**Excerpts from**

**The Art of Being a Healing Presenee:**

**A Guide for Those in Caring Relationships**

**By James Miller with Susan C. Cutshall**

“Healing presence is the condition of being consciously and compassionately in the present moment with another or with others, believing in and affirming their potential for wholeness, wherever they are in life.”

“Seen in this light, healing is not something you can cause in another. You can be alert for healing potential and share this awareness as you see it arising. You can bring attention to what you already notice taking place deep within another, helping that person name it for himself, claim it for herself. You can foster those conditions that nurture any movement toward wholeness, whether those conditions are in you, the other person, people nearby, or the world around. You can affirm the authenticity of each human being—body, mind, heart and soul stretching into the fullness for which each of us is created.”

“You don’t *do* presence – you *are* presence. It’s as simple as that.”

“A strong desire to act, to be effective, can also hinder being present. We want to exert our influence upon the world, and so rather than allowing ourselves to stay with the moment, we swing into action. We hurry to do something with that moment. Applying skills we’ve developed, we make something happen. Wanting our expectations to be fulfilled, we do what we can to influence the outcome.”

“The help of healing presence is like pulling alongside.

 The help of healing presence looks like this: visualize one person coming up beside another who’s walking along and falling in step beside that person. In such a situation, what is it that helps?

 You help when you walk with them, matching your pace to theirs. You help when you walk in the direction they’re moving, even if it seems directionless, rather than leading them the way you want to go. You help when you walk close enough that you can hear and be heard with ease, but you don’t walk so closely that they feel crowded. Sometimes you look at them and sometimes you don’t, but either way, they know beyond a doubt they’re being seen.

 Even if those you accompany are agitated or troubled, you consciously and lovingly choose not to be. Even if they are excited or speak rapidly, you communicate in your own natural rhythm and voice. You take time in responding, waiting for words to come, or not to come. This waiting can be an invitation for others to do their own waiting, if they wish. You can help by resting in your own quiet center as you move along together. Without speaking a word about it, you’re saying: “You too have this same quiet center in you.”

 When you practice healing presence, the effect is subtle. You don’t appear to be doing very much, and the other doesn’t necessarily appear to be receiving a great deal. Yet as you stay attuned, something takes place. Maybe you see the other relax a little and breathe more freely. Maybe they open up and speak more honestly. Perhaps they share a feeling, have an insight, lighten a little. You may have little idea of anything changing, yet the other can be shifting profoundly.”

 “The more you are a healing presence in the midst of everyday events, the more you come to appreciate that the common ground on which you stand with another is pulsing with all that is divine. You realize that holiness is at work as you consciously and compassionately accompany others. Then sometimes when you least expect it, a sense of awe overwhelms you—awe, perhaps strong assurance, or waves of gratitude, or an immense sense of peace.”

**STEPS FOR BEING A HEALING PRESENCE**

 Inasmuch as it’s more art than science, you’ll have your own ways of bringing healing presence into your life and the lives of others. Following is a rough order for how you might proceed.

1. OPEN YOURSELF. Begin not with the other person but with you. Become present to yourself in a way that is honest, insightful, and accepting. Open to your uniqueness, humanness, prejudices, brokenness, and whole-ness. Do this by owning your life story, continually fathoming who you are in a holistic manner, and developing or utilizing a support system to which you hold yourself accountable.

2. INTEND TO BE A HEALING PRESENCE. Aware that healing presence doesn’t just occur out of the blue, you intentionally decide to be such a presence with another. Intend to promote healing in its many forms, while being understanding of yourself as you emerge in the day-to-day intricacies of this practice.

3. PREPARE A SPACE FOR HEALING PRESENCE TO TAKE PLACE. Clear a space to interact with the other or others, assuring as much privacy as possible and creating an atmosphere of calm. Prepare a space also within by placing your self out of the way and clearing away your personal expectations for what the other should be or do.

4. HONOR THE ONE IN YOUR CARE. Approach those you accompany as people with dignity and worth. Show your regard for them by honoring their individuality, equality, humanness, separateness, and sacredness. Respect their natural and unique healing capacity.

5. OFFER WHAT YOU HAVE TO GIVE. Freely and simply make available what you have to offer, realizing it’s up to the other or others to accept or not. Offer presence, loving acceptance, empathy, dependability, an unselfish focus on them, your firm belief in them, your willingness to follow their lead, and, as much as anything, hope.

6. RECEIVE THE GIFTS THAT COME. Accept with a grateful heart what is yours to receive. This may include living your life more fully as a result of this practice. Other gifts may include uncovering your genuine self, enjoying wonderful relationships, relationships, finding personal satisfaction, realizing you have made a difference, receiving your own healing, and exploring some of life’s most valuable lessons.

 7. LIVE A LIFE OF WHOLENESS & BALANCE. There is more to life than being a healing presence. So live your days fully, caring for your own needs, setting appropriate boundaries, encouraging your own growth, and nurturing a loving attitude toward life, including the sacred dimension. Affirm and live out the truth of the transforming potential of healing presence. Be grateful for the possibilities.