**Reflexology and Logotherapy – Where Body meets Spirit**

**Devorah Kur**

Recently I watched an inspiring movie called UNBROKEN. Louis Zamperini was bullied by his classmates when he was growing up in California. To escape their cruelty he ran from them which became his passion. His older brother had faith in his abilities and trained Louis to be a runner. In 1936 he became a hero for his country at the Olympic Games in Berlin where he was congratulated by none other than Hitler. Later on he joined the United States Army and during WW2 his fighter plane was shot down over the Pacific Ocean where he and a few of his platoon survived 47 days floating in a raft. When all hope was lost he was rescued (and captured) by a Japanese war ship and subjected to barbaric war crimes in a Japanese P.O.W camp in Tokyo. He was thought lost forever and declared dead to his family. His jailer was a brutal cruel commander who subjected Louis to all types of abuse, but Louis was a survivor who would not be broken. His fighting spirit inspired his fellow inmates which in turn gave him the courage to overcome the sadistic cruelty. In the end we see a powerful scene where Louis while still a prisoner rises above the commander and is as if he is a free man, while the jailer who has become obsessed with breaking Louis spirit is actually imprisoned by his obsessions.

I have been raving about this movie ever since, and my kids always tease me and say, “Can’t you just watch the movie and enjoy it? Do you always have to look for the meaning in everything?” The truth is yes I do. Logotherapy is such a powerful outlook and way of life that I find it inspiring and see opportunities for growth and meaning all around me. Logotherapy is the teachings of Dr Victor Frankl which encourages one to find meaning within any type of suffering and overcome.

Dr Victor Frankl says, “Everything can be taken from a man but one thing; the last of human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”

In 1996 my father was diagnosed with colon cancer. This was devastating news in my happy life. I became obsessed with the role of the patient and wanted to learn everything I could about empowering the patient to be an active participant in his own healing journey. At the time I was running a successful Interior Design company and eventually could not deny my new passion for healing. I closed one door and opened a new one entering into the world of Reflexology.

Reflexology took me so far enabling physical improvements within the patient, but I wanted more. I wanted to help my patients find a deeper meaning not just a healing of the body. I wanted to help them bridge the gap between body and spirit. In the movie Manhattan, Woody Allen is told by his girlfriend Dianne Keaton that she is having an affair and that she is leaving. She gets very angry and asks him why he doesn’t get angry and show some emotion, to which he replies, “I don’t get angry, I grow a tumour instead!” While this appears to be very humorous, this is exactly what we are doing in our bodies when we constantly bury our feelings and emotions and don’t deal with issues in our lives. Woody Allen is showing how we are partners in the creation of our own dis-eases. This is the power of the mind body relationship. Yet, it goes even deeper as we start to explore the noetic aspect as well. Often illness offers us the chance to seek the noetic and ask what life is expecting of me now through this challenge. Illness, symptoms or dis-ease is an opportunity to rise above and dig deep to find our purpose through the crisis. It is the defiant power of the human spirit to look within each struggle and be able to take responsibility to seek a deeper meaning through this questioning, instead of being a victim and asking, “Why me?”.

Dr Victor Frankl says, “Each man is questioned by life and he can only answer to life by answering for his own life; to life he can only respond by being responsible.”

Logotherapy exposed me to something deeper; to be able to guide and help patients delve deeper into their challenges to see what life was asking them. It enabled a new kind of healing as patients started moving away from “WHY ME?!!” victim mode to “WHAT NOW? Now this is in my life, what is expected of me? What are the opportunities?”

Dr Victor Frankl says, “When we are no longer able to change our situation – we are challenged to change ourselves.”

Caroline Myss is a bestselling author and internationally renowned speaker in the field of human consciousness, spirituality and mysticism, health, energy medicine and the science of medical intuition. She says, “Often when a life crisis is identified, the physical dysfunction (dis-ease or symptoms) being manifested in or by the body would be understood as a reflection of these deeper spiritual issues, e.g. grief, guilt hatred, loss of self-esteem all forms of fear, emotional stresses, insecurities and personal traumas. Once we understand more about the persons inner functioning, then we can understand how consciously or unconsciously a person participates in the creation of disease.” How a person chooses to grow, change or stand up to his diagnosis through this understanding is embarking on the noetic. She continues to say that Healing is the process of transforming inner grief which could be unfulfilled needs or ambitions, disappointments, broken promises, and unfinished business into lessons that empower rather than destroy the individual. In accepting the necessity of doing this quality of inner work, we are acknowledging the need to change or transform the areas of our lives that are not conducive to regaining our health, and this is noetic work. As we do this, we change the relationship we have with our disease. This way the disease changes from being a condition to being a messenger. The challenge is to understand the message in the illness and to act on them in ways that are productive to our health. Illness (or symptoms) brings an opportunity for you to lovingly challenge yourself and push yourself to receive those messages and to create the health that you want to see in your life.

I began incorporating Logotherapy into the Reflexology sessions and I started seeing more meaningful results. It is one thing to put a Band-Aid on an open wound to stop the bleeding, it is another thing to help the wound close so that you don’t need the Band-Aid. This is how Logotherapy transforms my Reflexology sessions. I’m going to share two cases that I worked with to give you a taste of this mind body relationship and healing journey that encompasses the noetic.

**Reflexology Case Study 1 (ZC)**

A male patient in his 50’s presented with pain in his right foot on the plantar aspect (underneath) in between metatarsals 1 and 2 (the big toe and the second toe). The patient had been to an orthopaedic surgeon, had X-Rays, been on anti-inflammatory and pain killers on and off for 2 years yet nothing had helped him.

Firstly, the body is broken up into LEFT and RIGHT sides which as with the brain we have the left side represented by logical and analytical thinking, and the right side is the more creative side. So too in the body we have these distinctions which are drawn from Chinese Medicine thinking. There is a cross-over so left brain plays out on right side of the body and right brain on the left side of the body. This is often a huge diagnostic clue when a patient is presenting with something on a specific side of the body only. So, my first clue told me that there could be something to do with career, a business relationship, a male relationship or something along those lines representing right sided body issues. Left body side indicates female, right body side represents male (Chinese thinking).

My second clue was the placement on the foot where the complaint was. The area that the patient was referring to corresponded to the reflex of oesophagus, which indicated acid reflux or heartburn in the system. The type of extensive questioning that I used in the Therapeutic Reflexology consultation gave me further clues into the patient’s condition.

Q – Do you suffer from reflux?

A – Yes, funny you should ask. That also started at the same time as the foot problem

Q - When did this pain in your foot first start?

A – 2 years ago

Q – Was there anything going on in your life at the time?

A – “Funny you should ask that as well!” he said. A business deal he was involved in went ‘sour’ and the Preacher at his Church had mediated between the two congregants. It was decided that my patient would have to pay to settle the dispute. He did this, but he said that “it left him with a **sour** and **bitter** taste in his mouth”. He meant this figuratively, but soon after this incident, my patient developed **reflux**. My patient also told me that as a result of this incident he would “never **set foot** into that Church again!” Often we find that the **words** a person uses to describe his condition also give us clues into what is going on in the person’s life. Let’s take a look at the words that this patient used:

* **“Sour** and **bitter** taste in his mouth”- soon after this incident he developed acid reflux. The words used describe exactly what acid reflux is. His internal turmoil converted into a physical manifestation.
* “Never **set foot** into that Church again” **–** Where did the problem occur? In his foot! Once again the same words he used started to play out in his body.

The part of the body that is presenting with the problem also gives us a clue. We look at function of that body part. Our feet take us where we need to go, they point us in the direction that our lives should be heading in. Faced with a problem in the foot I questioned the patient about his direction in his career since this incident, as well as his spiritual connection since he had left his Church. The patient was holding onto that **bitter feeling** (playing out in his body now as reflux) from the business disagreement which had affected him in his career, and he also felt that a significant part of his spiritual connection had ended since he had stopped attending Church.

Getting the full picture here, the right foot was communicating many ideas and messages to my patient about his life and his unfinished business. Once he was equipped with the tools to be able to analyse his body and combined with the Reflexology treatments we started noticing improvements. Logotherapy Counseling came into the picture as we explored finding deeper meanings through these challenges, which enabled him to grow beyond the ‘pain’. He struggled with issues of pride which had deprived him of his spiritual life and his ability to move on, as well as humiliation within his community. Logotherapy gave him the strength to forgive the Pastor and rise above his ego to reclaim back his spiritual life, and the pain in his foot allowed him to delve deeper into the pain of the severed relationship. Eventually he was able to forgive the partner as well which was the turning point in the physical pain being released. Logotherapy helped him to rise above the pain of the past and set his life on a path moving forward and Reflexology helped his body to heal. From my experience, as the buried unfinished business was addressed so the body could stop sending its ‘message’ to overcome the ‘pain.’ I only treated this patient five times, and then the pain was gone. A year later when I followed up with him, he was still pain free, enjoying his spirituality in another Church.

**Reflexology Case Study2 (AF)**:

In the war in Israel in the summer of 2014 there was a young combat soldier who was a Krav Maga black belt instructor. During the war he entered a building in Gaza with four soldiers in his combat unit. The building was booby-trapped and there was an explosion and he was the only soldier who survived. You can imagine the devastation of the loss of his ‘brothers’ in his unit; such an empty waste of young life. Apart from the trauma and the intense grief this young soldier was dealing with, was the fact that his injuries might leave him in a wheel chair. His feet had been severely injured and the ability to walk again was uncertain. I volunteered to work with him to see what I could do from a Reflexology perspective to regenerate nerve function and communication to the feet as well as help manage pain relief and increase muscle tone. From a Logotherapy perspective we discussed looking for meaning from this huge ordeal.

From the start, he never saw himself as a victim. He was in a very positive and hopeful space and managing his deep emotional pain exceptionally well. He had an innate desire to live and thrive in his life. One day I asked him, “Can you see yourself walking again?” I was over the moon when he replied, “I can’t see myself *not* walking again!” His defiant spirit rose up to the challenge so powerfully. For him, the goal was not just about learning to walk again; he became passionate about reclaiming his firm footing on the ground as a Krav Maga instructor and inspiring others to rise above and overcome as well. His purpose was now not to just instruct, but to inspire greatness as well. What a Logotherapy response!

Frankl quotes Nietzsche who said: “*He who has a WHY to live for can bear almost any HOW*.” When this soldier was injured he overcame hours of gruelling pain and rehabilitation because he saw his future and he wanted to be a part of it. The process was the means to the end. Watching his life go by from the side-lines in a wheelchair was not an option for him. His defiant spirit transformed his personal pain and bereavement into purpose, survival, a will to live life with deeper meaning and ultimately healing. Today, fully recovered, he is once again an instructor working for the army.

I learned a beautiful idea from my one of my Logotherapy teachers who says that a client and therapist have a relationship like that of midwifery. Through learning about their strengths, the client is able to dig deep and find themselves. This is the process of giving birth to themselves. Deep within us we have the abilities, strength and capabilities to cope with and rise above that which comes our way. It is the struggles in life that present us with opportunities on which way we are going to deal with them. Logotherapy helps people find that inner strength within thereby aiding them to use difficulties as stepping stones to their greater self instead of stumbling blocks. Illness and suffering is part of the journey. Sometimes the greatest gifts that come our way are disguised as illness and suffering. For me, it is a privilege to be a tool in peoples healing journeys.

[M. Scott Peck](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/3061.M_Scott_Peck) says in his book, [The Road Less Travelled](http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2747475), “Life is difficult. This is a great truth, one of the greatest truths. It is a great truth because once we truly see this truth, we transcend it. Once we truly know that life is difficult - once we truly understand and accept it - then life is no longer difficult. Because once it is accepted, the fact that life is difficult no longer matters.”

***Devorah Kur*** *is a Reflexologist and an associate in Logotherapy practicing in Raanana Israel. Devorah is passionate about helping people through their illnesses, challenges and struggles in life. She combines her expertise to empower people to wellbeing of their mind, body and soul. Her forte is to help people find meaning and rise to the challenges of what life is asking of them, instead of asking “why has this happened to me?”*

*Devorah can be contacted thought her website and also offers phone or skype consultations. She has visualizations and lectures available on her website* [*www.dkwellness.co.il*](http://www.dkwellness.co.il) *as well.*