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## **The Smile**

“High and dry,” he said. “I left them all high and dry.”

Imagine that. This was the sensation in my client’s jaw and cheek just two days into being granted a six month paid sabbatical from his stressful job of thirty years. His shoulders were relieved, but his cheeks carried the cancerous guilt. You know the kind I mean, the kind that eats away at your skin and what’s underneath; the kind that leaves you with a slanted expression plastered on your face so that everything and everyone you face, you feel the tight clench of your jaw and cheek fighting that energy that is eating away at you.

I needed to help him – and fast – or every day of his time off to repair and restore would be digested into the deadly pit of guilt. I had already helped him to shake off the weight of a “mother who was on my back and a father who was standing on top of the mother on my back,” as he described it. That weight was comparable to Atlas only instead of carrying one world he was carrying two

At first, he tried to get rid of this weight by reaching back and over his shoulder to grab it, and throw it like a basketball into a hoop. “A jump shot,” he noted. When he attempted to do this, however, he realized that he did not have the reach, the strength, or the support to do so without hurting himself further. It’s difficult for a body to reach back and over because this motion is not really incorporated into the design. The serratus muscles attached to the ribs allow us to breath, reach forward, and recoil. They get unfairly stretched if we reach over and back, especially trying to lift off the weight of two parents. Breathing suffers and so does sensation and orientation. The only thing you sense is being lost.

Next we tried shaking the weight off the way a dog shakes its whole body to free itself from extra weight or water. He liked this image even though he is a cat person. He literally began to do this on the table, shaking his whole body and flailing his arms. As he was doing this, a sensation came to his lower back and legs. “This is too much to shake off all by myself. I need some help from the outside to get this off.” We celebrated this new sensation of wisdom. He was not lost. His body knew the way.

I placed my hands under his lower back and asked for an image. “A crane would do the job,” he said. A crane, wow! This was possibly the first image in thirty years sent to the back and shoulders that said he didn’t have to do it all by himself. Something and

someone from the outside could help. We used the image of the crane. He shook and his body settled into stillness. I took my hands out from underneath his lower back. He was experiencing relief and the ability to recoil. When he talked of his work and all the worlds he was carrying there, he could feel his arms recoil, a strange new sensation for him. His mind knew that he didn't like his work world and now his body supported this knowing.

With energetic weight, we lose the important sensations and a mind can feel like an island surrounded by waves of isolation. We had created a bridge from the mind to the body. In fact, having this sensation in his body was instrumental in his requesting a six month paid leave of absence from his work. He was granted this immediately and without hesitation by his superiors. The crane had moved from image to experience. He was relieved of the weight of his work world and he was going to be paid.

In this session though, we had come face to face with guilt, that intrusive energy that can make us feel bad even when we are doing the nicest things for ourselves. "Whose guilt is it?" I asked. He replied, "It's mine." I wasn't convinced it was his so I said, "We can tell by the shape of your face whose it is." I picked up the handheld mirror that was lying on the mantle in my office and gave it to him. He lay there and looked into the mirror. He knew this face. It wasn't his! With astonishment he said, "This is my mother's frown of disapproval at the slightest pleasure. This is my father's face of fury at the misfortunes in his own life." They were literally in his face, along with being on his back. This is how he was always describing them during the four years that I had been seeing him. He put the mirror down.

I placed my hands in the crease of his cheeks and we listened. Slowly an image came to him of a smile, a smile with creases and lines, bright and defined. It was the smile of his grandmother's face, the one bright spot in his life. "She always smiled at me," he said. "Especially when she was preparing me food." We used the warmth of that smile to melt the frown and the fury (an incredible combination that shows up as guilt on the receiver's face). As he breathed into his cheeks, they melted and his cheeks rose lightly into glory, the glory of his own smile! With that smile in place, I grabbed the mirror again and he took another look. "Now that's the smile of innocence," he said, and on that bright note we finished the session.

You see, it was in his face and not just his feelings. The frown and the fury had left him high and dry. If we had just addressed the feelings without freeing the face, he would have been left with their shape instead of his own smile. Freeing the face created the space for his smile to appear. This is the importance of the body-mind-emotion connection. He was now able to smile at having six months off.

In Transformative Touch we listen to the body because it is what bridges us to the person's mind, emotions, and spirit. We listen to the body because we realize that all kinds of energies can enter the body in all kinds of places. Just think how we say IN your face, stuck IN your craw, pain IN the neck, pain IN the butt, etc. These energies shape the tone of our muscles which in turn shape the tone of our thoughts, feelings, spirit, and voices. Identifying and moving these energies out of the body allows a being to be. This is the cry of so many of us; we just want the world to let us be! In Transformative Touch we listen and let you be, because we know that when this happens, a smile appears on the body.