The Healing Dance:
A Fusion of Massage & Asian Healing Arts

By Grace Sunga Asagra MA, RN

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Dedication

TO THE VILLAGE
In memory of my father Miguel “Mike” Asagra, sister Ruth “Ruthie” Asagra Stoos, brother Raul “Yoyi”, brother Jose “Joe”, my grandparents, and my friend, Herbert “Herbie” Tuchman
To my mother Josefina, aunties, uncles, and cousins
To my sister Edna, sister Patty, brother Timmy, and families
To my son KwaseKhemwer “KK” and family
To African Nganga (Shaman), Akinyele Onisegun Karade, whose indigenous wisdom guided me
To seekers of indigenous-integrative-complementary healing
To friends
To all
To LIFE
Disclaimer

1. This manuscript does not substitute for any study with a Filipino hilot or Thai massage teacher.
2. This manuscript does not substitute any competent instruction, particularly when it comes to anatomy and physiology.
3. This manuscript does not guarantee safe practice by just reading it.
4. Each receiver is different. Approach can only be customized if the giver is competent and confident as a practitioner.
5. Caution for some techniques must always be observed.
6. Information from this manuscript does not substitute any consultation from physicians.
7. This book serves as a cultural expression of cultural healing.
8. No one owns the truth.
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An effective nurturer goes beyond the attainment of knowledge of techniques and motions. A good nurturer is the embodiment of health, discipline and compassion. How good you are depends upon how much of yourself you give during a never-ending training process.

Many elements beyond technique can be taken into consideration. I have listed seven of them below, along with some Filipino idiomatic expressions and proverbs that help me to remember that these elements are key.

**KALAKASAN (VIGOR for Stamina and Endurance)**

*Magtipon ng lakas. (Gather your strength)*

Vigor is the driving force to have the stamina and endurance. This work is very physical and could give the nurturer a feeling of fatigue and exhaustion. A healthy lifestyle contributes to not just the physical strength needed but to the unwavering inner strength grounded in truth and principles of healing.

**INSPIRASYON (INSPIRATION for Confidence)**

*Ang nakikinig sa sabi-sabi ay walang tiwala sa sarili. (When you listen to hearsay, you have no confidence in yourself.)*

The inspiration coming from your instructor, your clients and your techniques will help you in what you are doing and gain confidence. But above all, the inspiration (in-the-spirit) from within, will give you confidence, and with it humility.

**KATATAGAN (STABILITY for Coordination)**

*Tinimbang ka, ngunit kulang (When weighed, found wanting)*

Stability through harmony of mind, body, emotions and spirit will lead you to balance the weave of every motion you decide to do, whether it is a pattern or an addendum to the routine. It is important to spend time and energy tending to all areas and aspects of compassion that matters for the individual.

**PAGLINGAP (NURTURE for Refinement and Style)**
Nasa tao ang gawa, nasa Diyos ang awa. (The person does the work so God gives the blessings.)

Nurturing can bring out the best in oneself. Without the Divine’s omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience in our being, techniques will remain techniques rather than instruments of healing. Your own style and system unfolds with God’s grace and through diligence and practice.

SIMBUYO NG DAMDAMIN (PASSION for the Work)

_Buhos na kalooiban (Unconditional commitment)_

Passion for growth, for success, for excellence through one’s determination and love of the work can only come from belief in oneself, leaving no room for any doubt or fear. Doubt and fear can only lead to lack of commitment and focus. When you love something, it brings about transformation and unity with yourself, your clients and the spirits of the ancient healing arts. Yearning leads to the desire for knowledge to understand the interrelationships of techniques, patterns, things and events in the dance as it’s woven in the web of life.

PAGIGING ISA (ONENESS for Sensitivity and Awareness)

_Ang taong hindi marunong lumingon sa pinaggalingan ay hindi makarating sa kanyang paroroonan. (If you don’t look at where you came from, you will never be able to reach your destination.)_

Everything is medicine wrapped in gratitude. Our past, our present and our future come with medicine needed at the right moment as we look into our habitual patterns that may cause joy and sufferings. They are the roots that keep us growing. We cannot deny events that have happened, or emotions felt in our life’s journey. Understanding and appreciating all moments help us to be one with ourselves, our clients and all our surroundings. Being one increases our keenness and sensitivity to forces in nature. It gives us clarity and direction. It sharpens our listening abilities beyond what we only want to hear. It helps us notice things to which we normally would not pay attention. Our senses become a source to protect ourselves from harm’s way. To be one is to listen with our hearts as compassion unfolds healing. Be grateful, relax your whole body, stay calm and be alert. Be ready to attune yourself to the unfolding dynamic.

KABANATAN (RESILIENCE for Patience, Trust and Faith)

_Kapag may tiyaga, may nilaga. (When there is patience, something is brewing.)_
Resiliency is empowered through patience, trust and faith. We are called to give way to diwata master plan. Be harmonious with the forces in nature. This will allow us to enjoy a delicious dish of health and well-being. Be like the water. Transform as you flow. Helping others calls us to re-shape our-selves in many ways necessary to create harmony and yet remain true to our being.
About Grace

Grace Sunga Asagra MA, RN, HN-BC, HC-BC, is a traditional Filipino hilot (indigenous health practitioner using joint-muscular manipulations, bentusa, cooking and herbal foods), holistic health coach (nutritionist-counselor-life coach-health advocate), author and speaker on “Who and What's the Matter with You.” A seasoned nurse with over 20 years of critical care nursing, she was a barefoot nurse in Legaspi City, Philippines, organizing and empowering locals to use natural resources for sustainable health solutions.

Currently, her practice as a hilot is the dance co-created with mga diwata (forces in nature/deities/angels) and mga ninuno (ancestors). She guides individuals to change the course of their health from chronic conditions to healthy aging through understanding the dance between their inner and outer selves.

Grace specializes in optimum health and wellness programs in partnership with clients want to weave authentic, integrative, functional, ancestral and traditional health solutions into improving overall health. Some of the success stories that inspire her include a nine-year-old girl in the Philippines with history of cerebral palsy who was able walk again after series of hilot sessions, a sixty-year-old female business owner who lost thirty pounds with improved clinical changes and was able to discontinue her blood pressure medication, with her doctor’s approval. Also a seventy-six-year-old male college professor who experienced healthier prostate conditions without prescription medications and a fifty-six-year old female with history of colon cancer who chose not to have surgery and became cancer free to much surprise of her oncologist.

Grace’s caring ways and healing embody respect for a person’s bio-individuality, authenticity and wholeness through healthcare programs that support an environment for optimum healthy gene expression founded on her relationship with her clients and diwata, bringing about awareness and responsibility to her clients’ health and well-being, as well as holism embodied in cultural ways of knowing and being to express inherent healing ways. She honors all experiences and trusts the process as medicine and healing in collaboration with those who join her in this journey. Learn more about her at her websites, www.graceasagra.com and www.filipinohilot.com.