

# **A Brief Summary of Nervous System Energy Work: origin, principles, and basic concepts- Who was Bill Gray**

Bill Gray was an extraordinary energy healer whose remarkable healings were described in the popular book *Born To Heal* by Ruth Montgomery. He was born around the end of the 19th century and died in the early 1970s. Only one other small book about his work, *Know Your Magnetic Field*, has recently been reprinted. The books tell very little about his actual method, and no one appeared to actively carry on his work.

## **How NSEW came about**

During her early years as a healer, Rosalyn Bruyere, a noted energy healer and clairvoyant, was introduced to a man named Bill (William) Gray by her friend Ida Rolf around 1970. Bill was hospitalized with an illness, and Ida Rolf, a mutual friend of Bill Gray, asked Rosalyn if she would come to San Francisco to do healing work for him.

As Rosalyn tells the story, she worked on Bill Gray as he lay in his hospital bed, with him encouraging her to channel more and more energy. Eventually, his impatience with the ethereal nature of her healing energy began to show. She reports him as saying, "Well, you're not bad, girl, but you sure are slow!" So, Bill placed his large hand over her navel, saying, "Do it like this." He then sent a jolt of current through her that she says, "Nailed my feet to the floor," and filled her with intense buzzing and heat. And this is from a patient who is ill in his hospital bed!

Rosalyn credits this transmission from Bill for her capacity to run an intense and vibratory form of energy, which is characteristic of her. She refers to this as "sound energy" instead of the more ethereal "light" energy that most healers can generate. This quality of energy is what she attributes to her notable ability to change physical tissue directly and thereby have more impact. Unfortunately, she could not study further with him due to his passing.

The two of us, Carol DeSanto and Jim Kepner, had been long-time students with Rosalyn in energy healing work. We were intrigued by Rosalyn's stories

about Bill and searched out the few books that left us singularly unenlightened about what he did. His notions about energy and healing were so different from the work they were learning that our mysterious longing to know more of Bill's methods seemed a dead end. Over 10 or so years of study with Rosalyn, our interest in Bill Gray would periodically surface, only to subside again when we could not quite grasp it.

Eventually, through our studies with Rosalyn and our experiments, we gradually began to understand how to work energetically with the nervous system. We also developed intuitive techniques that were very successful and impacted our clients. Somewhere along the way, however, we began to recognize that our intuitively derived approach to energetic work with the nervous system was striking a familiar chord: many elements of Bill Gray's approach were becoming apparent.

As our intuitive connection grew more precise and potent, and more experiments with technique bore fruit, we began to develop a set of practices and principles that described and explained his approach systematically and effectively. Our approach became a teachable and modern form of Bill Gray's way of healing. Indeed, our approach does not always look like what is described in the books about him, and we are certainly not up to his level of effectiveness! *We do not claim to be teaching "Bill Gray's work, only our interpretation.* The method we developed is **called Nervous System Energy Work (NSEW)**, which marks it as a distinct, modern version based on his approach.

## **What is distinct about the NSEW approach**

We are often asked how NSEW differs from other subtle energy approaches, which is perhaps better answered by saying what we think makes it distinct.

**Specific**—Knowing the particular nerves and nerve pathways allows the NSEW practitioner to target specific body areas and organs, directly affecting energy flow and functioning. This contrasts with other methods that give a broad energy supply and rely on it to go where needed. In many conditions, organs and tissues have become unable to absorb energy naturally, a fact that can limit the impact of a more broad-band approach.

**Palpable**- The energy work of NSEW is usually more palpable to the client. This comes from two sources: the strongly vibrational nature of the energy practitioners are trained to generate, and we are developing this energy through the client's nervous system, which is the natural organ of sensation

and information in the body.

**Definitive effect on body awareness**—NSEW work clears and opens the nervous system to enhance body awareness and access to our body sensations. It is instrumental in getting people in touch with their bodies, deeply embodied, grounded, and increasingly in touch with their insides. Body psychotherapists find this especially helpful in their work for these reasons.

**Enhances many nervous system functions**- Work that improves energy flow in parts of the nervous system also appears to have a salutary effect on the function of those nerves or nervous system organs. For example, work in the vagus nerve, an NSEW specialty process, appears to enhance vagal tone and the parasympathetic functions that go with it; work in the sympathetic nervous system enhances smoothness of function and more balance of this system so that it is less hyper-reactive and responsive.

**Integrates energy sensing, rational understanding, and intuition in the assessment process**—In NSEW, we strive to work in a way that integrates the practitioner's ability to sense and scan the client's energy and bring rational and intuitive knowledge together to formulate a treatment best attuned to the client's needs.

## **Subtle Energy- energy, energy bodies, chakra**

Many traditional systems of healing refer to energy that flows through the body and creates a subtle field around and through the body. It is sometimes referred to as the auric field or human energy field. Although it cannot be measured readily through scientific instrumentation, one can learn to sense its presence or absence, discern its qualities, and utilize its effects on health and consciousness. In many subtle energy systems, the practitioner or "healer" is trained to generate a flow of subtle energy and to intentionally direct this flow of energy to alter or improve the client's subtle energy flow and functioning.

Most hands-on subtle energy healing systems have some practice for either:

- a) Building up a charge of energy so it can be discharged into the patient to correct imbalances, as is true in some chi kung healing methods or
- b) Using principles and touch work to balance and redirect the patient's own internal energy, Polarity Therapy being an example of this approach, or
- c) Are practices that allow the practitioner to channel a flow of energy from an

outside source through their own body or energy field?

***Nervous System Energy Work*** takes both the a and c approaches, generating energy for the client's energy system and balancing the dynamic forces in the client's field.

## **Flow and Field**

Subtle energy work is often referred to through two views or metaphors: flow and field.

### **Energy As Flow**

Most subtle energy healing systems refer to energy flowing along specific pathways in the body. When energy systems speak of being blocked, limited, excessive, etc., they usually refer to the flowing or watery aspect of subtle energy.

### **Energy As Field**

Energy also surrounds and interpenetrates the physical body, often called the auric field or energy body. This field has many different layers, energy bodies of various frequencies and subtlety, embedded within each other. Centers of energy are often referred to as chakras. Each chakra is associated with a different energy body layer, and each energy body has a different realm or quality of experience and consciousness.

## **Nerves as conduits for subtle energy**

Bill believed, differing from many other systems of subtle energy healing, that the nervous system is the central system for conveying subtle energy throughout the body. In his view, the nerves' ability to convey energy determines our health. Bill Gray saw the nerves as wires or conduits for distributing subtle energy throughout the body. He had little interest in chakras, meridians, and the like.

He considered that the body tissues require an adequate supply of this subtle energy through the nervous system to maintain healthy functioning and that disease was caused by an inadequate supply of energy to the organs. He accomplished remarkable healing by opening the flow of energy through the nerves that fed an otherwise diseased and distressed organ system.

## **Feeding flow**

There are two directions of energy flow through the energetic nervous system. Subtle energy flows from the central nervous system (CNS—brain and spinal cord) to the peripheral nerves, through nerve branchings, into smaller nerves, and finally out of the nerve endings in tissues all over the body and in every organ.

## **Return flow**

Although Bill never referred to it, we know of stagnant or used energy, which an acupuncturist might call "stale chi," cleared from the organs and tissues in a reversal of feeding flow. Used energy flows back through the nerve endings, through the small nerves back to larger nerves, and eventually back to the CNS or other nerve tissues responsible for clearing this energy from the body.

## **How the energetic nervous system differs from the physiological nervous system**

Although energy flow through the nerves affects and enhances nervous system function and sensation, two things are strikingly different about energy flow through nerves compared to the physiological flow of nerve transmission. One is that, energetically speaking, feeding and return flow occur in the same nerve. This is perhaps like a coaxial cable that has one cable with current flowing in both directions. When trained healers can sense the energy in a nerve that has adequate feeding and return flow, they describe it as feeling like "fish are swimming through a tube in both directions, but not interfering with each other."

The second difference is that both feeding and return flow occur in every nerve in the body, whether it is an afferent or efferent nerve, a pain fiber or a sensory fiber, or an autonomic or skeletal nerve. In other words, the whole nervous system is energetic.

## **The Nerve matrix**

Energy doesn't just transfer from nerve endings directly to organ tissues and back again. There is an intermediary state or process that seems physical and energetic, which we call the nerve matrix. The nerve matrix feels like a mesh-

like, energetic web that interpenetrates the tissues and carries the energy from the nerve endings into the tissues in which it is embedded. Feeding flow comes off of the nerve endings and into the nerve matrix where the tissues absorb it, at least in health, and return flow is absorbed back into the nerve endings from the nerve matrix in that tissue.

## **Abdominal nerve matrix- the reservoir for energy**

Everywhere there is a nerve, there is a nerve matrix. The more nerve there is, the more nerve matrix there is. The abdominal and pelvic organs, especially the intestines, are rife with nerves and are, therefore, deeply saturated with nerve matrix. This abdominal nerve matrix is a crucial reservoir of energy, which feeds the whole nervous system. It is the primary supply source for the CNS in its role of directing energy and feeding flow. Bill Gray referred to this as "the magnetic field" since it is not only a reservoir of energy but also crucial in supporting nervous system energy's magnetic and dynamic properties. We find this term confusing to modern students who have usually been taught that the aura is a "magnetic field," so we call this the abdominal nerve matrix to avoid this confusion.

## **Matching and complimentary energy**

Bill Gray described two significant qualities of energy that each person requires for health and well-being. The most fundamental is the frequency that matches the signature energy of their nervous system. This matching energy resonates throughout the nervous system and the body core; we sometimes call it the person's base frequency.

One of the first skills we learn in NSEW is to sense and run matching energy for each client. When one is well matched in energy, there is no sense of intrusiveness or disturbance in the client from having energy pushed on them that feels alien to them. The nervous system seems built to reject foreign energy and will push the healer out when they are not well-matched.

As we grow, particularly in adolescence, we also require energy complementary to our own, which Bill calls "mating fuel." We call this simply complementary energy. Complimentary energy is crucial for maintaining the dynamic or magnetic qualities of energy in the body.

## **Nerve tension**

Energy depletion, injury, disease, trauma, and other conditions create a lack of flow in the energetic nervous system, either because there is insufficient energy overall or because some organs are using up more, leaving less for the rest of the system. Organs in need seem to pull or have a stronger draw for energy. This pull creates a quality of tautness in the nerves related to that organ. In turn, this pull can generate an energy lack in another body area or organ, creating a nerve tension of its own. Eventually, you can have nerve tensions in areas far from the original problem site and a network or tangle of nerve tensions.

Although we know that nerves don't tense and contract physiologically like muscles, energetic tension has a similar physical and subjective effect, leaving us wrought up and tautened from the inside.

Networks of nerve tension can also be associated with illness, trauma, or even emotional states. Part of the healer's art in NSEW is sensing and releasing these nerve tensions to restore the body to its feeding and return flow. Watching the client's body shift and ease as these nerve tensions are released is remarkable.

## **Brain/Spinal cord "chelation" or clearing technique**

This fundamental technique in NSEW opens the primary circuit for the nervous system's energy in the body, the central nervous system. Its use fosters energy flow in the body and a much deeper, felt connection to one's body. A truism in the Nervous System is that Energy Work is where energy can flow, and awareness can go.

## **Polarization and Magnetism**

It's not enough simply to have enough energy. Merely being filled with energy is no more than an inert bag full of water. Energy must have a dynamic quality or flow to move through us and get to where we need it.

Our field becomes dynamic and flows because it has polarized or magnetic properties. Our notions of this in NSEW are similar to those in another hands-on energy art called Polarity Therapy. Part of rebuilding the energy field for

clients in NSEW involves restoring the body's proper polarization.

## **How we draw energy- the "Koosh ball" exercise**

In NSEW, we develop the current or subtle energy flow needed by opening our "fibers of light." There is an aspect of our energy field where we look like a ball of luminous fibers or filaments extending in all directions from the core of our body or field, much like a child's toy called a "Koosh Ball."

Through a meditative imagery practice, we can, over time, open these filaments of light to the larger energy source available to us and channel an increasing quantity of energy through us. The audio files you can listen to here describe a meditation process that takes about six minutes. We often do it standing, although it can also be done sitting in a chair with your back straight and feet on the floor.

*(See our Audio Page for a guided meditation on using the metaphor of the Koosh Ball)*

## **The spiritual connection in NSEW**

Although there is much practical and immediately helpful to work with and assist in alleviating health concerns in NSEW technique and practice, there is also a deep spiritual potential in the work. The nervous system is understood in NSEW as the "carrier of consciousness." Many healing and spiritual systems note that the chakras, the seats of the various energy bodies, are rooted in the spinal cord. Therefore, the nervous system is potentially linked to our multidimensional nature, including our spiritual nature.

When the nervous system is energetically cleared and open and capable of carrying the higher frequencies or octaves of subtle energy associated with the higher chakras (those of the heart chakra and above), we have a greater sense of connection to our spiritual nature and the spiritual realms of experience.

## **Specialized treatment protocols developed in NSEW**

NSEW has developed many specialized treatment protocols and processes that are of note. These include:



- Methods to work with pain and pain
- Syndromes,
- Work to balance the autonomic nervous system, work to improve
- Neuropathy and related conditions,
- Work with the vagus nerve, especially in
- Developmental therapy,
- Systematic approaches to enhancing recovery and healing
- Related to surgery,
- Chemotherapy and other medical treatments,
- And many others.