

Chapter 10

## **Testimony of a Traditional Healer**

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This testimony was provided by Jean Roche on his experience of practicing as a ‘healer’. Unfortunately Jean Roche passed away before the article was finished and did not have the opportunity to review his paper prior to his death. The editorial team have taken the liberty of editing Jean’s paper, and we hope that we have honoured and reflected his story.

Currently I am seventy years old and for more than fifty years I have practiced that what we call in our region, ‘the conspiracy’. I have not studied for that, and I consider that I received a gift which allows me, to relieve and heal other “humans and animals”.

When I was young I had contact with healers or “bonesetters” of fire or blood, as they might be called. They were generally farmers or people very close to the nature. I was born, and I still live in Auvergne in the centre of France, and I come from a rural area.

This is how I tried to practice, my only intention was to relieve patients suffering, and it worked. Initially, people came mainly for burns (to calm the fire) or to stop bleeding. They also came for *zona* (skin disease). I used my gift for forty years, with a few people coming to visit me each week. They came as a result of recommendations from friend and family, by word of mouth.

The act of healing is done discreetly, whereby someone who has the ability, does not speak publicly about it or promote it. Other people would often say: “He’s a healer!”, and would sometimes add: “He is strong, and it indicates that he has other capacities that go beyond the role of “fire cutter”.

Generally in our region, the person who practices this gift does not expect any remuneration from the patients. In order to express their gratitude people usually offer a small gift from nature, such as food, poultry, honey or a bottle - very rarely money.

In our traditions, we basically have the healer who conjures with his hands and his breath, and the bonesetter who remedies, with his hands, strains and other displacements of bones or muscles. Magnetism is related to both forms of care.

As I have decided to testify, I will talk only about my own work.

During my life, having discovered my gift, I agreed to put it into practice without any publicity or desire to profit financially. This is the case for many other people who have had the same skills. However, everything changed after I agreed to be filmed for a national television show on healers in France (including new healers). I agreed to participate in the programme as a result of pressure from the people that I had healed and the director who wanted to show the pure nature of practitioners, by comparing it to the other professionals of this discipline and to other ‘charlatans’.

The people I had healed wished to remain anonymous. However, because of the dissemination of the report and patient testimonials on the Internet, people were able to locate me and contact me. Everything changed for me as a result of the television programme. I have since had to create rules to organize my interventions, because on average, thirty people, began to contact me every day asking for help, and I was unable to help more, as I need to keep my life in balance.

Having noticed that distance was not a problem in relation to my healing work, I started to ‘conjure’ by phone, at specific hours. This helped me to create a balance in my life and allow time for a ‘normal life’. The process was simple: I would spend around two minutes on each case, and I would typically undertake three cases in a row. Having found that I have benefited from various healing gifts or abilities, I was practicing all forms of “care” on the telephone, even the role of bonesetter.

### HOW DO I PRACTICE?

In terms of how I practice, I need about thirty seconds to listening to patients in order to ‘feel’, their needs and location. In fact I receive calls from many different regions of France, and sometimes international calls. I concentrate for about two minutes on the patient, reciting a “prayer” three times, which allows me to forget myself and let go of my “ego”. I blow three times, and then I symbolically take the “evil” and “throw” it away, and finally I forget. Once is generally enough for a burn or bleeding disease, for the other conditions—I sometimes have to repeat this process three times, and in general “it works!”

Usually, the people who contact me have some confidence in this kind of practice but are no longer able to find the healers or the bonesetters that their parents have previously used: as many of them are dead and few have taken on this gift! A lack of people entering into the practice might be due to them not wanting to be disturbed all the time, or to not suffer ridicule.

Personally I have been contacted by a lot of people further afield as a result of the national television’s coverage, also from coverage on international networks such as the internet and YouTube, and of course, by word of mouth and personal recommendation. I am contacted in respect of various diseases, affecting the body and also the mind, including nervous breakdowns and their consequences.

Requests for help typically relate to various forms of burn skin diseases, pain cancers and reactions to the chemistry and other post-surgical treatment, but requests may also concern babies and ways to protect them from convulsions and sore teeth.

I can say that I am contacted by all sectors of society: elderly, active people, and even children.

People contact me for themselves, for a loved one and even for a pet. I refuse to act for a person who does not want a healer to intervene, even if the request is made by a parent or spouse. Meanwhile, depending on the case’s severity, and if I know that the person is unable to talk to me, I agree and ask the relative to become an intermediary, and to concentrate on the patient at the specific time when I intervene (about 2 minutes). Then I ask them to wash their hands. For most of these cases,

the person is in coma or hospitalized, or is in great difficulty, mental or physical, does not speak (deaf, mute, baby or pet).

### **WHAT CAN I SAY ABOUT MY RELATIONSHIP WITH MY PATIENTS?**

Although our contact is very quick, I can say that in general the conversation follows a similar process.

Hello Sir, are you a healer? Sorry to bother you, I call on behalf of Mr So-and-So, who told me that you could help me?

Then he/she explains very quickly the problem. Knowing nothing of medicine, I ask them to explain to me with a clear and simple way what is wrong.

In general the answers are accompanied by comments which describe how they have already contacted medical professionals.

“The doctors as the specialists have not found anything and I have to redo analysis...”

“The doctors told me that this would be long or even painful”

“I have problems with the medication.”

“My physio or osteopath are unable to relieve me.”

“Experts warn us that we should expect the worst.”

Most of the time, patients speak to healers because they feel that official medicine does not relieve their health problems, and that they want to try alternative methods of traditional medicine, as they hope that they will be more effective and quicker.

Of course we never advise not to continue their visits to the doctor or to stop taking their medications. In some cases, typically burns, shingles, and the side-effects of chemotherapy treatment, it is the doctor or the nursing staff who suggest that the patient contact a healer. With the beautiful saying “You don’t know someone?” the doctor explains to them that a healer can relieve the pain alongside other treatment. It should be noted that in the waiting rooms, the patient do not hesitate to testify to the benefits of healing based on their experiences and make some recommendations as to whom they might contact!

There are also doctors who have gained confidence in the treatments offered by healers after seeing improvement in their patients. As some people say: “there’s nothing that can be explained, only observed, but after all why not?” It should also be said that some doctors do not hesitate to call me in, particularly for burns and shingles. Caring for someone from a distance is not a problem for me. Since I treat most patients remotely, this has allowed me to live normal life, by accepting some of schedule constraints, and to better liberate myself from my ego, because I do not spend too much time with each patient.

The feedback or thanks that I receive in around 80% of the cases is via a telephone call, a SMS message or an email, a short mail, or a package that arrives by post or directly delivered to my home. I have to say that in general, I receive testimonies of relief, and even cure, with thanks. I



Picture of Jean Roche, in memory  
of his untimely death.

receive it as an encouragement to continue practicing my gift, which I offer in service to someone who suffers with ill health.

### **WHAT ABOUT THE REACTIONS OF THOSE WHO TALK ABOUT THE PLACEBO EFFECT?**

For me, even if the person tells me: “I believe in it, so it’s going to work”. Because when I care for a baby (for teeth troubles, convulsion, eczema, etc...) this latter is not in a capacity to believe or think. It is the same when I am taking care of animals.

I sometimes wonder about the placebo effect of healing, whereby those who believe that it is going to work are cured. However, when I offer care to a baby or an animal that is subsequently healed, they do not have the capacity to think ‘this is going to work’. Therefore, I think that the placebo effect cannot explain the successes that are observed.

### **WHAT ABOUT THE DISTANCE?**

There are occasions when I am surprised that the distance is not a problem for me. As an example : I used to receive a young boy suffering from a serious illness, who was in need of intense care and physiotherapy treatment. This boy was responding very well to magnetism, and this enabled him to use his limbs better. In fact, further to the treatment that I did, his hands and his feet responded very quickly and rose as by hypnosis, and then he was freer in his movements. So I proposed that his mother to inform his physiotherapist, who phoned me one day.

His attitude towards me was quite derisive, while he had the young person in consultation, I asked him to give me five minutes, to act from a distance, in order to show him that the boy was able to do easily gestures which he had tried to make him do [to move his thumb closer to his little finger, or to unbutton and re-button his shirt]. Very quickly, this practitioner changed his intonation, inviting me to meet him because he was so surprised by what he had witnessed.

Since then I have practiced this method from distance too, when previously, I could have only done it in the presence of the person. I could give you many other examples like this, where I have been surprised by the positive outcome.

As another example, there was a lady whom the hospital staff wanted “to disconnect” from the ‘systems’ and who then came out of her coma, asserting that she knew that I was near her and that I had asked her to live and she came back to life, although she had been in intensive care, without any visit. Another patient told me that he had felt my presence taking care of him in his hospital room, while I was at my home!

When I intensified my phone interventions, I felt a huge fatigue with a lot of pain in the elbows: the only way to relieve myself of this pain was to allow water to flow between my elbows and the end of my fingers.

Now I suffer less, and I have to very quickly forget my intervention. On the phone, I tried to make a list of the identities of all the patient and the pain that I have had to deal with.

For example: “Lady of Marseille, Cancer lung / Mr Arcachon, left shoulder” so when I get a call, the phone shows me the care that is required from me and of course, my memory comes back quickly and I can immediately connect myself with the person. I also know that in certain cases, I am going to have painful reactions - in particular, a sudden jump which provokes my tears to flow and causes me to ‘spit’ “the pain” which I have just removed. I have noticed it for certain tumours, abscesses, and warts or to remove the desire to smoke, I continue to do it but by organizing my interventions and schedules in order to be able to get back my strengths.

## CONCLUSION

This is the first time that I have revealed myself through this testimony as I have agreed to do it means that it will be disseminated and read by NGO members who work in the field of intangible culture. This testimony might encourage other people to do likewise and share their stories, because without the confidence provided by the selection panel, and our last meeting during the committee of the PCI, which recounts the subject of traditional medicine, I would never have spoken of what I have practised and still practice. I have not gained any glory, and I have done all that just to make my contribution in helping others.

As hundreds of people who practice, like me, without looking for any advertising, I wish to be able to exercise this gift in the serenity and to have the time to live normally by pursuing my activities of everyday life.

Although I have nothing to prove, I have to say that the numerous testimonies I have received encourage me to continue, in spite of the constraints due to this practice (spent time, spiritual and physical moral).

What I expect from my testimony is not to not receive other contacts, but to assert that what happens to me is true. I know, from travelling around the world, meeting shamans and healers, that I have become a witness of the fact that the official medicine and all the existing medicaments are not the only way to cure illness.

I also think that this is a gift of love that we use to cure and heal, not only the sick part of the body, but also the spirit, and yet like you, I can't explain it.

However, I am convinced that through dialogue between scientists, the medical profession and traditional healers, we will overcome the barriers that currently exist and that one day, traditional practitioners will be no longer afraid to speak and will share their experiences and practises.

PS: Friends readers, do not think that I have extraordinary powers and know that in this world, thousands have this gift, so why not you?

## RÉSUMÉ

Tout jeune j'ai été en relation avec les guérisseurs ou « rebouteux » passeurs de feu ou de sang, comme on peut aussi les appeler. Ce sont en général des paysans ou personnes très proches de la nature. C'est ainsi que je me suis essayé à pratiquer avec la seule volonté de soulager la souffrance du malade – et cela à fonctionné.

Cet exercice du don, je l'ai vécu durant quarante ans à raison de quelques personnes par semaine en fonction du bouche à oreille.

Chez nous, en général, celui qui pratique ce don ne demande aucune rétribution au malade ; et il est de coutume qu'en remerciement le demandeur lui remette un petit cadeau en nature – très rarement de l'argent. Ayant constaté que la distance ne me gêne pas, je conjure par téléphone et à des heures définies afin de libérer ma journée pour redevenir un homme normal.

Je pense également que ce don d'Amour que nous utilisons pour soigner, guérit non seulement la partie malade mais aussi l'esprit ; et pourtant comme vous, je ne peux pas l'expliquer.