

# Healing Appeasement with Energy Medicine



Most are familiar with the concept of fight or flight in reaction to stressful situations. These “dorsal responses” also include freezing, or dorsal shutdown, plus a relatively new dorsal response called appeasement. Women often don’t cope with unbearable situations responding with appeasement (otherwise known as fawning), that was not long ago recognized as a major trauma response.

Appeasement comes out of a very resilient nervous system not available to everyone and represents a complicated interaction, a skillful neuro-biological strategy of making the perpetrator believe they can trust the appeaser and thus build a relationship that is supposed to avoid abuse, injury or even death of the appeaser. (While more common with women, men can also experience this response.)

Especially in inescapable environments where fighting only increases threat and harm, appeasement seems to be the go-to strategy by trying to fix the broken attachment to the caregiver(s) through prioritizing their needs over one’s own. Later on in life appeasers often

try to find safety in constantly reading other people's emotions and attuning themselves to them. This can often be mistaken with empathy, but as it comes from fear, it is rather a very smart way of self-sabotage coming out of a heightened alertness and sensitivity to threat.

The most famous example for appeasement is the Stockholm Syndrome, which describes it as a response to traumatic entrapment resulting in paradoxically positive relationships with the oppressors that may persist even beyond release. This can also be widely witnessed in ongoing relationships with the trauma-causing perpetrator, especially if they are parents, care givers, close friends or relatives of the family. Appeasement is the mammalian defense most relevant to the survival challenge presented by traumatic entrapment and appears to be the foundation of complex PTSD. Long term appeasement in childhood leads to a typical set of behaviors and beliefs about the self – high sensitivity, empathy and alertness, feeling responsible, auto-aggression (as in negative self talk), self-blame, shame and guilt, low self esteem, insecurity, anxiety, “not-good-enoughness”, feeling unseen or unimportant, depression, addictions and self-harm, chronic pain or illness, and unhealthy boundaries.

The lack of healthy boundaries is a widespread challenge women seem to be still facing most everywhere in the world. The paternalistic structures we unfortunately still have to live with today request women to be overly flexible and tolerant, whether it is about their careers, opportunities, relationships. As mothers it seems to be expected that we rather swallow it all and smile instead of saying no or even getting angry when our boundaries are overstepped or ignored.

This often begins in childhood, where girls are expected to be polite, quiet, helpful and sensible, while boys, due to their apparent nature, are allowed to be more wild, loud and aggressive. Women who have developed an appeasement-based coping strategy on top of societal dictates often end up people-pleasing and thus continuously creating unhappiness for themselves by not being in tune about what feels right and wrong, then blaming themselves for external situations. This often leads to a variety of psychological and somatic problems as well as internal and external disorientation and disconnection.

Connection and orientation however are two of the many magical and healing offerings of energy work.

Looking at the cosmology of the Q'ero Nation of Peru, whose wisdom and medicine I studied at the Light Body School through Dr. Alberto Villoldo, it is important to mention that they are the direct descendants of the Inca who fled into the high Andes upon arrival of the Conquistadors 500 years ago. Carrying this ancient wisdom in their lineage, they believe that we never left paradise, which is in stark contrast to our Judea-Christian understanding of Adam & Eve's expulsion from the garden after eating from the tree of wisdom, which was passed down collectively as original sin.

The Q'ero however believe that we are one with the Earth and in fact her guardians and stewards, and that through our luminous energy field we are connected to realms and beings

beyond our limited perception of a materialistic/reductionist reality that is trying to understand everything through the mind. "Monkey mind" if you will, as it represents only one and the much lesser developed organ of perception and intelligence in our bodies. Far more wisdom lies in our hearts and guts, in our intuition and subtle remembrance of ways that were lost centuries ago.

## How Energy Work Can Heal Appeasement

It might seem difficult to grasp the concept of the luminous energy field or energy body, that not only the Q'ero work with. If we turn towards quantum physics being a rather new scientific discipline, we find proof of a universal truth that has been known and used by indigenous cultures around the world for millennia and that we have essentially been trained to forget about. Just take the European witch hunt resulting in mass-extinction of women knowledgeable of this truth as well as their experience in midwifery, their herbal knowledge and more. The loss of this wisdom systematically disconnected us from our roots and intuition. We are slowly starting to remember and reconnect with it, initiated around 100 years ago by C.G. Jung and his profound contributions about archetypes, the collective unconscious and a more spiritual understanding of our life purpose.

For women to heal the consequences of appeasement, as we are still embedded in a dominant and toxic paternalistic society, it takes a more feminine, maternal, loving and caring approach to undo the damage that has been passed down for centuries from mothers to daughters, and especially support women in overcoming the mostly self-destructive strategies that have developed due to the heavy, inter-generational and collective luggage they carry and to help them get back in touch with their yin-qualities and dormant resources. From my experience, energy work is offering exactly that, as it works with intuition, with soul, with connection and with the subtle flow of energies.

Energy work not only offers a higher level of cosmic order and connection but can serve as a guiding compass in navigating through our lives. Gaining independence of the feedback and acknowledgment from other people, we learn to find everything we need to feel safe and loved within and beyond. This is how hypnotherapy and energy medicine overlap and complement one another: tapping into our unconsciousness, into our beliefs and into our body can bring us in touch with ourselves and can be achieved with both methods. But while the western approach addresses heart, body and mind, the medicine of the Q'ero is enriching the healing work by nurturing our spirit, thus deepening trust and self-reliance and offering a map for a profound quest of the soul, reassuring us of the eternal divine love that flows through everything at all times.

The combination of energy medicine with our western approach also helps our conditioned minds to accept and integrate the energetic transformation much better if we cognitively reflect on what an imprint or soul loss represents, what caused it and how it has expressed itself through the core beliefs it created. Hence I prepare any energy medicine intervention with a couple of self-inquiring therapy sessions, as I noticed that a drop-in energy session

with a client inexperienced in self-observation and self-inquiry isn't very sustainable. From my understanding, all the work we do in the practice is an invitation to actively participate in our healing journey by taking responsibility and working on applying the insights they gain during sessions in their every day lives.

This leads to two more important aspects of sustainable transformation that need to be mentioned here for completeness: mindfulness and an understanding of our nervous system.

Mindfulness is an important tool to help the client rewire their nervous system, as it needs attention, time and repetition for neuroplasticity to come into effect. Obviously, maladaptive patterns are developed over time, resulting in our world view, beliefs, coping strategies and reaction to supposed triggers. Most of my clients have a fuzzy awareness or are unconscious to the cause and effect of their inner system and wiring of their nervous system.

Introducing the observer mode, in my opinion best described by Eckart Tolle, they learn to differentiate the ego-states and retrain reaction patterns in their nervous system by understanding that a reaction to a trigger in most cases comes from a protector of our hurt parts that desperately need to be acknowledged for healing to occur. They get to know their inner landscape consisting of many other parts and their resources that can cope with a situation in a more mature and appropriate way. For this work to be most effective, it's mandatory to include the body into the observation and process. Where do these parts with their feelings and memories reside? How does it feel and look? Are there incomplete movements stuck in a freeze? What do these movements try to do? Is the stored memory a sympathetic (fight, flight) or parasympathetic (fawn, shut down) reaction?

Coming back to women, energy work is a deeply nurturing and connecting practice especially due to its transpersonal setting within sacred space and the support of the summoned archetypes and energies. As we actively participate in the healing process by consciously letting go and releasing what no longer serves us, we step into self-responsibility and away from defining ourselves as a passive victim, while being invited to receive care, attention and love, accompanied with the stimulation of all senses by using flower waters, rattles, drum, bells, stones and feathers.

With this setting and support, we more easily find the courage to give ourselves permission to claim our boundaries and speak our needs, to be witnessed in our pain and suffering without being judged, belittled, pushed away or worse, instead deeply connecting to our inner truth and wisdom which allows us to step out of the limiting beliefs our life story was holding.

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