

## **Nurturing the Heart with Energy Psychology**

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February is heart month!

Valentine's Day is the perennial opportunity to affirm the presence of romantic love and caring relationships in our lives. The American Heart Association was quick to capitalize on the national interest in this day by additionally encouraging public awareness of physical heart health. Interestingly, February also gives a rare opportunity to acknowledge the intimate link between the body and emotions since the heart is not only the physical pump that maintains life but it is also popularly seen as the seat of our loving, caring feelings.

Science tells us that the physical heart is the most electrically and magnetically active part of the body. Since cardiologists measure heart functions regularly with the well-known electrocardiogram and sometimes the more subtle tool of the magnetocardiogram, we can be assured that we are indeed energetic beings who emanate a constant flow of subtle electromagnetic fields. Heart electrical rhythms are not only life-sustaining, they also generate most of the biofield that surrounds the human body and interacts with the fields of people around us.

Mental health practitioners tell us the emotional heart is the center of our humanness. Heart-felt feelings motivate our interactions as social beings. It is in expressing love for others that we grow emotionally as individuals. In turn, we must receive love from others to feel nurtured in order to better handle life's many challenges.

The new fields of energy psychology and energy medicine give us many resources for nourishing the both physical and psychological heart. In bringing their practices into daily life, we can strengthen the sense of joy in our lives and support physical heart health. Here is one exercise you may wish to try:

- Think of a recent time you felt discouraged or sad, and notice where in your body you most feel the sensation.
- Gently touch the area on your body where you feel an emptiness. For many people, there is an automatic wish to touch the mid-chest heart area. Of course, other areas are fine as well, and often it feels good to touch two areas along the front of the body, such as the solar plexus and heart area which correspond to two of the major energy centers that have been known throughout human history.
- As the hands gently touch the body on one or two of the areas, gently rub and add an affirmation such as, "Even though I feel discouraged (or overwhelmed, sad, or upset), I deeply and profoundly love and accept myself."
- If relevant, add, " And I forgive myself."

- Once you feel lighter you may want to think of a loved one you could help in a similar way. Since Valentine's Day is central this month, think especially of your significant other.
- Is there anything that needs to be resolved in your primary relationship? If so, make sure you have let go of your negative emotions enough to be objective before attempting to reach out to your partner.
- Then, together, you may explore if there is something you both have worry, discouragement, or sadness about. It may be difficult news, a loss, or a physical problem.
- Reach out to touch each other's heart area with a gentle touch and a joint affirmation. Example, "Even though we have this diagnosis or news, we deeply love and accept each other."
- And, if appropriate add, "I forgive you for\_\_\_\_\_."
- Allow the dust to settle, take quiet time to really *see* each other, and enjoy the energy of the heart-to heart connection. Let your relationship be "re-fired" by this easy act of heart health maintenance.

In a very tangible sense, every day is heart day since we would not be alive without the trusty efforts of the physical heart. When we add the energy of the emotional heart to our lives we become enriched at deeper, more personal levels. Reaching out to a loved one with caring is not only emotionally rewarding but it is also one of the quickest ways to allow the heart muscle to relax and continue to do its life-sustaining work. Studies show that people who help others with altruism and engage in ongoing relationship maintenance activities live longer, in better health, and much more joyously.

This month, re-fire your life and give support to your physical heart by loving yourself and others more fully!

Psychotherapist Dr. Dorothea Hover-Kramer is author of *Second Chance at Your Dream* and a leader of "re-firement" consciousness.