



March 10-16, 2005

## **THE POINT OF IT ALL TAPPING, PRICKING AND PRESSURING YOUR WAY TO GOOD HEALTH**

BY SIBYLLE PREUSCHAT

Although developed thousands of years ago, maps of the body charted by healers in ancient India and China continue to inspire.

Any therapy involving touch, pressure, heat, needles or magnets on specific bodily points most likely originated in these traditions. Think acupuncture, shiatsu, acupressure, polarity therapy, etc. The point (pardon the pun) is always to encourage proper flow of life energy (also called "qi" or "prana") in the body. If the energy flows well, say practitioners, good health follows.

Science doesn't know how these therapies work, but respects their effectiveness – both the World Health Organization and the National Institutes of Health in the U.S. have released lists of illnesses treatable by acupuncture. Proponents of the Eastern way say that as we increasingly come to understand our bodyminds as complex bioelectric systems, qi will begin to make sense to Westerners.

If you're new to these practices, how to decide amongst all the offerings out there? Here are some pointers, so to speak.

### **WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY**

"**Polarity therapy** captures more of an Ayurvedic understanding, from India. It works with chakras and the various energy currents that link them (rather than the energy channels emphasized in Chinese traditions). For there to be movement, there must be a positive push and a negative pull through a neutral space. We make bipolar contacts (working with two points simultaneously) with our hands or fingers to encourage energy movement. It can be a very deep touch to disperse energy, a second type that stimulates to encourage energy flow, then there's a very light touch which encourages a gentle calm, balancing effect."

**TOM RUSSELL** , *polarity therapist, director, Ontario Polarity Therapy Association, kundalini yoga instructor, Toronto*