

The Healing in America Story

In 2001, Roger Ford and Kim Vincent were running a highly successful healing center in the west of England. They had created a busy regional practice offering energetic healing to the sick and infirm, along with other forms of complementary therapies which included nutritional counseling, chiropractic treatments, acupuncture, reflexology, hypnotherapy, neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), and aromatherapy.

Between 30 and 50 people attended each week for healing, many of whom had been referred by the local medical community, with illnesses ranging from the trivial to the life threatening. Results such as pain reduction, decreased needs for medication, reduction and elimination of tumors, and improved quality of life were reported among patients served. Ford and Vincent were held in high regard in both doctors' offices and local hospitals throughout Great Britain because they offered a more holistic approach to patient care.

The type of approach used by Ford and Vincent was pioneered in 1980 by the Penny Brohn Cancer Center in Bristol, England. This nonprofit agency provides specialized support including complementary therapies, advice and counseling for people living with cancer and their supporters. HRH The Prince of Wales is a patron and avid supporter of this center as is Dr. Karol Sikora, Professor of Cancer Medicine & Honorary Consultant Oncologist at Imperial College of Medicine, Hammersmith, London, who says:

"Penny Brohn Cancer Care has continually **set the standard in complementary care** – offering services that can help people with cancer benefit more fully from their medical treatment and to strengthen their general health and wellbeing."

Having achieved their vision of developing and operating a vibrant healing center, Ford and Vincent felt that there was more they could do to promote a more holistic approach to healing. As trainer-healers with Britain's National Federation of Spiritual Healers (NFSH), they had worked not only in the UK, but throughout Europe, and suspected that their life's work would take them further afield. It took a cancer patient – who had been referred to Ford by a local doctor – to sow the seed that would lead them to America. Says Ford,

"My patient Andy told me, 'You should go to the states, specifically Ojai in California. They need people like you over there to help the medical community to understand what this healing is all about, and how you can all work together.' He understood that energy healing adds a level of support to the work of doctors."

Together Ford and Vincent discussed the move, sought counsel from people they knew in the United States, and they considered the implications of relocating their two daughters to another country. At the end of their deliberations, they picked up the gauntlet and in a breathtaking leap of faith, sold their healing center and traveled almost 6,000 miles to California. And with that move, Ford and Vincent were not only ready to change their lives forever, but they carried with them – in their hearts and in the work they had set out to do – the enduring legacy of an extraordinary man who in his time was revered not only by the many thousands of people to whom he brought healing, but by doctors working at the very highest levels of medicine in Britain.

That man – had you passed him in the street – would have made no great impression on you. Harry Edwards was an unassuming man of great humility, but he could command an audience of thousands as soon as one of his appearances was announced – a following that is the stuff of dreams for today's aspiring rock stars. Imagine the scene: It's a damp, gray October day in early 1950s London, the kind of day that mirrored the mood of a nation still struggling with post-war rationing and surrounded by bomb-sites. Yet a multitude are making their way, by bus, by tube, train and on foot, towards the Royal Albert Hall, and by early afternoon already thousands

are in line to see Harry Edwards. Some are in wheelchairs, some carried by family members and friends; others have struggled to find a way to see this man. By the time Edwards steps onto the stage, more than 5,000 people have crammed into the Hall, and you could have heard a pin drop. And when he leaves the hall, exhausted, several hours later, many of those who needed the support of loved ones, or who came in wheelchairs, or who could not see, would walk away with their illness or affliction cast aside, testament to the numerous cases of spontaneous healing brought about by Edwards' gift of energetic healing. Even the most skeptical observers were stunned into silence upon watching this great man at work.

Harry Edwards did not court fame; he knew only that he had the gift of being a healer, and he knew that gift was not his alone; he believed that every human being had the ability to bring healing to others. This knowledge, together with the lack of recognition by the medical community, frustrated Edwards; he knew that to broaden his reach to the sick and dying, he had to win the hearts and minds of doctors throughout the country, and at the highest levels of medical administration. He was under no illusions regarding the enormity of his task.

By the time he passed away in 1977, Edwards had achieved the pinnacle of his life's work. The road had not been an easy one, but in the founding of NFSH, he had laid down a Code of Ethics along with a comprehensive training program and strict guidelines to which all healers were required to adhere. This brought a level of respect for his method of energetic healing never before encountered within the medical profession. Since that time, the NFSH has gone from strength to strength, to the extent that it is now commonplace for many hospitals such as University College London Hospital (UCLH) and the Great Ormand Street Hospital for Children to have NFSH healers working on staff. Healers can be present in emergency rooms and operating theaters to bring healing energy to doctors and nurses working in acute care situations, as well as to the patients. Doctors routinely recommend their patients to see NFSH healers while undergoing treatment, and the mutual respect runs deep. Now the NFSH has a presence in countries throughout Europe. None of this would have been possible without the tireless work of Harry Edwards more than a half a century ago.

In the same way that Edwards faced challenges, so Ford and Vincent encountered doubt and reticence to engage with them when they first approached doctors in California. That response came as a surprise. Says Ford,

"To be honest, we expected a greater openness. After all, America is supposed to be at the cutting edge of new thought. Surprisingly there was no history of effective communication between the medical community here and practitioners of energetic healing."

With Edwards' determination as their guiding light, Ford and Vincent have slowly, but surely, made inroads into the wall of doubt they encountered, and are now seeing a positive outcome from their efforts. Since the founding of **Healing in America** in 2004 – the US arm of the NFSH – they have made significant steps forward.

For example, two-year internship training programs are now in place, a Code of Ethics has been implemented, continuing education credits are available for nurses and massage therapists. In addition, workshops are being run in several states – California, Washington, Arizona, Michigan, Ohio, and Florida and the first three-day workshop specifically for the California Board of Registered Nurses and the American Holistic Nurses Association took place in November 2009 at Sansum Clinic in Santa Barbara.

As any commander in the battlefield, or any director of a marketing campaign knows, the most crucial time for increased effort is when the cracks form, which heralds a breakthrough. Now is the time for Ford and Vincent's **Healing in America** organization to surge forward and bring a new level of healing to this country's ill and infirm. Amid all the rhetoric about healthcare, Ford

and Vincent have prepared the way for a broader dialogue about healing. They stand ready to work alongside medical professionals in a holistic environment based upon mutual respect and understanding. Britain's Winston Churchill, who was himself half-American, said that,

"America will always do the right thing, but only after exhausting all other options."

Making a promise to develop a dynamic relationship between healers, doctors, and nurses is the right thing; the opportunity cannot be missed. Ford and Vincent's **Healing in America** is an organization set to play a crucial part in that journey.

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