

Psychologist defeats fear, trauma using kinesiology methods

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Phobia, perhaps the most common psychological disorder, is said to seriously impair as many as 30 million Americans. Mild forms of irrational fear are present in nearly everyone. Conventional treatment can help, but it often takes months or years to make an impact.

For more than a decade, Roger Callahan has demonstrated and reported rapid cures through the use of a patented technique combining elements of Eastern and Western medicine

Callahan now also uses it to treat addictions, trauma and "heartbreak."

The technique relies on strategic pressing on certain areas, primarily acupuncture Points, of the face and upper body. Although the mechanism through which it works remains unclear, Callahan suspects that these acupuncture-like points are the key to a bodily energy system.

Callahan already had been treating phobias in private practice for some 30 years when he made his discovery in 1979. It evolved from his growing interest in applied kinesiology, "muscle testing."

"I was frustrated at the slow progress I was making with a patient who had a crippling fear of water," he recounted. "I tried out some kinesiological ideas on her almost as a stab in the dark."

"Within minutes she announced, 'It's gone!,' and she headed toward my swimming pool. When I got over my shock, I knew I was on to something."

In the first few months, the new technique cured about 40 per cent of Callahan's phobic patients. Soon afterward his discovery of a phenomenon he calls psychological reversal helped improve the rate to about 85 per cent. Follow-ups indicate that most people have found permanent relief.

"Psychological reversal is a literal version of 'mental block,'" Callahan said. "For example, some athletes are blocked from winning, some people get fractures that just won't heal." He said that this reversal is reflected in switched electrical polarities.

Callahan discovered the reversal phenomenon when a patient with an eating disorder showed greater muscle strength when saying "I want to keep my disorder" than she showed when saying "I want to cure my disorder." He devised techniques to overcome such reversal.

In addition to phobias, Callahan then began using the technique on such varied complaints as war trauma, chocolate addiction and what he calls "love pain"--the anguish caused by the breakup of a relationship.

Again it proved astonishingly successful--to the point, he said, of arousing automatic disbelief. Callahan has come to anticipate this reaction.

"Anyone would be skeptical of such results," he said. "I'm the kind who demands evidence myself. But it was right there in front of me."

As a challenge, he undertook spontaneous television demonstrations. On live TV, he treated volunteers with phobias--heights, cats, snakes. Following his usual procedure, he asked them to rate their fear on a scale of 1-10 before and after treatment.

More than nine of every 10 demonstrated drastically reduced fear on camera within minutes. TV host Tom Snyder, an acrophobic, easily climbed a ladder after being treated. A CNN anchorwoman reported losing her powerful desire for chocolate almost instantly.

Later Callahan found he could demonstrate the technique on live radio. He explained the procedure to willing callers, who treated themselves at his instruction. The average radio treatment took less than five minutes.

Callahan thinks his procedures affect a bodily energy system proposed and described by Norwegian radiologist Bjorn Nordenstrom, a former head of the Nobel Assembly. (See Discover April 1986.) He also sees a connection to the models advanced by "M-field" theorist Rupert Sheldrake and pioneer electromagnetism researcher Robert Becker. The speed at which the procedure works supports the notion of a biological mechanism.

Today, most of his patients are treated over the telephone.

"This way, they can be treated when they're really in the grip of their trauma, fear or addictive impulses. I just direct them in performing the technique on themselves."

Martin Schwartz of New York University Medical Center, one of many clinicians who have learned the technique from Callahan, confirmed its effectiveness in a double-blind study. Only those nurses who were given the proper sites to manipulate were able to help their patients.

In January 1991, B/MB reported on another unusual technique for trauma, Francine Shapiro's "eye-movement desensitization and reprocessing." Any relationship between the techniques is unknown.

Callahan's treatment of food addiction is described in Why Do I Eat When I'm Not Hungry?, Doubleday, 1991 see also his How Executives Overcome The Fear of Public Speaking and Other Phobias, Enterprise Publishing, Wilmington, DE, 1985/1992

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Case study: the Callahan technique and overcoming the pain of losing a spouse

When anesthesia was first used many traditionalists were angry. They cited scripture to prove that relieving pain was the work of the devil.

Although we now take anesthesia for granted, we still assume that people are meant to agonize over the loss of love or a loved one. Anything less is "unnatural."

In 1989, Paul von Welanetz died after a short bout with lung and brain cancer. Ten days after his death, his widow, Diana, sought the help of Tim Piering, a California-based therapist who uses Roger Callahan's techniques. Piering asked her if she thought Paul would have wanted her to grieve, and her answer was no.

"Tim asked me to access as much of my grief as possible--to get to 10 on a 1-10 scale," Von Welanetz recounted. "Tears started rolling down my cheeks. Then he had me start tapping on the bone just under my eye, open and close my eyes, roll my eyes clockwise and counterclockwise and tap between my third and fourth knuckle and on the side of my hand.

After half an hour, my subjective experience of suffering had settled in at a two, and we left it at that. The sadness was essentially gone, even though nothing had been deadened. I still had access to my memories."