

## DATA

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*Dreams disappear  
When light has come  
and you can see . . .*

—A Gift of Healing

Frances Vaughan & Roger Walsh (1988)

The current issue includes two Keynote Addresses and the Presidential Address from the ISSSEEM Conference, 2003, as well as a contemporary paper on a relatively scientifically understudied energy medicine topic, systematic assessment of the human energy field in humans of different ages and experiences. These four topics provide an opportunity to discern just how our field develops from its' early stages through data collection and analysis to the development of theory. It is remarkable that even where a topic has received considerable consideration—such as “enlightenment”—it is still possible to pursue it in new ways that further contribute to our understanding. Use of analogy, even when measurement is difficult, is a further analytic technique beyond those usually employed that can reveal novel aspects of a process.

In her Keynote Address, *Intentional Healing: Exploring the Extended Reaches of Consciousness*, Marilyn Schlitz helps us to consider the importance and effect of the quality of “intentionality” in the process of mind/body/spirit healing. “Intentional healing” concerns how a healer’s awareness of the well-being of the other provides focus and motive power to affect a specific *this* (and not an overly general topic) as energy is passed through him/her to its ultimate effect in the one experiencing healing. Issues of experimenter effect, patient expectation, experimental design questions and relationships between psychological factors at baseline and medical outcomes, as well as others (appropriate experimental blinding procedures), are discussed.

In, *Enlightenment and Spiritual Growth: Reflections from the Bottom Up*, another bold stroke of modern analysis and conceptual terminology with an ancient investigational topic is modestly purveyed by master Charles Tart, revealing how skillful use of analogies to tools that we use in other domains may channel various aspects of what humans have focused on as “enlightenment.” Tart’s summary through contrast with his term “endarkenment” humorously helps us to define this common but somewhat mysterious subject through discussion of its opposite. Again, his new look at our absolutist promotion of socially approved enlightenment helps us to examine its possible relativistic nature and allows us to take new conceptual tools in hand. Our own, and broad cultural expectations, concerning aspects of what we believe to be real may prevent an unbiased, open perception of what is actually observed, possibly preventing a more full, accurate account. Limits imposed by prejudice may become crucial especially with respect to such an important topic as enlightenment.

Jerry Wesch, in his Presidential Address for 2003, *Energy Healing: Data, Angels and Magic Feathers*, then zeroes in on what makes data valuable in a field such as ours, again derived from prejudices that are based on particular previous experiences or cultural understandings. Wesch reveals his own earlier personal experiences that power his interest in “energy healing,” including the nature of those experiences that led directly to the specifics of that interest and to his summary with the saying, “Don't argue with REALITY—it doesn't care about your opinions!” He then succinctly summarizes various commonalities in healing experiences in the context of quite different traditions including non-local events, different content validity and traditions, placebo vs. specific mechanisms, importance of love in healing, group vs. individual focus, and resistance, conscious and unconscious. Negative healing, intention, and visualization of intended effect are also touched upon.

Finally, Geoffrey Leigh and colleagues in *A Comparison of Human Energy Fields Among Children, Youth, Adults & Dahn Masters* presents actual collected data on energy fields observed with different age groups and experiences that are in process of analysis. As in previous work on related topics, members of this group used a developmental approach to empirically assess human energy fields (HEF). In this case, a Gas Discharge Visualization (GDV) technique provided measures of some aspects of factors that are presumed to define HEF characteristics. It is interesting how such observations lead to new understandings

and hypotheses with regard to the phenomenon. For example, the Dahn masters, who were reported to be highly skilled and experienced with meditative techniques learned in adulthood, evidenced HEF most similar to those of children rather than those of youth or adults. Have they achieved the coveted status of “beginners mind?” Here is a result definitely in need of replication with all participants derived from the same culture. The data did not reveal systematic gender biases.

It is easy to surmise that each paper presented here will lend itself to further developments of hypotheses, systemization of results into theories, and stimulation of new theories. For this to occur we must keep our minds clear and open, and to process new developments as our new empirical stories unfold.

*Birth of Light* by artist, writer and psychotherapist Carol Walsh suggests emergence of something novel from the body which gave it birth. Shrouded in mystery, this parent entity remains protectively sealed to close the opening from which the Light has just emerged, amidst the high drama of the light and swirling clouds, as the Light—with thought, hypothesis, theory—swirls upward in a miracle of birth. The dialogue, the magic, continues. . .

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