

Stress and Rheumatic Complaints

Dr. Anne Vervarcke

P.V.G. Born 27-5-66, not married, no children, employee.

First Consultation: 5-1-06

P: I'm interested in alternative therapies... I'm following a Shiatsu training myself... I have a pain in my shoulder and for it I went to the doctor... who sent me to the manual therapist but it wasn't cured... I went back and he reacted: what do you mean it isn't better? It has to be better by now! This was it... so I decided to see a homeopath... I could get seriously ill if I don't pay a bit more attention to my health... my finger joints are aching... it comes and it goes... I don't panic... but I don't want to end up with arthritis... I don't want to get something serious...

H: *When did it start?*

P: Some 6 months ago... it started with this one finger (middle) and then it went away...

H: *What is the feeling there?*

P: It really hurts... when I touch... I can hardly bend it... or carry things.

H: *Can you describe the pain?*

P: It is sensitive to touch... and when I bend it... it is worse with pressure... now it pains in three fingers... not that it is red or swollen... it disappears after a few days... sometimes it is left, sometimes right...

H: *What is the worst problem with it?*

P: It feels stiff... it is sensitive and

I have difficulty with movements like cutting a cake.

H: *Anything else?*

P: I have a lot of stress... I work 4/5 since four years... I started Shiatsu training and my purpose was to start my own practice... So I moved for this reason but just before that I break my ankle and my mother took care for me... it was a complicated fracture and I had to be operated last February to remove the metal... but I had to go back in August and then by accident they cut a tendon... I was at home again for another few months... at last with two years of delay I want to begin with my 4th year of my training but they didn't have enough students so, they postponed it another year... meanwhile I am paid 4/5 but I work 6/5... I don't even have time for my Shiatsu and since December I'm home with a frozen shoulder... I took medication and slept for a week but I don't want to end with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome... At work I try to go home in time but then my colleagues will be in problem...it's the same every where: maximum return with minimal work force... (Then the patient explains the whole situation and says) I'm not strong enough to say: I just won't do it... I feel it is my responsibility for the work to be done... it is my task... (Hand Gesture/ HG) I don't want people to wait for me... I want the company to function well...



H: *From these; what do you consider the most important?*

P: My responsibility... they gave this task to me... there are deadlines... thus I have to make things OK by hook or by crook... even when I have to work during the night... I feel unhappy when things are not as they should be... especially when somebody would make a remark... I'd sink through the floor.

H: *What would be your feeling?*

P: As a shortcoming... a disappointment... you promised to do this thing and you didn't make it.

H: *When the other is disappointed what happens?*

P: I think it is terrible... those people count on me... they expect me to do this... they give this to me because they know it will be done well and in time... I promised (a lot of HG).

H: *And when somebody doesn't do what he promised?*

P: (a tear in patients eye)... when you don't do this... a shortcoming...

H: *Can you tell me a bit more about this?*

P: It is because I'm raised like this... my parents were very sincere, especially my mother.

H: *That is why but can you tell me how it feels?*

P: Shortcoming... not worth...

H: *What do you mean by shortcoming?*

P: Not doing what they expect.

H: *What do you mean by this?*

P: When you promise something you have to do it other wise the other will be disappointed...I know it is stupid but this is very deep engraved in me. Then you make somebody sad... you're not worth the others persons trust.

H: *Can you talk in general about disappointment?*

P: You expected something and the other didn't do it... So you are sad... your expectations aren't met...

H: *Why sad?*

P: I don't know when disappointed, you feel sad.

H: *How is the feeling disappointed and sad?*

P: I don't know because I am not disappointed and sad, it is the other.

H: *I know but what does the other feel?*

P: You haven't fulfilled their image... it is trust that is crushed.

H: *How is that?*

P: Terrible (weeps)... this is obviously terrible... I didn't expect it to touch me so much (searches handkerchiefs).

H: *Why it is so terrible?*

P: When I was a child... I have a history of incest... persons you should be able to trust weren't trustworthy... I follow therapy (group

sessions) and with one of the men I had a good contact... until I heard he had an affair with one of the women from the group...I trusted him...he is married and has children... I didn't expect him to do such a thing and my trust is less ever since.

H: *Why is that so?*

P: I could do exercises with that person... hugging and so without feeling abused... I didn't expect him to start a relationship with somebody while he is married... It affected me more than I expected...

H: *Can you tell a bit about the impact the incest had on you?*

P: I got over it... I mean almost... I have two sisters: one is twelve and the other thirteen years older.... One of them was like my second mother... I didn't have a good contact with my mother and I went to her very often. She married when I was six or seven... it was with my brother-in-law... They used to go an amusement park with me or shopping... They listened to me... my brother-in-law played with me... he gave me attention... but this went too far. Somehow you feel this isn't right but on the other hand you don't want to lose this either... until one day my sister found us. She took me and dropped me with my mother... I was fourteen by that time. Nobody ever talked about it... but indirectly they made remarks... like I was deceitful. I lost everything all at once: attention, presents, my world collapsed... I was the bad one. I couldn't go to my sisters, I seduced him. My mother must have known when from the one day to the other I was dumped that something must have happened... from one day to the other I was nothing...

H: *In all this what is the most difficult for you?*

P: That I couldn't explain my sister up to now what really hap-

pened... that it is not only my fault... and that my mother didn't have the courage to defend her child... (Weeps a lot) I worked a lot on psycho-therapy and it is much better than it was ten years ago.

H: *How was it then?*

P: I was miserable... after I finished my studies, I returned to my mothers place and I lived there until I was 27. She wasn't happy when I left, she felt I abandoned her. Before I went in psycho therapy I was afraid of contacts. I wanted a relationship and I was a member of a singles club. It was fine as long as we were in a group... once in a session we also had a one to one exercise and I was so afraid, so afraid, I completely freaked out, shaking with fear... that something would happen that I couldn't control.

H: *What if...*

P: Those things I don't want should happen.

H: *And if things happen that you don't want...*

P: I'm lost... a bird for the cat... I surely don't feel strong enough to go against it or even to react.

H: *What do you mean by lost?*

P: It is like you lost your singularity. Your own self... something unique... like this is taken away from you.

H: *A bit more about this.*

P: That you are no longer yourself... there is no more respect.

H: *How is that experience: something is taken away, no longer yourself?*

P: Very threatening... frightening... defenceless... sad... nothing.

H: *How is that?*

P: (weeps a lot) not being worth anything... not taken into account... treated like a dish cloth.

H: So when your own self is lost... taken away: how is this?

P: Lost... lonely... abandoned... worthless... deserted.

H: Can you describe lost a bit more?

P: Lost the way... afraid not to find it back... afraid not to find something back... desperate.

H: What is that something?

P: Your singularity... what makes you unique... special... belongs to only you. Your personality.

H: Can you describe that?

P: The way you react, how you think, what you experienced... it is vast: your voice, nuances, how you move, what you think... it is thinking, moving, living, your values.

H: So you said that the lost feeling is the fear all this will be taken away?

P: The fear is to lose control, so a part of me can be taken away.

H: What is that part?

P: My integrity.

H: What is that?

P: My own unique 'me'.

H: Can you describe this?

P: My own deep nucleus inside (HG).

H: And what is that?

P: My soul... no, this is not right... one cannot take somebody's soul...

H: If somebody would, how is that person?

P: He's a criminal in the highest degree... a murderer...

H: When the deepest nucleus is taken away, how does it feel?

P: When you lost this, you lost everything.

H: What do you mean by everything?

P: Everything that makes you 'you'... all aspects from your personality make you 'you'

H: When your sister took you and dropped you with your mother: how was this for you?

P: I lost a whole lot... my sister, who was like a mother, my weekends with them, and my listening ear, attention... very frightening; I didn't have anything to hold on to.

H: What was the worst in that event?

P: That I didn't have a sister anymore... she was my everything... I could tell her everything.

H: How was that?

P: I didn't have any foundation anymore... the bottom fell from under my feet...

H: And what about your mother who didn't defend you?

P: I feel she'd chosen for herself: no quarrels, a nice family... very egoistic... the easiest way.

H: What do you mean by: she didn't have the courage to defend me as you put it?

P: I think: when you are a mother in heart and soul you defend your child... when your child is nine years old, it can't defend itself... instead of giving me the responsibility.

H: What was your feeling?

P: That I had to do it myself... that she is not a good mother.

H: What is your feeling?

P: Mothers like mine shouldn't be mothers... they destroy their children (weeps).

H: Can you tell anything about your dreams?

P: I dream about situations where I can't get out... have to crawl

through a very narrow hole... or a very low cellar with no space... or that I'm tight up or stopped... I have a feeling of helplessness and fear: that I can't get through or away... it's a real panic... very suffocating... very frightening... life threatening... and then the dream stops all of a sudden without ending.

H: Do you have any fears?

P: I have some kind of constant fear... I perspire under the armpits at work with the idea: will I be able to do it, am I good enough... will I be right... will I perform well...

Another fear is to fall, I always had that, even when doing gym in school... and now it is an enormous fear... like for instance skiing... I can't even think about it... from the moment there is no firm foundation under my feet... I feel as soon as I would stand on those skis I'll break something.

Analysis

First of all the kingdom is quite clear with this patient: from the start she uses mineral words and keeps on doing so consistently through the whole anamnesis. Even more important is that the core issue is one of losing foundation, basis, and fundament. There we know for sure that on the deepest level it is a mineral issue. The story with the incest and the loss of attention and care from her sister and brother in law left her with nothing to hold on to, losing everything and becoming nobody herself. Would it have been a plant remedy she could have experienced this as a very painful event, or a bewildering one or as if a union is broken beyond repair, which would make us look for a remedy from the Papaveracea in the first possibility, the Magnoliacea or the Conifers. Would she have experienced this incident as frightening because once belonging to the safety of a family and now being all alone and vulnerable, not knowing how to survive, our minds would get an animal probably mammal remedy.

Her physical complaints are stiff joints, worse on bending and pressure, she broke her ankle badly and recently she had a frozen shoulder. Her structure seems to be very weak and unable to hold.

She feels stressed because at work she tends to overdo. She doesn't feel strong enough to refuse work; she uses words like task, responsibility, function, minimum and maximum, shortcoming, and worth.

There is a remarkable sensitivity to disappointment. When we explore this we see there are emotions: sadness, helplessness, trust that is crushed. Since this is not really explained by the kind of work she does, it must be part of her state. And then comes the incest story. The feeling when she was caught and dropped by her sister is that she lost everything at once and that her whole world collapsed. This gives us the hint for the side of the periodic table beyond column 10, the loss or collapse.

She's shaking with fear in contact, fear that things will go out of control, because she is not strong enough and everything will be lost. It's a desperate fear that the self will be taken away. By this she means: the personality, the singularity: it's all about being somebody, a personality, a unique being, that is the nucleus. The issue is rather becoming an independent and separate being, not really building up an own personality yet, although she uses this word. But when asked, she defines it as what is unique in a person: his face, his voice, and the way he moves and that is very basic and preverbal. Hence we are on row 2.

She feels abandoned by her mother. The words she uses are very strong: a mother like hers is not worth being a mother; they destroy their children by letting them down. This shows the degree of dependency to the mother. It is still more or less crucial, she will have to do it on her own now and she is not sure she will make it.

This is Ozone: the umbilical cord is cut and you are on your own. You have to be strong to become a person; somebody, a unique being or you won't be at all. There is a lot of fear and desperation, an all or nothing feeling, a minimum and maximum performance in it since it is a matter of life and death. It's a feeling of collapse because the bond and the trust is lost and it's about coming into yourself with movement, thoughts and values.

Her dreams wonderfully express all the anxieties during the birth process: the narrow place, the dark cellar, the suffocation, the feeling of getting stuck, the fear of falling and the life threatening situation. She doesn't know how it ends... She gets a dose of Ozone MK.

Follow up 9-3-2006

P: The evening after the consultation I cried, cried, cried so much... next morning I took the remedy but I didn't feel anything... After a few weeks it occurred to me my fingers were better and I had more energy... Then one day I had a flu with high fever and I had to stay a week in bed... even after that I wasn't recovered and had to stay another week at home and even the 3rd week I wasn't OK but now I feel much better in my skin... I'm more cheerful... there is a definite change.

H: What about your shoulder?

P: Still stiff... tense... I'm following a program now to loose weight and I have to move now...

H: What about your finger joints?

P: The ring finger left where it started still hurts but less than it did before... I have the feeling that I start to walk more upright, my posture ameliorated... I do all kind of things: body work, meditation, that synergy seems to help me... but there is still a way to go...

H: What do you mean by that?

P: I'd like to start with a shiatsu

practise... I wished I didn't feel so heavy... I'd like to feel lighter... work less... have some more self-respect and self-confidence. I'd like to be able to come at a party with the feeling I'm OK instead of sitting in a corner feeling 'I'm too fat, I'm plump, I don't have anything to say'... that's why I don't have a partner... First I need to loose weight, do sports. But you know, yesterday I left my job leaving a document unfinished... I went earlier today but before I would have worried more... I see the same things with my colleagues, the problem at my job is structural, and it's not me not working in a structured way.

H: What about the family?

P: I surprised myself, I answered back my mother! One Sunday I was there and my mother told me my aunt was going to give a feast for her 80th birthday... I'd liked to go but it was just on a shiatsu weekend, so I told her I couldn't come. My mother reacted: 'but you have to come, you can't miss your aunts feast'. Besides that: 'what are you ever going to do with that shiatsu diploma, what importance does that have?'... I went into the kitchen and fell the ground breaking down under my feet... I ran like a chicken without a head... every time I answered something to defend, my mother gave it to me and then all of a sudden I said: 'mother, that shiatsu training is important for me and I don't have to justify myself for what I do!' And she was quiet. She didn't react and she didn't start the subject again. I was happy I replied... I would never have dared to do that before... in our family. Their will is law... we are not supposed to have an idea of our own... we are three children and all of us still behave like this!!!

H: What would happen if you didn't?

P: Then my mother plays the victim... 'I do so much for you' and so on and she would start crying. This

time I really felt the floor sinking under my feet... I didn't have anything to hold on to... I didn't know where the cups were, where is the tea... nothing to hold on to at all... I lost it and then I reacted vehemently... I had to do something in order to have something to hold on to again.

Follow up 18-5-2006

P: On the one hand I'm better, on the other it's like I'm not moving forward much. What is better: I talked with my boss and he promised things were going to ameliorate. I worked so hard last week I slept the whole weekend. I planned to start my practice in October and now somehow I have to find a way to work less... The boss promised to employ somebody extra in one or two months... but then I have to train him or her first... I want to work 4/5th but for instance to go home in time, still is very difficult. I'll give you an example: last week I came from Holland dead tired from an audit and I wanted to go to Brussels to my office only to bring some dossiers but when I went there I saw some urgent work and again it was 7.30 before I went home. I can't manage to leave things for next day... I think my company has to succeed in this Benelux story so I have to work a bit more. I'm in the manager's team (the patient explains in every detail about her work).

H: *How do you feel in that situation where everybody is already working at his maximum capacity and still you feel more guidance is necessary, more co-operation etc.?*

P: It is difficult because I feel for the company; it is a piece of myself... I have been working there for 15 years... is it the spirit of the boss? I don't know... everybody is very much involved with the company... sometimes I think: 'I want to start shiatsu, I'm going to look for another job'... but then I lose everything I build up for all those years: my pen-

sion, my seniority, my benefits... and also when I start in another company I have to prove myself again... I need this job, I'm alone, I need that security, and this is the reality.

H: *Anything more?*

P: I skip a weekend now and then with my mother... when I don't come she is complaining but it is not a drama... this is since last time, I told you about that. I don't feel obliged anymore to stay for supper when I go. She nags about it: 'I just bought this and that', you know. These are little steps but I feel things change.

When I went for body work we had to do exercises. One was: letting yourself fall and the others would catch you. After that the whole right side of my body ached and they told me: this is your mother's side of your body, you lack trust. I was angry, after so many years, she is still influencing my system. The next exercise was: searching for a partner in the room with a blindfold on. But I just couldn't stand anybody touching me at that moment, I was wrapped in isolation... every time somebody touched I'd jump up to the ceiling... like an electric shock.

H: *Can you tell a bit more about this trust?*

P: To tolerate, allow somebody... I was so turned into myself... what I did was: I quickly found somebody and I stayed close to this person... the feeling was: I should be held and protected, held like a child in order to avoid those other people who are searching to bang against me (HG arms around herself)

H: *What do you mean by allow, tolerate somebody?*

P: Somebody touching you...

H: *What was the feeling?*

P: Don't touch! Leave me on my own... I put a great big wall around

me... to isolate myself from the world outside... be on my own... so I don't have to see or to hear all the rest... I was lucky to find somebody so quickly, I cramped and held her hands like I would have squeezed them... this is what I do as deterrent: cramp up and wall off.

Follow up 13-7-2006:

P: I'm very fine... did you give me another remedy? My fingers were much worse in the beginning and now the pain has completely gone. Also my morals are very good: the heaviness has gone! I walk more upright, it's like I became taller... I keep my head more upright... it has changed in many domains. At my job I try to keep calmer... I start at 9 and go home at 17.30... but it's summer now... anyway: it's much less than before... last summer I didn't manage... I work in a lower gear also... and I sleep a lot, really a lot... sometimes I have to sleep for three hours when I come home from work... but I sport much more too: twice a week I go for fitness or Body Vision. I want to cook healthier for myself but I don't succeed as much as I would like... anyway the thing that makes me most happy is that I got rid of this heaviness... this is really remarkable!

H: *Can you describe how it feels?*

P: A more cheerful mind... I talk to people easier... for instance in a shop, I never did this but now I spontaneously would make some remarks... I'm more open towards people... I feel better, no, it's not that I feel better but I have more self-confidence... I'm not going to be shot because I make a remark... I'm better in my skin.

H: *You didn't stress that heaviness so much....*

P: No... maybe not... it was not that I was depressed or so but the difference is... I was more heavier... now I have less grief... this is lighter, it has gone... it is a remark-

able change... You know what is funny: when I said something to that lady in that shop, that remark, I resembled my father... he used to talk with everybody in every shop and he was loved for it in the village.... He had a heart attack at the age of 41 and couldn't go to work after that, so he did the house hold duties and since I was much younger than the others he virtually raised me... mother went out to work, was stern and strict and he was easy going and playful... I always went with him shopping and I remember he could get along with everybody and talked with everybody. He died when I was 17; this is 23 years ago now. Only last year I did a goodbye ritual... you know he was operated for his heart and they discovered cancer and said he had only a few weeks to live... I couldn't get it at that time... everybody was crying but not telling me exactly what was going on... I wasn't involved... my mother and sister arranged everything, the coffin, the funeral, the obituary... it was like only when his coffin was let down in the ground that I started to realize. But my mother was crying so much... I was in secondary school and I had to help her with everything... after that I studied and lived on a room but later I came back home... my mother pictured him as a difficult person, angered very quickly. Since I did that ritual, I have a picture of my father on my desk and it did me good.

H: *What about your mother now?*

P: I don't go every week any more and although she nags about it I don't care. Last time I told her: but you can call me and she did and you know what: we had a nice conversation at the telephone... now my sister is complaining she is pressurizing her more.

H: *About shiatsu?*

P: I still plan to start in October...

another student and me are rehearsing all the material from those 4 years and it's amazing how much we already learned... I'm not a beginner after all... I'm also going to assist in the first year.

H: *Did you have any dreams?*

P: Not many! I remember I had to crawl underneath something, through something; there was not enough space... It's the same thing: I always have to crawl somewhere with little space... in a well... or a cellar... and always with a lot of effort... I have the feeling I'm held back... like by my mother... obstructed... not getting more space than the bare minimum to breath... like little holes where we have to struggle through, flat on you belly... just enough space for your head and then all the rest had to get through also. Another dream I have is I'm naked on the street.

H: *How is that?*

P: Unprotected.... Very vulnerable... it's like anything can happen to you... there is no buffer... (HG a wall)... it's embarrassing, that I'm out like that, not sexual but like I'm so stupid that I go out without thinking.

H: *Can you tell a bit more about: unprotected, vulnerable, no buffer?*

P: Very scary, very scary... you are alone... the smallest thing can touch you enormously... also physically... they touch your naked skin directly.

H: *So your fingers...?*

P: Last time I didn't mention but the pain was coming back and after last remedy it was very bad, more painful than otherwise and after about three weeks it went away and now it is totally gone.

H: *The muscle in your shoulder?*

P: I go to an osteopath regularly but when I am not too stressed at work it is better.

H: *The first time you were afraid to become Chronic Fatigued, how is it now?*

P: I don't have this feeling anymore... after I slept I wake up in the evening, do things and when I go to bed I sleep well again.

Analysis

The pain in her finger joints have gone after they flared up for a moment and the Ozone was repeated (she had SL on other follow ups) but more important: she feels lighter, more cheerful, more spontaneous and freer towards her mother. She started her Shiatsu practice at last and I've seen her one more time, when she feared to relapse but in fact was back on her feet by the time she had an appointment and then she was asked by her psychotherapist to become an assistant because he felt she didn't need the therapy anymore. Also her Shiatsu master asked her to assist with his lessons. Of course she was very happy with this and it shows that other people somehow see the difference in her and feel how much more self-confident she is, more harmonious and in peace. This is what we like to see happening with a patient after the similitum: not only the physical complaint to disappear and not only some temporary emotional gratification but a deep transformation that makes the person calm, undisturbed by daily things, being contented with himself and without judgment towards others, full of energy and creativity, doing the things she enjoys most. This potential in homeopathy is the real charm of this fascinating healing method.

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