

# Natural healing

**Suzi Cooper** meets two women whose natural therapies work for a range of complaints, with the blessing of the medical profession



Healing hands: Trish Costigan is now enhancing her hypnotherapy sessions with Reiki

**H**AVE just been on a fascinating journey. I walked through beautiful woodland and along a path which I knew would take me to see a wise old man. As I reached a clearing he was there and he held out a gift for me. The gift was a crystal ball which, when I looked inside, showed an image of my children and me; laughing, happy and content for evermore. In return, I gave the wise man a sack containing all my problems. He walked away and cast the sack to the wind, taking away my problems forever. Okay, it

all sounds a bit New Agey, but this was my experience of hypnotherapy by Trish Costigan. It was a powerful experience and one which left me relaxed and reassured that all would be well with the world.

Trish is a former primary school teacher who now practises hypnotherapy and the relaxation/healing technique Reiki for clients who may or may not use it in tandem with conventional medicine. The hypnotherapy is probably the easier of the two to explain. It involves, as you might expect, simple

hypnotism, putting the client in a relaxed mental state where the subconscious comes to the fore; a state where we are at our most receptive and able to make the most of the power of the subconscious to realign our thoughts.

Now, there's none of that going into a deep sleep, swirly watch stuff. No, hypnosis isn't really like that. It's simply a technique to induce a very relaxed state, never a sleep, where the power of your own mind - or at least the part of it that is most rarely used but is the most powerful - is to the fore. Whether you need it to help you give up smoking or alcohol, to cure a fear of flying, or to make you more effective at work, it is relaxing and highly effective.

Trish, who has been a hypnotherapist for several years, has now also started using reiki both as a healing tool and as an aid to relaxation for hypnotherapy patients prior to a session. Reiki is a healing process much like spiritual healing, during which she lays her hands on the shoulders, head and neck and hovers her hands over the body. During this process she can pick up on physical or mental troubles.

## Instinct

"It's based on an instinct, an instinct to make people better," she says. "We can actually all use Reiki, even on ourselves. I remember once, years ago, my nana, who suffered with her chest, was feeling poorly. I asked her, I don't know why, if I could lay my hands on her chest. When I did, her pain eased. We weren't a very tactile family and it was a strange thing to do for me, but she felt much better. I have thought about that a lot over the years, before I began to practise Reiki."

Reiki is one of many forms of healing through the use of the natural forces which were given the name Chi by ancient Chinese mystics. The practitioner places his or her hands upon the person to be healed with the intent for healing to occur, and then the energy begins flowing. The Reiki energy is smart and it knows where to go and what to do once it gets there.

The energy manages its own flow to and within the recipient. It draws through the healer

exactly the amount of energy the recipient needs. All this happens without direct conscious intervention by the healer. The healer's job is to get out of the way, to keep the healing space open and to watch and listen for signs of what to do next.

Trish stumbled upon the therapy through a chance meeting, walking her two West Highland terriers, Harry and Hamish, in the park near her home in Ponteland, near Newcastle. "I was walking along and met a woman with another West Highland," she remembers. "We got talking about the dogs and just clicked. Then I told her what I do and she said she did Reiki."

At this very moment, the lady from the park, Julie, rings Trish as I'm sitting there, pen poised at her kitchen table. Talk about a strange coincidence. Not that Trish does coincidences. "No, I do think there are many things in life which happen for a reason and I met Julie at just the right time for me," she says. "I did some hypnotherapy for her and she told me where to go to do a course in Reiki, which I have found extremely useful. It's one of those things that happen for a reason."

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**T**HEY say the eyes are the windows to the soul and, for Rumana Ramzan, her patients' eyes are an essential tool in diagnosing their ills. The technique she employs, iridology, is based on the theory that every organ in the human body has a corresponding location within the iris, creating a sort of map of the body in the eyes. Hence, a naturopath like Rumana can determine whether an organ is healthy or diseased by examining the iris rather than the organ itself.

She produces a folder containing photographs of some of her patients' eyes. One shows a patient's eyes speckled with orange which, Rumana says, gave her the first clue that the patient was suffering with toxins leaking from *please turn to page 20*

## health



Naturopath: Rumana Ramzan works alongside doctors

the gut. So, the patient embarked upon one of Rumana's detox programmes and had an enormous reaction. You don't want to see the photographs of what came out of the patient in the toilet but, suffice to say, they're enough to make you wonder what's going on inside you. Ugh!

"The digestive system is the core of the body," says Rumana, who runs one of her clinics from

a GP's surgery, such is the wide acceptance of her natural therapies amid the conventional medical profession. "The body is always struggling to keep us cleansed, but this cleansing, or detoxing, has to be done in a certain way depending on your area of need - say your colon, your liver or your kidneys.

"After the body is cleansed I can then start giving natural nutritional or herbal supplements to the body which, once detoxed, is at its most receptive and much better able to absorb them."

When she is first assessing a patient's needs, Rumana also uses kinesiology to see if her clients are allergic to anything

before she engages them on a detox programme. To do this, she puts a small amount of certain foods under the tongue and applies pressure to the muscles. The body's reaction to this technique tells Rumana if the patient is suffering from any intolerances.

In addition, she uses a system to balance her patients' life force energy, which concentrates on the electrical energy field which surrounds us

all and is recognised by the World Health Organisation and forms a part of many alternative health therapies such as acupuncture, homeopathy and reflexology.

Rumana uses one or a combination of natural therapies such as nutritional therapy, herbal medicine, homeopathy, allergy testing, detoxification and cleansing, and naturopathic techniques. During the course of the treatment thought-field therapy and energy therapies may also be used where appropriate. She can treat a huge variety of ills such as eating disorders, depression, stress and digestive problems.

"I get many people in my clinic who have had their symptoms for 10, 20 even 30 years," says Rumana. "I had a patient who came to me and she was on repeat prescriptions of antacids for 16 years and still experiencing the same symptoms. If your car does not perform you fix it, or if a door hinge is squeaking you oil it and get a result. Yet many people continue with conventional treatments that are not evaluated or working for them."

## Emotions

Her patients may have a specific problem or just want help with maintaining their health, but Rumana finds that for all of them there are dramatic results which sort out the body and the mind. "People's outlooks do change over the course of treatment," she says. "It may be that their new sense of wellbeing can change them from a negative person to someone who is very positive, or I can use thought-field therapy to help ease stuck emotions. I find that people on anti-depressants may find they no longer need them because they learn to start to deal with their emotions.

At the same time, they become more in tune with their body and learn to listen to its needs."

Rumana grew up in a family where alternative and natural therapies were embraced, but only started researching them seriously when, as a teenager, she suffered an eating disorder. "Conventional medicine didn't help me then," she says, "so I began to research and then train in different therapies." She went on to do a degree in biology and then worked in pharmaceuticals before giving her time over to her practice, which embraces the need for a holistic, natural approach to health which can work hand in hand with conventional medicine where necessary.

Her clients include doctors and she runs one of her clinics at a GP practice in Gosforth, Newcastle, in addition to her work at her base in Darlington and her association with the Serenity Spa at Seaham Hall Hotel.

"This is all about giving the body the right tools to heal itself," she says, "and that can also help to heal the emotions. Going and getting more pills from the doctor is not the only route."

One of Rumana's patients, 53-year-old Anne, puts it simply: "For years I had been experiencing discomfort from Irritable Bowel Syndrome and knew that it was possibly food-allergy linked. Rumana's approach in diagnosing my food allergies was sympathetic and efficient. It was found that I had a number of food allergies and was provided with a comprehensive list of alternative foods. I followed the prohibited list of foods for four weeks and found a significant improvement in my general health, although the time spent in the supermarket reading food ingredient labels also increased significantly! The follow-up appointments continue to be helpful and encouraging and provide me with an update on foods I continue to have an allergy to."

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