

## A Shiatsu Case Study

by [Julian Yates, Dipl. S.T. C.S.T](#) 

Shiatsu is a powerful healing therapy that is quite often regarded solely as a pampering treatment one might indulge in at a spa. Shiatsu reaches deeply into the client's body, addressing the symptoms and roots of many day-to-day health problems, going far beyond simple pampering. That being said, I believe the true power of Shiatsu lies in the therapist's grounded connection with the client. This realization has moulded the way I have practised Shiatsu.

I am thankful to the many clients I have seen and connected with over the years who have given me the opportunity to understand and observe how successful treatments unfold. Treatment is pluralized for a reason. Therapists are not miracle workers, but careful observers of the human body and all that affects it. A full understanding of a person's condition usually happens over the course of a few sessions. Over time, the connection between the client and therapist deepens, the picture of the client's health clarifies, and each session begins to have an effect stronger than the last. The relationship builds to the point where therapy blossoms into healing reactions that can be truly spectacular.

Reflecting on my career as a Shiatsu therapist, there is one client, Rosanna, whose experience poignantly demonstrates the power of Shiatsu. She first came to see me three years ago for neck and shoulder pain. We connected nicely and the client-therapist relationship was firmly established. At one point, Rosanna came to me explaining how a tremendous amount of emotional upset had recently occurred in her life. She had lost 8 friends through accidents and illness, her father became ill with a brain injury, and her relationship with her significant other ended. The stress and trauma caused by all these events made her feel groundless. In an attempt to stabilize herself, she took on so much work that she no longer had time to think about all that had happened. This seemed to help initially, but eventually her body retaliated against the repression of so much pain, and she began to experience dizziness, inability to draw in breath, bouts of near blacking out, heart palpitations and migraines. She went from one specialist to another to no avail. They could find no concrete reasons for her symptoms, and their only solution was to suggest drugs or more testing.

Rosanna came to me with hope that the mere physical contact of Shiatsu might help her to relax. She soon discovered it was much more: "When we began our work together, I was aware immediately of Julian's ability to target certain points of tension in my body that held onto the pain and trauma. He had a great sense of 'connecting the dots' between one point of tension and another, both of which were related to particular kinds of pent up pain, or sorrow or loss. Julian could intuit where the deeper traumas were being held. He worked consciously to release my body from its state of depression, anxiety, loss and mourning."

As Rosanna and I continued to work together in session, I found certain areas of tension and tried to determine the best methods to release them. The resistance was sometimes intense, and occasionally verbal outbursts signalled her body's contention with my elbow.

Over the months and years that we worked together I saw changes, relapses and even areas of her body which, fortress-like, rejected my touch. In fact, Rosanna and I were working together to reshape the way she experienced and lived in her body. She felt that I "...was able to sense and locate the areas where trauma was locked in my body and worked conscientiously from the surface to the deeper points of holding tension. With each subsequent session he developed and altered his practice in order to create a therapy that would help relieve my individual issues, and I trusted his instincts and skill implicitly. He worked with me and we collaborated during each session to target the points we would work on during any given session."

Rosanna's first experience of emotional relief happened when she came to me mentioning a point on her neck that was particularly bothering her, feeling locked like a 'kink in her neck'. I began some intensive work on her head, along her neck, and finally holding at two points at the base of the skull, one of which was the 'kink' she mentioned. It was at this point that the first of many emotional releases began.

This is how Rosanna described the process: "The release was intense. From week to week Julian worked past emotions that erupted during my sessions. I laughed hysterically when some points of tension were found, but Julian worked past that laughter and found sadness buried underneath. True sorrow followed and I sobbed openly as I felt the emotional sickness that was trapped within. Julian worked to have that pain move and shift and finally leave my body. The anxiety began to leave me and I found my energy being restored, my sense of balance and grounding improved. I experienced intense moments wherein memories I had suppressed were contacted and released and I was able to breathe again. The dizziness left me, and soon thereafter so did the other conditions."

This is the evolution of a Shiatsu treatment, the play of resistance and acceptance. A series of treatments cannot be allowed to stagnate into rote and repetitive manipulation of flesh. It is a live process of discovery for client and therapist. What clients learn about their own bodies can spring them into action toward self change; and what the therapist learns allows him or her to adapt treatment, and to facilitate change.

Our sessions have left Rosanna migraine-free. She no longer feels anxiety, and dizziness and instability have become a distant memory. This is how it works. For the Shiatsu therapist the client is like an onion; we peel away one layer to reveal the next.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Rosanna whose openness and patience through her course of treatments enabled me to puzzle out the best method of practice to use. With each new client a new relationship unfolds and a slightly different path to healing is found. This is what Shiatsu is and how it can truly affect positive change in a person's health.

- See more at: <http://vitalitymagazine.com/article/a-shiatsu-case-study/#sthash.Kyp2Ia4F.dpuf>