

Research project, Heart of Love Healing: The complete version

By Grace Bubeck, August 2012

1. How it all started: the vision, love as a healing force, and the reality check

Heart of Love healing is a way of working with people therapeutically and in a healing way that came to me in a vision. The vision was very simple, so simple in fact that my rational mind doubted immediately whether this was worth taking seriously! The vision was that I myself was totally open to, and immersed in, an energy of pure Love, and that I interacted with people with and from this energy in a healing way. A more concrete way of putting this would be to say that I opened my heart to this energy, and that whatever I did with people was an expression of this energy. I could even say that what I did was guided by pure Love. I had an intuitive sense that the energy of love was very powerfully transformative and healing, but I had never done this before, and I couldn't know for sure! I also did not know whether and, if so how, the therapeutic modalities that I used as a matter of course (counseling, intuitive energy work, acupressure, massage) in my sessions with clients could be integrated into this way of working.

All I knew was that people who had gone through near death experiences, which are often described afterwards by them as an immersion into total, unconditional love, often healed quite quickly and dramatically from physical conditions that were thought to be fatal and incurable, such as cancer or fatal wounds. These people also invariably report that their experience had a powerfully positive effect on their minds and emotions. And of course there are also the healing 'miracles' that Jesus was well known for that could similarly be attributed to the healing power of love.

The healing power of love is a subject that has interested me for the longest time. Intuitively, I have always known that love can be infinitely healing, and also that subtle energy is actually more powerfully healing than the denser physical energy. The energy of love is a particularly harmonious energy, and it is also profoundly peaceful and nurturing. If we speculate that dis-ease and dis-comfort are a form of distortion of what would naturally be more harmonious and therefore comfortable and at ease, then the energy of love could have the power to reverse or 'undo' disharmonious states and to enable people to move back into the direction of harmony, ease, and comfort.

These ideas are not at all new: many have speculated on the nature of subtle healing, on what it means to be well or unwell, healthy or subject to disease. The concepts of harmony and disharmony, balance and lack of balance are often used in order to understand both what is disease and how it heals, what it means to move from disease back to well-being and health.

So there was an intuitive understanding that love is really the most powerful healing force of all. Why would it be the most powerful healing force? There are two reasons: one, because it is the most harmonious of all energies; and two, because in its purity, it is at the origin of all life. Love is the life force that runs through us all and that we get disconnected from in various ways. So being exposed to this energy cannot but be helpful.

Now I need to be clear that when I talk about the energy of love I don't mean emotional or romantic love, which are at least to some extent based on emotional need. Emotional love stops, or turns into pain, disappointment or anger, when the need that it responded to is no longer satisfied. Similarly with romantic love: if it does not become truly unconditional over time, and therefore more like pure love, it turns into other emotional states when it meets with frustration of various kinds. Pure love, by contrast, does not stop ever; it is more akin to a totally open heart that feels and emanates love unconditionally,

no matter what happens, no matter what response it meets with. The image of the open heart, in fact, is probably the best approximation that can be used in order to suggest the idea of a pure loving energy.

So how could my vision and the idea that such love is a powerful healing force be put to the test? Was there a way of finding out whether this is indeed true?

This is where the idea of the research project came in: why not simply try and see whether it is true? Why not do a study of this? Now I realize that it is really not that simple. Having had a very scientific training during my psychology studies at university, I am very aware of the rigorous standards of scientific research. This research project does not meet those standards: there is no statistical analysis of the results, which would be required for research that meets scientific standards; nor is this a double blind study; nor do I have a control group. The results are also not necessarily replicable in the sense that it is difficult to assess to what extent other therapists are able to be in this energy of Love, or I for that matter! Moreover, the very nature of the therapeutic work that I was going to do with people was very experimental in the sense that I had to find out as I was going along how the energy of Love could express through me and be combined with the healing modalities that I already knew. I had conducted some trial sessions with friends before starting the research project, but essentially it was through the sessions of the research project that I hoped that the vision would take a more concrete form.

So I realize I cannot claim to contribute to the scientific understanding of healing, such as science has come to be understood. But I did feel there was a real point to giving this vision a concrete form and a 'reality check' at the same time, whether doing so met scientific standards or not. What I have been able to do with this research project is to satisfy myself, within the small frame that I chose, that the sessions that I did with people clearly had a positive effect. I hope that this may be interesting to other practitioners and even the public at large.

2. Research sessions and questionnaires

Research sessions were conducted in April, May and June 2012 at my offices in Montreal and St-Adolphe (Laurentians), with 11 participants. Three participants were male, eight female, with an age spread between 32 and 70. The majority of participants (8) were in the 30s and early 40s age range. The sessions were one hour long and offered at a reduced rate, with the understanding that participants would fill out all the questionnaires that were part of the project. Some sessions were conducted in person, others on the phone: 3 participants had phone sessions only, one participant had one face-to-face session and two phone sessions, the other 7 participants saw me either in Montreal or in the Laurentians. One participant came with a physical problem, 9 wanted to work on mental/emotional issues, one participant on a spiritual issue. Each participant received three sessions which, for the most part, took place with one week intervals in between.

As the very nature of the sessions was experimental, the work I did with participants evolved over time. Throughout the sessions, I took care to maintain an awareness, focus, and anchor in the open heart and the energy of Love. An element that I came to use very consistently, usually around two or three times during a session, were the 'tuning in' periods. These could be several minutes long and allowed me to deepen my immersion into the energy of love at the same time as the participant would also connect with their experience at a deeper level. If the session consisted mostly of counseling, these periods were introduced at points where I felt it would be useful to deepen the connection before continuing, and also to allow guidance to emerge out of it. During phases of energy work or body work, which would often be in silence, I would similarly maintain and monitor the focus on the open heart and the energy of love every alongside the actual energetic or physical interventions.

In terms of types of intervention, then, what I did in these sessions – a combination of counseling, energy work and body work – was not necessarily all that different from what I had done before. What was different, but obviously very subtly so, was the energy and focus with which it was done. A further difference could be described as the work being guided by Love as compared to being guided intuitively. Again, this is a subtle difference that might have expressed as a slightly different tone of voice or a slightly different kind of intervention, but would not necessarily be very noticeable from the outside, even though the difference was very clear to me at an energetic and felt level.

In order to assess the effect of the sessions both quantitatively and qualitatively, participants filled out the following questionnaires:

1. An 'initial questionnaire', in which they gave personal details and where the conditions of participating in the research were stated. In addition, participants named, stated and rated how they felt about the issue they wanted help with, gave information about other therapies they might have received for it, and indicated their expectations in respect to receiving this form of healing. This questionnaire was either filled out in the days before the first session, or immediately before the first session.
2. A short, quantitative 'pre-session questionnaire', in which they rated, on a scale of 1 to 10, how they felt about their issue, and how they felt at a physical, energetic, emotional, mental, and spiritual level. This questionnaire was filled out three times immediately before each of the three sessions.
3. A 'post-session questionnaire', identical to the pre-session questionnaire in its quantitative scales, in order to assess the difference the session had made. This questionnaire was filled out three times immediately after each of the three sessions had ended.
4. An 'after the session questionnaire', which contained the same quantitative scales as the pre- and post-session questionnaires, a quantitative question about the effectiveness of the session, as well as qualitative questions about participants' experience in the session and its effects. This questionnaire was to be filled out 24 - 48 hours after each of the three sessions.
5. A 'closing questionnaire', in which participants rated the effectiveness of the sessions overall and with respect to the different levels (physical, energetic, emotional, mental, spiritual), as well as in terms of their contribution to developing their awareness, the healing of wounds, and their personal growth. In addition, there were a number of qualitative questions to get more feedback about various aspects of the sessions. This questionnaire was filled out about a week after the last session.

Most of the intake questionnaires and all of the pre- and post-session questionnaires were filled out on paper if the sessions were conducted in person, the rest of the questionnaires were filled out on the computer and sent to me by e-mail. Due to various factors, not all participants filled out all the questionnaires, so the number of answers to a particular questionnaire is indicated in brackets in the corresponding tables with the results.

3. Results

3.1 Quantitative results

There was improvement in all respects over the course of the three sessions. Interestingly enough, the improvement was greatest during the first session, as reflected in the difference between the pre-session and post-session answers, and was subsequently lost to some extent, as reflected in the 'after the session' answers which were given one or more days after the session. The improvement seemed to

stabilize more after the second session, and continue on with the third session. Chart 1, which shows the overall trend over the course of the three sessions in all the variables, gives an impressive visual representation of this trend.

Chart 1: ratings before (pre), immediately after (post), and one or more days after the sessions (betw S1/S2, betw S2/S3, after S3), for all variables.

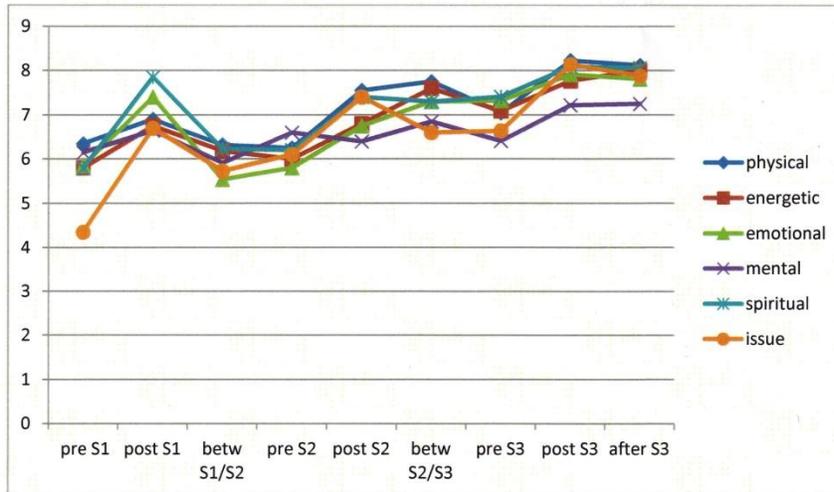


Table 1 lists the averages of the actual evaluations as well as the difference the sessions made to the ratings. The first two columns give the values of the various variables immediately before and after the sessions and the differences between them are found in the third column. The evaluations from the questionnaires that were filled out one or more days after the sessions are listed in the fourth column.

What is clear from these results is that participants felt an overall quite strong improvement in their physical, energetic, emotional, and spiritual state during the sessions, and they felt a lot better about the issue they were working on with me after the sessions. This improvement is most impressive during the first session, but continues on as a trend throughout the three sessions, and is represented also in the averages between the three sessions ('all sessions').

The strongest improvement is in relation to how participants felt about their issue (+1.7 on average), spiritually (+1.29 on av.), as well as emotionally (+1.02 on av.) and physically (+1.02 on av.). The only variable that is less strong in terms of improvement is the mental state. I will come back to this point in the discussion.

What is also noticeable is the marked improvement during the first session, especially in three variables: the emotional and spiritual states, and how participants felt about their issue (emotional: +1.55, spiritual: +2.05, issue: +2.35). Some of that improvement is lost after that first session, by the time participants filled out the after the session questionnaires, especially in terms of their emotional and spiritual wellbeing (-1.7 and -1.4 respectively). But these losses are regained and the gains are more stable after the second and third sessions. There is a lesser loss of gains in relation to how people felt about their issue after the sessions, but nevertheless some loss compared to the gains during the sessions (-0.6, -0.8, and -0.5 after the three sessions, compared to + 2.35, +1.3, +1.5 during the sessions).

Table 1: ratings for all variables before (pre) and immediately after a session (post), and one or more days after the session for all variables

	Before session (pre)	After session (post)	Difference between pre- and post-session ratings	One or more days after session
Session 1 (n of answers)	(n=10)	(n=10)		(n=11)
Physical	6.35	6.9	+0.55	6.32
Energetic	5.8	6.75	+0.95	6.18
Emotional	5.85	7.4	+1.55	5.54
Mental	6.15	6.65	+0.5	5.91
Spiritual	5.8	7.85	+2.05	6.23
issue	4.35	6.7	+2.35	5.73
Session 2 (n of answers)	(n=10)	(n=10)		(n=10)
Physical	6.25	7.55	+1.3	7.75
Energetic	6.0	6.8	+0.8	7.6
Emotional	5.8	6.75	+0.95	7.3
Mental	6.6	6.4	-0.2	6.85
Spiritual	6.2	7.4	+1.2	7.3
Issue	6.1	7.4	+1.3	6.6
Session 3 (n of answers)	(n=11)	(n=11)		(n=8)
Physical	7.05	8.23	+1.18	8.12
Energetic	7.09	7.77	+0.68	8.0
Emotional	7.32	7.91	+0.59	7.81
Mental	6.41	7.22	+0.8	7.25
Spiritual	7.41	8.09	+0.68	8.06
Issue	6.64	8.14	+1.5	7.88
All sessions (n of answers)	(n=31)	(n=31)		(n=29)
Physical	6.56	7.58	+1.02	7.31
Energetic	6.32	7.13	+0.81	7.17
Emotional	6.35	7.37	+1.02	6.78
Mental	6.39	6.77	+0.45	6.60
Spiritual	6.5	7.79	+1.29	7.10
Issue	5.73	7.74	+1.71	6.62

In looking at the results in more detail, then, it seemed obvious that there were slightly different trends for the emotional, spiritual and issue variables on the one hand, and for the physical, energetic and mental variables on the other. I have therefore listed them separately in the following two charts.

Chart 2: trends over the three sessions in the emotional and spiritual states, and the issue.

Chart 2 illustrates visually the marked pattern of very marked gains during the first session, subsequent loss of some of these gains, and the regain of these losses in the second and third session with stabilization during the third and after.

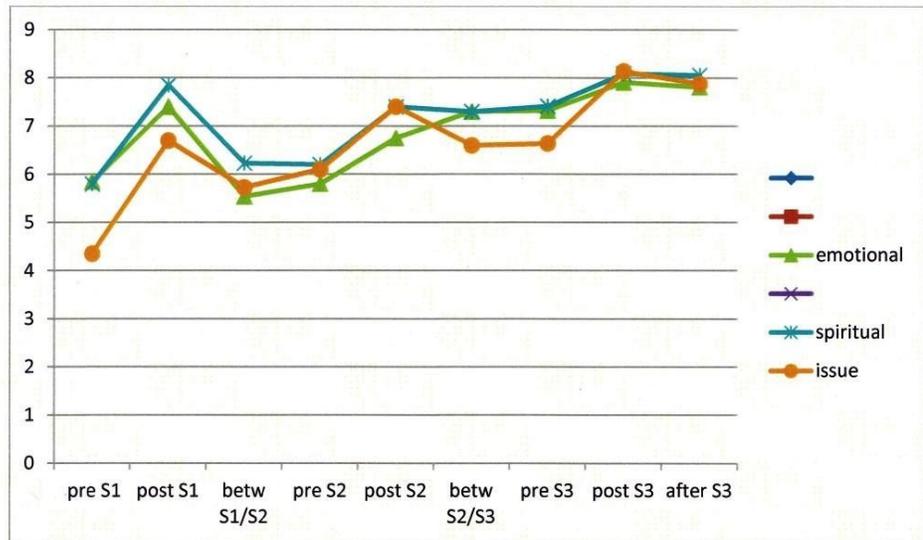
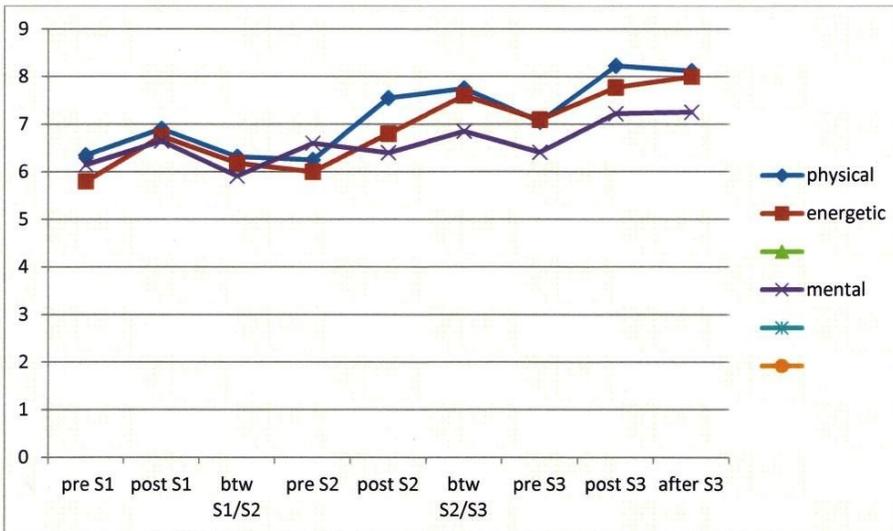


Chart 3: trends over the three sessions in the physical, energetic and mental states



As chart 3 shows clearly, the pattern of improvement in the physical, energetic and mental states is much more gradual and also less steep over the three sessions. In contrast to the steep rise during the first session in the emotional, spiritual and issue variables, there is more improvement in terms of the physical state during the second and third sessions than during the first. It is also obvious that the mental state variable shows the least gain, and even a slight decrease during the second session.

and third sessions than during the first. It is also obvious that the mental state variable shows the least gain, and even a slight decrease during the second session.

This difference in patterns between the two 'bundles' of variables is to some extent reflected in the final evaluations in the closing questionnaire. Participants gave much higher ratings to the helpfulness of the sessions in terms of their emotional and spiritual wellbeing (8.6 and 7.8) compared to the physical and energetic ratings (5.83 and 6.92). The only variable whose rating does not seem to fit this difference is, again, the mental variable: the rating of its helpfulness is quite high (7.58), but the actual trend during the sessions is the lowest of all variables. I shall comment on this variable in the discussion. Table 2 lists the values from the closing questionnaire.

Table 2: evaluation of the series of sessions as rated in closing questionnaire

Helpful overall	Helpful: physical	Helpful: energy	Helpful: emotional	Helpful: mental	Helpful: spiritual	Awareness	Healing	Personal journey
6.8 (n=9)	5.83 (n=6)	6.92 (n=6)	8.6 (n=5)	7.58 (n=6)	7.8 (n=6)	7.39 (n=9)	6.1 (n=9)	8.28 (n=9)

Unfortunately, not all participants filled out all of the parts of this questionnaire, so the values regarding the helpfulness of the sessions with respect to the different levels are based on fewer responses (6 or 5, see listed numbers of responses). But the trend is nevertheless very obvious: participants felt that the sessions were much more helpful in terms of their emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing (8.6, 7.58, and 7.8 respectively), as compared to their physical and energetic states (5.83 and 6.92 respectively). The last three columns list the answers to the question how beneficial the sessions were with regards to deepening their awareness of themselves (7.39), bringing healing to areas of wounding in their lives (6.1), and supporting them in their own personal journey (8.28). Participants clearly noticed the impact of the sessions most at the more subtle emotional, mental and spiritual levels, and reflected this also in their emphasis on support in their awareness and personal growth.

The last table (table 3) lists the ratings of effectiveness of the individual sessions with respect to the issue that participants had chosen as the focus for sessions, as given in the after the session questionnaires, as well as the rating of overall helpfulness of the series of sessions from the closing questionnaire.

Table 3: effectiveness of the sessions with respect to the participant issue as rated one or more days after each of the three sessions, and overall helpfulness as rated in the closing questionnaire

Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Average all sessions	Overall helpfulness	Overall helpfulness (without physical case)
6.5 (n=11)	6.95 (n=10)	7.94 (n=8)	7.07 (n=29)	6.8 (n=9)	7.52 (n=8)

The average ratings of the effectiveness of the sessions in terms of helping participants with the issue they had chosen for the sessions increase with each session and are all in the 'very helpful' range (6.5, 6.95, 7.94). It is interesting to note, though, that the most marked improvement in terms of how people felt about their issue was during the first session, which had the lowest rating. However, the overall improvement that people felt across the three sessions is reflected in the upward trend of the ratings. The last two columns give the overall helpfulness value from the closing questionnaire. The first average includes the rating of the one person who did not have any improvement from the sessions for the physical problem that she had chosen to work on and who gave an overall rating of 1 (since her physical problem remained unchanged), the second average excludes that rating and is therefore much higher.

In conclusion, the quantitative results show overall improvement both during and as a trend throughout the three sessions in all the variables that were used to measure the effect of the work during the sessions. The improvement is highest as far as the issue is concerned that participants chose to focus on. It is furthermore more significant at the emotional and spiritual level than it is at the physical and energetic level and at the mental level. The ratings of the helpfulness and effectiveness of the sessions were relatively high and increasing over time.

3.2 Qualitative results

In addition to the quantitative scales that I used in the questionnaire, I also included open questions in the 'after the session' and the closing questionnaires, in order to allow participants to express their experience in their own perspective and terms. At the same time, the questions were formulated so as to provide more specific information about what aspects or moments in the sessions were particularly helpful for participants (or not helpful). In addition, there were more general questions in the closing questionnaire about heart of Love healing as a therapeutic modality. Not every question elicited an answer, as one would expect of qualitative questions.

In the **'after the session' questionnaire**, which was filled out about one to two days after each session, participants were asked **how they felt about their issue right now**, both quantitatively, as listed above, and in general. They were asked in addition whether there had been **any changes or shifts during or after the session**. Out of 29 answers, 3 were negative (meaning no change – by the person whose physical condition did not improve throughout the 3 sessions). All the other answers (26) were positive and often listed the changes or shifts that they had experienced either during or after the session. Here are some examples:

- 'I felt more connected to myself (emotionally, spiritually) during the session, and afterwards to the "knowing";
- 'Better: I feel more hopeful, and more focused';
- 'I feel more informed, better able to cope and make wiser choices';
- 'feeling more loving, kind, empathetic';
- 'not stuck, rather optimistic, it still is an issue though';
- 'I have been meeting "the voice" that tells me I am not/have not been as I should be with gratitude for giving me the opportunity to NOT listen to it. This is a huge shift for me.'
- 'connected to love; could see my issues and express them with deep clarity';
- 'more grounding; grounding and peace';
- 'emotional release during the session, felt lighter, openhearted and vulnerable';
- 'I feel very empowered';
- 'I feel a marked shift when I leave the session ... my heart feels lighter'
- 'I felt like I had been given the space where my soul could come forward and express itself'.

The question whether there had been **any new insights** elicited less answers, but out of 19 answers, 17 were positive and went into more detail about the insights they had had either during the session about their issue, or insights which were related to the work done during the session. One insight was particularly interesting as it was about the way issues were approached during the sessions:

'It has been somewhat of a revelation to me that opening to the issue helps to overcome it. It is also surprising how the issue is actually transformed in the process. Furthermore, a lot of vital energy is released in the process.'

When asked **how they felt about the session now**, 11 times the answer was 'good', twice 'nice', twice 'happy', and once 'grateful'. The other answers mentioned what the session did for them, for example:

- 'the session left me with a sense of peace and lightness';
- 'it seems to have moved something, I might not have felt safe to feel as (a certain situation) happened';
- 'it pointed out my blockages to me';
- 'I enjoyed the calm and resting during the session';
- 'I feel the session was organic and supportive'.

The question ***'Was there something (or more than one thing) in the session that really worked for you?'*** again elicited a lot of answers (28 out of 29 questionnaires). Here are the main comments grouped together by theme:

- Taking time to connect ('tune in') with the 'inner world' (emotions, feelings, sensations) from an open heart space (mentioned several times, also in the closing questionnaire);
- The timing of those tuning in times;
- Energy work (4 times), 'finding balance';
- Relaxation, 'release of inner tension', 'open for everything';
- Ideas that were new to participants: about what healing is, how to address certain feelings;
- Insights that I had during the 'tuning in' periods and shared with participants;
- Ability of participants to feel more clearly and acutely during the sessions (mentioned twice);
- The naming of emotions or feelings;
- Reassurance: 'really needed to hear this';
- 'your openness and seldom faltering non-judgment';
- 'your intense listening and ensuing comments'.

To the question whether there was ***anything that didn't work for participants***, there were 8 answers which stated something to that effect (out of 29). One point was about the quality of the phone line. The rest of the answers were about more detailed aspects of the sessions such as:

- the timing/pace and the length of the session and/or the 'tuning in' periods;
- too much talking (by a participant who wanted more energy work);
- the examples that I used weren't concrete enough;
- there had been no change (by participant with the physical issue).

One answer, in the questionnaire after the first session, was that the participant 'sometimes felt judgment coming from you but much less than in the past'. When asked about this, the participant made it clear that their answer referred mostly to sessions that had taken place many years ago. By the end of the series of sessions this participant had felt such benefit from the work that they expressed the intention to continue seeing me once a month. They also mentioned the issue again in the closing questionnaire, saying 'It felt good that we clarified some of my negative thoughts about our past interactions. It cleared space for more open and frank connection.'

When asked about ***'key points or moments'*** in the session, again most participants answered in a positive way (25 out of 29). Some of the answers repeated points that had been listed elsewhere in the questionnaire or that had been mentioned by others in response to earlier questions, such as:

- Tuning in periods;
- Energy work, 'a new energy', 'energy shifting, moving through the body (as a result of an emotional release)';
- Experiencing certain emotions or states more deeply or for the first time, emotional release; 'feeling safe to feel', 'connecting with my child self', 'realizing I could go deeper if only I let it happen';
- Insights, seeing beliefs or emotions or needs clearly, or hearing them named;
- 'focusing on solutions', 'sharing my successes';
- Qualities that I brought to the sessions, such as 'active listening', 'kindly questioning';
- Certain interventions during the session, such as my naming certain experiences or sharing images or needs or feelings that I had sensed in participants;

One participant mentioned the following key point for them: 'To feel that I can travel deeper with you and that there will be other moments to be experienced in that kind of sacred space'.

Participants were given space to elaborate on their ratings of the effectiveness of the session in relation to their issue, and many did so by mentioning other aspects or changes or shifts that had happened for them. There was also a last open question to allow them to express whatever else they wanted to share. Many used this space to express their gratitude and their looking forward to more sessions. One participant expressed regret that they had not heard feedback from me about the issue worked on in the session (the session was focused on their exploration of their experience), and another participant expressed worry that the changes that had taken place would not be permanent. Participants also commented on other things that had not been covered by the questionnaire, such as the helpfulness of completing the questionnaire, the quality of the session ‘that was very subtle and very powerful at the same time’, and their appreciation of ‘a more heart and spiritually-based approach [compared with] the more traditional forms of psychotherapy ... it resonates more, and it feels to me like it gets to things faster’.

The ***closing questionnaire***, which was to be filled out within 4 – 7 days after the last session, confirmed many of the themes that had already been mentioned in the ‘after the session’ questionnaires. However, unlike the ‘after the session’ questionnaires, the focus in the closing questionnaire was on the review of their experience of the series of the three sessions as a whole with a few days’ distance. The first question was about ***how participants felt about the process they had gone through during the time of the sessions and after***. All answers were positive and commented in more detail about their impressions and feelings. Here are some of the answers:

- ‘I feel like some definite progress has been made. It was made in a way that was anchored inside me and that I can call upon according to need.’
- ‘It was a very interesting and rewarding journey’
- ‘I feel happy and complete with it.’
- ‘I feel fascinated, intrigued, inspired, nourished, trusting about the whole process. The realization of a whole new attitude towards life amazes me.’

The participant who had had no improvement in terms of their physical condition felt it was ‘a nice support’, and commented on the fact that they had found the body-mind connections that were made during the sessions helpful and insightful for them.

Much of the information in the closing questionnaire about participants’ experience of their sessions repeats themes that had already been mentioned in the after the session questionnaires and was very mostly very specific to the content of the sessions or the issue participants were working on, so I will not present this information in detail. New and significant points in response to the question ***what was overall most helpful*** to participants were the following:

- ‘you responding to me to clarify what you see beyond what I can’t see (blindspots)’;
- ‘identification and explanation of how the issue was being expressed in my character’;
- ‘the availability, the presence’;
- ‘feeling safe and comfortable enough to share my most intimate thoughts and feelings’ (mentioned twice);
- ‘the love coming full blast through the phone’, also ‘loving attitude’ and ‘loving energy’; ‘empathy’; ‘good will’.

There were three new questions in the closing questionnaire about ***how beneficial the process had been to participants with regard to deepening their awareness of themselves, bringing healing to areas of wounding in their lives, and supporting them on their own personal journey***. As presented in the quantitative section, the answers to all of these questions were positive, and highest for the awareness and personal journey questions. The following are some of the comments on the ratings that were given:

1. **Awareness:**

- 'It's always helpful to look in and have some assistance to be there and support';
- 'The issue that we worked on is one that has been with me for as long as I can remember. I am not sure I feel that my awareness of myself has deepened, but rather that I have become clearer about what I can do, from within, to counter some of the tendencies I have that are self-limiting.'
- 'The experience of deep peace seems engraved in my cells more than ever. The memory of seeing life from a totally different angle has made its mark.'

2. **Areas of wounding:**

- 'More insight than healing';
- 'When I talk to you about the things that have taken place in my life I can see the connections to old wounds and childhood traumas. This helps me put things into perspective and appreciate them as opportunities for healing and forgiveness.'
- 'I sense a beginning of healing. I intuit that there is a lot more to be cared for. I get what is healing is now.'

3. **Personal journey:**

- 'I feel it is very helpful to moving forward with greater insight and clarity.'
- 'I feel like a layer has been peeled away allowing me access to my heart and my feelings.'
- 'It was beneficial for many reasons – including all the insights listed above. But mainly, because it has given me hope, and some tools to work with!'
- 'I really felt supported more than ever in my life. I'm still astonished at what happened.'

When asked whether they would **recommend heart of Love healing to others**, 8 out of 9 persons answered positively, but some mentioned that they would probably recommend it only to people who were open, or receptive or sensitive enough, to this kind of work. Similarly, when asked whether it would serve them to continue the process begun during the research project, 8 out of 9 persons responded positively, with some stating that they were indeed continuing, or expressing a clear intention to continue in some way: 'Yes, it would [serve me]. I would like a monthly spiritual and emotional "tune-up".'

Finally, here are some of the comments of participants that were given in an open space at the end of the questionnaire:

- 'I really like this way of working.'
- 'Great work!'
- 'I think we covered quite a bit in just a few weeks. ...'
- 'My deep gratitude for all the care, love, availability, nourishment... I would definitely like to continue...'
- 'Thank you kindly for your loving presence. Heart of Love is very close to how I would describe you :)'

4. **Discussion**

Since I had no idea what would come of this journey into the unknown territory of 'heart of Love healing', I was really very positively surprised about the overall outcome. As a therapist, I am used to perceiving subtle shifts and changes in my clients, or even major energetic, emotional, mental or spiritual shifts and breakthroughs. Having these perceptions confirmed through the questionnaires was a very new, and personally very confirming experience. I was even more thrilled to see the quantitative ratings displayed in tables and charts! There is a hidden scientist in me that loves to see concrete evidence of what is usually only in the realm of what is sensed subtly. So not only was I delighted about

the very positive results, I was also pleased about having results that were so tangible and could be shared with others.

4.1 Possible biases?

Of course I am also very aware that there could be some bias in these results. To start with, the questionnaires were not filled out anonymously, and the participants obviously knew that I was going to read them and must have some interest in having positive results. However, in looking at the questionnaires, my sense was that people were really quite honest in their answers, and I made it clear in my instructions for the questionnaires that I was as much interested in hearing about what didn't work for them as I was in what worked for them. The instruction for the qualitative questions read as follows: *'As for ... feedback about the session, please feel free to be totally frank, I learn as much (or more) from what didn't work for you as I learn from what worked!'* In other words, I was interested in the truth of their experience. My sense is that this was a shared understanding between myself and the participants.

Secondly, I also wondered about the fact that two participants did not complete the process of filling out the questionnaires after the third session. My sense is that one participant might not have done so because they were not very satisfied with their experience of the last session, possibly also the second session, as there were some critical points in their answers on the after the session questionnaire. The other participant was very busy and it had already been difficult to get them to fill out the after the session questionnaires for the first two sessions. In terms of their experience of the sessions, the questionnaire for the first session did indicate one point of dissatisfaction (too much talking, not enough energy work) that was discussed and changed in the last two sessions, and the pre- and post-session questionnaires did follow the general trend of improvement, though not for the last session (with the exception of how they felt about their issue, for which there was consistent improvement). So with respect to the third after the session questionnaires and closing questionnaires, it is possible that the average ratings and qualitative results might have been slightly less good had those two persons contributed their answers. However, given that the results are averages, I doubt that the difference would have been very significant. Note also the discussion of the 'physical case' which affected the average ratings in the opposite, more negative sense.

4.2 The physical case

I did consider excluding the data from the participant whose physical issue had not improved. There were two good reasons for doing so. First, this was the only participant with a physical issue whilst all others presented with emotional, mental or spiritual issues, so there was a question of comparability between them. A second reason was the fact that there was clearly not enough evidence to come to any conclusions about physical issues: in order to assess heart of Love healing in relation to physical issues, I would have needed evidence from a lot more participants. So it would have made some sense to evaluate the results without the data from this participant and to restrict the interpretation to the more subtle emotional, mental and spiritual levels.

The results would certainly have been more positive if I had excluded these data: as indicated in table 3 in the quantitative results, the average rating of the overall helpfulness of the sessions increases from 6.8 to 7.52 when this participant's rating is excluded, and the qualitative answers would have been more uniformly positive. However, I decided to include the data despite their obvious negative bias. As I was more interested in general trends, the fact that overall ratings were pulled somewhat down by these ratings did not seem to be too important. It is moreover interesting to note that this participant still appreciated the sessions, particularly in terms of their body-mind perspective, the energy work, and the

empathetic listening. They also felt they benefited from the sessions at the other levels (as indicated in the pre- and post-session ratings), as well as in terms of their awareness of what emotional issues were related to their physical issue (as indicated in the after the session and closing questionnaires).

4.3 The mental variable

As mentioned in the presentation of the results, the results for the mental variable were somewhat anomalous in two ways: they were less marked in terms of improvement over the course of the three sessions, but the rating of the helpfulness of the sessions in terms of the mental level was almost as high as that of the spiritual level, as well as higher than the ratings for the physical and energetic level. My sense is that the problem is to be found in the formulation of the scale that participants filled out. The scale was presented as follows:

How do you feel mentally?

1 = very sluggish

5-6 = normal

10 = mind is very active/racing

The scale was meant to measure the amount of mental activity as an indicator of well being, with the presumption that the mind was more active with emotional stress and would become less active with relaxation during the session. Some participants did read and understand the scale like this, and also commented verbally in this direction, with the result that their mental ratings decreased during the sessions. Other participants clearly didn't, and hence rated their mental state roughly in line with their emotional state. As a result, the mental ratings on the pre- and post-session and the after the session questionnaires were overall very inconsistent and unfortunately really not very meaningful.

Furthermore, it is clear from the closing questionnaire, that participants who commented on the helpfulness of the sessions at a mental level felt that the sessions had been helpful in terms of mental clarity and the shifting of mental patterns. Here are the qualitative comments that they added to their ratings: *'less scattered and anxious, I feel more focused'*; *'quite a few of my beliefs shifted, helping me overall to deal with the issue'*; *'this is where I feel the impact the most'* (a participant who commented throughout on shifts in mental/belief patterns); *'I feel a lot of clarity'*; *'freer, unshackling some old patterns'*. Obviously, with the exception maybe of the first comment, the other comments indicate a very different and much more common understanding of 'mental' than what I had intended to measure with the mental scale!

It therefore makes sense to disregard the inconsistent quantitative ratings on the mental scale, and to accept the more common understanding of 'mental' that participants clearly used in the closing questionnaire. When doing so, the quantitative results also become much more consistent: there is then a clear trend of greater improvement, especially during the first session, at the more subtle emotional and spiritual levels as compared to the physical and energetic levels. The high ratings of the helpfulness of the sessions at the mental level then also make sense: presumably, participants did feel an improvement at the mental level in terms of shifts in mental patterns and mental clarity during the sessions as well as after, but were not able to indicate that on the quantitative scale given the way it was formulated. However, in the closing questionnaire, as well as in their qualitative answers, there is much evidence that the improvement was very much experienced at the level of mental patterns and beliefs, in parallel with the emotional and spiritual levels.

5. The effectiveness of heart of Love healing

In looking at the quantitative and qualitative results together, it is very obvious that the sessions were overall very helpful for the participants, excepting the one participant with the physical issue. Both

types of results suggest that participants felt a lot better about their issue by the end of the series of three sessions: not only had they given increasingly higher ratings in terms of how they felt about it, they had also reported shifts and changes all through the series. They had also indicated that the sessions were overall very helpful and effective. What is interesting to ask, then, is: in what ways did they benefit more specifically, and what exactly worked for them during and after those sessions?

5.1 Physical/energetic versus emotional/mental/spiritual levels

When looking at the results in more detail according to the different variables, it seems clear that the benefits were greater at the more subtle emotional, mental and spiritual level than they were at the physical and energetic level (but note above discussion of the mental variable). This conclusion is supported both by the quantitative ratings in the closing questionnaire and the qualitative reports that participants gave throughout. It may seem to be confirmed further by the fact that the one participant who had no improvement in their issue had a physical issue. However, interestingly enough, the ratings in the physical and energetic variables immediately after the sessions suggest consistent and quite high improvement during the sessions. Moreover, the average physical improvement for all sessions is equal to the average emotional improvement for all sessions. Also, some participants do report overall changes at the physical and energetic level in their closing questionnaire ('I was overall feeling better physically', 'I feel less tired'; 'I maintained a rather high energy level during the process', 'I feel lighter [energetically]'). So there is some evidence that the physical and energetic improvement was not much less than that at the more subtle levels, and in the case of the emotional and physical improvement actually equal.

There are two possibilities for making sense of these discrepancies. One is that the improvements at the physical and energetic level were simply overlooked by participants in their qualitative reports about the sessions because their focus was on the more subtle levels at which their issue was located. Since they had come with emotional, mental or spiritual issues, these were the levels at which they sought out help and would notice improvement most. It is therefore possible that the physical and energetic level simply didn't register as much for them because it was of less concern. I would say this is quite a plausible explanation, which is also supported by the fact that the qualitative comments in the after the session questionnaires were almost exclusively about the more subtle levels, with the exception of comments about feeling calmer, more relaxed, and more balanced. So even though most participants did not necessarily notice except immediately after the sessions, the sessions clearly had a positive impact on their physical well-being and overall energy levels.

An additional possibility is that the lower average improvement at the emotional level (compared to improvements at the spiritual level and for the issue) is a result of the fact that some of the sessions were emotionally quite challenging for participants. Thus there were two participants in the second, and two in the third session, whose emotional ratings after the session were lower than before, as they had come in touch with some rather difficult emotions. In the most extreme case, one participant's emotional ratings in the second session went down by three points from 6 (feeling 'good') to 3 ('mixed feelings, kind of sad'). However, their emotional rating three days after the session was 7 (feeling 'good'), and the rating of the effectiveness of the session also at 7 ('very helpful'), with the additional comment that 'the session really brought me forward'. Visiting difficult and painful emotional places, then, is clearly part of the process of working with emotional issues, especially as the work goes deeper (as it did in sessions 2 and 3). It is through 'unearthing' these difficult emotions that old patterns become more conscious and new openings and possibilities arise. This interpretation is confirmed by the very high ratings of the overall helpfulness of sessions at the emotional level in the closing questionnaires (8.6, the highest rating overall) and the high ratings of the benefit in terms of increasing awareness and supporting their personal journey (7.39 and 8.28 respectively). It is further confirmed by

the qualitative comments about the sessions. So in assessing the helpfulness of the sessions, participants clearly saw the improvement that had taken place, rather than just the 'lows' that they might have felt as part of the process.

My sense is, then, that both points are probably true. The focus on the more subtle levels for all participants but one clearly did make most participants overlook the benefit that they had indicated at the physical and energetic levels during the process when it came to evaluating the whole series of sessions and they were looking back to assess its overall impact. And it is also very likely the case that the dynamics of entering a process of emotional healing may have been reflected in the emotional ratings during the process, whilst not affecting the overall ratings at the end.

What this means, then, is that even though almost all participants were looking for help with their more subtle personal issues, the sessions were also beneficial at a more general physical and energetic level. At the same time, this benefit seemed to go more unnoticed than the more obvious and overall stronger benefit at the emotional, mental and spiritual levels. The highest improvement of all took place, maybe not surprisingly, in relation to the issue that participants had brought to the sessions. This issue was the focus of the sessions, and clearly also the focus of participants when they filled out the questionnaires. In reporting such improvement, participants confirmed that heart of Love healing is a good and powerful modality for addressing personal issues and for supporting people in their journeys of personal growth.

5.2 Physical conditions

What is more questionable is whether this form of work is an effective tool for physical conditions. Since only one participant sought help for a physical problem and this problem did not improve during the sessions, there is some doubt as to whether heart of Love healing is a good modality for treating purely physical problems. The physical issue in question was a knee problem which did not respond significantly to the work in the sessions, although the participant commented at the end that it 'feels maybe a little easier'. It is possible that the results for the physical issue reflected my own personal strengths and weaknesses: my strength as a therapist clearly lies more in the subtle realms as compared to the purely physical level. But it should be noted that knee problems are indeed difficult to treat even with more physical modalities, and it is certainly possible that other physical conditions, maybe especially more obviously psycho-somatic conditions, might well respond more strongly. Given the very real improvement at more subtle personal and psychological levels that heart of Love healing could bring about, this may be an interesting area to investigate. But this remains in the realm of speculation, and much more evidence is needed before any conclusions can be drawn in this respect.

My personal sense regarding heart of Love healing at the physical level is that benefits are indeed possible, but that a more obvious psycho-somatic dimension to the physical issue may make positive results more likely. It is also worth taking into account that improvement at the physical level, given that it is the densest level of all, may take longer and/or more sessions in order to happen.

5.3 Heart of Love healing: the evolution of the work and the spiritual dimension

As mentioned in the introduction and the description of the actual sessions, the nature of the therapeutic and healing work that I did with participants was somewhat experimental. In fact it was through conducting the sessions that the work took on a more concrete form and that I realized that I could integrate counseling, energy work and some body work as techniques in a session that was guided by, and based on, the energy of Love.

A good example of a therapeutic 'tool' that evolved during this process is what I described as the 'tuning in' periods in presenting the results. I had originally proposed these periods in order to give myself space to connect with Love more specifically in relation to what a participant had introduced as a topic or concern at the beginning stages of a session, and often also at one or two more crucial points during a session when I felt I needed to return to the heart level in order to connect more profoundly with the energy of Love. My instructions to participants for these periods were to suggest that they turn inside at the same time and connect with a deeper level or a heart level of what they were feeling, or simply that they open their hearts to themselves in whatever it was they were feeling. The periods were several minutes long, ranging anywhere from 3 to 5 or 6 minutes. In therapeutic terms, these periods turned out to be extremely important as they often allowed insights or images to emerge in me and/or the participants that would be very evocative and powerful for the participants. They tended to provoke insights as well as emotional shifts, and participants often remarked on them for this reason. Connecting with Love even more directly and deeply during those 'tuning in' periods, in other words, often turned out to be powerful moments during a session.

Another very striking experience were times when the energy of Love came to be very 'palpable' to both therapist and participant. The participant with whom these moments had happened most powerfully described them as 'love coming full blast through the phone', and others similarly mentioned feeling like they were receiving or in the presence of a loving energy. These moments, or longer periods, would just happen. They were beyond my conscious control in that I could not 'make them happen': it was as if Love revealed itself in its purity and power and touched both, therapist and participant, with its grace. I did notice that these moments tended to arise more with participants who were emotionally and spiritually more open and able to recognize and receive such Love. These moments were probably also very transformational in their impact: the participant who experienced them most strongly commented on their experience of the series of sessions in the following terms: 'It's just love pouring at me ... amazing ... like a shower of diamonds and lighting all my cells, emotions, mind and spirit. ... I could connect with the love energy like never before ... and I can see that there is nothing but that. It's the truth ... everything else is just layers.' So the experience of receiving or being in this Love could be very potent. What is most striking in reflecting about these moments is that they were really moments of true grace, beyond my making, happening when they were happening, and touching both therapist and participant very profoundly. All I could do was to stay open to that Love and trust that it would guide and manifest as was needed.

A further aspect of this work is worth noting. There were many comments by participants that they were able to reach into the depths of their psyche and experience because they felt safe to do so in a therapeutic environment that was loving, compassionate and kind. As the comment by one participant about feeling judged in the past indicates, I have not always been above judgment as a therapist, and there are probably still lapses from time to time. However, the very clear and conscious anchoring of my intention and being in the energy of Love certainly helped enormously in creating this safe environment for participants. In fact, this may be one of the explanations of the healing power of Love: when faced with pure love, protection, defenses, and the contraction that goes with protective defense, are simply not necessary, allowing the person to open fully to whatever it is that needs to be seen or felt, and to relax whatever tension is habitually there as a result of the defense. In this deep relaxation (another aspect that was often remarked on by participants), what is tight and contracted can release, thus allowing people to let go of old emotional, mental and spiritual patterns of contraction and holding.

An additional point of explanation of the healing power of Love may be that such a release of tension will also allow vital energy and forces to flow more freely, thus allowing people to feel clearer, stronger, and more grounded in themselves. This deep relaxation and re-vitalisation could eventually have an effect even at the physical level – which is the densest and therefore slowest to respond – and bring

about healing at that level, too. It is therefore possible, even though there is no evidence of this from this research project, that healing will result also at the physical level, much as it did at the more subtle levels.

Given all this, and especially the profound and almost mystical nature of some of the moments of pure Love during sessions, it is not surprising, then, that participants felt the benefit of the sessions at the spiritual level, too, even though they tended to comment more on the benefits with respect to their issue. However, when asked more directly about the spiritual level, they responded that they felt more connected spiritually and to themselves during and after the sessions. With the exception of one participant who focused more on the intuitive nature of the work, they were also positive in their response to the question whether they had felt that the sessions were an expression of a loving intention and energy, many adding 'definitely' or 'absolutely' and further comments to their response of 'yes'. Even the participant who responded in more uncertain terms to the questions that were directly about heart of Love healing or the loving energy and intention commented as follows on the question how they had experienced the sessions in comparison with other types of therapy: 'The [therapists] I had seen were not as spiritual ... I like the way you always brought me around to a more forgiving, accepting and loving relationship to myself and the world. This allowed me to see that I am ok and that there is nothing wrong. From this more compassionate perspective, I could go deeper into the process of getting to know myself. If I am ok and if what I feel is also ok, I can relax and be at peace with myself and the moment.'

In looking at the spiritual dimension of the sessions and the work that was done, then, it is clear that this dimension was very noticeable for participants, and that it was quite powerful in its effects. In this respect, the results of the research confirm the more intuitive understanding of the healing power of love with which I started when I embarked on this journey. What the research project cannot inform us of is to what extent the improvements were due to the spiritual dimension of the work, and to what extent they were due to other aspects and tools that I integrated into the sessions, especially counseling and energy work. It would take a much more sophisticated research design to be able to distinguish between these different aspects and their specific contribution to the benefits of the sessions.

6. Conclusion

The experience of this research project was not only beneficial to the participants in terms of helping them feel better at all levels, including about the issue they came to look for help with, it was also enormously beneficial to me. It confirmed the intuitive understanding of the healing power of Love that I started off with, and it allowed me to develop ways of working with people that were an expression of Love. Even if there is some question mark over the beneficial effects it can have in relation to specific physical issues, the benefits at all other levels, including general physical well-being, are very clear. In fact, the results are so encouraging that I started reflecting on integrating heart of Love healing into all of my work with clients. The beauty of the energy of Love is that it can indeed be combined with all sorts of other healing modalities, as I found out during the course of the sessions for the research project. At the same time it will modify these other modalities in a subtle way and introduce a sweetness and softness that are maybe its most characteristic features.

In conclusion, then, the research project did provide a 'reality check' in terms of seeing what effects heart of Love healing could have, even if it does not measure up to scientific standards as defined by the scientific community. Its results are strong and striking enough to support the conclusion that heart of Love healing does indeed have a very positive effect on people's well being and personal growth. For

me personally, the results are encouraging and do inspire me to offer this healing modality to those who feel drawn to it.