

# Heimann Counselling & Healing: Lay Your Hands On Me



By David Morrison

Not that it need concern you, but I'm pretty happy right now. Life's good. My wife and I are optimistic in the wake of a tumultuous year. Sure, I could do with losing a few pounds and gaining a few bucks, but I have no right to complain about my overall lot. I'm more content and relaxed than I've been in a long time. Yet try telling this to my mind.

A storm of ideas and worries, fears and hopes, all chaotically scrapping for priority attention, my brain churns noisily away day and night like a washing machine full of nuts and bolts. I often wonder how I function at all when it gets real hectic in there, but it's just the way it is and how it's been for as long as I can remember. So, can you imagine my shock when, a while back, I suddenly found my mind as empty as the swimming pool at the conclusion of the national elephant belly-flopping finals? Actually, there was one thing in my head—an awareness of the fact that there seemed to be nothing in it.

This revelation occurred in Errington, where your esteemed publisher and I had gone to meet married couple Thorsten and Imke Heimann. We were pursuing an article perfectly suited to challenging my overriding suspicion of many practices and attitudes that could be classified as 'New Age.'

Why have I felt so? Let's just say I didn't have the best introduction to said world. Relentlessly pestered in my early twenties by a demented (though admittedly attractive) individual who considered me an evil entity because I don't meditate or manipulate Baoding balls on a daily basis, 'New Age' and I got off on the wrong foot.

However, you also need to know that I am extremely open-

minded, totally receptive to new ideas and philosophies, even ripe for conversion to alternative ways of thinking or doing, each individual instance weighed up on its own merits. So it was with this mindset of part historical dismissal, part scepticism and part curiosity that I happily took on the commission.

The Heimann's market their services as Intuitive Counselling and Energy Healing, the latter element being of particular interest to me. Prior to meeting them, I had an inkling that Energy Healing was something to do with auras, but no real clue as to its credibility, how it's supposed to work, or even exactly what auras were. My only exposure to this area had been via comedic ridicule or journalistic sensationalism, each instance guilty of presenting the topic without any attempt at impartiality. I was therefore intrigued when handed an opportunity to have an expert explain all and have a good old fiddle with my chakras in the process.

Yet despite all this jocular badinage I lob your way, I say in all sincerity that when researching this piece I found that what lies at the core of the Heimann's counselling service to be utterly compelling. My findings genuinely provoked a degree of self-examination and reflection well before I was to meet Thorsten and Imke.

Based on the work of the late American psychologist Carl Rogers, their approach is of the humanistic school of thought that Rogers helped to found. Whilst the subject is deep and expansive, though based on logic of crystal clarity, I will attempt to capture it in just a few lines. Should your ears prick up as a result, I would urge you to pick up the baton and run with it. You may thank me one day.



Photo by Amy Kennedy

His theory commences that, understandably, all living things look to make the very best of their existence, knowing what is good for them as a result of evolution providing the required discriminations, senses and tastes. A discrimination peculiar to our species, significantly contributing to our overall sense of well-being, is “positive self-regard” — thinking good of oneself. Developed through the experiences of positive regard displayed to us by others as we grow up, we cannot truly achieve our “real self” without it. We can only be “the ideal self,” an incomplete being for which something ‘feels’ permanently just beyond reach. This is not helped in life by the way we need to shape ourselves to receive “conditional positive self-regard” upon meeting societal conditions and demands. By this, I mean we consistently behave in certain not necessarily natural ways

in order to receive praise or awards.

The gap between the real self (the “I am”) and the ideal self (the “I should”) is known as “incongruity.” An incongruity is effectively a threatening situation, an anxiety, from which we defend ourselves by psychologically fleeing, denying entirely or distorting to decrease the threat. In simple language, it’s no good for us and it is this that the Heimann’s attempt to lessen or remove entirely by, to paraphrase their website, releasing emotions we no longer need.

In order to effectively tackle incongruity, Rogers stated that therapists, counsellors—call them what you will—must un-failingly possess three basic qualities: congruence—honesty or genuineness; empathy—the ability to feel what the client feels; acceptance—where unconditional (i.e. non-judgemental) posi-



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tive regard is given. In the comfort of the counselling room of their immaculate home, practice and hobby farm, I set to finding out whether the Heimann's possessed these traits.

First and foremost, Thorsten and Imke are instantly likeable. And I mean instantly. They're welcoming and smile a lot with genuine warmth, exuding a pronounced beatific calm. They glow with good health and equanimity. They even smell great. I felt immediately comfortable and trusting in their presence. Testament to this is that I felt like opening up about past woes, even though the situation did not demand it. It just seemed the perfectly natural thing to do. So, yes, even from my fleeting experience as a reporter rather than a client, I would say they seem to have Rogers' required traits in abundance.

The Heimann's also feel no need whatsoever to confront the views of anyone who may feel their work is aerie faerie nonsense, or to defend it in any way. They seem used to it, resigned to occasional bouts, but it just doesn't concern them. This positivity and their lulling demeanours were enough for me to suspend all preconceptions and allow myself to become putty in their hands. Literally.

Thorsten drew me a simple diagram to illustrate the energy layers around the human body, all of which start at the core deep within the physical self. The first layer is indeed the physical—the skin, if you will—and outside that come the emotional, mental and spiritual layers.

Next, Imke explained she was going to try to locate my own energy layers, pointing out that I may feel physical changes as she did so, requesting that I inform her should something happen. It might be cold or heat, any other given change or none at all, she explained. I sat quietly looking at the floor, waiting to see what may or may not happen as she went to work.

Standing in front of me, Imke reached out with her palm outwards as if gesturing for someone to halt. Then she moved it towards me very slowly, as if carefully searching for something in the dark. Suddenly, incredibly, I started perspiring for no reason at all! I wasn't hot or nervous and surely not party to autosuggestion, so... Whoa! It was if Imke had somehow reached inside me to massage my sweat glands into action. I was truly stunned by this, but there were more mind-blowing experiences yet to come. It was time for the big one—an Energy Healing session with both Thorsten and Imke.

Also known as Healing Touch, Energy Healing may have roots in ancient days, but is a relatively new practice that can

have wide-ranging benefits for the mind and body. Stress, anxiety, physical pain, migraines and arthritis are just a few of the problems it can help address. According to the Colorado Centre for Healing Touch "it uses touch to influence the human energy system and the energy centres that control the energy flow to the physical body." Physical health as well as mental and emotional well-being can be affected during what is essentially a powerful temporary union between the practitioner and client. I would soon discover just how impacting this could be.

Lying on the comfortable massage table in the Heimann's atmospheric treatment room, I waited for the action to begin. Thorsten and Imke initially stood at my feet, whispering softly to each other, in discussion as to the best way forward for my treatment. I was not, after all, attending this session to have any specific ailment attended to, though I had arrived with a cricked neck. I'd slept poorly the previous night, kept awake for a time by a washing machine filled with nuts and bolts.

I say hand on heart that much of what followed is a dreamy blur; such was the distortion of reality that occurred. I remember Thorsten breathing hard and deep at regular intervals in what seemed like fierce concentration. Yet it was calming, as I knew all his effort was concentrated solely on me. And I recall him and Imke placing their hands on various parts of my body with tenderness and lightness of touch. There was movement between my feet and head, though I lost track of who was where as the Heimann's seemingly wafted about me. I vaguely recall Imke remaining mainly below my waistline and I think Thorsten conducted his role from my right. It's difficult to be sure.

Which hands belonged to which Heimann soon became both a puzzle and an irrelevance as I slipped more and more towards a soporific state. My eyes were closed as I let it all happen, the deep breathing and occasional whispering continuing to soundtrack the experience. When the awareness melted of where the Heimann's hands ended and I began, I knew even in my blissful state that something extraordinary was going on here. This was confirmed when my chest started to oscillate gently when one or the other's hands lay over my heart. This may sound terrifying, but I assure you it was anything but.

Thorsten concentrated on my head for the longest time, gently kneading my temples and cradling my neck with a hand that increasingly felt like a deep heat liniment rub. He stroked my face from forehead to cheeks in what I can only describe



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Photo by Amy Kennedy

as a loving manner and... would you believe it... the washing machine ground to a halt and my mind was completely empty. When the realization dawned, it was an inexplicably exquisite moment that to this day I cannot fully comprehend or find adequate language to clearly express. But it doesn't matter that I don't understand it. I just accept and happily acknowledge it as some kind of step forward in my life

Following the treatment, I was genuinely amazed. We discussed how I had felt and I could only relate my experience as one of euphoric, intense relaxation. I also voiced my astonishment at how I'd suddenly found my brain free of clutter; Thorsten attributed this to his 'mind clearance' technique. I also found it incredible that I'd been flat for over forty-five minutes. It felt like just a few minutes, but then again like hours. Time had ceased to matter.

I am not going to leave you by proclaiming that the Heimann's Energy Healing has shifted my world off its axis. And I'm not going to say that as a result of my time with them I now view all so-called 'New Age' practices as solid. It is clear, however, that there's something remarkable about Energy Healing—even in such manufactured circumstances as mine. I still don't understand how it works, but rerunning the experience in my mind leaves me smiling and glowing. That alone is reason enough as I see it to declare that I'm convinced of its benefits. There, I said it. ■

Contact Thorsten and Imke Heimann at (250) 248-9970  
[www.heimanncounselingandhealing.ca](http://www.heimanncounselingandhealing.ca)