



# Oh!! OSTEOPATHY!!

MESSAGE VOODOO. THAT'S WHAT I WAS IN SEARCH OF. SOME KIND OF TRANSCENDENTAL REMEDY THAT WOULD GIVE ME RELIEF FROM MY CHRONIC, THROBBING PAIN THAT WAS AN UNRELENTING HUM IN MY RIGHT SHOULDER: THE RESULT OF A CAR ACCIDENT AND A SUBSEQUENT FALL.

STORY:  
KAT LANTEIGNE

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF  
THE OSTEOPATH

I've had shiatsu (which has helped), I've had deep tissue massage, which has mostly brought me to tears, and I have had acupuncture –which I am still not sold on, and I have to admit I have absolutely no clue as to what is in those little black pellets they give me.

My husband has also been through the gambit of pain relief support (that's my term). He has undergone back surgery in an attempt to relieve the pain caused by herniated disks and, although he is doing much better post surgery, he hasn't recovered fully. Now he has a gift from his adoring wife who can usher him into a new arena of treatment - osteopathy.

Osteopathy is of course not voodoo in any way. It is rather: a natural medicine, which aims to restore function in the body by treating the causes of pain and imbalance. \* The Canadian College of Osteopathy states that the premise of natural medicine in osteopathy is that nothing is added (ie: medications) and nothing is subtracted from the body (ie: surgery). So the osteopath is essentially working with what walks through the door. And the day I went, that was me; my baggage, stress and injuries in tow.

I can tell you I was skeptical, mostly because people who had made disparaging remarks about osteopathy (and most hadn't even been to one) had said, "they hardly touch you,"; "I need to really feel a treatment,"; "you have to keep going back again and again." Well, my first experience has proven all these comments wrong.

**“Everything in our body is connected to the bones. We have to be good to them”**

~ George Workman, The Osteopath



George Workman is standing in front of me – a friendly, warm, strong-looking man. He is already eyeing my posture, how I'm tilting my head and how I sit. It is no surprise when George tells me he was raised on a farm; he has a very grounded and welcoming energy about him. He also attributes his rural upbringing to leading him to his career as an osteopath. “Growing up on a farm you have to fix things, they need to work in order for things to keep moving. In my other practices I couldn't help people because I wasn't fixing things.”

George instructed me to stand on a scale (yes, you have to), he analyzed my posture some more and touched my shoulders and hipbone softly and proceeded to list off the parts of my body that were either causing pain, or out of whack. I will remind you that it was my shoulder that was hurting but George insisted that my left hip had popped out too and that can cause secondary pain. “In osteopathy I work from a principal of the body as a whole. Everything in our body is connected to the bones – we have to be good to them,” he told me.

I've filled out my sheet with some very basic information and medical history. I lay down and George starts to work on my hipbone by stretching my quads in a way they have never been stretched before. I breathe through the discomfort (it's not painful). After about ten minutes I am floating off the massage table. Something in my body is moving that hasn't moved in years. I haven't even verbalized my state of mind when George chimes in. “It's okay, you'll feel a little light-headed, muddy - it's normal.” When George moves to do the cranial part of the treatment, his touch is so gentle it hardly feels as though he is

doing anything – and then – I swear it – I feel my vertebrae and spine move ever so gently. My lips shake and I can feel my jaw soften. It's so delicate I am amazed that it gives the same relief as when my husband has dug his knuckle into my lower back exercising the sweet spot of a persistent knot. When George places his hands on my head he tells me, “Whoa, you take on a lot don't you? You think about things a lot, and you're a fighter.” All true. There's something about this guy that's different than other therapists I've been to – he's personally invested – and he's present. It's kind of flipped my lid.

At the end of the treatment George tells me he wants me to be in the pool at least three times a week if I can. “I can tell you have a traumatic posture, you've been hurt by a trauma.” I had forgotten to tell George about my car accident. “Anyone who has experienced body trauma needs to be in the water more,” he says. I ask him how many times I should come back, and what exercises I should be doing aside from swimming. He assures me to live my life as I do – I will anyway - and adds, “People can hurt themselves by over-treating, if you are not hurting, then I don't need to see you.”

I will need to see George again – I certainly am not fixed yet. But for the last week and a half my shoulder pain has in fact lessened, my headaches associated with it have disappeared and my hip doesn't hurt when I run. On George's website he describes osteopathy as a “system and science of healing that uses physical techniques to remove tensions and restrictions in the body. It encourages structural physiological harmony.” I can now safely assert – that for me – it did just that.