

THE HEALING ATTITUDE

Find The Meaning Of Your Symptoms And Embrace
The Healing Process

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Introduction

After many years spent working to support others in their healing processes, and many more invested in exploring the fascinating world of healing from multiple points of view, I finally felt called to share my journey. This is why you are reading this book.

I don't like to call myself a healer. I prefer to call myself a teacher, a consultant, a coach, a trainer, an artist, and by many titles other than healer because some people mistakenly believe that a healer is someone who magically heals others from anything just by touching or praying for them. I don't identify with that kind of healer.

I help others to reconnect to their inner, intrinsic, natural, hidden resources to support their healing processes.

I have been initiated to a healing path. I received healing transmission to pass on. But this is not the topic around which this book revolves.

This is not a book specifically about spiritual healing or even about healing in general terms. It is, above all, about the common denominators I observed in most of the people who have been able to heal, remarkably recover from, or functionally deal and cope with symptoms due to so-called incurable illnesses, or chronic illness and pain - including myself - independent of a specific belief.

I was born in 1965. I was a quite healthy child, but in my teenage years I became such a collection of various symptoms due to illnesses, injuries, and diseases. It took a while to understand that I could take responsibility for my mental and physical state, and also for my recovery. My innate love of knowledge of any kind - from Western medicine and psychology to "alternative" healing paths and spirituality - helped me develop a constructive attitude.

One step at a time I learned how to tap into my intrinsic resources and I observed the spontaneous remission of different kinds of symptoms due to various illnesses and diseases. This made me even more curious to proceed on this path.

So, whether you are suffering from symptoms due to illnesses, injuries, or diseases, or you are working to facilitate and support other people's healing processes, this book can help you connect some dots and offers some easy and practical suggestions and tools to empower your or your clients' and patients' healing process as well.

You can read this book and find some inspiration independent of your beliefs because it is not about a method or a specific path. It's about the *attitude* supporting healing and well-being, whichever path one wants to take.

In other words, whichever path you choose to take care of and cure yourself, whether you believe in holistic and alternative approaches, or in allopathic medicine, whether you believe in a spiritual world or you call yourself an atheist - it's your attitude towards the process that can make a difference.

In my role as teacher, practitioner, and consultant, I never interfere with my clients' or students' choices. Each one of us has a different story and a different background. I can occasionally suggest openness to exploring different ways to achieve the desired result and invite people to challenge their beliefs when I see that there is a lack of practical knowledge, but that's it - and it's enough.

I always encourage everyone to be open to knowledge, because the more we know about ourselves and the way our mind-body operates, the more we can support our healing process from within. I never judge a method or approach as "better" than another *a priori*. Everything has to be explored and experienced because what can work for someone might not work for someone else. We are all different and we have to acknowledge our differences to discover what is useful to us in a specific moment and context.

This is why I'm not a fan of "*this is the only - or the best - way to heal*". There are many ways, many roads, many tools, many paths.

Healing is not about "*the one and only*" specific path, nor is it about our choice of tools. It's our attitude that makes a difference, independent of the means we choose.

This book is exactly about this.

So, whether you are interested in healing from a strictly scientific perspective, or from a spiritual point of view, I am sure you will find inspiration.

The Healing Attitude book is divided into three parts.

Part One

In this Part, you will be taken through a three-chapter journey about the importance of reconnecting to our inner resources and true self to find our "inner medicine" and source of wellbeing.

I'll share with you what brought me to define the *healing attitude*, both from a scientific and a spiritual perspective, and you will be introduced to one of the extraordinary healers who passed on healing gifts to me so that I could transmit those gifts in my turn.

Then you will be introduced to Chiron, the wounded healer, both from a mythological and symbolic point of view.

Part Two

In Part Two, I reorganized some of the concepts expressed in Part One to guide you through a description of the basic and most important steps towards the building, practice, and expression of the healing attitude. You will find eight chapters, one for each letter of the word HEALING, plus a chapter about the ATTITUDE, aimed at giving you suggestions, inspiration, and insight. Our brain loves to learn by layers, and this is why you will find some concepts expressed more than just once in this book. It will help you integrate and incorporate, or embody, the information on a deeper level.

Part Three

This part is meant to practically support your healing journey, or your work to help others on their healing path.

In this Part, you will find more details about my initiation to the healing path: how it happened and where it brought me. Then you'll find some healing myths, symbols, inspiration, and practical tools integrating modern science and ancient knowledge from traditional healing and spiritual paths.

In Part Three you will also find a link leading to a "safe space" - a secret area of my website in which you will find other resources.

To access this space you won't need to register or subscribe to anything. You don't need a password. You don't even need to subscribe by giving me your email address and so you will not be bothered by unwanted newsletters.

You need just that one link, and nothing else, to access the tools supporting your healing journey, which include:

- audio meditations
- video meditations and activations
- healing art (drawings and paintings based on sacred geometry) to help you create inner states promoting and facilitating healing and recovery processes.

You might feel that some parts of this book are to be read all in one breath, and other parts taken in small doses. You might also feel that you need to read all the book or parts of it more than just one time because it seems like you find something new every time you read it. This happens when a book resonates deeply - meaning that the reading of it predisposes to a beneficial transformation.

And now let the journey begin.

PART ONE

1. On The Path To Healing

As there are many spiritual paths - designed for individuals who differ in needs, mind-body structure, education, heritage, ancestry, and goals - so there are many paths leading to healing. Each one of us can explore and find the best fit for ourselves.

Here's a very simple example - you can't force a classically-trained ballerina to compete in a boxing match, or vice versa - force a boxer to participate in a classical ballet competition. It doesn't fit. As you can be built for one art, or sport, or area of expertise, so you can be inclined towards a certain healing approach, and not towards another.

This is why I'm not going to discuss the path you chose (or will choose) to proceed towards healing. I want to bring you some insights about the *healing attitude*, in the light of recent discoveries about the interconnections between thoughts, emotions, and the state of the body, taking into account also a "spiritual" - or consciousness-related - point of view.

Whether you believe in a spiritual dimension or not, I think that in this book you will find something useful, maybe even a little provocative - simply to invite you to look at healing from a different perspective.

Healing is a journey, or a path itself, more than a simple destination. It can be the most fascinating and exciting journey to the discovery of a deeper, wider, higher dimension of our *self*. It's a journey to wholeness and completeness, dotted with jewels - our symptoms - in which every symptom can be meant as a cue or a direction on the map leading us to the hidden treasure: our *true self*.

I might also say that healing is not only a journey, or a path, or an attitude: it is a mindset, too.

As a noun, *healing* means the process of making or becoming sound or healthy again: *the gift of healing*.

As an adjective, it means tending to heal, therapeutic, bringing healing: *a healing experience*.

The *healing attitude* is something we can develop to support any healing process, and is part of a healing mindset that can help us turn any health challenge (or life challenge as well) into an opportunity to discover something new about ourselves and our relationship with the world surrounding us.

But - just to clarify - this book is not about *positive thinking*. It's not about "everything happens for a reason", and it's not about "it's my/your karma". Above all, it is not about "if you can't heal it's because you are not working enough on yourself". There are many traps and clichés into which we can fall when it comes to talking about healing. My intention is to avoid those traps and to share what I found effective both for myself and for the people of different ages and beliefs I have been working with over more than 20 years of practice.

I have a solid scientific background and I am a (re)searcher in the field of healing practices from all around the world. I feel like a Renaissance woman who loves to connect the dots between science, art, the humanities, and spirituality. In my life journey, I was blessed with meeting extraordinary people devoted to healing others, from whom I learned a lot about healing, compassion, and open-mindedness.

My work to support healing is very creative. It can include and integrate different approaches and methods, depending on my clients' beliefs and orientation. I am very flexible and I can adapt my work easily, drawing both from my expertise in the field of bodywork, neuroscience, movement rehabilitation, and from my experiences alongside healers, medicine men and women, shamans, and spiritual teachers from different traditions.

Whatever approach or method I might integrate, I always look at the big picture, meaning at the single individual in their life context, which includes their relationships and the environment in which they live.

The healing attitude path is about acknowledging each individual in their uniqueness, including their history and background, the way they process their emotions and feelings, the way they look at themselves, and more.

Each individual is a world, and this is why there is not only one path to healing: there is a path for each one of us because we are all different.

This is why my work is focused on helping people to find their path - a path respecting their uniqueness and leading them to unveil and express their wholeness.

But even if every path is unique, there are common factors that I feel called to share in this book, so as to reach, help and support the most people I can.

The Meaning Of Healing

From an etymological point of view, *healing* comes from *holy* (sacred) and *whole* (integer, complete). So we could relate to *healing* as meaning to *restore integrity*, and so to "come back" to a state of intactness, and unbrokenness. But, if we meant this

only from a physical perspective, it would be reductive.

Healing actually doesn't only involve the mere physical aspect of our being.

If our body is the sacred, precious and unique instrument through which we can embark on any healing journey, it would be really reductive to use integrity and integration to mean *being in one piece* or *unbroken* while referring just to our physical body.

What about scars, fractures, and surgery then? And what about the removal of organs or body parts?

Integer refers to *integration*, the process of *becoming whole*. It's the process of acknowledging, mastering, and manifesting, or expressing, our wholeness in harmony with the world around us.

This is huge. It also means to embark on a journey of self-discovery and self-knowledge, leading us to figure out and express who we really are, beyond any conditioning from our previous experiences, from the education we received, and even from the beliefs which shaped our mind and body from our childhood.

The most impactful words I ever heard from some of my clients who were struggling with different kinds of symptoms - from chronic fatigue to brain injury - related to considering their symptoms and issues as the "*blessing*" (some of them even said "*kick in the ass*"...) they needed to take a leap towards their awakening. Can you believe it?

I assure you that when you hear a 70-year old lady who is still recovering after a stroke and massive brain damage saying "*this stroke was a blessing. I realized that I didn't know myself at all. I was living like a zombie before, doing the same things every day. What I am discovering right now is so exciting. I feel like finally, right now, I am awakening and becoming a real human being*" you might feel really astonished.

This lady recovered fully, by the way, despite a hopeless diagnosis, according to which she had no possibility to recover at all. When she told me that, she was still experiencing both movement and cognitive issues from which she then recovered completely. I think her attitude somehow made a difference. And she was not even a "believer". She just accepted that she had to go through the process with no resistance and no expectations - most likely this helped her recovery.

I heard very similar words coming from people who faced (or refused) chemotherapy, or went through transplants, or very invasive surgery procedures, as well as from people suffering from so-called chronic disease. Their healing and integration journey went through remarkable challenges, but their life and life quality improved. In some cases, they recovered completely. In other cases it was from most or just some of the symptoms affecting them.

But all of them have been able to turn their challenges into something useful and even rewarding - and continue to feel that their illness was a priceless turning point towards the discovery and expression of themselves.

For them, the acceptance of the loss of a body part or function has been a constructive *push* to explore, become aware of, and express their hidden and unsuspected resources.

From what I witnessed, I observed that in some cases, the sacrifice (that means literally *the act of making sacred*) of a physical body part or function has been concurrent with the achievement of a deeper understanding and awareness of intrinsic resources - usually symbolically connected with that body part or function - that otherwise would remain hidden.

In other words, while facing illness, symptoms, surgery, or anything challenging our health, we can play the role of a passive victim of the circumstances, investing time and energy to ask "*why did this happen to me?*" and continuing to complain feeding our grief and anger much longer than what we would need to process our loss in a healthy way. Or we can take responsibility for learning something more about ourselves and our ability to recover, cope, or deal with the process - even if the process might lead us to death.

There is always something to learn about ourselves. While facing potentially life-threatening issues it's not easy to accept that the final result could be a "healing" resulting in the end of this physical life. But that could happen, too.

The fun fact is that we usually forget that death could happen in any instant of our life for a hundred reasons, and not even for the reason we are worried about, involving our illnesses or symptoms. There are many occasions waiting for us to die, besides our health (I told you from the beginning that I will be a bit provocative...but I promise you that I will entertain you with some fun too because humor is of great help for healing). So why should we bother ourselves with worries?

To make it even more clear, this is not a book about healing as simply as the disappearance of all the symptoms, because this would be like saying "*only those who have no symptoms are whole and somehow worthy*". I also noticed that the more we are attached to a result, the more likely we are to walk away from the process.

Part of the healing attitude is about trusting the process with no attachment to a specific result because that attachment might paradoxically take us away from healing.

Yes, we can trust the process and also our intrinsic, inner healing resources - and take the needed actions and steps to support ourselves through the journey.

In this perspective, it's important to stop judging what is happening to us in terms of right and wrong, or good and bad, or blessing and punishment, otherwise we keep feeding a dualism that can be very confusing when we speak about healing.

We can instead introduce the concept of *functional* and *not functional*, stepping away from judgment and embracing observation, and the recognition of what can support us instead of creating obstacles to our healing process.

We cannot pretend that everything is going wonderfully when we don't feel good at all. We should not pretend that we are doing great when we are not in good shape, or when we feel in pain and alone.

So, this is not a book about "*fake it until you make it*", even if - as a practitioner who also uses hypnosis amongst the several techniques - I will teach you something about "*imagine or recall it until you feel it*". The use of memories and mental imagery can be powerful to support and promote healing and general wellbeing. Keep reading until the end and you will find resources about this.

Healing always begins with acknowledging and accepting our starting point. Our physical state. Our feelings. Our thoughts. Our emotions - including our fears and worries.

Without this acknowledgment and acceptance, we cannot move forward.

Then, healing also becomes about finding a new balance and reconnecting to our true self. It's about discovering the enlightening connections between our thoughts, emotions, feelings, our body structure and its nature, the environment in which we are living, and then Nature itself - that is what our body belongs to, and what it is made of.

Healing is about learning to hear, listen to, and understand the messages from our body, and expressing our intrinsic and unique nature.

It's a much richer process than just getting rid of symptoms. The more we take steps towards self-discovery and knowledge, the more our body might collaborate, finding a new balance and surprising us with miracles. I witnessed many cases of spontaneous remission of symptoms even in cases of life-threatening illnesses (my case included). I noticed that all the individuals experiencing spontaneous remission of their symptoms and issues were practicing, spontaneously or with the help and support coming from my experience and expertise, what I called *the healing attitude*.

Why is it important to detach ourselves from expectations, and focus on healing as a process instead of a goal? Why does it seem more functional to focus on self-discovery instead of just the disappearance of our symptoms?

There is more than one answer. But I have noticed that when we keep thinking about healing as the absence or disappearance of symptoms, we also keep feeding our own frustration - which comes from expectation - or self-judgment every time our symptoms pop up. We might even think that we are not able to heal.

If you are fond of the law of attraction, you might also think in terms of being (or not being) able to attract healing, or manifesting healing.

And this might be not functional.

In other words, we might consciously or unconsciously put unnecessary pressure on ourselves.

In fact, our system (I'm speaking of our nervous system as an intersection point connecting our mind, body, consciousness, soul, etc.) needs to be reassured first, in order to recover. Every challenge is perceived as a potential threat, and in order to tap into our deep healing resources, we need to experience reassurance first - as a concept we will explore more deeply in the following chapters. So, if we keep challenging our system putting pressure and expectations on it, we might sabotage the process.

A Paradigm Shift

How many times have I heard someone saying *"there is still something that I didn't understand, otherwise I would have healed and gotten rid of my symptoms"*. Maybe, but maybe not. It's not just a (or not always) matter of understanding.

It's true that very often our body enacts and manifests in the form of symptoms some dynamics belonging to the emotional realm - dynamics and conflicts of which we are not even aware. Emotional distress and traumatic events can be literally translated by our body and turned into symptoms.

So, instead of blaming or judging yourself for something that you did or did not do, that you understood or didn't, or for not being able to heal, or for deserving or not deserving healing, you can instead embrace a paradigm shift.

Start thinking that healing is above all an attitude, a mindset, and a journey aimed at the unveiling, acknowledging, and expressing our true nature and self.

We need this paradigm shift. Otherwise, we just keep trying to suppress symptoms, believing that healing means the disappearance of the symptoms which will allow us to return to our normal life - the life we used to live before the manifestation of our health issues: the life we were used to, as if nothing had happened.

The *coming back to normal* is not part of the healing attitude. It's just an attempt to come back to a comfort zone from which our symptoms desperately wanted to pull (or push) us out.

Sometimes symptoms are a *mise en scène*, meaning that our body stages, enacts, and expresses our emotional conflicts, whether we are aware of them or not.

Sometimes they are the expression of an imbalance due to distress and feeling overwhelmed by the many tasks and duties we are called to perform. There is still very little awareness about how dysregulation in the functions of our autonomic nervous system can lead us to a multitude of symptoms - both on the physical and mental levels.

There is a truth we have to accept: our lifestyle is not designed for our body - or, if you prefer, our body is not designed for our lifestyle. Our society is based on exploitation. We lost touch with Nature and its rhythm, forgetting that our body is part of Nature, and its settings are designed to keep a certain pace to keep the balance. We keep feeding the illusion that humankind is able to bend Nature and exploit it as if we were not part of it.

We behave like we are above and beyond Nature. Our model of society is based on exploitation and emergency. We don't look at the big picture, we just run to fix things when things are already broken - because of our irresponsibility and incompetence in taking care of those things. We need and want to keep functioning to fit into the box represented by our society model. So we run away from pain and symptoms, and we forget that pain and symptoms are just the red flag warning us.

Our body is the keeper of amazing healing resources. Our body is designed to keep that balance called homeostasis, the tendency toward a relatively stable equilibrium between interdependent elements, which guarantees the condition of optimal functioning for the whole organism.

But, to keep that balance, our needs - especially for rest and self-care - have to be respected, and our rest-less lifestyle, unfortunately, doesn't help.

In other words, sometimes we are not able to find our path to healing because we are unable to find the balance that our body needs to function or to restore its functionality.

It's not functional to spend our time blaming ourselves because we are not able to heal. It's not functional to spend our time blaming the world (our family, the society, the system, etc...) as the cause of our distress and diseases.

To maintain a blaming-and-judging attitude would probably be a waste of time and energy.

I have a very constructive mentality. Before doing something, or while doing something, I ask myself: what is the benefit of this?

There is a huge difference between blaming someone (most of the time ourselves) or something, and observing, noticing, or acknowledging if and how that someone or something might have affected our body-mind balance. While blaming and judging are not helpful, observing, noticing, and acknowledging help us take actions that are functional to obtain a constructive and desired change.

We can take responsibility for our choices, actions, and reactions without blaming, and we can observe, notice, and recognize without judging. I can't find any benefit of judging or blaming anything - but I can find benefits to observing, acknowledging, and noticing, to promote awareness.

Illnesses, pain, diseases, and uncomfortable or limiting symptoms, are not punishments. Perhaps we could consider them as signs of a deeper discomfort or as warnings, or complaints coming from the depth of our body and being - or from our *true self* who might feel too restricted and limited in the role we are playing in the world.

What if we considered healing as a work in progress towards a constant upgrade of our awareness and consciousness? What if the symptoms we have been experiencing came and went for a while, and then one day they stayed away for good? Or...what if symptoms were the cure themselves?

This hypothesis brings us beyond the concept of healing as the mere disappearance of the symptoms - beyond the expectation we could consciously or unconsciously nurture: to be free from symptoms.

But we can aspire to achieve much more than this.

What if symptoms were signals aimed at showing us the road to a new, more conscious, functional, and upgraded version of ourselves? What if, thanks to our symptoms, we could learn how to function at our best on all levels (mental, emotional, physical, and even on the level of our relationships), and then evaluate if our symptoms are still useful?

What if we could turn our symptoms into guardians and advisors helping us function at our best and express our best selves?

Let's go back to the meaning of the word healing which originates from *whole*, in Latin *integer*, bringing us again to integration. At the beginning of this chapter, I wrote that *integer* refers to *integration*, the process of *becoming whole*. Integration is the process of acknowledging, mastering, and manifesting our wholeness in harmony with the world around us. This wholeness refers to our whole being and means *the complete expression of our full potential in harmony with the surrounding world*.

Integration means to become aware of all our resources and to harmonize with all of them, including our talents, skills, passions (in other words what we own, love, and master) in order to express ourselves fully - nurturing ourselves in harmony with the world around us.

It can take a while. Sometimes we need to change scenarios to support the process. But I assure you that it's such a fascinating journey towards individuation, self-realization, and self-actualization.

Beyond the label of illness and disease, healing is a journey that leads us to discover who we are, harmonizing all the aspects of our personality, including our shadow - or dark side - to extract the best from ourselves and our life.

About Chronic Disease

We are living in the age of chronic disease.

I was still living in Italy (I moved to Canada in 2012) when I started working with several women diagnosed with fibromyalgia. Some of them were following my groups, some of them working with me individually.

Very soon they told me that since they started working with me, after very few sessions, their symptoms were gone or dramatically decreased. They were incredulous, but that happened, despite the fact that at the time there was no cure (at least in the area of Italy in which I was living and working) for this issue.

More recently, I happened to start suffering from symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis due to two viral infections and other causes. But I refused the label related to the illness itself and kept telling myself and others that I was suffering from the symptoms of it.

For me, that made a huge difference because as soon as I start identifying with someone who *is* ill or sick, it makes me feel like that illness is part of my identity. But when I tell myself that I *suffer* from certain symptoms, I feel like those symptoms can resolve as easily as they manifested.

For me, the difference between having an issue, like epilepsy, or suffering from symptoms of epilepsy, and labeling myself as an epileptic makes a huge difference (it actually *made* a difference, and I will tell you more about this in the next chapter).

The temptation to accept a label and begin to identify ourselves with a group of people suffering from the same illness or disease can be strongly appealing. I agree that not feeling alone, or that you are not the only one who is suffering from certain symptoms can help us feel supported and acknowledged for what we are experiencing. I still remember how, when I started reading posts and articles about or written by other people suffering from the same symptoms which I was uncomfortably experiencing, I felt relieved because I knew that I was not alone.

It's always good to feel part of a community, but sometimes this can become another comfort zone, or another trap, because we can start unconsciously building an illness-based identity.

The truth of the matter is that our symptoms can put us on the most appropriate path to finally discovering who we really are, and so they can help us find our identity beyond what we believed it to be.

Symptoms can be information, messages, and even the *cure* itself for other kinds of imbalances which were previously invisible to our eye - like taking more care of others than ourselves, or doing too much instead of listening to ourselves, or continuing to pretend to be different than who we are just because we don't know enough of ourselves yet.

Since 2009, life brought me to crossroads three times through hard lessons involving my health. I could have started relating to myself as suffering from a certain disease, or accepted the symptoms as an opportunity to deepen my self-knowledge, practice the *healing attitude*, and turn my health challenges into opportunities to find and express my hidden resources and live a more whole life. I chose *the healing attitude path*, and this brought most of the symptoms into remission (with some funny side effects that I will tell you later).

I wrote this book to share with everybody interested or involved in healing that which has helped me and many others.

Whether you are in search of a path to healing for yourself or to support others, you are not alone. I sincerely hope that my attempt to share the *healing attitude* through this book can help you find practical strategies and create a healing mindset that is helpful for you as well as for your clients and patients.

And now, let's proceed.