

# The Spectrum of Health Care Chart

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**M**any of us appreciate the function of “charts” to help us organize knowledge and see certain content or principles arranged in relationship to others.

The left brain likes when things are placed in boxes, categories, or some hierarchical structure because it wants to see things in relationship to one another. The right brain can then integrate the “whole” picture of the details and determine a sense of integration and overall sense or feel for the realm of content.

I developed this chart in the mid-1990s for the Healing Touch Program when I was the Director of Research. I hope you find it helpful in seeing the big picture of how we can think of the realm of health care in western societies. I’ll offer a brief explanation of each level to clarify the chart.

The title of the chart is: “The Spectrum of Health Care.” *Spectrum* indicates the wide variety of options that exist for practicing self-care and seeking holistic or mainstream possibilities.

The two major categories of this chart are: Western/Conventional and Holistic/Integrative/Alternative/Complementary (found on page 31).

We think of **Western/Conventional** as those practices which are fairly well-established and (supposedly) backed by both anecdotal and evidence-based practices. Most of us have had at least some exposure to mainstream health care which includes Diagnostic Tests or treatments such as PT, OT, Speech Therapy, Radiation, Chemotherapy, and so on. Pharmaceuticals and Surgery fit in this category as well, and are very common. Standard psychotherapy and counseling are also considered in this major category, but there are some versions that may be considered more holistically-oriented, such as body-centered psychotherapy, which has become more popular over the last few decades. Wellness education has gradually come under Western/Conventional care in the form of: nutrition, exercise, and lifestyle. Body-mind connections to health have also become more apparent over the last quarter of a century.

Next, we have the other major category titled **Holistic/Integrative/Alternative/Complementary**, as all synonymous with therapeutic agents or therapies/practices that tend to include the equal importance of body, mind, and spirit to the overall health of a human being. We are all aware of the plethora of options that we see multiply in front of our eyes, especially over the last 25 years. It seems that every day we are hearing about more practices and theories related to holistic health and healing. While some are ancient (yoga, meditation, acupuncture, spiritual healing, fasting, herbal medicine), many of the newer approaches build upon the ancient practices while providing a different “twist” (or perspective), ideally with research, to support a particular substance, therapy, or practice.

This Holistic/Integrative/Alternative/Complementary category has subcategories which include: Overall philosophies/schools of thought related to body-mind-spirit health within the human life cycle. Among them are: Chinese Medicine, Osteopathy, Naturopathy and Ayurvedic approaches to health.

Just because a practice or therapy is thought of as non-mainstream and more “holistically-oriented” doesn’t mean it actually “walks the talk” of true holistic application, which would mean exploring how the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of a person are integrated and attended to for healing purposes. Some practices which are thought to be more “holistic” could actually be just as single-pointed to one area of health (body, mind OR spirit) and partially or totally ignore the other aspects, thus, not truly “holistic!” In a correspondent way, a mainstream or conventional practitioner could very well be beautifully attending to the body-mind-spirit of a client through the way s/he provides conventional medical care through his or her caring presence, conversation, questions, and compassionate application of a treatment or practice. It is important to take note of this fact because “holistic” versus “mainstream” care could actually be a misnomer for the actual quality of care that is provided.

I offer this perspective because those of us who think of ourselves as “holistic, spiritually-oriented, complementary, and/or integrative” can sometimes feel superior to mainstream western practices. Yet, I’m sure most of us have had unsatisfactory experiences with some “holistic” practitioners, and inversely, very satisfactory experiences with standard mainstream health care. The point I really want to make is that I believe it is not just the therapy or practice that makes the difference with a person’s health, but the humanity and “caritas” of the practitioner providing care. This is well established through the theory and research on **Caring Theory and Science**, pioneered by **Jean Watson**, PhD, RN, whose Watson Caring Science Institute has established world-wide, transcultural respect and acceptance at health care schools and institutions all over the world. See <https://www.watsoncaringscience.org>.

Now we can move on back to the chart!

The holistic oriented category also includes **movement therapies and practices** (meaning that some kind of physical movement is involved, whether subtle or apparent). Examples include: chiropractic, massage, reflexology, Feldenkrais, Pilates, Yoga, Tai Chi and Qi Gong. It can also include newer practices, such as ecstatic dance.

Also included in this major category are forms of **Body Psychotherapy, Spiritual Practices** and **Nutritional** practices and therapies. These are fairly self-evident when referring to the chart.

The final sub-category under holistic health care is **Vibrational Medicine**.

Vibrational Medicine is a huge and growing category which has become increasingly popular and of general interest since the 1990s. These include various forms of color, light and sound therapy, crystal therapy, flower essences and essential oils, homeopathy, and all the various forms of energy therapy/medicine.

**Energy Medicine or Energy Therapy** (the latter term being the preferred term over the last decade or two by the Institute of Alternative and Integrative Medicine in the USA) is a huge subcategory. Within it are two main branches: **Bio-mechanical** and **Bio-Field** or **Hands-On Energy Therapy**. The bio-mechanical branch utilizes some type of machinery to either diagnose health conditions, or help to deliver a vibrational frequency that supports a therapeutic response. I continue to refer those interested in energy therapy to James Oschman's classic research text titled "*Energy Medicine: The Scientific Basis*" (2016, 2nd Ed). Dr. Oschman addresses the wide variety of energy therapies, including bio-mechanical and hands-on versions. He explained at numerous EM conferences worldwide that any instrument or machine used for diagnostics and healing could all be done through the human being who is attuned to the high vibrational energies of healing. Thus, the instruments are all actually imitating what we are capable of as divine human beings.

The **Hands-On** (light or off-body touch) **energy therapies** are those which do not use any pressure, manipulation or pulling of the body or its parts to achieve its therapeutic goal (in comparison to massage and rolfing). The emphasis is on utilizing the **soul capacities** of the practitioner to help create **sacred space** which raises the vibrational frequency of the client through the attunement and **entrainment** processes/phenomenon to support a healing response. Practitioners are not just focused on hand placements. In fact, hand placements alone may do little or nothing to facilitate improvement or healing.

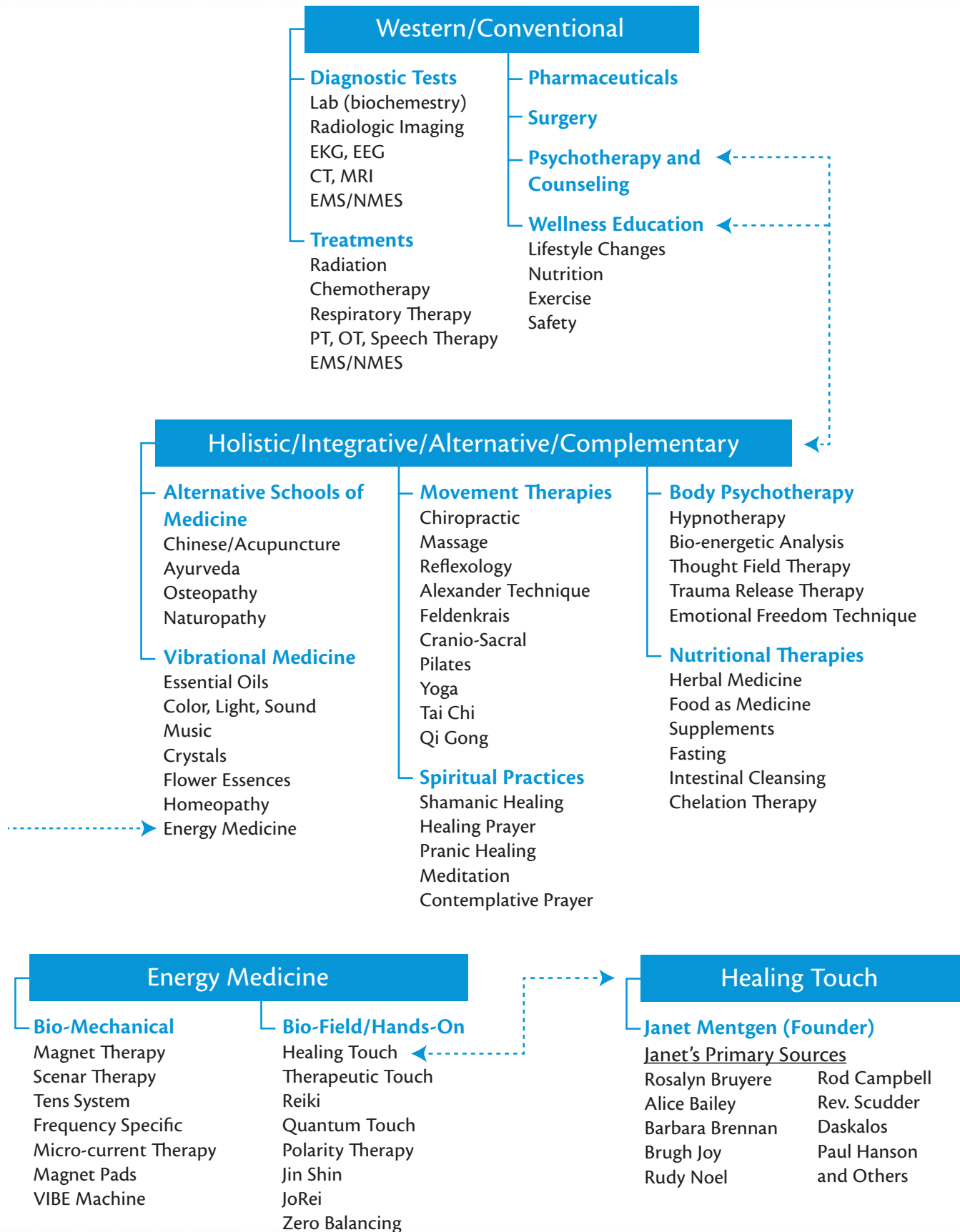
It is the practitioner's **thoughts/intentions, compassion, heart-centeredness, and will forces** that align with service, self-giving, and goodness, which appear to be the critical ingredient; not merely hand placements or gestures. Because we know through the **power of intention** and meditation, space or distance do not seem to be a barrier to providing this type of therapeutic support. Long distance hands-on energy therapy is known to be very effective with practitioners who know how

to hold "sacred space." Another likely factor in client response is whether or not the client is also "receptive," either consciously or unconsciously (at a soul level), to healing on some level of being. As most of us know, a client may seek treatment for a physical issue, but we see results at an emotional, mental or spiritual level. The reverse is also somewhat common, and variations of it. It seems that the healing "energy" knows where it is most needed, thus requiring that EM practitioners do not have any attachment to a specific result, but instead trust that the divine healing energy will be used for the highest good of the person. Thus, the practitioner (and hopefully client) often hold two intentions: the first may be a specific "hope" or intention, for a result; the second is a "release" of the specific healing intention with an overall intention for the "highest good" of the client, whatever that looks like.

In **Healing Touch**, the energy therapy practice I have utilized most over the last 25+ years, along with application of **Sacred Geometry**, I have emphasized to thousands of students the concept of "*intention over technique*." What does this mean? It means that you can literally "mess up" on your application of hand placements or gesture, leave out one or more steps, or alter the recommended time placements of the various methods and still have a very effective treatment and healing response. Why? Because the practitioner's head and heart take precedence in their influence over what their hands do. Thus, if the practitioner truly holds a positive, prayerful, heart-centered intention for the client and uses her/his hands with the best intention possible, one can trust that healing will happen at some level, whether it be a noticeable healing response of body-mind-spirit, or a subtle relaxation response.

From the perspective of "Perennial Philosophy," Barbara Brennan's work (Light Emerging, 1993) and Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy/Spiritual Science, the essential state for positive change or healing is that the soul capacities of human **Thinking, Feeling and Willing** (head, heart, hands) align as much as possible with the three transcendentals of **TRUTH,**


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**BEAUTY and GOODNESS.** (Which correspond with Faith, Hope, Charity & Science, Art, Religion.) Barbara Brennan refers to this state as **Hara (soul) Alignment**, a fairly well-known concept among energy medicine practitioners.

While I remember Therapeutic Touch, Reiki, Polarity Therapy, and Healing Touch as the main hands-on healing methods that were more “known” back in the 1980s in the United States, many other forms have sprouted up since then, and the chart provided here is far from inclusive of all the possible therapies and practices. There are numerous and myriad choices for people who are interested in learning how to practice these interventions, or who are seeking energy therapy from a practitioner who aligns or resonates with who they are.

I hope this chart has provided some learning to you, and a way to organize and visualize that *big picture* perspective of health care options. It has been a helpful learning tool for many over the years. 



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