended. Rather quickly, I could feel the benefits of this healing process. Still intellectually confused, I became a believer.

Along my path to becoming a healer, I learned to feel energy move through my body and became aware of the different energies in nature; I also learned to
work with other people’s energies. All the while, I continued my self-healing using the MAP process. I only saw other energy healers five times – each time to help me remove significant blocks that I couldn’t yet readily clear myself. I never studied formally, read very little and spoke to only two people on any regular basis about what it was I was learning. In preparation for my thesis research, I chose to become certified as a Reiki Master, as Reiki is one of the more accepted energy healing techniques. I learned during the process that my own discoveries were quite similar to the Reiki concepts.

Despite the fact that I have become comfortable talking about universal energy and guides, I’m actually a rather pragmatic person. Energy healing works to heal from conflict whether you believe in it or not, however I’ve found it significantly easier for people to accept if they can frame it within their own intellectual and/or spiritual belief systems. I believe that energy healing can be spoken of in terms that make sense to each of us, and it has been my desire to discover language to help me teach others.

**Creation of a 3-Step Healing Process**

My pathway as a healer advanced in stages. Of particular relevance to this research is my ability to receive metaphoric images as a communication tool between the universal energy and me; as my abilities to interpret the metaphors have grown, I have become more readily able to interpret a person’s issues needing healing.

With practice, I have come to realize that metaphor is the quickest and most detailed method of receiving intuitive or guided messages. Certainly, in this case,
the phrase “a picture is worth a thousand words” is accurate. The more I work in metaphor, the better I can interpret every detail of an image. In each case, the imagery is particular to the person, and represents something they can readily relate to.

People began to ask me how I did what I did; I began to wonder if there was academic support for the healing of negative emotions that I was assisting in. As part of my research for this thesis, I found myself guided to define and formalize the healing process that I have been using, in hopes of better explaining it to others. Three words presented themselves to me: locate, describe, and transform; the acronym is LDT (a process that I have trademarked). When I work with clients, the first energy I receive directs me to the area of the body where the negative energy is trapped; thus, the word locate. I then find myself explaining in detail the imagery that I am presented with – step two is describe. Once the presenting imagery is explained, I receive one or more images that transform the first into something more positive and in the process release the negative energy with the transformation. This process is then repeated for each blocked area. The key at every stage is my connection to a source energy, which guides me in my intuitions and knowing. At no time does the client need to know, or share with me, what they believe to be the sources of conflict; their bodies speak to me in metaphors that I intuitively receive, providing all the information I need.

Occasionally, I use LDT™ for my own self-healing rather than opening a MAP session. I also teach it to people as I work with them. I have taught it to kids, teens and adults; in each case, the response has been positive. Given my
own healing path, I could see the benefits of a self-healing process – particularly one in which the individual defines their own connection to the energy that surrounds us – and wondered what might be learned from a more detailed examination of LDT™ to help heal from conflict.

Energy healing, when broken down in this way, can be readily framed within existing academic research. Energy healing, as I practice it, focuses on releasing the negative emotions that are associated with conflict; the embodiment literature speaks to emotions being *located* within our bodies. A significant body of research also exists with respect to how, across cultures, people *describe* their emotions via metaphor; *transforming* imagery as a healing tool is also grounded within the psychology and conflict literature. Perhaps the most challenging academic link for LDT™ is the connection to universal energy – this I explored within the growing body of literature on energy healing as well as within four conflict healing theoretical frameworks.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Healing from past and current conflicts and stresses allows us to bring the best that we can be to each relationship and situation. Current healing techniques focus on the involvement of other people – internationally, there are truth and reconciliation commissions for people to share their stories and begin healing, within groups such as First Nations’ communities, there are healing circles to help people share their stories and heal the individuals and the community, and within Western culture, there is individual and group counselling to help people heal as they re-story their lives.
There are limitations to these healing processes. First, although processes such as “truth-telling, dialogue, listening, story-telling, and forgiveness” can be beneficial for healing, it is not always possible for people to access them (Potter 2006, p.10). Second, not everyone can remember what happened in their past that they’re bringing into their present – Lamb (2006) states that patients “protect themselves from knowing some truths” (p.232). Although psychoanalytic processes can help an individual to reconstruct their past (Wyatt 1986), a person would first need to link their “inner unrest” (p.194) to this unremembered past, and then have the time, financial means, and therapeutic expertise available to them to begin the long process of reconstruction. Third, not everyone can, or wants to, share their stories of conflict – verbal communication favours “those with good verbal skills and those who express themselves spiritually through the use of conversation, which eliminates many” (Gopin 2000, p.43). Certainly, in non-Western countries where more traditional healing rituals occur, people “would rather not talk about the past, not look back, and prefer to start afresh following certain ritual procedures [that] do not necessarily involve verbal expression of the affliction” (Honwana 1997, p.296). By learning to use a healing process such as LDT™, people might begin to simply and effectively heal their own lives. This is not to say that people will never need outside resources, but we can hope that it will reduce the need.

Although, as a healer, I can help people in their healing, only they have the power to choose to heal and to make the healing happen. By choosing to do so, my role becomes minimal and infrequent. Most of us, however, feel rather lost as
to where to begin self-healing as our logic clouds our intuition. We want a road map to get started. The goal of this research is to examine LDT™ and its potential to provide just such a self-healing road map.

**Thesis Statement**
Self-applied energy healing can be a viable process for healing from past and current conflict.

**Research Question**
What might the exploration of a single LDT™ self-applied energy healing session reveal about the underlying conflict healing theoretical framework?

**Scope of the Study**
This study examined one self-applied LDT™ energy session with the intent of bringing healing to a current conflict. The session manifested naturally as the negative emotions associated with the conflict grew. There was no time limit imposed upon the session.

**Delimitations and Limitations**
Some issues can be healed in a single LDT™ session; on deeper historic issues, it can often be the case that more than one session is required. Although the conflict issue explored in this research has been touched upon in other healing sessions, both before and after this research piece, only one single energy session is being reviewed, as the research focus is on process, not content.

In this exploratory study, I am both the researcher and the subject as I undergo and examine the LDT™ self-healing process. This research is not
intended to be autobiographical, it is simply that LDT™ is an intuitively created process not yet formally taught to, or practiced by, others.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

CONFLICT

Conflict is a historical process, and focused on the past. People in conflict have past orientation, and are often concerned with past injustices or events that led to present-day conditions. (Tidwell 1998, p.37)

Definition

At its simplest, conflict is “the pursuit of incompatible goals by different [individuals or] groups” (Miall, Ramsbotham, and Woodhouse 1999, p.19); such a definition, however, ignores “the emotions, values and non-material interests of the person” (Burton 1997, p.17) so central to many conflicts, particularly those involving basic human needs. Bernard Mayer (2000) argues for a more comprehensive definition, referring to three dimensions of conflict: cognitive (perception), emotional (feeling), and behavioural (action). In short, he adds the third dimension of emotion to Miall et al’s definition, in which “the pursuit” can be likened to action and “incompatible goals” to perception.

According to Mayer, conflict can occur in one dimension but not in another. For example, we may believe that our needs are incompatible with someone else’s, and we may have strong feelings about it, but we may not take any action. Alternatively, it is possible to still feel the negative emotions associated with conflict long after the perception of conflict, and conflictual behaviour, have terminated.

Of significance to Mayer’s view is the possibility of being in conflict even if only one person or group believes it to exist. So long as I feel we are in conflict, or I act in a conflictual way toward you, I engage you, at some level, in conflict, regardless of whether you believe, feel or act the same. This has relevance in
many types of conflicts – bullies may argue that there is no conflict because everything goes their way, while victims would disagree; a minority community may feel that they are in continual conflict with the dominant group, while that group may only feel they are in conflict when the community takes action that directly impacts them.

Alan Tidwell (1998) suggests that conflict can be defined as either objective, in which the emphasis is on the external aspect of the conflict, or subjective, in which the individual is the focus. An objectivist would define conflict “as a phenomenon that occurs when one or more parties perceive incompatible goals and then equally perceive interference from the other in their desire to obtain their goal” (, p.31) – this is similar to Miall et al.’s definition above. A subjectivist would argue that an individual’s beliefs and values can, and will, impact the outcome of a conflict, therefore “neither the occurrence nor the outcome of conflict is completely and rigidly determined by objective circumstances” (Deutsch, as cited in Tidwell 1998, p.31). This view aligns more with Mayer’s definition, which includes the subjective emotional component. Tidwell is in agreement with Mayer that conflict can exist even if only one person believes there to be conflict, and even when there is no external manifestation of the conflict.

Since healing includes the subjective aspects of emotion and spirituality in addition to its mental and physical components, and since we have all experienced negative emotions that can arise from conflict, Mayer’s expanded
definition, or the subjectivist’s viewpoint, most appropriately defines conflict for
this study.

Not all aspects of a conflict, nor all conflicts, are viewed as negative. John
Burton believes that conflict can provide “an essential creative element in human
relationships. It is the means to change, the means by which our social values of
welfare, security, justice, and opportunities for personal development can be
achieved” (as cited in Sandole 1993, p.6). Hugo van der Merwe argues that
despite the extreme suffering resulting from conflict in South Africa, “there is the
sense of potential that is absent in more stable society” (1993, p.263). And Paul
Lederach states that social conflict “is a necessary element in transformative
human construction and reconstruction of social organization and realities”

Transformation, however, is not always a smooth process. The most
positively handled conflict will still involve a degree of stress and negative
emotions that may require healing and, if not healed, may be brought forward
into future conflict: “The perceptions of others and the attribution of their motives
will depend on actors’ *pre-existing* emotions, and emotional relationships among
actors” (Crawford 2000, p.119, italics added). Therefore, whether conflict has
served a positive purpose or not, the residual negative emotions must be healed
in order for transformation to occur.

**Theoretical Development**

*We must be careful not to push a single theoretical approach as the only mechanism for understanding social conflict.* (Lederach 1995, p.9)
Conflict can occur internally, as with a person in conflict with their own conscience (Redekop 2002), as well as at an individual, societal, international or global level (Sandole 1993), and may be categorized as latent, emerging or manifest (Moore 1996). Latent conflicts contain “underlying tensions that have not fully developed” (, p.16); one party may not even be aware that the conflict, or its potential, exists. Emerging conflicts include parties who have been identified, know of the conflict, and are clear on many of the issues, yet have not developed a workable process, while manifest conflicts are those in which an impasse in the process has been reached (1996). Redekop (2002) argues that “we are all at some point involved in deep-rooted conflicts” (, p.23), whether it be within families, communities, workplaces, or at the international level, and that a knowledge of multiple theories “helps us to see new dimensions of different conflicts” (, p.120).

Conflict has been theorized to be caused by one or more of the following: competing desires, limited resources, miscommunication, cultural differences, power imbalances, differing values, and/or basic needs (Macfarlane 1999; Moore 1996; Deutsch and Coleman 2000). LeBaron (2002) points to three waves of conflict theory development. The first wave saw a focus on win-win solutions, in which conflict “was seen to arise from competition over resources and differences over material things” (, p.6). She suggests that this period “advanced the theory and practice in conflict resolution by substituting scientifically ordered thinking for ‘jungle theories’ in which wits and luck had been the tools” (, p.7). The second wave focused on the issue of miscommunication, where it was noted
that “conflict does not arise in a vacuum [but rather] it arises from poor
communication, often exacerbated by poorly designed systems and unequal
power” (, p.7). This wave, LeBaron suggests, “advanced theory and practice by
bringing attention to communication as the conduit for conflict resolution. But still,
our capacity to generate lasting results was limited” (, p.7). We are, according to
LeBaron, in the third, or relational, wave, in which we recognize that “some of the
most difficult conflicts we face have well-defined issues and have been the
subject of countless efforts at calm communication. Despite attempts to extract
people from problems and promote rationality, more conflicts have surfaced,
emerging out of unaddressed roots like nested Russian dolls. This is because
conflicts are indivisible from the relational context in which they arise” (, p.7,
italics added).

**Negative Emotions**

*Many children and adults in the course of ‘normal’ existence have painful, wounding experiences… exclusion by peers, conflict with and at times the resulting loss of friends, divorce, the death of loved ones, and others. These can be a source of vulnerability, mistrust of other people, unhappiness in life, as well as hostility and violence. (Staub 2003, p.10)*

Regardless of the theoretical foundations for why conflict occurs, negative
emotions are a powerful by-product that feed the conflict cycle. “People in conflict
are often angry,” says Tidwell, and “often motivated by extreme emotions such
as hate” (1998, p.25). Galtung mirrors these sentiments, stating that a conflictual
relationship can “quickly be filled with strong emotions ranging from hatred to
apathy …” (2004, p.4). He adds that these strong emotions can actually create “an inability to handle... the root of the conflict” (, p.7, italics added).

Redekop points out that “deep-rooted conflict is about emotions [which occur] beneath what is consciously articulated” (2002, p.61), while Gopin speaks of the challenge of conflict resolution processes because “[r]ight beneath the surface of the participants’ negotiating positions is deep-seated rage for various injuries, among them humiliation, and these deeper issues insert themselves as a cancer into the fine details of the negotiation” (2000, p.181). Miall and colleagues believe that “[h]ealing the psycho/social scars of war has always been central to the work of those working in the conflict resolution field” (1999, p.206); it does not play a secondary role to “the other more pragmatic aspects of post-settlement peacebuilding” (, p.206).

Sandy, Boardman and Deutsch (2000) warn us of the likeliness of bringing negative emotions from past, unresolved conflicts into current conflicts: “[I]f an external conflict elicits anxiety and defensiveness, the anxious party is apt to project onto, transfer, or attribute to the other characteristics similar to those of internalized significant others who, in the past, elicited similar anxiety in unresolved earlier conflict” (, p.296). Accumulated pain is “one of the main obstacles to social and psychological healing” (Miall et al. 1999, p.207), and, as Saunders (1999) points out, cannot be forgotten by conflict resolution practitioners. Making peace ultimately requires transforming relationships, which requires healing the roots of conflict (1999).
Healing

In her Holocaust memoir, Etty Hillesum, a Dutch Jew, wrote: ‘give your sorrow all the space and shelter in yourself that is its due, for if everyone bears her grief honestly and courageously, the sorrow that now fills the world will abate. But if you do not clear a decent shelter for your sorrow, and instead reserve most of the space inside you for hatred and thoughts of revenge – from which new sorrows will be born for others – then sorrow will never cease.’ (Wolpe 2001, p.41)

There is general consensus in the literature that healing from past conflict is required in order to transform negative relationships. Redekop (2002) points out that “the limbic system of the brain cannot make temporal distinctions, so the wounds of the past are brought back with an immediacy as though they have just happened” (, p.288), and Gopin (2000) asserts that our denial of our need to heal “haunts and destroys peace processes the world over” (, p.174).

Breton (2005) speaks from an Indigenous perspective when she states: “From a holistic view, harms hurt everyone. Unhealed, they function like festering sores. They don’t go away on their own, because they exist to reveal something fundamental about our ways of being together that need healing” (, p.415).

Kaufman (2006) points out that processes which only address the “tangible interests at stake… will continue to be ineffective” unless they also “address the emotional and symbolic roots” (, p.202), while Fuertes (2004) sees trauma healing as vital to peace processes, arguing that peace talks and legal agreements can’t “mend shattered relationships” (, p.491). Without healing, conflict, especially entrenched conflict, continues.
First Nations’ communities have faced this first hand: “Descendants who are as many as three to five generations removed from the externally induced trauma… are now being traumatized by patterns that continue to be recycled in families and communities today” (Lane et al. 2005, p.370). “The literature is clear on this point: unless young people are specifically targeted for healing initiatives, they are destined to repeat and even amplify the self-destructive behavior patterns of those who came before them” (, p.379).

In all likelihood, each of us, at some point in our lives, has been in conflict that requires healing: “If the wounds have become less visible,” says Galtung, “this may be because they are now located deeper in the soul. And that’s where the repair work has to take place” (2004, p.33). No single process for healing exists, and certainly no timelines can be applied, “because people respond to trauma in a wide variety of ways that are significantly influenced by the cultures in which they live” (Brendel 2006, p.19).

Groff and Smoker (1996) summarize the importance of healing in transforming conflict: “[W]e need to remember that when we go to do battle in the world – the warrior archetype – that the real battle is really within oneself. Indeed, the external battle in the world is really a reflection or mirror of the inner battle within – to master one’s own fears, limitations, insecurities and demons. Once we can consciously recognize this, then ‘perhaps’ we will realize that we can focus our primary energies there, on developing internal mastery and balance, which can then be expressed in nonviolent ways in the world” (, p.16, italics added).
SPIRIT: CENTRAL TO A HEALING PHILOSOPHY

[In order to cope with negative emotions,] believe in something beyond yourself. For some people, this something beyond is God. But it doesn’t have to be. Believe in anything that takes you out of the center of the universe but includes you as part of it. Nature, for example. There is beauty and wonder to be found on a quiet path, a body of water, the peace and silence of the woods. (Baker 2001, p.222, bold in original)

Helminski (2001) identifies humanity as “one soul, one family, whether we admit it yet” (, p.33), while Melton (2005) argues that “restoring spirituality and cleansing one’s soul are essential to the healing process” (, p.109). Healing one’s self or Spirit then, may be a pathway to healing humanity.

Throughout history and across cultures, common ground can be found in our search for spiritual meaning to our lives, regardless of how we label it (Groff et al. 1996). “Spiritually based peace theory stresses the interactive relationships, the mutual co-arising, between all things and the centrality of inner peace” (, p.18, italics added). Redekop (2002) suggests that positive feelings such as “love, joy, peace, patience, voluntary vulnerability, hope, and boldness” are evidence that a “Spirit of Blessing is present… Whatever particular form the transformation takes, there is a profound turning around of one’s situation that takes the combined energy of the Self and the Transcendent Other” (, p.323). While some people are “acutely aware of these influences and flow with them” (, p.322), others have cut themselves off from this connection.

Groff and Smoker (1996) suggest that when we traditionally think of conflict, we may define peace as an ‘absence of violence’; however, when asked what it feels like to be at peace, they suggest that we “will almost certainly describe
some form of inner peace experience involving ‘being at one with,’ or being ‘peaceful’ or ‘calm’” (, p.18). This inner peace “involves an inner knowing or intuitive dimension – beyond the feeling dimension – where one suddenly understands patterns and relationships between things which were not understood before. This is the classic ‘aha’ type experience which is the basis for creativity, and tapping this source would do much to enrich peace researchers visions of a positive future world at peace” (, p.18, italics added).

Groff and Smoker (1996) critique Western peace research as ignoring the inner aspect of peace as researchers focus solely on outer peace. They insist that this needs to be brought into balance, and that to do so, methodology needs “to include other ways of knowing besides social scientific methods only” (, p.2), such as intuition and direct inner experience. “The further expansion of peace research methodologies to include spiritually based methodologies, such as meditation and prayer, should not be taken as a negation of the well established social scientific approaches that have provided the basis for Western peace research, but should rather be seen as an extension of the multimethod philosophy that is associated with interdisciplinary work” (, p.25).

Balance must be maintained, as insufficient attention to inner peace can lead to “people’s unresolved inner conflicts [being] projected out onto the world” (, p.24), while solely focusing on inner peace means that the unaddressed “social injustices and structural violence in the world…will tend to make it difficult for most people to transcend their outer conditions of life, thus making it difficult for them to attain inner peace (the ostensible goal)” (, p.24).
CONFLICT HEALING & CONNECTION: 4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Although many conflict practitioners draw on inner resources and a sense of connection to that which is bigger than themselves, there has been little written about how these connections are made outside of faith-based contexts. It is a challenge to find a vocabulary that speaks to connected ways of knowing that does not relegate them to the realm of the impenetrably mysterious or the impossibly intangible. (LeBaron 2002, p.)

We have seen that regardless of why conflict occurs, negative emotions are a by-product. For healthy relationships to grow, conflict must be transformed, so the negative emotions associated with conflict must be healed. Healing, as noted above, includes a spiritual component, which is personally defined. There are numerous religious and spiritual belief systems that offer models for connecting to a greater life force energy. How though, does the field of conflict resolution theorize about connection to universal energy?

This section presents four concepts of connection within the conflict literature. First, we take a look at Abraham Maslow (1999), who theorized about the universal need for Self-Actualization, in which humans have an instinctive ability to reach toward alignment with their god-like selves as they pursue their fate or destiny. The only reason many of us aren’t aware of this innate drive is because we are focused on meeting our more basic needs.

Next, we explore Vern Redekop’s theory of Mimetic Blessing (2002), in which he postulates that the natural human tendency toward mimesis, or imitation, can result in a positive flow of energy and action between people that can lead to a greater sense of connection to others, and quite possibly to a sense of oneness with the universe.
The third concept presented is Michelle LeBaron’s *Connected Ways of Knowing* (2002). Since conflict exists within relationship, LeBaron places relationship, and our connection to others as well as ourselves, at the heart of transformation. She outlines nine dimensions and five qualities of intuitive or connected ways of knowing that help us to strengthen relationship as we transform conflict.

The final section examines Marc Gopin’s *Eight Steps* (2004), which begin with self-exploration and move us through to dialogue as a pathway for healing from conflict. Self-reflective focus on the inner life is common to many religious and spiritual practices, and Gopin situates this as central to healing.

**Maslow: Self-Actualization**

Over 50 years ago, Abraham Maslow presented his *theory of motivation*, in which he outlined a hierarchy of human needs (1954). All human beings, he argued, were motivated by the same universal needs; although people might differ in how they attempted to meet these needs, the needs themselves remained the same across cultures. He further argued that these needs are hierarchical, with basic physiological and security needs having to be gratified before the higher needs of love, belonging and esteem could be addressed. At the top of the hierarchy, he placed the universal human need for self-actualization, where we experience purpose, meaning and the realization of our inner potential (1954).

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs has served as a cornerstone to conflict theories based on basic human needs; although there is much disagreement as
to which needs might be considered universal, and how they fit in a hierarchy, “there does seem to be fairly wide agreement that the basic concepts of ‘hierarchy’ and ‘prepotency’ are plausible and scientifically useful” (Lowry in Maslow 1999, p.xxviii). The concept of self-actualization, however, has received less fanfare: “The verdict of mainstream psychology on this point is essentially that the idea is interesting but completely unproved. More than that, it is fairly clear in retrospect that Maslow’s vision of self-actualization was, in large measure, a reflection of his own personal tastes and preferences, and seemed to be predicated on the assumption that he himself was a ‘good chooser’ in matters of this sort” (, p.xxix). Lowry adds: “Yet, when all is said and done, when every last methodological weakness has been noted and every last bit of questionable logic chopped, there is still something in Maslow’s vision of things that I cannot entirely put aside” (, p.xxxii). This section explores Maslow’s vision of the human need for self-actualization.

Maslow based his belief in the universal need for self-actualization on the theory that, despite behaviours to the contrary, at their core human beings are good and decent (1999). “When people appear to be something other than good and decent, it is only because they are reacting to stress, pain, or the deprivation of basic human needs such as security, love, and self-esteem” (Lowry in Maslow 1999, p.vi). When physiological, security, love and esteem needs have been met, then people have the opportunity to focus on the greater purpose and meaning of their lives. Healthy people, Maslow argues, “have sufficiently gratified their basic needs for safety, belongingness, love, respect and self-esteem so that they are
motivated primarily by trends to self-actualization” (1999, p.31), which he defines as the “ongoing actualization of potentials, capacities and talents, as fulfillment of mission [or call, fate, destiny, or vocation], as a fuller knowledge of, and acceptance of, the person’s own intrinsic nature, as an unceasing trend toward unity, integration or synergy within the person” (p.31). Although framing his theory of motivation in a hierarchical structure, Maslow insists that growth is not linear – there is no “all or none, salutatory conception of motivational progression toward self-actualization in which the basic needs are completely gratified, one by one, before the next higher one emerges into consciousness” (p.32, italics in original).

Unfortunately, according to Maslow (1999), human beings seem to have a deficiency in one or more of the lower needs – perhaps we do not have enough food, water, clothing or shelter, we may not have a sense of social security, we may lack in love, friendship or a sense of belonging, or we may struggle with self-respect and a positive sense of esteem from others. As a result, we are deficiency-motivated, trying to fill what is lacking in our lives rather than opening to our growth potential. Despite our core truth toward self-actualization, “[m]ost of us spend most of our lives in thrall to one or another of the more prepotent levels of deficiency motivation. The higher and distinctively human possibilities remain locked away, masked, eclipsed, unable to express themselves” (Lowry in Maslow 1999, p.xi).

Yet, Maslow insisted, even those of us living the most mundane lives experience moments of Being-cognition (or B-cognition), in which we experience
“the god-like in ourselves [– that which we are often most] ambivalent about, fascinated by and fearful of, motivated to and defensive against” (Maslow 1999, p.72). B-cognition, he felt, “might occur ‘dozens of times a day’ in self-actualizing persons” (Lowry in Maslow 1999, p.xix), as the “clouded lens of deficiency motivation” (, p.xi) dissolves. Most often, he argued, “as is typical in the history of scientific theorizing, this probing into the unknown first takes the form of a felt dissatisfaction, an uneasiness over what is missing” (Maslow 1999, p.84).

Maslow believed that “B-cognition of the other is most possible when there is simultaneously a letting-be of the self and of the other; respecting-loving myself and respecting-loving the other each permit, support, and strengthen each other. I can grasp the non-self best by non-grasping” (Maslow 1999, p.120). He offers no prescription on how to do this; rather, it appears to flow naturally from the self-actualizing person’s synergistic way of living (1999).

Self-actualizing persons hold many advantages over deficiency-motivated persons, including: not feeling threatened or frightened by the unknown, being problem rather than ego-centered, and being free of defensive posturing (Lowry in Maslow 1999). Yet, as the motivation hierarchy is not linear, no person is completely free of deficiency motivation, for growth brings new experiences and therefore new challenges; self-actualizing persons move toward human perfection, but are never “entirely without flaws or shortcomings... proof that such persons really [are] human after all” (, p.xvii).

A related concept to his theory of self-actualization is that of peak experiences – “self-validating, self-justifying moments with their own intrinsic
value; never negative, unpleasant or evil; disoriented in time and space; and accompanied by a loss of fear, anxiety, doubts, and inhibitions" (Hefner 2007). Maslow believed that it is one’s “ability to perceive the whole and to rise above parts which characterizes cognition in the various peak experiences. Since only thus can one know a person in the fullest sense of the word, it is not surprising that self-actualizing people are so much more astute in their perception of people” (Maslow 1999, p.101, italics added).

Maslow “came to believe and then ardently proclaimed that there is a realm of practical, everyday human existence for which the truly revelatory, B-cognition types of peak-experiences can furnish formulas and do give a map” (Lowry in Maslow 1999, p.xxiii, italics in original). This suggests that each of us can be guided in many areas of life, including that of healing from conflict. As Lowry makes clear, “Maslow’s vision of what peak-experiences reveal about Being itself is only one of a wide range of philosophies and theologies that have attached themselves to such experiences” (, p.xxxii). Yet it remains an open window through which we may theorize about the concept of connection to universal energy.

**Redekop: Mimetic Structures of Blessing**

Vern Redekop (2002) draws his theory of mimetic structures of blessing from the work of René Girard, who wrote of mimetic rivalry and conflict (Girard and Williams 1996). Girard argued that imitation and mimicry “are common to animals and men” (, p.10) and based his theory of conflict on mimesis, or the human tendency to copy both what is clearly visible in the other as well as “what
Redekop summarizes Girard’s theory of mimesis as follows:

“Girard’s understanding of the structure of mimetic desire includes an initial mimesis of the perceived interior desire of another person or group who becomes a Model. This mimetic desire can develop into mimetic rivalry in which the Model becomes an Obstacle to the Self. The initial Self, in turn, becomes a Model to the initial Model. As each party becomes a Model to the Other, a relationship of Doubles ensues. Each party is fascinated with the Other. The intensity of this fascination can become violence in which the identity boundaries of each Self begin to blur. Besides this type of violence, mimetic desire may trigger an act of violence, the imitation of which is known as mimetic violence. Unless the sequence is halted, escalating reciprocal violence can destroy a community” (, p.73).

Redekop proposes that a similar mimetic process can occur in a positive way. He suggests that we are all, in a sense, “a limited Subject” (, p.259), whether by wounding, oppression, or simply because we “have not yet fully realized some inner capacity to grow, perceive, and act in the world” (, p.259). We are therefore open to mimesis of a healthy model:

“[L]et us start with the basic situation of a Model desiring the well-being of a Limited Subject… Now suppose that this Limited Subject, imitating the Model’s desire, comes to desire [the Subject’s] own well-being. This will, in turn, lead to an increase of [their] self-esteem and self-respect, strengthen [their] self-confidence, and lead to self-recognition. As a second possibility, suppose the Limited Subject also imitates the Model’s desire for the Model’s own well-being. This will lead to a back-and-forth mutual and reciprocal valuation, increasing the well-being of both parties in the relational system” (, p.272).
For this reciprocal mimetic process to occur, each person’s needs must be satisfied (2002). In this situation, people will feel a strong positive connection to each other – a part of something beyond the self.

Redekop also postulates the potential for a “highly undifferentiated” (, p.275) mimetic structure of blessing, which “occurs when a profound sense of oneness with an Other takes one to a higher level of consciousness” (, p.275), thus providing a “sense of belonging to the universe” (, p.275). Such a transcendence requires being open – “to the Other… to new meaning systems, relationships and actions. It means letting go of control over the means of security” (, p.282). In short, “[c]reating a mimetic structure of blessing involves examining all of the theoretical perspectives from the point of view of mutual empowerment” (, p.307).

Mimetic structures of blessing, suggests Redekop, are open and expansive, life-oriented, creative, generous, thankful, receptive, trusting, caring, loving and joyful: “Our mimetic instincts are so strong that we can pick up on these values at a tacit level and pass them on in the same way” (, p.277). Through positive mimetic behaviours, we may feel connected to others, and possibly to the universe at large. This mimetic connection may aid our ability to heal from conflict.

**LeBaron: Connected Ways of Knowing**

Michelle LeBaron (2002; 2003) situates her work within a material / relational / symbolic framework (2007), noting that our problems, the resources available to resolve them, and the will to transform conflict all exist within
relationships (2002). “As relationships begin and deepen, we draw on many creative resources. We experience physical, emotional, imaginative, and spiritual connections” (, p.13).

LeBaron places prime importance on our body as “central to our relationship with ourselves and each other” (, p.40) – through our body we empathize, communicate, discern, listen and intuit (2002). “There are exceptions,” she acknowledges, “but too much of our theory and practice misses the opportunities available via our physical selves” (, p.81). This artificial distinction that we maintain “between our minds and hearts, between our bodies and our spirits [inhibits] our instinctive knowing about how to navigate conflict” (, p.81).

Perhaps, LeBaron comments, our vocabulary is lacking as we try to verbalize our intuitive body-knowledge, but “most of us can identify a time when we have experienced it” (, p.84). Offering no method for connection to our intuition, she suggests that we don’t need talent, “just a willingness to still the busy mind long enough to create a space for seeing” (, p.113). LeBaron does, however, offer the warning that the answers aren’t always straightforward, and that we may need to develop our capacity to understand the symbolic language(s) in which our intuition may speak (2002).

LeBaron speaks of connected ways of knowing, “also called spiritual ways of knowing. From this realm comes the assurance that we are all connected” (, p.192). Connected ways of knowing are about relationships with others, to be sure, but they are founded in our “relationship with ourselves – with our purposes
for being and ways of making meaning” (p.141). Positive results flowing out of connected ways of knowing, she insists, aren’t the result of “genius, luck, or even mystical forces” (p.143), but rather stem from a more pragmatic approach of expanding our own awareness.

“Connected ways of knowing, like wind on the water, are easiest to understand by their effects” (p.147); LeBaron identifies these effects, or dimensions, as: expanding, animating, connecting, informing, spiralling, inspiring, surprising, changing and mindful (2002). “[T]ime and space, self and ego, understanding and awareness” (p.147) are all expanded when we feel connected, and the energy and sense of vitality that we feel during this connection animates us (2002). As stated above, connected ways of knowing are about building relationships – with ourselves and with others – thus “reinforcing our sense of being part of something bigger than ourselves” (p.151), and as we feel part of this bigger connection, connected ways of knowing help to inform us, for “we will receive additional information when we open ourselves to ways of knowing outside our conscious awareness and ask for what we need” (p.154).

Connected ways of knowing are spiralling, moving us away from our tendency toward linear thinking and behaviour (2002); they are also inspiring as we expand our narrow perception through our greater connection (2002). Connected ways of knowing, lying beyond conscious awareness, are unpredictable, and “may surprise us with unexpected, often-elegant experiences of creativity in action” (p.156, italics added); if we open to them, connected ways of knowing will change us, helping us to become unstuck from our old conflict
patterns (2002). Finally, LeBaron suggests that “[c]onnected ways of knowing are calls to mindfulness [to] cultivate our inner observer so that we become more aware of all parts of ourselves: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual” (, p.160, italics added).

Having outlined these nine dimensions, LeBaron suggests that connected ways of knowing contain the following qualities: gracefulness and fluidity, gratitude, gentleness that is compassionate and caring, yet strong, generative as we find alternative ways forward in conflict, and grounded, not allowing us to “[abandon] ourselves to some ethereal way of being that leaves the ways of the world behind in favour of a transcendent way of being” (, p.167).

LeBaron warns that the “acknowledgment of connection is pragmatic and ignored at our peril; its denial ultimately leads to war and environmental degradation [which relies] on an enemy ‘other.’ If the other is seen as part of the human web of relations, then dehumanizing actions are limited and finding ways to coexist takes priority” (, p.303). She argues that conflict theories and practices need to include expanded ways of knowing if conflict practitioners are to “integrate [their] work into the social realities of the twenty-first century” (, p.301).

**Gopin: Eight Steps**

In his book *Healing the Heart of Conflict* (2004), Marc Gopin outlines eight healing steps that “transcend barriers of race, gender, politics, and nationality” (, p.xvii) and can therefore be used in any conflict (2004). Unlike dialogue-based processes, Gopin believes that healing “must begin with self-examination and end with extensive communication and dialogue” (, p.xvii, italics in original): “You
can have all the training in the world in managing and solving conflicts, but *if you have not come to know your own inner life, and if you have not worked on your own character, then all the skills in the world will not help you heal the conflicts around you*" (, p.262, italics added). It is our own character, he argues, “that is central as a means of healing ourselves and reaching the inner life of people who are in pain around us” (, p.263).

Healing is not about control – not of others, and not over history. Control “is an illusion. [Healing] comes from knowing yourself well enough to make yourself into a vehicle of healing and then humbly accepting what comes” (, p.191). To that end, Gopin presents eight steps to help us “examine our inner lives so that our character becomes a true ally of healing” (, p.xviii). Ideally followed in sequence, they are: Be, Feel, Understand, Hear, See, Imagine, Do, and finally, Speak (2004). The heart, he suggests, must be combined with the mind to help heal the wounds of conflict (2004).

Step one, *Be*, is a process of deep self-examination of the conflict and of our role in it. We may need to recognize our tendency to blame others and to not take ownership for our own attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the conflict (2004). We may also “need to appreciate how really wounded we are and how much we have to heal ourselves in order to move on in healing conflicts with others” (, p.14).

Whereas step one is a more intellectual self-examination of our identity and character (2004), step two, *Feel*, is an emotional self-examination. Gopin states that “emotions are at the center of all the relationships that we cultivate” (, p.57);
not acknowledging them only causes them to persist (2004). “We need the courage to be emotionally alive and not shield ourselves perpetually with the armor of feigned indifference” (, p.51). Awareness of our emotions, both positive and negative, helps us to “learn about the deeper aspects of a conflict, and indeed about issues that affect the meaningfulness of our lives” (, p.35).

Step three, *Understand*, means knowing about conflict – it is about what lessons we might learn about what wounds, and what heals (2004). “Our understanding of others and their experience of conflict is the key to understanding ourselves” (, p.59). We must understand that our old wounds, and those of others, become triggered by new conflicts; knowing this can help us to separate the old from the new and improve our ability to manage the conflict (2004).

Step four is to *Hear*, and is the art of skillful listening (2004). Listening goes beyond the words being said to include “every cue that may help you enter into the world of those around you” (, p.83, italics added). Step five, *See*, is the companion to hearing, and requires observation of what you can see as well as all non-verbal cues: “Seeing is about the challenge of detecting what is not spoken but what we need to understand about others with who we are in conflict” (, p.106, italics added). Observing goes so far as to include the “ethos… a certain kind of spirit to a place, a guiding way of being that gives everyone direction” (, p.109, italics in original).

Step six of Gopin’s eight healing steps is *Imagine*, and it asks us to envision the future, to step back from conflict and imagine the many ways toward
transformation (2004). “Traps and prisons that we find ourselves in, especially ones that have been built over decades, take as their first hostage our power of imagination” (, p.139). It is important to reclaim this power, and to use it alongside, not instead of, our healing of the past (2004).

Step seven, Do, is to transform conflict through positive, flowing action that stems from the wisdom acquired to this point (2004). “This step asks you to take everything that you’ve learned about your inner life and everything that you’ve been able to observe about the people around you and put it all into the single most powerful way we humans express ourselves: through our deeds” (, p.153).

Finally, step eight brings us to Speak – it is now time for dialogue as we “incorporate the lessons learned in the previous steps” (, p.177). Speaking is about the wise choice of words that can help to build bridges and deepen relationships (2004). Gopin suggests using words that “speak to the heart, that bring everyone a greater level of consciousness” (, p.183).

It is, of course, not always possible in our day-to-day lives to go through the first seven steps before we must speak (2004). Gopin believes that on these occasions, “it becomes necessary to at least keep all the other steps of healing in our consciousness and in our feelings” (, p.179) to best temper our responses. With repeat practice, we will learn “to integrate the eight steps into day-to-day community relationships in a way that prevents new conflicts and heals old ones” (, p.257) – that is, we will harmonize (2004), and become healers.
Discussion
The following commonalities exist among the four theories: connection to universal energy occurs within relationship; there is no one way or ‘how to’ manual to connect to universal energy; connection results in a feeling of expansiveness; the purpose of connecting to universal energy is quite practical, and; transformation resulting from connection is non-linear. Each of these is explored below.

Relationship Focus
Each model presented speaks of the importance of connecting to universal energy via relationship. Perhaps we are ethereal beings, but this aspect of our nature must play out within a social structure. Maslow talks of the relationship with “the god-like in ourselves” (1999, p.72), as well as Being-cognition of another that involves simultaneous “letting-be” and “respecting-loving” of self and other (1999, p.120). Redekop’s mimesis is a “relational system” as the Limited Subject copies the Model, and vice versa (2002, p.272), while LeBaron’s connected ways of knowing are about relationship with others, yet founded in relationship with ourselves (2002). Finally, Gopin focuses first on knowing “your own inner life” (2004, p.262) in order to heal the self, and then on “reaching the inner life of people who are in pain around us” (2004, p.263).

Prescription-Free
Perhaps recognizing the vast array of differences between people, and the personal journey that each of us must undertake in learning to connect to universal energy, all four authors go only so far as to say that healing and transformation come via connection to something greater than ourselves, but
leave the pathway for that connection up to us. Only Gopin’s eight steps, in which he offers some questions to reflect upon, provides some level of practical ‘how-to’ guidance. Maslow says that we can “grasp the non-self best by non-grasping” (1999, p.120), and suggests a synergistic way of living, while Redekop bases his theory in Girard’s statement that relational mimicry is “common” (Girard et al. 1996, p.10) and so, presumably, instinctive. LeBaron says we must be willing “to still the busy mind” (2002, p.113), and Gopin tells us to learn to be or feel during self-examination (2004). In this way, all theories are plausible regardless of an individual’s personal belief system.

Expansiveness

Maslow, referring to his concept of peak experiences, says that people, when connected, have no sense of time or space, and are able to perceive the whole (1999). Redekop sees mimetic structures of blessing as open and expansive and, within his concept of highly undifferentiated mimetic blessing, he speaks of “a profound sense of oneness” and a “sense of belonging to the universe” (2002, p.275). LeBaron also speaks of the expansion of “time and space, self and ego, understanding and awareness” (2002, p.147), while Gopin talks of letting go of control and “humbly accepting what comes” (2004, p.191) as we enter a “greater level of consciousness” (2004, p.183).

Practical Purpose

Maslow spoke of a “practical, everyday” (Lowry in Maslow 1999, p.xxiii) place for peak-experiences to guide us by providing us with formulas and a map (1999), and Redekop referred to the practical healing potential of mimetic
structures of blessing (2002). LeBaron (2002) speaks of connected ways of knowing, not for mystical reasons, but because it plays a role in transforming conflict, and Gopin (2004) sees his eight steps as a very practical guide to healing. All four authors keep us grounded in what they see as very pragmatic reasons for us to connect to universal energy, reasons that, in their view, will help us to become healthier individuals who can create healthier societies.

Non-Linear Transformation
Healing is not linear; we do not usually explore a conflict once and then remove it from our intellectual and emotional checklist. Maslow argues that there is no “all or none… motivational progression” (1999, p.32), LeBaron sees connected ways of knowing as spiralling (2002), and Gopin’s eight steps, although suggested as sequential, require ongoing repetition as new conflicts emerge (2004). Although Redekop does not address the concept of linearity, the back and forth flow of mimetic behaviour suggests a non-linear pattern.

Summary
There is strong support for the need to heal from conflict, and acknowledgement that healing has a spiritual component. In a non-prescriptive way, the above conflict resolution theorists and practitioners are emphasizing the practical need for a personally-defined spiritual, energetic, or relational connection that takes us out of ‘real time’ and beyond our selves. The concept of energy healing, which relies on connection to a personally-defined universal energy force, is beginning to gain momentum as a research topic. The next section explores recent studies.
ENERGY HEALING

Introduction

The U.S. National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) (2005) separates energy medicine into two branches: veritable, which includes “specific, measurable wavelengths and frequencies to treat patients,” and putative (or biofields), “which have yet to be measured… [and are] based on the concept that human beings are infused with a subtle form of energy… believed to flow throughout the material human body” (p.1). Research is being conducted into a variety of putative energy processes, including: acupuncture, qi gong, herbal medicine, yoga, meditation, homeopathy, distant healing, and energy healing practices such as healing touch, Johrei, vortex healing, polarity therapy, Therapeutic Touch and Reiki (2005). Although differing in method, the energy healing processes share the common theme of a practitioner using their hands to move universal energy through their own body and into the client in order to locate energy blocks, assist in the removal of these blocks and help the client to balance their energy field (2005).

Two of the more commonly investigated energy healing modalities are Reiki and Therapeutic Touch. Reiki is of Japanese origin, and is based on the belief that the higher spiritual consciousness (Rei) guides the life energy (Ki) for the purposes of healing (Rand 2000). Reiki practitioners take courses and are certified at one or more levels, including Level I, Level II, Advanced, and Master (2000).

During a Reiki session, the client is laying or sitting, fully clothed, as the practitioner rests their hands on specific areas of the client’s body, resting there
for approximately three minutes (2000). A client may or may not feel energy move through them during the session; the healing energies are working with their body regardless. A typical session ranges from 30 to 90 minutes in length (Aetna InteliHealth 2005), however sessions as short as a few minutes may be used to address a particular, immediate issue (Rand 2000). Although there are up to fifteen specific hand positions in a Reiki treatment, the practitioner is encouraged to be guided by their intuition, and to place their hands accordingly (2000).

From Level II certification upward, Reiki energy is strengthened by the use of symbols, which are seen to be direct links to the higher spiritual consciousness: “Reiki symbols are like keys that open doors to higher levels of awareness/manifestation... The power of the symbols is not in their outward appearance but in the attunement energies that become attached to them” (, p.II-6).

Therapeutic Touch was developed in 1972 by Dr. Dolores Krieger, RN and Dora Kunz (Nurse-Healers - Professional Associates International 2006). Although it was created as a “scientifically based process” (, p.1), it is based on the same life energy concept that the NCCAM refers to as putative. Practitioners receive training in Therapeutic Touch, but there is no certification process (Aetna InteliHealth 2005).

As with a Reiki session, the client is laying or sitting, fully clothed, and may or may not feel energy moving through their body; unlike Reiki, the practitioner’s hands hover over, rather than rest on, the client’s body, there are no specific
hand positions, no symbols, and a session averages between five and twenty
minutes in length (2005).

Therapeutic Touch consists of four phases: centering, assessing,
intervention and evaluation/closure (Nurse-Healers - Professional Associates
International 2006). During centering, the practitioner becomes peaceful; once
this is achieved, the practitioner assesses the client’s energy by holding their
hands two to five inches above the client’s body, scanning from head to feet in
order to feel where energetic imbalances may be occurring. In the third phase of
intervention, the practitioner first clears energy by moving their hands in a
symmetrical fashion, from head to toe, and from the body’s mid-line and outward,
and then re-balances energy by focusing on particular blocked areas. Finally, the
practitioner uses their intuition and energetic feedback from the client to
determine when to end the treatment.

Current Research
Energy healing has increasingly gained the interest of Western society over
the past two or three decades: in a recent meta-study, DiNucci (2005) found that
energy healing was one of the fastest growing complementary and alternative
medicine (CAM) therapies, predominantly due to patients’ perceived satisfaction.
DiNucci’s research shows that, to date, no adverse effects have been reported in
research into energy healing; although research is still in preliminary stages,
energy healing “may offer a noninvasive nonpharmacologic adjunctive treatment
for several physical and psychologic conditions” (, p.267).
Research into energy healing has been focused on the use of healers rather than self-healing. Two points need to be made about the use of a healer in such research: first, as Gerber (2000) points out, “[l]earning to channel healing energy is actually fairly simple. But the degree to which we may each become successful healers will vary from person to person” (, p.398). Second, as discussed by Jackson (2004), certification in a technique, and practice alone, does not make one a skilled healer. Healers must work on their own imbalances in order to best help others – this is a life-long process. These two points must be taken into account when designing research studies – the effect of the treatment may be directly related to the skill level of the practitioner.

While there is no shortage of studies on energy healing processes and health – Jonas and Crawford (2004) “were surprised to find more than 2500 references to nonlocal types of healing in the English literature alone and more than 200 controlled clinical studies or experiments from the laboratory that were investigating whether noninstrumental healing was effective” (, p.753) – there is, to date, no individual study that serves as the standard for which to compare future research. Several recent meta-analyses (DiNucci 2005; Abbot 2000; Peters 1999; Wardell and Weymouth 2004; Astin, Harkness, and Ernst 2000) point to the challenge – research is besot with methodological problems. Peters (1999) identifies four major weaknesses – “sampling procedures, intervention practices, practitioner skill, and the underreporting of data” (, p.58). Under-reporting includes a lack of demographic data that may affect results, as well as a lack of statistical values for non-significant findings (which may lead to small
significant values across studies). Most studies rely on convenience sampling but don’t adequately delineate whether, or how, randomness was assigned (1999).

Another key limitation is the degree to which studies rely on the term energy healing, Therapeutic Touch, or Reiki, for example, as a descriptor but don’t sufficiently detail what the precise practice was (Peters 1999; Wardell et al. 2004). This is necessary as variations exist within each modality. Did the healing session last five minutes, fifteen minutes or one hour? Did the practitioner use a hands-on or hovering hands technique? Did the research consist of one healing session, or several? If more than one, what was the time frame in between? Was the same practitioner used each time? Did the recipient know what was being studied?

Finally, limited information is provided as to skill level of the practitioner (Peters 1999; Wardell et al. 2004). This is a challenging limitation to overcome due to current inabilities to consistently measure the “healing presence” (Jonas et al. 2004, p.754). Years of practice and coursework do not in themselves guarantee that a healer has a particular level of skill – neither can we presume that no training means no skill – but documentation of the healer(s) background can be critical for cross-study comparisons. How many years experience does a practitioner have? How many actual ‘client hours’? If using a certified process such as Reiki, what level of certification is the practitioner? Does the practitioner feel energy move through them (not all do)? Does the practitioner use standard hand positions or a more intuitive approach? Does the practitioner receive intuitive messages or images that guide their healing approach? If so, do they
share these with the clients? Does the practitioner have regular healing sessions of their own to maintain and improve clarity within their own energy system?

Sessions vary person-to-person and day-to-day. A key component absent in studies is the practitioner’s view of the healing session. What did they experience? How did this compare from one client to another? Was their technique personalized depending on the energy needs of the client? If so, how? How did the practitioner feel on that particular day, or with that particular client? In examining processes such as healing modalities where the universal energy itself is not (yet) measurable, as much detail as possible about the practitioner and the process must be provided. Without it, even if there were significant results, there may be difficulty in replicating the study.

It is also incumbent on researchers to have a good understanding of what it is they are studying, and what the healing modality can accomplish. For example, in a widely publicized study by Rosa et al. (1998) published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, twenty-one Therapeutic Touch practitioners could not identify which of their hands was closest to the hand of a child sitting behind a screen – that is, they “were unable to detect the investigator’s ‘energy field’. Their failure to substantiate TT’s most fundamental claim is unrefuted evidence that the claims of TT are groundless and that further professional use is unjustified” (, p.1005).

There are several concerns with this study. First, energy healers, including Therapeutic Touch practitioners, identify with disturbances to an energy field – identifying where a healthy hand is located is an irrelevant game removed from
the healing purpose of the modality. Second, healing practitioners can work some distance away from a client - it would be difficult and unnecessary to determine which hand (with hands 25-30 cm. apart) is closer to a child’s healthy hand held 8-10 cm. above one of the practitioner’s hands. Third, not all practitioners can feel the energy moving through them, although with practice, this intuitive aspect is developed. Not feeling the energy move does not mean that healing energy is not being transferred. Again, in a healthy child, there may be no need for any healing energy to transfer. This study did nothing to investigate the true purpose of Therapeutic Touch. Finally, I would question the actual skill level of the twenty-one practitioners (with 1-27 years experience) who would be willing to participate in such a study. Any skilled practitioner would know that this is not the purpose of Therapeutic Touch, and that negative results would be highly likely.

Based on the emphatic insistence by the researchers that their misdirected study provides “unrefuted evidence” (1998, p.1005) as to the efficacy of Therapeutic Touch as a healing modality, one can only presume that they began the study with intent to prove the modality unfounded. Aside from a general research bias that this may introduce, it is worth noting here that energy flows in all directions toward anyone in the room. If researchers truly want to investigate energy healing processes, they must be mindful of this aspect of energy and ensure that their presence is not impacting the study in either a positive or negative manner. An enthusiastic supporter, for example, will undoubtedly send their own positive energy toward the practitioner and client, thus having the
potential to add to the healing benefits, just as surely as a researcher with negative intent can do the opposite.

Wardell and Weymouth (2004) found over 30 quantitative studies on healing touch up until June 2003 – cross-analysis was not possible because nearly 30 distinct approaches were used. Research was grouped according to the following categories: pain, cancer, immune systems, cardiovascular, elderly, mental health, postoperative recovery, theoretical and pediatrics. Despite validity limitations as outlined above, many positive results were reported across the studies, including “reducing stress, anxiety, and pain; accelerated healing; some improvement in biochemical and physiological markers; and a greater sense of well-being. Participants generally reported improved quality of life physically, emotionally, relationally, and spiritually” (, p.154). Wardell and Weymouth find sufficient support for further study, although no conclusive findings yet exist.

Abbott (2000) limited his systematic review to all randomized trials published up to the year 2000 – fifty-nine studies compared healing with a control, 15 of which were excluded because the client had no identifiable, treatable symptoms, while seven were excluded because original reports were unavailable and the abstracts did not hold enough information. The remaining 37 studies included 22 full, published trials, ten doctoral or master’s degree dissertations, and five studies identified as preliminary or pilot, with very low subject numbers. In twenty of the studies, researchers identified the healing intervention as Therapeutic Touch; the other studies identified healing as distant healing, intercessory prayer, paranormal healing, remote mental healing and
spiritual healing. Where stated, the number of healers used ranged from 1 to 90, the number of sessions ranged from one single treatment to daily treatments over fifteen months, and the length of sessions varied from five minutes to 40 minutes (note that many studies did not identify all of this data). Only three studies had a treatment group of more than 60 people. The conditions being treated included tension headaches, hypertension, chronic pain, leukemia, asthma, anxieties, HIV/AIDS, alcohol dependency, diabetes, coronary disease, warts and osteoarthritis. Of the twenty-two studies, ten showed significant results, eleven nonsignificant, and one indeterminate, leaving the researcher to state: “Despite some intriguing observations, no firm conclusions about the efficacy or inefficacy of healing can be made from the evidence contained in the [randomized clinical trials] currently accessible in the scientific literature… Too little research has been done, and that which is published is too often ill-conceived, ill-reported, and ill-performed, often by experimenters with more enthusiasm than expertise” (2000, p.166).

In a systematic review on quantitative healing research by Astin et al. (2000), 23 clinical trials involving 2774 patients were analyzed. Healing modalities included distant prayer (5 studies) and Therapeutic Touch (11 studies), as well as what researchers described as distance healing, paranormal healing, psychokinetic influence and remote mental healing. “Of the 23 studies, 13 (57%) yielded statistically significant treatment effects, 9 showed no effect over control interventions, and 1 showed a negative effect” (, p.903). Once again, the researchers could not draw conclusions as to the efficacy of healing due to
methodologic limitations: “A major limitation of our review was the heterogeneity of the trials (both in terms of treatment and outcomes), which precluded formal quantitative analyses” (, p.908). The researchers believe, however that “the evidence thus far merits further study” (, p.910). Research concerns to address include the issue of control groups, who may be receiving positive mental intent/prayer from friends even if not from within the research study, insufficient sample sizes, and the impact of researcher beliefs on outcome. In addition, it is suggested that future studies focus on “psychological factors (such as depression, anxiety, sense of control, and self-efficacy) that are known to interact with physical health outcomes” (, p.909).

Wardell and Weymouth (2004) also acknowledge a lack of research in the area of mental health, finding only four studies investigating healing and depression, posttraumatic stress syndrome (PTSD), anxiety and general coping. Sample sizes were small (10-51), and there were “inadequate controls, and potential study biases” (2004, p.152). One of these studies of relevance to conflict healing was an unpublished paper investigating the effects of ten healing touch sessions on thirty-five women with PTSD related to abuse (Guevara, Menidas and Silva, as cited in Wardell et al. 2004). Participants “completed Speilberger’s State-Trait Anxiety Scale and the Horowitz Impact of Events Scale before and after sessions at three intervals. The results indicated that PTSD symptom scores were statistically decreased (p<.01) at all three measurement intervals” (, p.152). Unfortunately, details are lacking with respect to precise
healing techniques (two were used), length of each session, number and skill level of practitioners and scoring of scales.

No studies were found examining the impact of healing processes on conflict – only a handful look at mental factors and negative emotions that lead to, or are the result of conflict although, as documented by Abbot (2000) and Wardell and Weymouth (2004), anxiety and stress are outcome measures during the study of various illnesses. If the desire is for quantitative research, one direction for study could include examining whether or not healing interventions affect individuals’ stress hormones (epinephrine, norepinephrine, and cortisol) associated with conflict.

Well-designed qualitative studies should not be ignored, however, for they have the potential to provide a significant amount of information not available through quantitative analysis. If, after a healing session, an individual feels better able to create positive rather than conflictual relationships, this is a significant finding, regardless of whether their hormone levels reflect that change. On a personal note, I can, in a time of stress and potential conflict, consciously make a connection to universal energy to begin a flow of healing energy; in well under one minute, I am calm and in a non-conflictual frame of mind. The result is a positive dialogue rather than an emotional reaction. I am not convinced that a quantitative analysis of my hormone levels could record such an instantaneous change, nor would I deny my personal experience in the absence of supporting quantitative data.
Research is lacking on people using energy healing modalities for self-healing: given the limitations that many people face in seeking out and paying for energy healing sessions, more studies into self-healing would be beneficial. One preliminary report investigated the impact of Reiki on pain and anxiety in outpatients with HIV/AIDS (Miles 2003). Thirty patients received First degree Reiki training in four-hour sessions over four consecutive days. On days three and four, anxiety and stress were assessed for each participant before and after a 20-minute healing session under two conditions: self-treatment and treatment via another student. The State Trait Anxiety Inventory and Visual Analog Scale were used as assessment tools. Results showed an average pain rating decrease from 2.73 to 1.83 (on an 11-point scale), and mean anxiety scores decreasing from 32.6 to 22.8. There was no significant difference in either measurement based on self-treatment versus treatment by another student. No information is provided as to statistical significance of the scores.

It is not surprising that there were no significant differences between self-healing and receiving a Reiki session from another student. First, all students are new learners – a significant difference would not be expected. Second, all students have HIV/AIDS – this could have a serious impact on their own ability to channel universal healing energy through their body into another person. The degree to which an individual can channel universal energy depends on their own state of health.

One obvious challenge to exploring the benefits of energy healing is the invisibility of the very healing energy being measured. A healing process in which
the practitioner (or the client in self-treatment) uses imagery and metaphor to interpret the energy blocks can be helpful, as qualitative research can investigate the degree to which the imagery and metaphor changed, the degree to which the client could relate to the images, and whether new images provided any long-term benefits (for example, less conflictual, more positive outlook, see the situation differently, etc.).

**Locate, Describe and Transform (LDT™)**

Healing studies to-date have been focused on physical ailments rather than conflict, and have explored healing via an energy healing practitioner; this research explores the concept of self-healing with a model that relies on locating the place of discomfort in the body, describing the feelings via imagery and metaphor, and transforming the metaphor with the assistance of an energetic connection to whatever one believes in that situates oneself as part of something greater.

Alternative pathways to healing are beginning to gain support – Redekop (2002) goes so far as to say that he has “sometimes thought that a massage or acupressure treatment before a reconciliation process might be good preparation” (, p.292). Gopin (2004) references parallel concepts to the describe and transform aspects of LDT™ when he speaks of the need to “imagine at each stage what might have prevented the next stage of the conflict, or what alternatives were available at the time. We then need to imagine what will happen if we or our opponents do things differently” (, p.150). And LeBaron (2002) speaks of the creative process as including “attention, invention, and
change” (, p.21). These terms also parallel LDT™, in which attention can be thought of as locating the source in the body, invention may be the use of metaphor during the describe component, and change can be likened to transform.

The process of *Locate, Describe and Transform* will now be briefly reviewed and linked to current literature via its three components.

*Locate*

*When we start with ourselves, becoming aware of our own stories, we can become clearer vessels for helping others. When we neglect attending to our stories and how they play out internally, they may find a way to get our attention. Equally problematic, they may play themselves out in our interventions with others.* *(LeBaron 2002, p.238, bold added)*

Storytelling is a widely supported tool within the conflict resolution field *(LeBaron 2002; Lederach 1995; Saunders 1999; Powell 2003; Redekop 2002; Gopin 2000)*. Not all stories, however, are told verbally; our bodies also tell our stories. “Deep-rooted conflict is about interiority” *(Redekop 2002, p.61)*; “Listen to people [talk] about conflicts they have experienced; they will often use words that reference the body” *(LeBaron 2003, p.186)*. Gopin (2002) tells us to look to people’s faces, because the “face embodies one’s emotions and one’s ethics” *(, p.162)*, and is therefore a source of information that can’t be overestimated *(2002)*.

LDT™ finds support within both the embodiment and the psychology literature. Although there are competing theories as to how emotions are embodied, there is agreement that they are *located in the body*. Research on emotions clearly demonstrates that emotions are bodily changes *(see Prinz*
Negative emotions associated with conflict include anxiety, depression, aggression, PTSD, agitation, guilt, embarrassment, chronic pain and suicidal tendencies (Smokowski and Kopasz 2005; Kass, Evans, and Shah 2003; Haynie et al. 2001; Schwartz 2000; Garbarino 1999; Ambert 1998). Healing requires a holistic approach that addresses these historic negative emotions residing in our bodies that impact current relationships. Since the emotional systems of our body develop separately from our conscious memory system (LeDoux 1996), healing is complicated because we do not always have conscious awareness of the roots of these negative emotions. LeDoux gives the following example:

[Suppose an accident] happened long ago and your explicit memory system has since forgotten about many of the details, such as the fact that the horn had been stuck on. The sound of a horn now, many years later, is ignored by the explicit memory system. But if the emotional memory system has not forgotten, the sound of the horn… will trigger an emotional reaction. In a situation like this, you may find yourself in the throes of an emotional state that exists for reasons you do not quite understand… [the] explicit memory system is notoriously forgetful and inaccurate… [but] conditioned fear responses exhibit little diminution with the passage of time. In fact, they often increase in their potency as time wears on (, p.203).

In these instances, embodied healing processes can be beneficial for accessing these historic ‘stories’ in our body. This is a well-documented psychotherapeutic approach: “Support for body work is found in different theoretical models: psychodynamic theories…, humanistic and existential
psychology, transpersonal psychology, and behaviour therapy” (Leijssen 2006, p.127). “If this bodily source is not too strange for the client, the symbols arrive right from that place… [however] some clients might need more guidance and practice to learn how to let a bodily felt sense come in relation to their life experience” (Leijssen 2006, p.129, italics in original).

Over thirty years ago, and with a statement that lends support to a conflict healing process such as LDT™, May (1975) proposed “a new form of courage of the body: the use of the body not for the development of musclemen, but for the cultivation of sensitivity. This will mean the development of the capacity to listen with the body” (, p.15, italics added).

Describe

[A metaphor is] a conceptual archetype, a way of seeing that relates apparently very different kinds of phenomena. A metaphor does not provide new data, but it gives insight into relationships. If we stayed at the metaphoric level, just enjoying the metaphor, we could rightly be accused of substituting feeling for thought. If, however, we use the insight of relatedness as a basis for analytic examination of empirical data about the connections, then we are making advances in knowledge. (Boulding 1990, pp.99-100)

Imagery “is generally perceived as an extremely effective therapeutic tool… a considerable body of literature [exists] documenting that images are indeed a powerful force” (Sheikh, Kunzendorf, and Sheikh 2003, p.19). The effectiveness of imagery is supported by a variety of established findings (see Sheikh et al. 2003 for review), including: our body’s inability to differentiate between an actual experience and one that is imagined; imagery’s capacity for simultaneous, rather than linear, representation, resulting in greater descriptive accuracy; a greater
range of emotions via imagery; an array of physiological changes resulting from imagery; the ability of imagery to access significant childhood memories that occurred prior to the development of language skills; and, the improved likelihood of images bypassing our conscious filter.

Case study evidence can be found linking a patient’s verbal story to their specific physical symptoms. In an ongoing study (which began in 1987) of patients referred by physicians to an integrative health studies clinic, Broom (2000) found: “… a rich fund of information in the patients' verbal language about the meaning of the illnesses” (p.1). “The language used in the stories given by the patients is uncannily relevant to the illness presentations, and has clear metaphorical or symbolic status” (p.8). 347 patients told a story that appeared to mirror their presenting symptoms – it is unclear in the paper how many patients in total had been referred, and what percentage of patients the 347 represent. Of these, 196 patients had a variety of diagnosed diseases, often chronic in nature, 70 of whom told stories “with clear somatic metaphors or obvious symbolic elements” (p.7). The remaining 151 patients presented with conditions that seemed to lack categorizing. Even so, there was “no differences between the two groups... in terms of the presence of apparently relevant story aspects” (p.7). Unfortunately, Broom’s paper is discussion rather than research-oriented, omitting details necessary to explore the validity of the study. Eight cases are presented in brief, three cases in detail. Although the detailed case examples each resulted in symptom relief when the imagery and metaphors of the verbal stories were attended to, there are no details as to what percentage of patients
healed in this manner. Broom is also working with patients who complain of specific physical symptoms – as such, he can do a comparative exploration between the physical presentation and the verbal story. People in conflict do not necessarily have medical aetiologies or obvious physical symptoms that can draw their attention to their bodies. The embodied story may be more subtle. This qualitative case study is strongly suggestive of the link between the images and metaphors of our verbal life-history and the story that our body tells, but as Broom notes, further more systematic research is necessary to determine the benefits of a storied approach to healing.

The use of metaphors is also supported within the field of conflict resolution. Lederach (2003) instructs us that “[p]art of creating the big picture is identifying and analyzing our guiding metaphors” (, p.28), and LeBaron (2003) speaks of the personal practice of “shapeshifting” (, p.179) (or transforming) via metaphors.

Lumsden (1997) situates metaphor within zone 3 of a three- zone model, where zone 1 is the outside world, zone 2 is the inner world of humans, and zone 3 is the “intermediate or transitional zone between the personal/psychological and the social/structural… [that] offers the [individual] opportunities to take conflictual material from the inner world and reconstruct it outside themselves, not so much in the ‘real world’ as in a metaphorical or transitional space” (, p.380, italics added).

Although metaphors “are most often used unconsciously as essential parts of our everyday language” (LeBaron 2002, p.188), becoming aware of our internalized metaphors “can enable [us] to progress beyond [our] current physical
states” (Jobst, Shostak, and Whitehouse 1999, p.497). For many, this capacity lays dormant, awaiting re-awakening: “People have to be encouraged to image, taught to exercise a capacity that they indeed have but are unaccustomed to using in a disciplined way” (Boulding 1990, p.109). Yet the benefits may be worth the effort, since a “radical transformation of metaphor… could be the core component in turning destructive diseases of meaning into aspirational health” (Jobst et al. 1999, p.500).

Transform

[Maha Gosananda, a Cambodian Buddhist monk,] transforms and overwhelms the violent symbols and metaphors by turning them into metaphors of transformation, healing, and peace. (Gopin 2000, p.45)

The transform component of LDT™ refers to both the changing of a metaphor, and the transformational power offered via connection to our personal belief system. “Change the story,” says Mehl-Madrona, and “the future changes” (2006, p.290). Redekop (2002) concurs: “Reframing changes the meaning of an event or action. It can transform suffering from that which is interpreted as victimization to a source of wisdom, insight, or a new direction” (, p.301).

Transformation occurs when we see ourselves as connected to something beyond ourselves (Baker 2001; LeBaron 2003). “Some call it Spirit, Essence, or Source. Some know it through nature, others through silence, exquisite music, the laughter of a child. Our spiritual ways of knowing whisper that we belong to life in unseen ways and that these ways inform our purposes and our passions” (LeBaron 2003, p.104). If we are to heal conflict, in ourselves and in the world, “[w]e must change ourselves... We must do so with new spiritual truths. We must
preach a new gospel, its healing message summarized in two sentences: *We are all one. Ours is not a better way, ours is merely another way*” (Walsch 2001, p.21, italics in original).

This thesis explores *Locate, Describe and Transform* as a conflict healing model that is rooted in research on embodied emotions, utilizes the common human practice of understanding and explaining via metaphor, and relies on connection to universal energy for assistance in transforming the metaphor and releasing negative emotions, without prescribing what that connection looks like.
Chapter 3 – Research Methods

QUALITATIVE PROCESS

“Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p.3). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative studies are naturalistic, uncontrolled and subjective; their strength is in uncovering the deep, rich data of human experience (Northey, Tepperman, and Russell 2002), which they achieve via a variety of empirical methods, including case studies, personal experiences, introspection and life stories, among others (Denzin et al. 2005). “The province of qualitative research, accordingly, is the world of lived experience, for this is where individual belief and action intersect with culture” (, p.8).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) talk of the qualitative researcher as bricoleur – someone who utilizes, invents or pieces together any techniques that will help to explore the phenomena under study. Selection or creation of these interpretive practices, they point out, “are not necessarily made in advance” (, p.4), but created along the path as the researcher responds to a “dynamic reality” (Northey et al. 2002, p.58).

Conflict is an emotional experience; so is healing. These experiences impact our physical body – sometimes, but not always, in measurable ways. A quantitative study of energy healing may or may not help to determine if measurable physical changes occur in a body during or after a conflict healing session. Certainly many studies are exploring healing from within a quantitative framework. This, however, is not the concern of this study.
When people talk about conflict, we speak in terms of how it impacts us and what we are feeling; we tell stories of how we were in relationship and how we are now. Unless we are experiencing specific health problems, we aren’t likely to know if scientifically measurable changes occurred in our physiology or not, so long as our conflict was reduced, our emotions became more positive, and we became better able to cope with whatever conflict might present itself in the future.

The purpose of this research is to examine LDT™ as a self-applied energy healing process to see what it might reveal about the underlying conflict healing theoretical framework. The study is exploratory in nature – this particular healing modality has not been examined before, and the energy session occurred spontaneously according to my personal healing needs. The study focuses on an audio tape of a naturally occurring session and, although guided by an initial research question, I am open to discovering whatever information I can that relates to healing. Perhaps quantitative analysis may be beneficial in future research; a qualitative approach, however, provides the foundation for this study.

HEURISTIC RESEARCH

Introduction

Energy healing is personal. When I work with clients, I see past their defences, into aspects of their private lives that they barely share with themselves. I may or may not see specific events, but I will see what makes all of us feel most vulnerable – emotions, pain, and our history of hurts. People come to me because something isn’t working in their lives – most don’t know what to
expect, they only know they need something to become unstuck. It requires trust and a willingness to explore something that can't be seen, touched, or logically explained.

During a healing session, my energy mixes with theirs, and we both blend with the universal energy that I open to for healing – an energy that we are all connected to but that many of us walk around feeling alienated from. This connection is ultimately about connection – to ourselves, to each other, and to a greater energy source. And that's an intimate process.

Self-healing can be both easier and more challenging than going to see a healer, as the safety of privacy is traded for the challenge of true self-reflection. It relies on an intimacy with the self – something many of us try to avoid – and whatever universal energy belief system we each hold. It’s personal, and requires a high degree of openness and honesty as we explore our bodies, emotions, and intuitive insights. My challenge was to find a research process that melded with the intuitive guidance and self-reflective practice of self-applied energy healing. Heuristic research meets that need.

Heuristic research is an intuitive, internal searching process that may include visions, images and dreams as the researcher attempts to discover the “nature and meaning of experience” (Moustakas 1990, p.9). It “involves self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery” (, p.11). When done intuitively (as opposed to intellectually), these concepts are key in energy healing. The heuristic researcher’s “primary task is to recognize whatever exists in [their own] consciousness as a fundamental awareness, to receive and accept it, and then
to dwell on its nature and possible meanings" (, p.11): heuristic research therefore offers a methodology for turning an academic eye upon an intuitive self-healing process.

Moustakas (1990) continues: “The initial ‘data’ is within me; the challenge is to discover and explicate its nature. In the process, I am not only lifting out the essential meanings of an experience, but I am actively awakening and transforming my own self” (, p.13, italics added). Awakening and transforming are the critical goals of energy healing. Healing comes from the self; the bodily feelings, emotions and metaphors are the ‘data within’ that we awaken and transform with the assistance of a connection to something beyond us. While explicating is not necessary for healing, the opportunity, through this research, to intellectually understand concepts associated with energy healing may allow our minds to release their fear-based grip on control, thus allowing us an easier entry into intuitive practice. In return, awareness of the grounded concepts within energy healing can help to awaken our own “tacit knowing” that is part of heuristic research: we know, even though we don’t know how we know.

Finally, the heuristic process relies on the investigator having had “a direct, personal encounter with the phenomenon being investigated” (, p.14). Heuristics is therefore a highly compatible process in research such as this study, as I bring forward not only my knowledge and insights as a healer, but most critically my own self-healing practice.

Moustakas (1990) offers an example of an heuristic process that is particularly relevant to this research. In his book *Talking with Nature*, Michael J.
Roads (1987) shares his conversations with rivers, animals, birds, trees, rocks and plants. As part of the process of writing the book, Roads is encouraged, by Nature, to trust – to “let go and fall into the river” (, p.25) as he explores a new consciousness. He is asked if he trusts “enough to let go of the known” (, p.26) – heuristic research, and energy healing, demand nothing less.

The Six Phases

Moustakas (1990) presents six phases of heuristic research: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication and creative synthesis. During this research, I engaged in all six phases as I moved from my original, ever-present question “How do I do what I do?” to sense-making and explaining energy healing with reference to what we already know about healing from conflict.

Initial Engagement

Passionate interest summarizes the first stage of initial engagement, as the researcher intuitively reaches inside to find a topic that “calls out” to them for further exploration, a subject that “holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications” (, p.27). During this phase, the research question is discovered.

In 1996, my life drastically changed as I moved across the country and, unplanned, began my exploration into energy healing. Learning to feel energy flow, to connect to a universal energy force, and to hear guided messages from this source became a prime focus in my life. As my own healing through a self-applied process showed strong, positive results, I found myself moving on to
working with others. My abilities as a healer grew, and the people that I worked with began to ask me how I did what I did. I saw the intra- and inter-personal value of healing the negative emotions from conflict that had impacted people’s lives, and I wanted to maximize my knowledge in order to offer up my best as a healer and educator. I do not feel that I chose to examine energy healing in my thesis; rather, I feel that it chose me. Despite my early attempts to talk generally about healing and to keep my distance from examining my own personal process, I finally came to accept that direct exploration of a self-applied energy healing process could be beneficial, and to overcome my fear of such a personal self-examination.

My broad starting place was with the always recurring question from clients: “How do you do what you do?” Friends have also commented that they can’t believe how instantaneously I can offer guided insights into their challenges. My own interest was in grounding an intuitive process in academic knowledge – it’s not that I can’t do my work without this intellectual understanding, it’s just that it makes it much simpler to explain my work to others. In my experience, many people are more inclined to try something new if they can make sense of it in their minds.

My particular interest is in healing negative emotions that stem from, and lead to, conflict, rather than focusing on the healing of a particular injury, disease or illness. So I narrowed the question to read “What might we learn about healing from conflict through the examination of one person’s self-applied energy healing session?” in order to reflect this interest. Yet even this question changed over
time as I realized that the people I was most interested in reaching would
demand theoretical support if they were to open to the potential of a 'new age'
healing process. As a result of this insight, my final research question became

"What might the exploration of a single LDT™ self-applied energy healing
session reveal about the underlying conflict healing theoretical
framework?" I am a practitioner, not a theoretician; it took time for me to
overcome my own fears as I explored outside of my comfort zone to more
explicitly examine the potential theoretical foundations of a practical, spiritual
approach to healing.

Immersion
During immersion, the researcher becomes fully occupied with the question,
dialoguing with others at any given opportunity and incorporating self-dialogue,
self-searching and intuitive guidance in attempts to gleam any and all possible
meaning associated with it (Moustakas 1990).

As I explored my preliminary research question (How do I do what I do?), I
found myself looking for commonalities in process between one person’s energy
session and another’s. Were there common themes that I could explore? Could
the process be broken down into individual components and, if so, was there any
existing research on these components?

As my question developed, I paid attention to how others spoke of conflict,
of how they referenced their bodily feelings and emotions, of whether they self-
reflected on what they brought to the conflictual relationship or whether they
directed their energies to what the other person was doing. I placed a spotlight
on conflict in my own life, and made conscious choices to strengthen my abilities to bring about positive change. I became aware of my own growing need to heal the ‘umbrella’ issue of power in my life; this became the impetus for the self-healing session that forms the foundation of this research.

The energy session occurred the morning of February 19th, 2007; during that afternoon I transcribed the audio tape, and the following day I made notes and reviewed the transcribed tape several times as I fully immersed myself in the data.

*Incubation*

Phase 3 involves a period of incubation, where the researcher moves away from such an intense focus on the question while “the inner workings of the tacit dimension and intuition... continue to clarify and extend understanding on levels outside the immediate awareness” (, p.29).

After reviewing the data on February 20th, I turned my attention elsewhere. Here is where the heuristic process mirrors energy healing, for while I did not consciously think about the data, I found myself gaining intuitive insights and being guided into further energy sessions to continue to release the issues that I had been exploring and healing. Although my academic interest was on the process, I could not ignore the personal growth that was occurring as a natural part of the research.

During this time, I also found my mind wandering toward how my own energy session had mirrored the process that I use with clients. Where I had
expected similarities, I was not disappointed; however, I became aware of similarities where I had expected differences, and this intrigued me.

**Illumination**

The fourth phase of illumination is the naturally occurring *ah-ha!* moment when intuitive knowledge is made conscious and the researcher gains a new awareness, where qualities, themes and components related to the question spring forth (Moustakas 1990).

The heuristic process did not occur in a linear fashion; the first “eureka!” occurred early on while immersed in the preliminary research question. After days of examining the healing process, I was guided to separate the process into three parts and to create the acronym LDT™ (*Locate, Describe and Transform*) to present the process to others. The second “eureka!” moment came as a result of my examination of the transcripts of my own energy healing session, and spoke to my ability to blend conscious awareness and memory with intuitive insights of which I had no memory yet which still served their healing purpose. The third moment was when I recognized the need for a more theoretical approach to my research and to examine the session’s transcript for themes related to theory rather than content – with this came a sense of calm as I finally overcame my fear of theory.

**Explication**

In the fifth phase of explication, the researcher attempts to explain what has just been made conscious; once again, the researcher self-reflects as they
explain "the major components of the phenomenon, in detail..." (, p.31). This was the naturally recurring process as I examined and drafted my findings.

**Creative Synthesis**

Finally, during the last phase of creative synthesis, while fully aware of all the data, its major themes and meanings, the researcher synthesizes the information – an intuitive process – and presents it to others, often in narrative form, but quite possibly via poetry, stories, drawing, or other creative medium (Moustakas 1990). This thesis is the creative synthesis of my heuristic research process.

**SELF CASE STUDY**

The design for this research is a single case study – “an observation of a single... event at a single point in time, usually subsequent to some phenomenon that allegedly produced change” (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996, p.146). In this case the event is a single, self-applied LDT™ energy healing session. The purpose of the research is to learn about a healing process; my own healing story is used only in so far as it furthers this discussion.

Single case study designs are useful in exploratory research where the goal is to gain insights that lead to more rigorous studies (, p.147). Stake (1994) refers to this type of case study as *instrumental*, where the case itself plays a supportive role to the primary goal of providing insight or refining theory. “The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed, but because this helps us pursue the external interest… *The choice of case is made because it is expected to advance our understanding of that other...*
interest" (p. 237, italics added). This is very much the situation with the particular energy session under study, a session that occurs spontaneously according to my own healing needs (as is standard with self-applied energy healing sessions): detailed examination of the content occurs only in the hopes of advancing theoretical knowledge of the process.
Chapter 4 – Research Findings

PRE-SESSION BUILD-UP

Approximately one week before the energy session examined in this research, I became fully aware of a large build-up of negative emotions, particularly anger and resentment toward those I perceived to have power over my life. I recall a moment when I recognized, and calmly stated, that I was becoming "just like my mother"; I had no derogatory intentions toward her, and I was not angry in that moment. I simply realized that I had gradually been putting up a defensive wall as a coping technique in a family conflict in which I was feeling powerless, with the resulting impact of an increasing ‘crustiness’ and short-temperedness toward the kids, who I perceived to be bringing ‘the problem’ into my home. I could feel the shift occurring within me as I recognized that I needed to release the negativity from my body; from experience in self-healing, I knew that although it was not quite time, I was moving rapidly toward the need for an energy healing session.

I have healing sessions quite frequently – they can last anywhere from one or two minutes to one or two hours. Most of the sessions in the past few years serve the purpose of maintenance as I release negative energy before it builds up. Every few months or so, I may have a session that ‘reworks’ my energy field and helps me to channel energy better in my role as a healer. This session, however, I could tell was going to be different. Over the years I had healed the individual incidents associated with power-dynamic conflicts, and I had come to a comfortably grounded and stable place in my life. The fact that this type of conflict was occurring repeatedly within my own home spoke to my need to ‘dig
deeper'; it was time to heal the overall issue of power, not just the power-related conflicts. It was time for me to release my negative connection to powerlessness.

THE ENERGY SESSION

On Monday, February 19, 2007, I woke up and knew that it was time for a full energy session to help heal my umbrella issue of power (as opposed to the frequent, shorter maintenance sessions I have that prevent a build-up of negative emotions). I intuitively knew it was going to be significant for me; I also knew that I was to record it, and that it was to be the session I was meant to use for my research. The session began at 8:45am and ended at 10:35am. During the session, I was lying down comfortably. When the session ended, I entered a ‘healing sleep’ until 11:55am. In reality, it is the norm for me that my own more extensive healing sessions occur with me in a state that feels like sleep; in this way I am relaxed and my mind is unable to control the session. I believe the reason for this particular healing sleep was to complete the work at a deeper level, as I would be more relaxed with my mind disengaged; it is more of a challenge, and can therefore cost energy, to remain intuitively accurate while simultaneously relying on my intellect to describe the details of my own session as it was occurring. During that afternoon, I transcribed the audio recording (see Appendix A).

POST-SESSION NOTES

The day following the energy session, I reviewed the transcribed notes and made comments about my view of the session (see Appendix B). Generally, I found the session to be an accurate representation of my work with healing
energies, or what I refer to as guides; I also found parallels between my work with clients, where I don’t remember most details of the session afterward, and my own session, in which I had forgotten, or perhaps, not consciously known, several key metaphors and transformations, even though I felt the changes in my body.

FOUR CONCEPTS EMERGE

As I reviewed the transcript, four recurring themes emerged. Detailed below, they can be summarized as follows: self-healing in this energy session is a) an embodied process b) assisted by universal energy in which c) imagery and metaphor is the language of connection to d) release the historic roots of negative emotions.

Embodiment

The first theme I found in the transcript is that conflict is very definitely felt throughout my body, as can be seen in the following statements:

I woke up feeling stressed.

I’m feeling in the middle of my back…

I’m feeling a huge pressure on my chest…

… as if somebody’s pushing, pushing, pushing really hard, firmly, permanently down on my gut, and upward, and it immediately gets me in the throat…

And I’m feeling a great panic in my stomach.

Yes, but now I feel snake energy in my gut, tail is in my gut and it’s pointing up to my throat – the head’s in my throat, the snake is within me and it’s not feeling positive.
These statements are supportive of the *Locate* aspect of the LDT™ process, which asks the individual to pay attention to their body in order to locate where they are feeling distress, tension or negative emotions.

**Metaphor**

A second theme throughout the transcript is that conflict is described via imagery and metaphor:

*The image I got when I woke up was of being in a little house, like a security guard house…*

*… airport runway and on the runway ready to load up… was a huge jet plane*

*… child-sized casket… really, really, really, really heavy. *

*There’s a key hole…*

**Ziploc bags…**

*Imagine a glass tube going from waist-height in front of you up into the sun. It is a vacuum suction tube…*

*Imagine anything that gets placed close to that hole will get suctioned up within a nano-second to the sun where it will be transmuted, for it is time to take these demons one by one and cremate them. They will bring positive energy as they are transformed into ashes. *

*This energy is long, thin, about 5 feet long, weaving around, curling around, wispy, with the motions of a serpent. *

*… by acknowledging you have the choice to batter this energy back or to release it up to the universe where it can be transformed, it will then become a more powerful symbol, the serpent, in your life. A symbol of transformation instead of an object to fight against.*
It is something to not be seen by you. It is ten feet long, 3 inches in diameter...” – “Tricky. Shape-shifting. The sponginess is suggestive of where you go for hug, but once you get in there and you give that squeeze, what [it] let[s] go with [the hug] is toxic.

The energies, the other energies have been wisp-like; this would feel – I couldn't send this up there because it would feel like I was burning a live, huge boa constrictor. *Boa constrictor* is a good metaphor for it because of the squishing, the squeezing, and so although I want to get rid of this energy, it flips back between being sponge... and being a live snake that I don’t want actually to throw into the sun and burn; but the flip side of also not wanting to put sponge up there, because if we think of *sponge* then I would be putting toxins into the air if it’s burning, so I’m struggling with the metaphor to help transform it... And what I’m getting is a *yogurt* kind of substance; natural, squishy, it'll break down, it'll dissolve with the sun, won't harm anything.

And a sense, for me, that we now have to work on us somehow leaving the casket, *transforming the casket*, because I’m getting a boredom of replaying the same old energies and I don’t want this between us anymore.

So the first place I’m being drawn is to put a *salve* on Tracy’s hand where the *rope* seems stuck and burned in.

I have a sense that I need to *let go of the rope* myself and walk around and take Tracy’s other hand so the casket’s not between us...

The first thing is I need to stop seeing the boys as being energies in a casket... Because I can actually see *heads now, personalities*, so I need to transform the casket... the casket image... just dissolved as they have become *people*, real people standing there now.

So people now are starting to *board this plane*. And I’m feeling an anxiousness like I want to get on it... in other words, we’re not standing in the destination I want to be at, and I want to get on that plane to go to
the destination that I want to be at, which, the imagery I'm getting around it... is tropics, Caribbean, laid back, peaceful... a reprieve to heal.

And the image I'm getting is rewiring, unplugging old circuits... taking out all the wiring... It's suggesting that in early childhood the wiring was put in for me and then from that point I've adjusted it, added to it, modified it, and what I have is a mish-mash of wires now that are not clean, clear, pathways for communication.

And by removing the wires, it's a reminder to me that I have choice, and I'm now not holding on to anybody's hands. I'm still in the same position between Kristin and Tracy but I'm now sitting with my legs crossed on the ground... just relaxing... Taking a deep breath and reminding myself that each step of the way I've had choice.

I could choose to leave everybody and get on a plane; I'm not trapped. And as I say that, then I notice that a pathway opens in the chain link fence and in the grassy hill... and I can slip through the fence at the airport and I could get on that plane, and that I have that choice.

And so the visual I can work with now for empowerment is to remind myself that I'm on the tarmac and the plane's waiting for me... I no longer feel like I'm stuck, trapped in this tiny backyard with a casket of dead energy. I now feel like I've made choices – I'm fully in charge of the choices I'm making.

Each of these metaphors helped me to describe my emotions in ways that brought clarity and a depth of understanding to what my deepest feelings were.

By transforming negative images into positive ones, I was also able to transform my emotions and release pent-up negative feelings. Working with metaphor in this energy session supports the Describe and Transform aspects of the LDT™ process.
Roots of Conflict

The issue of power that I was working through within this energy session was not the result of one incident, or even several recent events. Rather, my struggle with the issue of power has been life-long, and could not be released by focusing solely on the current struggle. In this energy session, conflict was healed by first working on the lingering root issues before looking at the presenting problem:

The [first] image is your birth father.

The next energy is your mother.

Jack.

Jill.

It’s snake energy that you fear. It is, in your mind, unpredictable, can bite at any instance without warning or opportunity for your escape. It slithers and represents the creepy energy of people in your past... You must see that even though the world may be full of snakes they do not have to impact your life.

We’re basically talking about my maternal line as well as some partners that I’ve had... all wrapped into one energy... the greater reality for me is how the women in my life created me as disempowered.

(Finally returns to the current issue with the image in the back yard with Tracy, looking at the casket): In the casket are, I think, some smaller, insignificant kinds of energies – nothing that stands out as needing more specific work, and the two boys, which are very real, powerful, sources of power conflict energies.

The LDT™ process allowed for me to locate within my body, and describe and transform via metaphor, residual negative emotions that I had not fully released and that provided a festering environment that strengthened my negative feelings associated with the current conflict.
Universal Energy

A final theme found throughout the transcript was that I accessed a universal energy source in order to help me describe and transform my negative emotions:

Guides

Energy is coming in toward the casket…

There’s a key hole… We will put first a clear plastic bag over the key hole. We are strong; we can hold it there…” also “We have released those of least consequence to you in order to make it less convoluted…

… by releasing them you allow them to be freed from the connection with you… negative energies cling to each other. You are signifying a desire to let go. This is their desire as well. To create healthier energy images in day-to-day living.

Yes, you feel the love building – your authority comes from a warm loving place… Your power will always be from a place of love… Imagine a warm, pink loving energy toward the Jill energy in the bag.

White light bubble.

The energy I’m getting now, I’m seeing myself… as more empowered and a greater spiritual energy that grows and rises above – it connects to the universal energy… I’ve created myself as a larger, more positive energy… So the message for me in that visual is by staying connected, by getting myself into that spiritual energy place, that positive energy place, then these potential conflicts won’t be that large for me.

It is a feminine energy…

I’m just feeling a loving presence as I calm myself.

There’s a part of me obviously then, that wants to keep carrying this energy… So although I’m putting this salve on her hand, she’s not actually going to put
the rope down until my energy shifts and gives a clear message that it’s okay and I’m ready to leave it. And I’m aware that there are unexplored energies that are still in this casket…

The casket doesn’t represent dead people, it represents the weight… the aspects of people’s energy that I’m allowing to come at me so negatively…

… the two boys, which are very real, powerful, sources of power conflict energies.

So we’re in a line, the boys aren’t between us, and so it’s a statement about how I need to energetically let go and that’s a big issue, just me having this image shift isn’t doing the trick. I need something else. The guides are back in.

So I’m able to describe the situation, the image as I see it, and I’m needing guidance now in transforming the metaphor even further to give me a sense of health, healthy relationships and contentment… Energy. I’m feeling all this powerlessness in my gut, and so the guide energy is coming to work on that, to soothe it.

… the main plug-in is being removed, coming up from the ground through my root chakra into my power chakra…

So a part of my energy is sitting there [in the back yard of the security hut with the others] – it’s like it’s holding the positive energy – it’s a thoughtfulness… What we’re working with is the way that our energy fields connect or hit against each other, and a desire to change… The energy has transformed. There’s a sense of ‘okay, we’re going in the right direction.’

Although I refer to this universal energy source as energy or guides, it is a personal connection that must be defined by each individual. The LDT™ process relies on a prescription-free relationship with universal energy for the practical
purpose of healing. As we will discuss, these are key aspects to the four theories of connection to Spirit/Other reviewed in this thesis.
Chapter 5 – Discussion

To work effectively in the world that is becoming, we must move beyond traditional academic disciplines and bureaucratic departments. (Saunders 1999, p.15)

LIMITATIONS

Before beginning the discussion, it is important to point out the limitations to a qualitative self-study in energy healing. A key critique may be that, as both the researcher and the subject, I am ‘intellectually directing’ my energy session (consciously or unconsciously) in order to make the session fit the theoretical LDT™ model. To address this potential claim, I can offer only my post-session notes (see Appendix B), in which I make clear my own surprise at how much of the session I so quickly forgot, or, perhaps, never consciously knew. The example I offer in these notes is the metaphor of the “sewer-grate style disc in my back that was connected to wires” – what presented itself metaphorically at the beginning of the session as a type of booby-trap, was transformed at the end of the session with the wiring being removed, and yet I had no memory of the first metaphor during its final transformation, and no memory of either metaphor within hours after the session. Although it is my strong belief, based on my experience in self-healing and my review of the transcript, that the energy session naturally and intuitively evolved, this critique may remain. Future research could address this limitation by separating the researcher and subject roles.

Other limitations to this research have been mentioned earlier, and include a lack of studies on self-healing using universal energy (and we could add to this the obvious lack of research on LDT™ as this is the first study investigating this
theoretical healing model), a lack of studies examining energy healing and negative emotions, and finally, the overall inability of all energy healing research to identify or measure the presence, or true role, of universal energy. And yet, despite these limitations, we have seen in the literature review that research into energy healing is growing; even as I write this, I have before me information on an upcoming conference entitled *Spirituality: The Invisible Ingredient in Health and Healing* (Providence Health Care 2008).

In my own attempt to learn how to maximize our ability to heal our negative emotions, this research offers up for critique and exploration one self-applied conflict healing model using connection to a non-prescribed universal energy. It is clearly a beginning, not an ending.

**THE ENERGY SESSION AND THE LDT™ FRAMEWORK**

As expressed in the introduction, my own personal energy sessions frequently use a different approach (MAP) from the *Locate, Describe and Transform* model presented in this paper. And, as we have seen, there are many different energy healing models, including Reiki, of which I am trained as a Reiki Master. Prior to further discussion, it is first necessary to compare the LDT™ theoretical model to the key themes that emerged in the energy session to be certain that an LDT™ healing process was indeed used in this research.

**Locate: Embodiment**

Academic support for the *Locate* aspect of LDT™ falls within literature on the embodiment of emotions, and embodiment is one of the four themes that emerged from the energy healing research piece.
Psychologist Mia Leijssen (2006) spoke of symbols arriving directly from areas of the body for those clients comfortable enough to access them, and commented that the practice of identifying the sensation and relating it to one’s life experience could be learned. Within the energy session, I readily located areas of my body where I was uncomfortable, including my mid-back, chest, stomach and throat, as well as identified a general sense of stress that permeated my body prior to the session.

Joseph LeDoux’s (1996) example of a car horn triggering the emotional memory system long after the explicit memory system has forgotten the details of an accident, resulting in an equally strong, if not stronger, (embodied) fear response as the initial event, was similar to my own reaction to issues around power, where my bodily reactions were so quick and so much more forceful than the presenting problem demanded that they suggested a deeper issue or issues must be at play. These issues appeared as “demons” in a casket – for example, my birth father, my mother – predominantly healed historic conflicts from which I still maintained remnants of negative emotions. As described in the energy session, although each “demon” felt energetically quite small (“most of them fit into quite small bags – it is an accumulation that is the problem”), my attempts to contain what was left of my remaining negative emotions made the current issues feel ‘more explosive’ in my body.

From this, we can see that both the embodiment and the roots of conflict themes from the energy session reflect the Locate concept within the LDT™ process.
Describe: Metaphor

Academic support for the Describe aspect of LDT™ falls within a variety of research areas including psychology, language and conflict resolution, as researchers and practitioners discuss the benefits of, and how we use, metaphor to describe our emotions and express ourselves. This metaphor theme was dominant in the energy healing session.

Sheikh et al (2003) point to findings similar to what I experienced during the energy session, such as my body’s inability to differentiate between actual experience and an imagined one, the greater range of emotions I was able to express via imagery, my access to significant childhood memories and their emotional impact, and the ability of images to bypass my conscious filter and thus more fully describe and transform my negative emotions. For example, I have never been in a situation with snakes covering the ground and dropping off trees. Nevertheless, my body felt a level of distress as if it were real – “There’s just more snakes coming” – and I needed to protect myself with what I refer to as a “white light bubble.” To my body, the metaphor was real and not at all imagined. Likewise, the image of the “snake energy in my gut, tail is in my gut and it’s pointing up to my throat – the head’s in my throat, the snake is within me and it’s not feeling positive” describes for me a much greater range of emotion than I could have expressed without the image. I can hear my distress as I read the words, and even now, can feel tightness in my stomach as I imagine what that distress would feel like.

One childhood memory that came forth unexpectedly was that of my grandfather “girl watching” - although I haven’t forgotten childhood conversations
about this behaviour, I certainly haven’t thought about them or linked them to any of the power-related issues I was working through. However, the serpent metaphor that was expressed in relation to this childhood memory allowed me to understand and release the negative emotions associated with my grandfather’s behaviour.

Finally, an example of a key image that exemplifies how metaphor aids us in bypassing our conscious filter was the “casket” which held the “demons.” I don’t usually think of my life in terms of caskets and demons, and I certainly would never consciously place friends, family members, and most importantly, my step-children, in a casket. However, in reviewing the transcript, and in my recollections of the energy session, the casket metaphor was a brilliant way of describing what I otherwise couldn’t put into words – a sense of feeling trapped and powerless by the dead weight of negative emotions and conflictual situations in which I felt I had little ability of removing myself from.

Within the field of conflict resolution, Lederach (2003) speaks of guiding metaphors, LeBaron (2003) talks of shapeshifting via metaphors, and Lumsden (1997), in a 3-zone approach, sees metaphor as a transitional space between our inner world and reality. These three concepts are evident within the energy session.

Perhaps the most critical, and obvious, guiding metaphor was my very specific use of the term *guides* to refer to the universal energy I felt connected to during the session. I have called this energy by many names, however, during healing sessions, I truly feel guided in where to focus my attention, in the
metaphors that I am presented with, and in the best way to transform these metaphors. Some examples from the energy session include:

- The initial “Welcome Karen,” as if I am being greeted by individuals.

- When I say “I can’t separate it all out. I’m just seeing a family mass” and the return response is “Bring the easy out first.”

- When I ask “Does she need to be transformed?” and the response is “No” and I am given another image.

- When I ask “So what do I do with these snakes falling above me that I don’t want falling above me?” and I am given a transforming metaphor.

During the session, as I try to describe a particularly challenging image, I mirror LeBaron’s terminology as I refer to the metaphor and the energy it is attempting to describe as “tricky” and “shape-shifting” as the negative energy presents itself as “serpent,” “spongy,” “dangerous” and “toxic.” Finally, it is evident throughout the energy session that metaphor represents a transitional space between the negative emotions of my inner being and the real-life conflict issues surrounding power dynamics that brought me to the energy session to begin with.

The metaphor theme, as found throughout the energy session, clearly reflects the Describe component of LDT™.

**Transform: Energy**

As stated in the literature review, the Transform aspect of LDT™ includes both transformation of the metaphor in order to create a more positive story, and the transformational potential from connection to universal energy. The former gains support from researchers such as Mehl-Madrona (2006), Redekop (2002),
and Lederach (1995), and can be found throughout the energy session. Some examples include: transforming demons into ashes through cremation by the sun; separating a family mass into individuals; transforming negative serpent energy into a powerful symbol of empowerment; transforming my own size to become ‘larger than life,’ thereby “dwarf[ing] all of the problems or conflicts”; transforming a shape-shifting serpent/sponge energy into yogurt; dissolving the casket so as to see individual people; unplugging old wiring and creating new circuits and; opening a pathway through a chain-link fence.

Although rightly paired with the metaphor theme of the energy session, the Transform component of LDT™ is perhaps best associated with the connection to universal energy found throughout the energy session. This will be explored further in the next section however, for the moment, I concur with Baker (2001) and LeBaron’s (2003) belief that transformation occurs while we see ourselves connected to something beyond us. My connection to universal energy weaves its way throughout the energy session, not only in my ability to visualize crystal clear metaphors that reflect the complexity of my emotions, but more particularly by providing me with guidance in transforming the metaphors, and a sense of positive energy flow that makes me feel more peaceful and supported.

After my initial description, the energy guides “welcome” me and begin working on the casket without my direction. They guide me with images such as a “keyhole” in the casket and “plastic bag” (both clear and opaque) and a “glass tube” to send negative energy to the sun, offer interpretations that connect historic negative emotions and people to my current feelings of disempowerment
("What you learned from this is bravado... you carry the germ, the seed, of disempowerment...")", answer my questions about what needs to happen next ("Does she need to be transformed? No. You see yourself walking beside her...")", and lead me through a process that I feel barely conscious of, but in reading the transcript, appears logical and controlled as it moves me toward a full transformation of my issues around power ("I'm feeling all this powerlessness in my gut, and so the guide energy is coming to work on that, to soothe it. And the image I'm getting is rewiring...").

I am told, metaphorically, how to feel safe (within a "white light bubble" in a field of snakes), reminded of the power that I do hold ("This is a case where you dismiss your own... power... your authority comes from a warm loving place, not a political power-over dynamic..."), and shown, perhaps most importantly of all, that I have choice ("And by removing the wires, it's a reminder to me that I have choice, and I'm now not holding on to anybody's hands.") The theme of universal energy found in the energy session does, indeed, reflect the Transform component of LDT™.

Accepting that the self-applied conflict healing energy session is a true reflection of the Locate, Describe and Transform theoretical model, it is now time to more critically analyse the universal energy aspect of the model through comparison of my experiences during the session with the four conflict healing and connection to Other theories presented previously.
THE ENERGY SESSION AND THEORIES OF CONNECTION TO UNIVERSAL ENERGY

The Five Common Themes

Five themes were found in common between Maslow, Redekop, LeBaron and Gopin’s expressions of connection: prescription-free, relationship-focused, expansive, serving a practical purpose and non-linear transformation. Perhaps most critical to a self-applied conflict healing process that roots itself within the concept of universal energy is that it does not insist on a particular belief system or method of connection. Each of the theories examined earlier talks of the need and/or benefit of feeling connected, but leaves the how to and what with open to individual interpretation.

The same can be said for the LDT™ process. The use of the term energy session is my language, as is the word guides. For many (and for me not so many years ago) these terms would send up red flags of resistance. The phrase Locate, Describe and Transform intentionally offers neutral language to describe one type of energy healing, and LDT™ sessions could be conducted in a variety of settings, including kneeling in prayer, as a form of meditative release, or walking through the woods, to name but a few.

Where I see the energy as guides, somebody else might see God or Buddha. While I feel as if I am talking with people-like entities, others may feel as if they are talking with nature; others still may work with the concepts of quantum physics to see themselves as part of a greater whole. As we can see from the transcript, I did not go through any particular ‘connection’ process at the start of the energy session. I simply began sharing the imagery that presented itself to me, and talked of the areas of my body where I located tension. For me, the
connection came naturally, out of habit and my awareness that imagery and
tension this strong meant work was to be done to transform the negative
emotions. This leaves the LDT™ process open to any number of personal
‘connection’ possibilities.

When working with individuals without a particular belief system, or in a
setting such as a public school where no single belief system can be presented, I
suggest that people see themselves as grounded in the earth and connected to
the sun, a natural form of energy that all of us need to survive. This allows for the
LDT™ process to be used even when a personal spiritual belief system is
absent.

LDT™ is very much a relationship-focused process. As the energy session
shows, I did not have a sense of working alone to transform my imagery and
release my negative emotions. I was quite reliant on a conversational style of
connection with guides. For some, this may be akin to a conversation with their
higher self, or connection with their intuition. For me, I would say that I
maintained a deeper level of connection with something much greater than me –
something that I was a small part of. It is this greater relationship in which I had
trust that moved my healing along without my conscious contribution.

Several times, my inability to maintain the highest level of connection
allowed fear to creep in – for example, when the serpent was stretched out inside
of me and I commented that “it’s not feeling positive,” after which I sensed more
snakes coming and energetically protected myself with a “white light bubble.” I
have a clear memory of the fear that I was feeling – I have a fear of snakes,
which is likely why this imagery was best able to describe my emotions. This fear was brief as I felt the safety of the bubble and the positive energy of the guides protect me, but during that moment I lost my sense of connection to something larger than me, and I felt alone with my fear and negative emotions (represented by the snakes).

Each of the four conflict theorists referenced a sense of expansiveness as a result of connection to universal energy. LDT™ offers this potential, which can be seen throughout the energy session, but it must be remembered that the expansiveness, or feeling of oneness or belonging, lies within the connection itself, which is personal in nature. Throughout the energy session, I did feel as though I belonged to the greater energy, and my awareness was broadened. I also felt that I gave up control as I entered into this greater consciousness. I did not, however, feel a particular expansion in time (although I have experienced this feeling during other self-healing sessions).

A fourth theme common among the theorists was that connection to a universal energy source exists to serve a practical purpose. This is clearly the intent with LDT™, which is designed to assist people in healing the negative emotions that cause, and are created by, conflict. The goal of this particular energy healing session was to release the negative emotions I carried surrounding the concept of power. I needed to discover a healthier relationship with power – to feel empowered, not powerless or powerful – in order to create and sustain healthy relationships with other people. I did not set out to have an energy session merely to feel connected to a greater being. LDT™ is a
methodical process designed to aid people in healing conflict. Connection to universal energy helps to serve this purpose.

Finally, the theorists appeared in agreement that growth as a result of connection to universal energy is non-linear. The LDT™ process allows for this non-linear transformation as well, and this is reflected in the energy session. Although it appeared that I moved through the old negative energies before addressing the more recent issues, the reality is that I have worked on these historic conflicts many times. In this particular case, I worked on them first, not because they were the oldest, but because they were the easiest to release: “We have released those of least consequence to you in order to make it less convoluted, more clear as to what is remaining inside the box to get them out.”

Also, if growth were linear, it could be suggested that as a result of this energy session, I have completely resolved all of my issues surrounding power, and that I would never expect to see them appear in my life again. Although I found the energy session to be quite healing, I would have to agree with LeBaron’s term spiralling (2002), as the issues and negative emotions do return, albeit less forcefully, and each time I can see where I have grown and released, and where healing is being conducted at a much deeper level. With respect to the negative energies in the casket, I am told that “[i]n and of themselves what used to be huge demons are now much more manageable although still quite disturbing,” and that “[t]his is actually a lighter energy that has been dealt with [in the past].” I often use the metaphor of peeling an onion with reference to conflict
healing – with each healing session, I peel away old negative emotions and move closer to my core truth, however there is always something more to peel.

Having looked at the five commonalities found between the conflict theorists’ concepts of connection, I will now investigate the similarities and differences between each of their key ideas and the universal energy concept of the LDT™ process.

**Maslow**

What I refer to as connection to universal energy, Maslow (1999) describes as Being-cognition, or B-cognition, as we move toward self-actualization, or fulfillment of our true potential. Maslow believed that all people have moments of B-cognition, where we receive fleeting glimpses into that god-like being inside ourselves; for those people willing, and perhaps able, to place a priority on self-actualizing, Maslow believes these moments could, and do, occur more frequently. Most people, Maslow argued, are deficiency-motivated as we attempt to fulfill our basic needs and, as a result, can’t focus on self-actualization. Our highest potential remains hidden, and we believe ourselves to be limited beings. Yet, at some point, Maslow argues, our dissatisfaction grows so strong that we begin to probe – we begin the path of self-actualization.

My own story shared in the introduction reflects these concepts. It was not until my basic needs of education, relationship, and financial stability were taken care of that I felt a growing dissatisfaction of how I was managing conflict. I didn’t believe there was a “god-like” being in myself, and I was prepared to brush off my inner knowing place as simply a solid level of intuition. First through
counselling, and then through energy healing and a letting go of my need for control, I was able to unmask that part of me that was connected to universal energy. My ability to read my own, and others’, energy grew, and today I readily receive insights, or moments of B-cognition. I have, as Maslow describes, become “more astute in [my] perception of people” (1999, p.101).

The theory behind LDT™ is that a three-step process of locating our discomfort within our body, describing it via metaphor, and transforming the metaphor to a more positive image can help us heal the negative emotions associated with conflict, and that this process is greatly enhanced through our connection to something greater than ourselves. Maslow’s practice of B-cognition and my experience of universal energy are similar, and both work within the LDT™ structure. They remain, however, personal practices or belief systems. The strength of LDT™ lies in its ability to work as a conflict healing process across beliefs.

Maslow speaks of grasping “by non-grasping” (1999, p.120), and this concept is very much a part of LDT™. In this particular energy session I was lying down; I have many brief energy sessions where I am either sitting or walking. In each case, I am receptive, as the metaphors and their transformation come to me. In those times when I am anxious to ‘get it over with and get on with other things,’ and I try to force the images, I am left confused and frustrated. I must give up control and allow the guide energy to work within the LDT™ process in order to receive and transform the clearest images that describe and release my negative emotions.
Maslow believed that self-actualizing persons had advantages over deficiency-motivated people, such as not feeling threatened by the unknown, not being ego-centered, and being free of defensive posturing (Lowry in Maslow 1999). While careful to note that with growth comes new challenges, and that perfection doesn’t exist in these areas, I find his assumptions somewhat overstated. Using Maslow’s language, I believe I am a highly self-actualizing person whose is very committed, in both work and personal life, to positive growth via connection to universal energy. I believe I am very capable in my abilities to connect, and to help others to heal. And although I might agree that I feel less overall fear of what my life may bring, on any given day I can have moments of feeling more threatened, not less, as I see the potential that exists for me, and I feel an ongoing pressure to be problem- rather than ego-centered.

In all, however, I believe Maslow’s key ideas fit well with the non-prescriptive universal energy concept within the LDT™ structure.

Redekop

Redekop’s (2002) idea of people being “Limited Subjects” as a result of emotional wounds, oppression, or not yet having taken the time to focus on our inner lives, blends with the underlying belief of LDT™, in which we hold within us negative emotions (that cause us to be ‘limited’). However, whereas LDT™ focuses on self-healing and the direct relationship between an individual and universal energy, Redekop speaks of a reciprocal mimetic interaction – mimetic structures of blessing – between individuals that, when positively played out, makes a person feel part of something bigger than themselves, and a “profound
sense of oneness” (p.275) with the universe. He refers to this universal energy as “Other” (p.275), and talks of the necessity for giving up control. This, too, can be found within the LDT™ energy session, in which I allowed the images to come to me, and asked for guidance in transforming the metaphors and releasing the negative emotions.

Intrinsically associated with mimetic structures of blessing, according to Redekop, are values such as life-orientation, creativity, generosity, thankfulness, trust, caring, love and joy. This list comes from within Redekop’s personal experience and does not necessarily transfer to all people’s experiences of connection, however, in my own life, and as is demonstrated in the energy session, connection to universal energy can only feel positive and healthy, never negative or punitive.

Creativity in the session is demonstrated in the variety of metaphors and their transformations; the end result of releasing negative emotions, and my resulting real-life choice, can also be said to be creative.

While connected, I feel a sense of trust as I open up my conflicts (to myself as much as to a universal energy) for scrutiny; for example, at one point during the session when I feel that it is not safe to release a particular negative energy, I am assured by guides that they will make it so, and then given a specific metaphor (a glass vacuum tube from the casket to the sun) that makes me visualize a safe transformation.

The LDT™ session under review could be seen to be life-oriented and loving, in that each time the negative energy associated with someone is
transformed, the final result of the transformation is a positive energy – that is, the people of my past and present that make up my relationship conflicts are changed from demons to real people with positive aspects to them. My eventual empowerment comes from a place of loving release of these energies, not from dominance over them, as is clearly shown when I am working with the serpent energy and wonder if I might kill the serpent: “Here you are in a position of power over this serpent... you could step on it, you could kill it, and a part of you wishes to do so. We see now you holding a shotgun and just wanting to shoot it repeatedly, and these are the emotions that you must work through in order to make fair choice of what is best for your energy field... In order to transmute this energy you must be willing to lovingly release it...”

Caring can be seen in the metaphor where I rub a salve onto Tracy’s hand in order to heal where the rope holding the casket was “stuck and burned in,” and I can still feel the love as I read in the transcript that the casket represented my negative energy and conflicts that Tracy was helping me to carry until I was prepared to let it go.

The LDT™ self-healing process allows for personal healing which can then be brought forth into inter-personal relationships in which Redekop’s mimetic structures of blessing theory can play out.

LeBaron
Michelle LeBaron places the body as the centrepiece in our relationships with ourselves and others, through which we can learn to empathize, communicate and expand our intuition (2002). She directs us to understand the
language of symbols in which our intuition speaks, and from which we can come to make meaning and create connection – to others, and to our “spiritual ways of knowing” (, p.192).

These concepts are central to LDT™, and are visible throughout the healing session. First locating the discomfort or distress within our body, we are then assisted in understanding our deeper feelings via the language of metaphor. LeBaron’s belief that connected ways of knowing (i.e. connection to universal energy) grow from our “relationship with ourselves” (, p.141), supports the concept of self-healing that forms the founding principle of LDT™.

As with the others, LeBaron offers a list of what, to her, connection feels like, including expanding, animating, connecting, informing, spiralling, inspiring, surprising, changing and mindful (2002). Within the LDT™ energy session, there are examples of some of these feelings; for example, I had an expanded awareness as to what the underlying historic issues were that impacted the current conflict, and although I would not describe myself as being animated, I can agree that by virtue of connecting to universal energy, I felt more energy. Perhaps the subtle difference here lies in the purpose of connection – during a healing session the increased feeling of energy is directed toward release of negative emotions, so rather than feeling more energetic or animated, it is easier to say that I feel less weighty. I also felt informed as I worked through one metaphor after another, and could agree that by the end of the session I was inspired to approach future conflicts from an empowered, free-choice perspective.
It is, however, less important to know whether my own personal feelings matched those of LeBaron, Redekop or Maslow’s, and more important to acknowledge that all of us feel connection to universal energy as a positive and purposeful experience, and that within the LDT™ process, there is room for whatever positive emotions come from this non-prescribed connection.

With particular reference to conflict, LeBaron asserts that if we remain open, connected ways of knowing can, and will, change us... we can improve our unhealthy conflict patterns (2002). This is the primary purpose of LDT™.

**Gopin**

Marc Gopin (2004) does not just present a theory of connection to universal energy; he offers his own conflict healing process. Whereas LDT™ focuses solely on self-healing negative emotions, trusting that such an exploration will assist an individual in creating and sustaining healthy relationships, Gopin’s process begins with the concept of self-examination and carries through eight steps to dialogue with others. He encourages a heart-centred approach to self-healing that blends with the mind to bring about change. With such focus on the heart, each of Gopin’s *Eight Steps* is bathed in the positive aspects of universal energy (or “inner life,” as Gopin refers to it).

Gopin’s first and second steps, *Be* and *Feel*, can be likened to the initial connection to universal energy at the start of LDT™, as well as to the overall concept of locating our negative emotions within our body. According to Gopin, this is where we can recognize what we bring into the conflict, and how much we, ourselves, are wounded and need to heal. Emotional exploration helps to prevent
us from putting up shields “of feigned indifference” (, p.51). As we have seen, emotional exploration, via metaphor, can be seen throughout the LDT™ session, and from this we can achieve Gopin’s third step of Understanding how our wounds impact, and are impacted by, other conflicts.

Gopin’s fourth and fifth steps, Hear and See, refer to verbal and non-verbal cues of a situation. In the case of healing via LDT™, these steps also include one’s ability to hear from whatever source we feel connected to, and to see, via metaphor, our negative emotions and their transformations. He comments that listening goes beyond words and seeing includes “detecting what is not spoken” (, p.106) – with respect to LDT™, this is akin to reading the body’s story.

The sixth step in Gopin’s process is Imagine, in which we are to envision a more positive future. This aligns with the Transform aspect of LDT™, which, as we’ve seen, changes negative images (i.e. feelings) into positive ones. Gopin argues that many of us have built barricades around our abilities to imagine, and that we must reclaim this power. This, too, parallels an underlying principle of the LDT™ process in which we all have the capacity to express our feelings via metaphor, and the ability to improve upon this skill.

Gopin’s final two steps, Do and Speak, move beyond the boundaries of an LDT™ session, instructing each person to take what they’ve learned out into the world. Yet I would suggest that when a person chooses to see themselves as connected to universal energy, whether it be within a healing session or in day-to-day functioning, the ability to offer positive action and words flows from the source energy. This, at least, has been my own experience.
Gopin presents his model in a linear fashion, and strongly suggests that it be followed in the order presented. He also acknowledges, however, that this is not always possible, and recognizes that the steps must be repeated with each new conflict (2004). I presume by this that he is not referring only to large conflicts, but also to the smaller ones we face on a day-to-day basis. From within the structure of an LDT™ session, I would suggest that non-linearity is even stronger than Gopin suggests, as it is much more challenging to break apart the concepts of being, feeling, understanding, hearing, seeing and imagining. Although I can identify each of these components within the LDT™ energy session under review, they do not present themselves quite so independently, and each new understanding, for example, leads to another level of being and feeling.

In all, both the theoretical development of LDT™ and its practical application as seen throughout the energy session, present conflict healing concepts and experiences similar to those postulated by Maslow, Redekop, LeBaron and Gopin.

**BRINGING TO A CLOSE A PERSONAL JOURNEY: DID THE SESSION HELP?**

*Where does a conceptual framework come from? In its most powerful and practical forms, it is a mix of experience and concepts pragmatically – not theoretically – defined. It is a conceptualization of experience. (Saunders 1999, p.20)*

The purpose of this paper was to explore a single LDT™ self-applied energy healing session in order to see what it might reveal about the underlying conflict healing *theoretical* framework. Within the research question, then, there
is no room for a look at content and the energy session’s overall impact on me, the subject. However, qualitative research in general, and heuristic research in particular, allows us to discover whatever information we can from the case study. As such, I will take a brief look at the impact of this single energy healing session on the issue of power in my life.

As I re-read my post-session notes, I was drawn to the paragraph where I spoke of how, in reading the energy session transcript, “I began to feel the issues again, for the re-reading was, in reality, a re-living.” I then shared how, only several hours later, the negative feelings were gone. I had, it seemed, released the issues. And yet, several hours later still, I again felt negative emotions within me build as Tracy shared a story of her own disempowerment. My guides told me that it would take “a couple of days” before I would feel more settled.

I can’t honestly say how settled I felt within a few days of the session, for during that timeframe, no power-type conflicts emerged to challenge me. I can say that over the past 11 months since the session occurred, I have been confronted three more times with the same serious conflict, and that the original source of my feelings of disempowerment no longer affected me. As it goes, however, the spiralling nature of healing led me to address the sense of disempowerment lying beneath that initial presenting surface; in other words, I continued to peel the layers of the onion. Yet despite this spiralling nature, I have not needed another energy session on this issue – I have not, in fact, even had an energy session close in significance to the one shared in this paper on any issue.
I was somewhat anxious about having to re-read the transcript in order to write my discussion yet, as I read, I felt like an outsider reading somebody else’s story. I no longer feel connected to the historic issues that clouded my vision in the ever-present current conflict, and my relationship with this conflict – which raised its ugly head again just one week prior to my re-reading – has changed. To continue the metaphor from the energy session, where, eleven months ago, I was standing on the tarmac and waiting, not yet ready to get on the plane, I now see myself metaphorically on the plane and in flight – positive, healthy, and allowing all the others to choose their own paths. Still a family, but reformatting how that looks so as to no longer be party to a conflict that I have no real part of. Still a family, but no longer trying to intervene (a slippery slope side-effect when a healer’s ego steps in when the healer hasn’t been asked for help, it is a particular challenge when kids are involved, as they don’t know how to ask).

As I re-read the transcript, I would have to say that yes, very definitely, the LDT™ healing session worked. Despite the fact that I can’t bring an end to the conflict, I have, step-by-step, changed my relationship with it, and my feelings of empowerment are strong and stable.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
As this research was exploratory, many options exist for future study. One direction could be to teach the LDT™ process to others, thus removing the researcher-as-subject challenge while investigating the degree to which LDT™ is a learnable, effective conflict healing process. Such a study might also focus on information as to the effectiveness of LDT™ for individuals with different belief
systems or different abilities for working with metaphor. Another option is to develop training materials based on the LDT™ concepts, and to examine the effectiveness of these materials in reducing conflict within particular environments, such as schools.

A third area of research could include teaching LDT™ to those whose job it is to help others in conflict, such as healers, counsellors, medical personnel or practitioners in the field of conflict resolution and examining what, if any, benefits are derived by the individuals or groups being helped. Although this study moves away from the self-healing concept, it does allow the effectiveness of LDT™ to be explored within the boundaries of existing healing practices.

A study close to my own heart would be to examine the impact on a group conflict after each person involved in the conflict underwent an LDT™ session with me as healer. Although there are many benefits to self-healing and to learning to conduct and direct your own healing process, the peak of high conflict is not necessarily the best, nor the easiest, time to learn the skills. As I mentioned in my introduction, I have, on a handful of occasions, sought out the help of other healers when what I needed to release was too big for me to do on my own; only after such a release was continuing on a self-healing path possible. Examining the impact of healer-applied LDT™ sessions, where I use my ability to read other people’s stories to help them identify and transform their negative emotions, could lead to an understanding of how to apply LDT™ within the field of conflict resolution.
References


Appendix A – Energy Session

This energy session occurred on Monday, February 19, 2007, between 8:45 and 10:35 am. During the session, I was lying on my bed. Once the session ended, I entered a ‘healing sleep’ from 10:35 – 11:55 am. The following changes have been made to the original transcript: 1. ‘um,’ ‘ah,’ and pauses have been removed. 2. Descriptive phrases that weren’t precise and that I had corrected within the energy session immediately after making the initial statement were removed. 3. In three instances, details pertaining to others, and having no relevance to my particular issues and personal development, have been removed in order to protect their privacy. 4. The names ‘Jack’ and ‘Jill’ are used to hide the identity of two individuals.

Karen: I woke up this morning having had tense dreams that led to angry feelings. I woke up feeling stressed. The dreams don’t really matter.
The image I got when I woke up was of being in a little house, like a security guard house – you know, one or two rooms. Tracy and I were there and the backyard went out to an airport runway and on the runway ready to load up, although it wasn’t near the buildings – it couldn’t take any passengers – was a huge jet plane. So Tracy and I went out the back door, and between us we were carrying this little box – like a child-sized casket that had ropes on each end. We were each hanging on to a rope. And the box was really, really, really, really heavy. And I guess it resembled Pandora’s Box – the stuff that shouldn’t be opened – all the evil things. I think the child size means several things. One, I think it’s about our childhood issues jointly that we’re carrying between us, and it’s very heavy. It’s about the stuff that’s been there since our childhood. I don’t get a sense of opening it. I think there’s a child-like fantasy that if we opened it, it would turn to doves and it would fly away, and I’m not sure that’s the reality. The reality feels like we need to get rid of it. In imagining burying it in the backyard it feels like it’ll be attached to us forever – we can’t just bury it and the impression I had is that we were wanting to get it onto the airplane but as we get out to the backyard there’s a fence – a waist-high chain-link fence and this box is too heavy to be able to lift over the fence – we can barely carry it as it is. It’s stretching our arms out. And then beyond the chain link fence is a taller grass hill – you know, like 10 feet up or something to get to the next elevation where there’s a large
chain link fence with barbed-wire across the top that points inward toward the airport so that we couldn’t actually climb it in anyway. So we can’t even leave the casket behind for us to escape onto the airplane but there’s definitely a sense that the airplane represents the freedom that we can’t access – it’s so close but so far.

I’m feeling in the middle of my back [a] full sized – kind of like a sewer grate – cap that’s even with my back, [it] has an inner grip that if we could turn it a quarter turn to the left and pull it off then there would be some kind of relief in that. But now as I do it I see it’s attached to a very heavy coil ring, like it’s booby-trapped. I can’t just take it off. We have to dig deeper to try and release this in order to access whatever is inside. At the same time I’m feeling a huge pressure on my chest – like I’m being buried under metal – heavy, heavy metal coming down on me. My stomach knots from having woken up angry and feeling disempowered – it’s always the running around and not being empowered to change things in the dreams, so it’s this stomach knot – more like a pressure – it’s not a knot – I don’t visualize a knot it’s just like a - as if somebody’s pushing, pushing, pushing really hard, firmly, permanently down on my gut and, and upward, and it immediately gets me in the throat where I feel an [anger] that can build and a choking sensation. In addition to that I have the regular aches and pains – my knees are aching – I shouldn’t say regular because that’s regular recently in the last 4 or 5 months but I haven’t had knee troubles before that. But they’re kind of sharp aches and my right heel is still tense as it has been for the past 5 months, 4 months, where it’s feeling like it’s locked into place again.

**Guides: Welcome Karen.**

**Karen:** Work is being done on the casket. Tracy and I have set the casket down on the ground although we’re still hanging onto the ropes. Energy is coming in toward the casket, not toward either of us. And I’m feeling a great panic in my stomach. What if the casket is opened and all these demons reattach to me? To Tracy? To us? And bury us alive? Yet it seems the casket has to be emptied in order to best move on since we are trapped in this back yard and unable to remove ourselves from the weight the casket bears on our emotions and on our lives, so we need to find a simpler way of alleviating the weight from the casket.

**Guides:** There’s a key hole, and so this allows us some control as to a slow release, manageable release, from the casket. On the inside of the key hole is a thin, metal plate, circular, that blocks the hole so nothing could get out. What we will do is put a plastic bag – clear, or opaque – both – some things [you] don’t want to see others [you] don’t mind seeing. We will put first a clear plastic bag over the key hole. We are strong; we can hold it there and slowly move the circular metal plate that’s on the inside. It’s pinned at the top, so we can release the pin at the bottom and let it pivot so the first of the demons comes into the plastic bag. The metal, circular frame covers up the hole and is pinned again, and so we
have one demon at a time in the plastic bag. This is a Ziploc style bag and it is sandwich size. It suggests, because this one is clear in nature that you don’t mind – you’re not afraid – you don’t mind viewing this one, and the size represents something relatively small in comparison to the weight of this casket. What we will find is that most of them fit into quite small bags – it is an accumulation that is the problem. In and of themselves what used to be huge demons are now much more manageable although still quite disturbing.

This image is your birth father. Wispy, not much left of his energy in your life. He represents the… power over authority that you wished him to have. Clarify – what you saw is how he saw himself, and thus put on a bravado. What you learned from this is bravado, and carried with you a sense of lower positioning in a social class – an embarrassment of how he was and who he was. Not because of a financial capability but because of a personality and desire to blame the world for all his woes. You carried a distaste for that and had a bravado and acted out oppositely in your own life yet you carry the germ, the seed, of disempowerment – of being a product of your environment. This is what you share with Tracy. This is the weight between you of trying to be more than you were raised to be.

Guides: So, all of that image energy is within this small, sandwich sized bag which makes it feel more explosive within you as you try to contain it rather than releasing it. There needs to be a transformation. A movement from containment and wispiness – we here you say ‘but it’s not safe to release it’ – we will ensure that it is. Imagine a glass tube going from waist-height in front of you up into the sun. It is a vacuum suction tube, the glass is ¾ of an inch thick, the diameter of the hole is 3-4 inches.

Imagine anything that gets placed close to that hole will get suctioned up within a nano-second to the sun where it will be transmuted, for it is time to take these demons one by one and cremate them. They will bring positive energy as they are transformed into ashes. The plastic bag cannot go up, it will be used to wrap around the tube so this wispy, grey-like energy can go nowhere but up the tube. Imagine unzipping slowly and being able to put it onto the tube. This is not a problem – the demon is not wishing to escape here but wishes to transform as well. The energies from which you wish to be freed also wish you to be freed. They have been here for particular life lessons for you that’s time to release. They wish you the best, each and every one of them, as they move on and transition and leave you to move on in your life.

The next energy is your mother. You can use the same bag. This is actually a lighter energy that has been dealt with. I see you are hooking it immediately onto the tube and releasing her. It is as much you releasing them to their freedom rather than keeping them trapped in your images –
your anger, your childhood memories – by releasing them you allow them to be freed from the connection with you as much as you are feeling trapped by them. It is mutual as negative energies cling to each other. You are signifying a desire to let go. This is their desire as well. To create healthier energy images in day-to-day living. Yes, the next one is bigger as it is not yours but impacts you daily.

Karen: I can’t separate it all out. I’m just seeing a family mass.

Guides: *Bring the easy out first.*

Karen: Jack.

Guides: *Can be immediately released for you. He is not an issue. He represents a place for you to be angry. It has nothing to do with him. It is an anger you feel toward all people in power or with the perceived ability to have power by virtue of their birth.* Next.

Karen: Jill. Represents confrontation and a... She’s in the bag – her energy is in the bag, it’s the same small, clear bag. It’s ziplocked.

Guides: *In this case she feels the power dynamic the other way – as if you have authority and bring this authority in with you. This is a case where you dismiss your own authority, your own power. Yes, you feel the love building – your authority comes from a warm loving place, not a political power-over dynamic. It is when you go to that place – you see, you get it – that you lose all authority, you lose power and you feel powerless. Your power will always be from a place of love.*

Prior to releasing the connection with Jill, you must feel loving and positive, for although the white, male, straight, able-bodied is what triggers you, it is in essence, your reaction [to] the women in your life whom have all had moral authority that you are most frustrated by as they do not stand toe to toe with this dominant male power. Imagine a warm, pink loving energy toward the Jill energy in the bag.

Karen: She’s not going up the tube. Does she need to be transformed?

Guides: No. You see yourself walking beside her toward the light in the future. She will not need to be released from your energy field for you are already in a healthy place with her. She represented turmoil that got grouped together in the box, but that is in fact, a smaller separate issue [that has been cleared].

The box. The casket. We have released those of least consequence to you in order to make it less convoluted, more clear as to what is remaining inside the box to get them out. We need a larger freezer Ziploc bag now. Note that they are still all smaller bags, relatively speaking. This energy is long, thin, about 5 feet long, weaving around, curling around, wispy, with the motions of a serpent. It comes into the bag readily, we Ziploc it closed, and in this bag you are fearful in holding it so we ask that you place it on the earth to lessen the trauma. It’s secure. It’s snake
energy that you fear. It is, in your mind, unpredictable, can bite at any instance without warning or opportunity for your escape. It slithers and represents the creepy energy of people in your past – your grandfather comes to mind although, as a child you loved him greatly. There was always an alertness to something that wasn’t quite right, that felt to you, rude, in his communications about women, girls as he called them, and in discussions of him ‘girl-watching’ on lunch but there was a lewdness to his look when he or your grandmother would joke about it. Your grandmother incensed you in that way in that you did not understand what she found so funny about his ‘girl-watching,’ that even as a young girl you recognized as being objectifying young women that would be walking by him at his workplace. Yes, the anger is there that even as a young child you were taught that women were objects by the women in your life as much, or more, [than] by the men. And now the anger builds as you look at this seething serpent who in fact, as you look at the bag, is feeling quite helpless in its own right.

You have not identified a way of releasing this energy, [and] the anger builds. And therein lies the dilemma; this serpent energy has been effectively caught by you with respect to your own energy field in this lifetime. You have become empowered enough, comfortable enough in your skin, secure enough in yourself that these energies are not attracted to you anymore. They are not judging you as to how you look as a woman, act as a woman, treat others as a woman. You have reigned in the inadequacies in your life, confronted the issues and released their hold on you and yet this serpent energy represents in your past all of the negative energies that continue to be present in the world if not directly in your life. Here you are in a position of power over this serpent trapped in a plastic bag; you could squish it, you could step on it you could kill it, and a part of you wishes to do so. We see now you holding a shotgun and just wanting to shoot it repeatedly, and these are the emotions that you must work through in order to make fair choice of what is best for your energy field. You must come to terms with this negative energy that is part of the world and recognize that although it exists it does not need to have power over you. In order to transmute this energy you must be willing to lovingly release it into the vacuum tube, which we see you are willing to do now, as you have worked through your other more violent desires. And by acknowledging you have the choice to batter this energy back or to release it up to the universe where it can be transformed, it will then become a more powerful symbol, the serpent, in your life. A symbol of transformation instead of an object to fight against.

Karen: Yes, but now I feel snake energy in my gut, tail is in my gut and it’s pointing up to my throat – the head’s in my throat, the snake is within me and it’s not feeling positive.

Guides: Imagine a snake-catching hook, grab the snake right around your abdomen, hook it there and pull upward, it will release from your
Karen: I’m standing in the field with this white, bright light around me, like a globe. And where at first the snakes were all over it, and all around the grass and along the base of it, there are none - one or two here or there that drop off trees – on the bubble any more. Those that drop off just slide right down to the ground. I’m finding myself still creepy, fearful of something dropping on my head, but the rest of them I’m feeling safer in them staying out from under my feet or near me.

Guides: Look over head – the apple orchard in which you stand with the snakes above you in the trees – are representative of the Adam and Eve tale of the snake convincing Eve to eat the apple, and therein lies the connection for you despite your lack of religious following that man’s downfall was that of the behaviour of woman, [but] the snake represented a male energy that tricked woman.

Karen: In other words, the snake represents for me male energy – it is controlling, creates the issue, and then holds woman responsible when she can only be responsible for her side of it. It’s my anger at the whole patriarchal religious system.

Guides: Yes.

Karen: So what do I do with these snakes falling above me that I don’t want falling above me?

[T]he energy I’m getting now, I’m seeing myself three times the size of the tree so that the tree is only up to my waist and that’s the sense of seeing myself as more empowered and a greater spiritual energy that grows and rises above – it connects to the universal energy – it gets bigger and therefore it dwarfs all of the problems or conflicts and puts them at a level I can manage instead of being something that’s hanging over me. So the tree is still there, the snakes are still there, but I’ve created myself as a larger, more positive energy so that, 1. The trees and the snakes don’t seem so big 2. They’re not so threatening ‘cause they aren’t hanging over my head where they can drop down anytime unexpected. So the message for me in that visual is by staying connected, by getting myself into that spiritual energy place, that positive energy place, then these potential conflicts won’t be that large for me.

Guides: The next bag…
Karen: It’s not clear – it’s white.

Guides: **It is something to not be seen by you. It is ten feet long, 3 inches in diameter, so it will fit up the tube still. It is the last of what is in Pandora’s Box. It is a feminine energy that is slowly coming into the bag. It is, by virtue of its shape, feeling serpent-like, yet it is more a…**

Karen: What? It feels energetically like it’s a serpent yet it’s spongy and feels far more dangerous. Tricky. Shape-shifting. The sponginess is suggestive of where you go for a hug, but once you get in there and you give that squeeze, what [it] let[s] go with [the hug] is toxic. And it’s representing all of the female energies in my life that have actually been toxic for me. The people who presumably have loved me and/or I have loved or thought that I loved that were merely unhealthy energies. So we’re not talking about one person. We’re basically talking about my maternal line as well as some partners that I’ve had – people that I’ve dated in my past. And they are all wrapped into one energy because I’ve dealt with each of the relationships individually over the years and I’m not carrying anything from any of them. But as a group, while I’m busy pointing at the male energy – the power dynamics – I’m pointing toward my frustrations to what the male is doing, the greater reality for me is how the women in my life created me as disempowered. The messages I was given from birth, about who I was and how I was to be in the world – whether those messages were given directly to me about the limitations that I had or were given to me in anger about the restrictions – for example, my mother’s own life, she had the choice of being a teacher or a secretary and that’s it – or whether they were messages that were socially accepted – ‘women are bad drivers’ – that I picked up through hearing them all the time, and that made me not want to be a girl or a woman, and in being a lesbian and not knowing it and liking sports and seeing that boys got to do lots more things than girls did, so all of these images are wrapped up into this one energy.

I’m just feeling a loving presence as I calm myself. The sponginess – it’s not a live entity… The energies, the other energies have been wisp-like; this would feel – I couldn’t send this up there because it would feel like I was burning a live, huge boa constrictor. Boa constrictor is a good metaphor for it because of the squishing, the squeezing, and so although I want to get rid of this energy, it flips back between being sponge, with a squeezing sponginess, and being a live snake that I don’t want actually to throw into the sun and burn; but the flip side of also not wanting to put sponge up there, because if we think of sponge then I would be putting toxins into the air if it’s burning, so I’m struggling with the metaphor to help transform it before I even put it up the tube to shift. And what I’m getting is a yogurt kind of substance; natural, squishy, it’ll break down, it’ll dissolve with the sun, won’t harm anything. And so I’m attaching the tube and it’s being sucked up. And it’s not going up just as one particle, one object. It’s going up more in chunks, which would be more accurately
representative of the variety of women in my life as opposed to thinking of it as one woman.

The image I have now is back to Tracy and I in the back yard of that house, with the casket. The casket is resting on the ground. We're each still holding the rope but, it's slack in our hand. A sense that even though we're emptying out the casket, we're still too tired to carry it anymore. Regardless of how light it is now we don't want to carry it anymore. And a sense, for me, that we now have to work on us somehow leaving the casket, transforming the casket, because I'm getting a boredom of replaying the same old energies and I don't want this between us anymore. Tracy's helping me to carry it, it, it's my image, my energy session so I get a sense that it's her helping to carry my baggage – This is a part of me that I bring into the relationship that makes me protect my softer core and put out a bravado kind of energy. And that she's willingly walked with me and helped me carry this until such time as I was ready to say 'I'm tired of carrying it, I don't need this crusty side of me and I want to shift,' so she's there with me, not because it's her baggage, but because it's mine... she wants to let go but I see that the rope has kind of sealed itself into the palm of her hand – it's burned itself in there a bit as she's carried some of these issues with me.

So the first place I'm being drawn is to put a salve on Tracy's hand where the rope seems stuck and burned in. Just to rub it in and to loosen the rope and to heal the rope burns. And so I'm doing this and she's happy about it, but I'm also feeling very anxious about it and she's hesitant to let go for fear that I actually don't want her to because I'm sending mixed messages. There's a part of me obviously then, that wants to keep carrying this energy and, as I say that, it seems the reason is because I've had a fear all my life of getting close to somebody, and although I'm close to Tracy if I heal this and we stop having it between us, then I'll be closer to anybody than I've ever been in my life and that scares me. So although I'm putting this salve on her hand, she's not actually going to put the rope down until my energy shifts and gives a clear message that it's okay and I'm ready to leave it. And I'm aware that there are unexplored energies that are still in this casket, in particular, my two stepsons, and the challenges of raising them, and I'm not sure what I'm supposed to do with them – with this aspect of their energies that I've been carrying as a part of the Pandora's Box and contained in a casket image. So I know that I can't just leave them in there. The casket doesn't represent dead people, it represents the weight – the, the stuff that's killing me – the aspects of people's energy that I'm allowing to come at me so negatively, so harshly, rather than rising above it and not letting it impact me. And it's always when I'm feeling vulnerable that this energy feels so strong to me.

I have a sense that I need to let go of the rope myself and walk around and take Tracy's other hand so the casket's not between us, and so I am doing that, but I don't want her to let go of it yet, 'cause it's hard enough
to let go myself without having her let go, and then what would happen, especially since the boys represent unfinished business. They represent power conflicts that I can’t remove myself from, that I can’t walk away from, so I have to figure out how to not make it about power. And this is about what they bring into this house from their father – it’s not the standard just raising kids, every day conflicts – that’s not what it’s about. So I need to transform this image.

My right hand is holding on to Tracy’s left hand, and her right hand is holding on to one rope of the casket. In the casket are, I think, some smaller, insignificant kinds of energies – nothing that stands out as needing more specific work, and the two boys, which are very real, powerful, sources of power conflict energies.

The first thing is I need to stop seeing the boys as being energies in a casket – that image is starting to gross me out. Because I can actually see heads now, personalities, so I need to transform the casket ‘cause Tracy is still hanging on to that rope, and visualize that everything is shape-shifting and that she is now holding on to the hand of one of her children who is hanging on to the hand of the other. So they’ve just now changed, and the casket image just doesn’t exist anymore; it’s just dissolved as they have become people, real people standing there now. So we’re in a line. The boys aren’t between us, and so it’s a statement about how I need to energetically let go and, that’s a big issue, just me having this image shift isn’t doing the trick. I need something else. The guides are back in.

Karen: What light bubble around all of us.

We’re still standing in the back yard of this hut with an airplane there and I see that passengers are actually boarding and I’m noticing that the terminal which looked so far away before, is actually, if I turn my head slightly to the right, there’s a smaller terminal there, as if the big terminal had a moving escalator or something that’s brought them along – it’s a [covered walkway] that was beyond my view. So people now are starting to board this plane. And I’m feeling an anxiousness like I want to get on it. So the energies I’m feeling – I have a sense of this – I mean it’s a nice day, it’s nice weather out – the size of the airport suggests that it’s relatively big, so a larger city, but the smaller size of the security house suggests almost a smaller airport. So I’m confused where it is. I think it’s just representing a sunny, warm city, it’s not the Caribbean or something; in other words, we’re not standing in the destination I want to be at, and I want to get on that plane to go to the destination that I want to be at, which, the imagery I’m getting around it, the feel I’m getting around it, is tropics, Caribbean, laid back, peaceful. So not going to another city but needing a reprieve to heal. And so the inner frustration I’m having is I’m standing here as a family – part of a family unit, of which one part of it is bringing an ongoing conflict that can’t be resolved within the standard parenting. You know, Kristin has conflict; as a mother I can just help deal
with that conflict – it’s not something that’s overwhelming. That’s not the case with the boys ‘cause their conflict comes from another house and is forced upon them and they’re made to bring it here, and encouraged to create problems here, and that is the conflict that I want to run from. I want to get on the plane and go. But if I did that then I would lose Kristin and Tracy ‘cause we’re all a family unit.

So I’m able to describe the situation, the image as I see it, and I’m needing guidance now in transforming the metaphor even further to give me a sense of health, healthy relationships and contentment, and removing that ‘power over’ dynamic that does not have power over me but has cost me a lot of energy in the way that I’m dealing with it to not allow that power over.

Energy. I’m feeling all this powerlessness in my gut, and so the guide energy is coming to work on that, to soothe it. And the image I’m getting is rewiring, unplugging old circuits that have, four, six and eight wire sets; a set of four wires together joined to a plastic piece that’s then plugged in, or a set of eight wires or six wires, and they’re taking out all the wiring. All the wiring is being unplugged and removed. It’s suggesting that in early childhood the wiring was put in for me and then from that point I’ve adjusted it, added to it, modified it, and what I have is a mish mash of wires now that are not clean, clear, pathways for communication. And so this massive tangle of wires is being removed from me.

Okay, all the wires are out. And the main wire, the main plug-in is being removed, coming up from the ground through my root chakra into my power chakra and I’m just pulling it down, back out the way it came. And it’s getting sucked back into the ground, going down to the core of the earth, like a retracting wire. And by removing the wires, it’s a reminder to me that I have choice, and I’m now not holding on to anybody’s hands. I’m still in the same position between Kristin and Tracy but I’m now sitting with my legs crossed on the ground, with my hands on each of my knees, just relaxing with my fingers lightly together, palms up. Taking a deep breath and reminding myself that each step of the way I’ve had choice. I chose to have a daughter; I chose to be with Tracy, even knowing that she had kids, and although the challenges with the kids have developed in ways I couldn’t have imagined, I still continue to choose to be with Tracy, and I choose to still be involved in parenting. So it’s not that society or an external force has pushed me to do this or pressured me, it was my choice. I could choose to leave everybody and get on a plane; I’m not trapped. And as I say that, then I notice that a pathway opens in the chain link fence and in the grassy hill – there becomes a little bit of a pathway – not a huge one, but a little bit of a pathway, and I can slip through the fence at the airport and I could get on that plane, and that I have that choice.

And so the image is kind of a split image. It’s as if I’m still sitting on the grass but also standing at the plane and waving the others forward to
come with me. So a part of my energy is sitting there – it's like it's holding the positive energy – it's a thoughtfulness. And what I'm saying is that I'm choosing family – I'm not choosing to leave family, but I'm choosing to not be trapped with family and inviting them to come along with me. [Four come and one is hesitant – scared.]

And so what this is all representing is my energy connection to them. What we're working with is the way that our energy fields connect or hit against each other, and a desire to change. So I'm saying I desire a change in order to move on to greener pastures, so to speak. And it's scary for all of us because we know we have to move on to be healthy…

And I think that's where this session is ending. The energy has transformed. There's a sense of 'okay, we're going in the right direction.' [With the guides, I've] worked through the historic stuff that I've worked through many times but has piled up again around this key issue of power and powerlessness and I've reclaimed my power by saying I'm moving forward…

And so the visual I can work with now for empowerment is to remind myself that I'm on the tarmac and the plane's waiting for me. There's no sense in this that the plane's going to take off without us getting on, and so four of us are ready to go on and we have to wait lovingly. I no longer feel like I'm stuck, trapped in this tiny backyard with a casket of dead energy. I now feel like I've made choices – I'm fully in charge of the choices I'm making,

Namaste.
Appendix B – Post-Session Notes

It’s 1:50 pm Tuesday, February 20, 2007. I recorded the energy session yesterday between 8:45am and 10:35am, but immediately following it I went into a ‘healing sleep’ – from 10:35am to 11:55am. This is the norm for me during intensive sessions; rather, the norm is that once I begin a session and describe what I’m feeling, or the initial metaphor that I receive, I drift off in order to get my own head out of the way and to allow the energies to do their work. The difference yesterday – and the challenge – was to stay present and describe what was going on. I believe that the rest afterward was to continue the work that could not be fully completed while my brain was actively involved.

I spent a few hours yesterday afternoon transcribing the notes, and one thing that shocked me was how much of the session I had forgotten. In fact, I would even argue that I hadn’t forgotten – it felt like I never knew. When I work with clients, I don’t remember much of their sessions within hours of having worked with them. It’s because the energetic work goes through me, it doesn’t come from me. So the stories I see of their lives, the metaphors that are used to describe and transform negative energies – all of this is coming from outside of me and doesn’t stay in my memory. But I never expected such a strong example in my own session. There were very detailed descriptions or metaphors that I had no recollection of but, in reviewing the transcribed session, actually linked stories or images. For example, at the beginning of the session I talked of the sewer-grate style disc in my back that was connected to wires. I had not remembered this throughout the session, and made no connection to it at the end of the
session when the ‘wiring’ was being removed. And when transcribing the notes, I had completely forgotten about the wiring being removed. There were several instances where I was quite surprised by what I was transcribing – if I hadn’t heard it on tape, I wouldn’t have believed it was from my session. So even though I was ‘present’ in describing what was going on, the energy was (as I expected) moving through me, but (unexpectedly) still bypassing my memory.

This morning, from 9:35am – 11:20am, I reviewed the tape again, counting the length of some pauses, adding ‘um’ and ‘ah’, and checking for exact words. I then went through the transcription again and highlighted text that was incorrect (as I tried to share during the session there were a few instances where it wasn’t coming out properly and I corrected or shortened it on tape) or that, in three instances, shared personal information about others that was unnecessary for my own personal healing. I then reviewed the notes for a fourth time (initial transcription plus three reviews), cleaning up the ‘um’, ‘ah’, repeat words, etc., and saved this document as a modified version. I have printed both versions, but haven’t read either since they have been printed.

What I noticed was that I began to feel the issues again, for the re-reading was, in reality, a re-living. As I type this now, only two hours later, I don’t feel it at all – it feels gone to me. But I was aware, over lunch, about how I reacted to a subtle power dynamic Tracy was describing herself as having with somebody, and that made me wonder “Have I not released it at all, then, if I can still react to a minor situation that doesn’t directly involve me?” The answer that came was that I had released, but that it would take a couple of days to really sink in, so I
guess I’ll wait and see. Since this is the same advice I give to my clients, I guess I can’t expect more for myself! Certainly, during the session, and in the re-readings, I did feel the positive shift as I moved to the tarmac. I’m just curious now as to how much shift on this larger issue has really occurred, as I’ve had many, many small shifts over the past years.

All in all I feel good about the session – I believe it to be a true representation of a session I would have with a client, although, in my case, I was actually able to describe the metaphors and transformations, where with clients, I describe the situations to them. Generally speaking, people come to me because they haven’t yet learned to self-heal, and since they usually only come when they feel in crisis, I teach them by example rather than trying to engage them in locating and describing the metaphors themselves. This allows as much work as possible to be done during the session.
Appendix C – Permission Letters

April 28, 2008

From: Tracy Morton
Re: Use of Name

To Whom It May Concern,

I give my permission for Karen Morton to use my name, and make reference to my two sons, aged 14 and 12, in her Dispute Resolution Master’s Thesis entitled *Exploring a Conflict Healing Theoretical Framework within an LDT™ Self-Applied Energy Healing Session.*

Sincerely,

Tracy Morton
April 28, 2008

From: Kristin Hopper

Re: Use of Name

To Whom It May Concern,

I give my permission for Karen Morton to use my name in her Dispute Resolution Master’s Thesis entitled Exploring a Conflict Healing Theoretical Framework within an LDT™ Self-Applied Energy Healing Session.

Sincerely,

Kristin Hopper