

# The Energy Odyssey:

## New Directions in Energy Psychology

Willem Lammers and Beate Kircher (Eds.)

**ias** institute  
for the application of  
the social sciences

**Energy Psychology: The Energy Odyssey**  
**Edited by Willem Lammers & Beate Kircher**

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# Preface

*Maienfeld, Ruggell, January 2002*

*This book has been a very inspiring project. The editing process gave the concept of the Odyssey an entirely new meaning, for both of us. In the beginning the title of the book was just a name, unmistakably inspired from Kubrick's 1967 movie. In the course of months, a new, metaphorical quality of the Odyssey as a Way for all of us manifested. The chapters of the individual authors represent different views on the development of the amazing field of energy psychology. We have learned a lot on our way, and we wish you a similar learning pleasure.*

*Willem Lammers and Beate Kircher*



# Contents

ALPHA: THE WAY HOME	1
<i>WILLEM LAMMERS</i>	
BETA: CREATING	5
<i>BEATE KIRCHER</i>	
GAMMA. QUICK FIXES AND CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE	7
<i>WILLEM LAMMERS</i>	
1. ACCESSING CREATIVITY THROUGH THE HUMAN VIBRATIONAL MATRIX	17
<i>DOROTHEA HOVER-KRAMER</i>	
2. ENERGY THERAPY, EDGE-FIGURES AND THE PHASES OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS	29
<i>JOAN HITLIN</i>	
DELTA: HEALING	37
<i>WILLEM LAMMERS</i>	
3. ENERGY-BASED HEALING: FOUNDATIONS AND APPLICATIONS	39
<i>MARTIN F. LUTHKE AND LINDA STEIN-LUTHKE</i>	
4. INTEGRATIVE HEALING: AN ENERGY AND SPIRITUAL APPROACH	49
<i>PHIL FRIEDMAN</i>	
5. THE MONOPOLY THEORY OF THE UNIVERSE AND THE THREE STEPS OF HEALING	67
<i>ALAN HANDELSMAN</i>	
6. QIGONG AND ENERGY PSYCHOTHERAPY: FOUNDATIONS OF ENERGY PSYCHOTHERAPY HEALING	73
<i>LARRY STOLER</i>	
EPSILON: WHAT MOVES US	81
<i>WILLEM LAMMERS</i>	
7. AN INTRODUCTION TO THOUGHT ENERGY	83
<i>GREG NICOSIA</i>	

8.	TRIPLE WARMER: IT'S HOTTER THAN YOU THINK	91
	<i>DONNA EDEN &amp; DAVID FEINSTEIN</i>	
9.	AT PLAY IN THE FIELDS OF THE MIND: PERSONAL MYTHS AS FIELDS OF INFORMATION	99
	<i>DAVID FEINSTEIN</i>	
10.	THE PHENOMENA OF PSYCHOKINESIS	111
	<i>MARLA BRUCKER</i>	
ZETA	THE ART OF HEALING	119
	<i>WILLEM LAMMERS</i>	
11.	GETTING ON THE SAME PAGE: HOW ALL THE DIFFERENT ENERGY PSYCHOLOGY APPROACHES FIT TOGETHER	123
	<i>DAVID GRUDERMEYER</i>	
12.	CONFESSIONS FROM THE HEART OF ETHICS	127
	<i>PATI BEAUDOIN</i>	
13.	ENERGY MEDICINE FOR THE EMOTIONAL BODY	137
	<i>SHARON CASS TOOLE</i>	
14.	FOUR STAGES OF TRAUMA TREATMENT	143
	<i>MARY SISE</i>	
15.	ENERGY MERIDIAN TAPPING AND EMDR	151
	<i>JIM LANE</i>	
16.	SELF-HEALING: MERIDIAN-BASED THERAPIES AND EMDR	159
	<i>DAN BENOR</i>	
17.	RELATIONSHIP-ORIENTED MERIDIAN-BASED PSYCHOTHERAPY AND COUNSELING	165
	<i>THOMAS WEIL</i>	
ETA	MASTERY	177
	<i>WILLEM LAMMERS</i>	
18.	TOUCH AND BREATHE	179
	<i>JOHN DIEPOLD</i>	

CONTENTS

19.	THE POWER OF USING AFFIRMATIONS WITH ENERGY THERAPY	189
	<i>PAT CARRINGTON</i>	
20.	FREEDOM FROM FEAR FOREVER: THE ACU-POWER WAY	199
	<i>JIM DURLACHER</i>	
THETA:	PENELOPE'S SHROUD	211
	<i>JOAN HITLIN</i>	
21.	CONSCIOUS HEALING AND REPATTERNING THERAPY: CHART	217
	<i>PAULA SHAW</i>	
22.	ENERGY PSYCHOLOGY TREATMENT OF ALLERGY-LIKE REACTIONS	225
	<i>SANDI RADOMSKI</i>	
23.	TREATING ADHD THROUGH ALLERGY ELIMINATION	233
	<i>SHERRY TENPENNY</i>	
24.	EVALUATING THE EFFECTS OF ENERGY PSYCHOLOGY USING PROGNOS ANALYSIS	241
	<i>TOM NARVAEZ, PETER ROHSMANN &amp; JIM STEGENGA</i>	
IOTA:	HOME	249
	<i>HOMER</i>	
APPENDIX		
A:	AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES	251
B:	ENERGY PSYCHOLOGY ACRONYMS	259
C:	ENERGY PSYCHOLOGY RESSOURCES	261







# The Way Home

*Willem Lammers*

*Whoever undertakes to set himself up as judge in the field of truth and knowledge is shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods.*

– Albert Einstein

The first edition of this book was first published on the occasion of the First European Conference on Energy Psychology named *2001: An Energy Odyssey*<sup>1</sup>. Homer's original Odyssey is the story of a man finding his way home.

After a ten-year long siege, the proud city of Troy was finally conquered by the Greeks, with the help of an ingenuous stratagem. They built an enormous, wooden horse and put it near the city walls. Then word was spread it was a gift from the gods. The Trojans believed the lie, and took the horse into the city. The gift proved to be a curse: The horse was a hiding place for Greek soldiers. In the night they left the wooden structure and opened the city gates to let their army in. The war was over, and Troy was destroyed. The creative man who designed the horse was Odysseus, the sharp-minded king of Ithaca.

Odysseus, or *Ulysses* by his Latin name, left the sacked city with his companions. On the way they insulted the mighty Poseidon, the lord of the seas. He took revenge, and it took Odysseus ten years to get home, to his wife Penelope and his son Telemachos. The story of his return to Ithaca was recounted by Homer in the eighth century before Christ, in the second work of Western literature, the *Odyssey*. The book is, according to Peter Jones (1991) “rich in character, adventure and incident, reconciling reality with fantasy, the heroic with the humble, the intimate with the divine”.

In Western culture, the word “odyssey” has received two different meanings. One is the long journey through adverse circumstances, in which an individual shows amazing resistance to the challenges of the environment. We’ve seen this in Stanley Kubrick’s film from which we borrowed the title of the First European Conference on Energy Psychology. The second meaning of the word is far less spectacular compared to the demons, witches, giants and plagues of the first, but very interesting in an age in which people were seen as no more than toys of the gods. It’s the way home, and for the first time in the history of literature the home becomes the center of the world.

Our own odyssey offers both options. In the world of energy psychology we have started a trip, of which we don’t know when, where and how it will end, and which already showed us a strange world. What we know is that in the end this trip will lead us home, a home within ourselves, within this world and within the universe.

Human searching is often described as a way. In the Bible, the children of Israel followed the way out of slavery, through the deserts of experience, to the Promised Land. Islam regards the pilgrimage to Mecca as one of the five pillars of faith. Chinese spirituality expresses the paradox of the journey in the Tao. The Buddhists seek the Way to Enlightenment, the first Christians were known as the People of the Way, and Jesus identified himself as the Way (Silf, 2001).

The Odyssey shows us first signs of a Western process of individuation, as Zeus complains to his god-colleagues: “What a lamentable thing it is that men should blame the gods and regard *us* as the source of their troubles, when it is their own transgressions which bring them suffering that was not their destiny.” (Homer, 1991, I, 33–35).

Odysseus’ journey challenged him in many ways, and his journey is a metaphor for the human condition. Odysseus is in us, in each of us on our way through existence. Although, in our culture, the physical dangers have ceased for most of us, the challenge remains. As Joan Hitlin puts it in Chapter 3, “at each edge, you can expect to find edge-figures – subpersonalities, shadows, demons, gremlins, introjects, inner children, archetypes – who are invested, for better or for worse, in keeping you from going past your edges”. We are kept from our way home the way Odysseus was, and we have to find the way again and again, each of us in our own way.

We all boarded an odyssey for ourselves. We’re on our way to our spiritual home and that way surprises us with ever new adventures. The challenges requires the utmost of our creativity, our flexibility and our endurance.

### **Note**

1. The First European Conference on Energy Psychology took place on July 5–8, 2001, in Fürigen, Switzerland. It was directed by the author and sponsored by IAS, the Institute for the Application of the Social Sciences in Maienfeld, Switzerland. This conference was co-sponsored by ACEP, the Association for Comprehensive Energy Psychology.

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