

## ***What is “Energetic awareness”, how can we learn it? and how can it be taught?***

### **What is energetic awareness?**

You are touching a tsubo on your client. Suddenly you get the overwhelming feeling that this part of their body is somehow linked with a traumatic childhood event. Your client moves suddenly, and says “what is that? - that feels strange, it reminds me of being a child”.

This kind of experience is common enough in energy-based body-work to require an explanation. How is it possible to explain such communication? Certainly it is very difficult to explain if we consider the body to be a mechanical-chemical system, as described by conventional anatomy and physiology.

Our understanding of what “energetic” and “energetic awareness” means are being revolutionized by the latest understanding about the nature of biological systems and life itself. A fascinating aspect of this new paradigm in bio-physics and the new biology is how it is converging with many features of traditional Asian healing arts of which Shiatsu is a part. This makes us as Shiatsu therapists naturally curious to explore this new material and meet those scientists involved in this work.

Firstly what is energetic or energy? Energy in Western Physics is described as the “ability to do work”. Energy can take many forms, heat, light, radio waves, the interesting thing for us is that energy is needed to create communication. Take for example a radio or a mobile phone. Information is transmitted and received via electromagnetic waves to make this technology work.

In TCM and Shiatsu we talk of Ki, which is sometimes translated as energy. But Ki means more than just “energy” in the Western sense. The ideogram for Ki – made up of the images of steam and rice describes a connection between the material and the material, between the physical and spiritual between the matter and energy. Ki is seen as making up the entire universe in different forms. The concept of Ki is central to the traditional world-view or paradigm where the material and non-material aspects of existence are considered to be part of the same essential fabric.

Before the beginning of the last century Western Science would have found the whole concept of Ki problematic. The Newtonian world-view described the universe very differently. Solid objects existed in isolation, acted upon by forces within a three dimensional space, the basis of which was the empty vacuum. However these beliefs about the nature of the universe were overturned last century by a series of theories and experiments that showed us that the Newtonian world-view was limited.

We now know that the universe can be better explained as an inter-connected whole. Space curves, it is connected in a 4 dimensional framework with time, objects that we thought of a solid can act as waves, and the vacuum – far from being an empty space has now been shown to be a bubbling cauldron of activity where matter and energy (the source of the so called “zero-point” energy) can arise.

So how does this revolution in our world-view affect us as Shiatsu energy-workers? Surely the curvature of space-time is on too big a scale, and the quantum vacuum is on too small a scale to affect our work? Well – quantum effects are not always small scale. Lasers and superconductors are just two examples of how quantum effects can be experienced in normal human scales of experience. The work of Mae-Wan Ho and other scientists is suggesting that life itself is a quantum coherent system – so consciousness itself, and thus aspects of “energetic awareness” may be best described as quantum process.

So when we touch someone, or even when we don't touch them –what is happening? Well – lets first explore what kind of thing we are touching. We now know that living systems are made up predominantly of liquid crystals. Liquid crystals are a meso state between liquids and solids. Around 75% of our bodies are made of liquid crystals, this includes all the cell membranes and the connective tissue. So what are liquid crystals like? Well they have many interesting properties for us as energy-workers. They are very good conductors of electrical and electromagnetic information. They are very sensitive to magnetic fields. They are very sensitive to pressure. Also crystals are the best medium for storage of holographic information – and the best model we have of the processing of sensation and of memory is a holographic system.

So we are a constantly moving and inter-communicating system of liquid crystals. We also emanate a bio-magnetic field. Current measuring equipment (the SQUID magnetometer) can detect this field up to 5m from our bodies – and more sensitive equipment may increase this distance. This field is rich in information about our physical and emotional patterns.

The liquid crystal structure of life has repercussions for our sensing system as practitioners. In addition to the sensory nervous system we are also very sensitive to bio-magnetic fields. We also are able through the process of resonance, and some would argue, through a quantum phase relationship, to empathize with our client, and access their emotions, physical obstructions and sometimes their memories.

When we “tune into the energy” of our client we use a whole range of sensory methods, some are well understood, eg our sensory nerves, and some of our perception is at the edges of our understanding of communication, sensing and consciousness itself. I have summarised these in the table below.

**FIG 1. Types of “Energy Perception”**

Type of “Energy perception”	Sensing Mechanism in the practitioner (varying levels of understanding exist about these mechanisms – some are widely accepted – some conjectural)
Direct sensations of heat, muscular tone etc	Direct palpation by our nervous system
Sensation of tsubos by palpation of the skin (traditional acupuncture method)	reduced electrical resistance detected by nervous system and/or sensitivity to accompanying distortions in the magnetic field around the point
Feeling of overactive or underactive body systems felt at a distance of up to about 10 cm eg inflammation / reduced circulation etc	Sensation of radiant heat felt by our nervous system plus possible biomagnetic field disturbance.
Discontinuity of energy field surrounding the client eg old injuries or over tsubos – felt at a distance of 10 – 20 + cm	Sensing of the bio-magnetic field of the client via the practitioners liquid crystal system.
Feelings, images or metaphoric associations of emotions or memories associated with the receiver	Access by the consciousness of the practitioner into the holographically stored thoughts, emotions or memories of the client.
Information about the client received at a distance. Distance healing perception.	Phase relationship between practitioner and client allows communication outside of normally understood communication methods. (see Entangled Minds by Dean Rakin for most comprehensive study, and overview of current theories that may explain this)

I have also summarised these processes in a flow chart below FIG 2.

## Can we learn energetic awareness?

How could we - as liquid crystal systems - learn to develop our energy awareness? We need look no further than the traditional systems of Qi Gong, Yoga and Meditation that we already use in our training.

The foundations of all traditional “energy-based” disciplines such as Qi Gong include releasing, centring, alignment and quieting the mind. These techniques are widely taught both within mainstream Shiatsu training are also commonly recommended as supplementary studies.

Releasing our body integrates the liquid crystal sensing property of our own fields by reducing tension and blocks that could interrupt the communication of signals in the system.

Centring, alignment and quieting our minds - helps unify our body and mind and reduces our own field activity – this helps our perception by making the field of the client more dominant. The communication of information by resonance can be a subtle process, which explains why practice of traditional disciplines, such as Qi Gong are so valuable for us.

The traditional “Shins” - diagnostic methods of Chinese Medicine - are an interesting application of learned energy perception. The way they are taught tends to de-emphasise the predominant conventional sense, and lead the practitioner into a more synaesthetic experience of their client. Such recommendations as “look or listen from your Hara not your eyes and ears” are examples of the development of synaesthetic perception. So even though we are looking when we do Bo-Shin – we are encouraged to process information from the field and combine it with our visual sense.

Setsu-shin is similar. Although we are touching – we are encouraged to combine the normal nervous systems information from our hands with other information gained from the field, some of this is translated into the familiar language of touch, and some of the information is encouraged to be interpreted metaphorically.

The system of scanning that I developed in mid 90s as a result of working with Pauline Sasaki is a good example of a teachable method of increasing energy perception, by encouraging the perception of field based information which is received without the conventional senses. More advanced techniques such as temporal scanning appear to work by accessing the holographically stored somatic memories of the client. These techniques, and many others like them that have emerged in many other body-work styles, can all be learned and developed, as has been witnessed by the thousands of energy-work practitioners who use these techniques in their every day work.

## Teaching Energy awareness

Teaching energy awareness is a subtle and demanding task. The most significant issue in teaching energy awareness is the effect of the Field of the teacher in the energy dynamic between the student and their receiver. I first worked on the issues of teacher training in Energy Work in 1992 when I worked with Pauline Sasaki on developing a teacher-training course for the European Shiatsu Institute (ESI) teachers group. We have been slowly developing the syllabus of our teacher training programme at the New Energy Work project since the mid 90s.

The core techniques, that I believe are essential for teaching energy work, include; tuning it to the student working, tuning into the receiver and tuning into the student's perception of the receiver. An ability of the teacher to minimize their interactive energetic presence is also invaluable, as are techniques to help the student sharpen their energetic perception.

Probably the most fundamental error we can make as teachers, when teaching energetic awareness is to directly and compare the perception of a receiver by our student with our own. When we do this we ignore the strong likelihood that the receiver may present a different pattern to us, the teacher, than to a fellow student working on them. In fact in a teaching situation this divergence of presented energy patterns is very likely, ( after all - would you tell your teacher the same thing you would tell your fellow students? ) – it is therefore a requirement that the teacher can tune into the perceptions of the students, and keep their own interaction with the receiver to a minimum.

Although challenging, energy-work teaching can be very rewarding. With a consistent and well thought out series of techniques, it can be a great experience to see the energy perception of students growing. Energy awareness can definitely be learned and it can definitely be taught. Not only that but how to teach energy-work awareness can be taught also.

Clifford Andrews is director of the New Energy Work project which provides workshops, online courses and associated media on Shiatsu Energy Work. You can find Cliff at [www.newenergywork.com](http://www.newenergywork.com) or email him at [cliff@cliffordandrews.com](mailto:cliff@cliffordandrews.com). Cliff teaches and practices internationally and has been working with Shiatsu for 30 years. You can find Cliff's diary at [www.cliffordandrews.com](http://www.cliffordandrews.com). Cliff is a director of [www.shiatuspace.net](http://www.shiatuspace.net) the world's largest independent online community of Shiatsu practitioners and teachers.

Recommended Reading:

Energy Medicine the Scientific Basis, James Oschman

Energy Medicine in Therapeutics and Human Performance, James Oschman

Rainbow and the Worm: The Physics of Organisms (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), Mae Wan Ho

Entangled Minds, Dean Radin

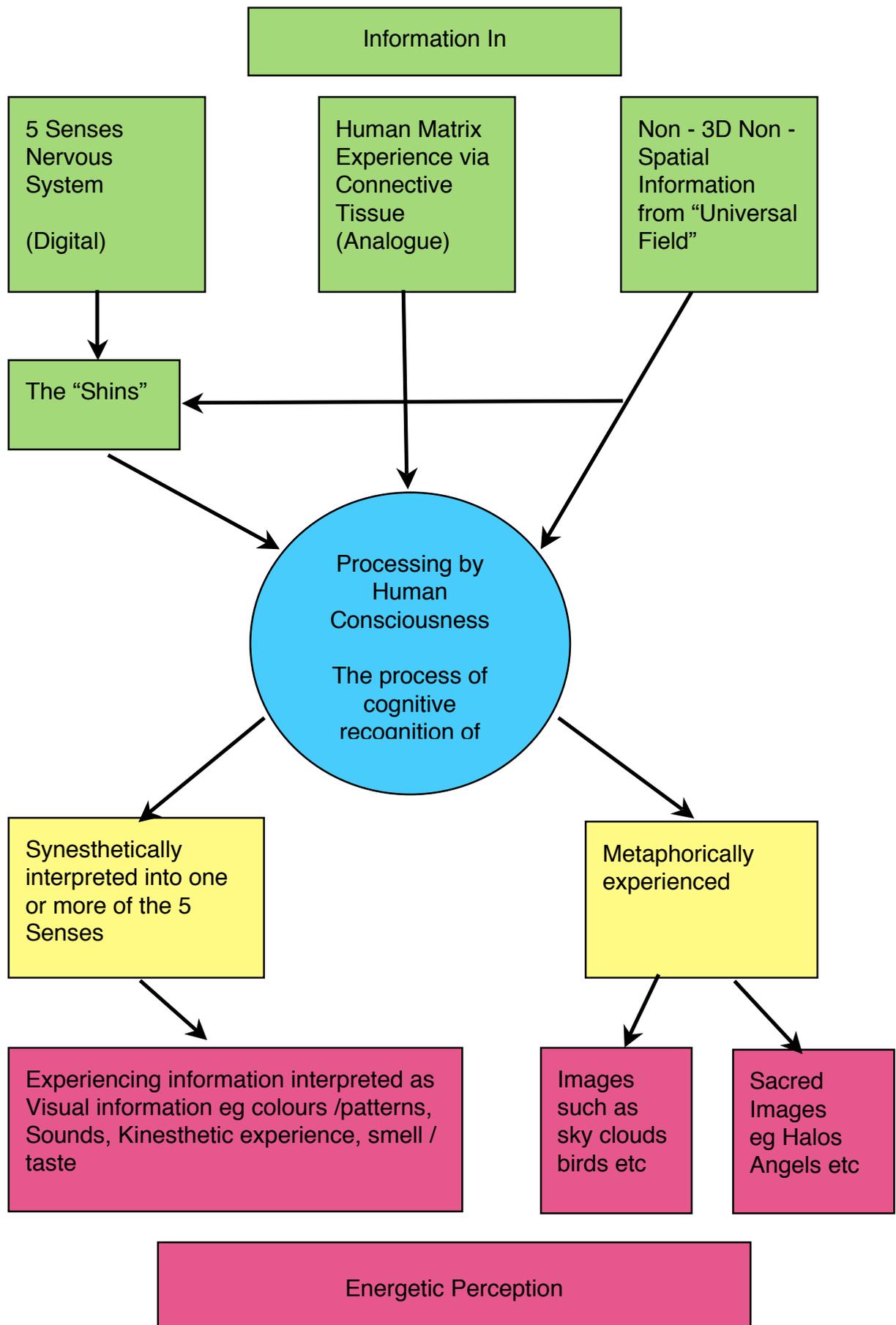


FIG 2 The Process of Energy Perception