

Lynne McTaggart on the POWER OF GROUP INTENTION

by April Thompson

Thirty years ago, speaker, author and journalist Lynne McTaggart recovered from an illness using alternative approaches to health. Since then, she's been exploring the frontiers of healing through consciousness and alternative medicine. In the 1990s, McTaggart, who lives in London, started a newsletter called *What Doctors Don't Tell You*, now an international magazine and popular platform at wddty.com that cites thousands of resources showing what works and doesn't work in conventional and alternative medicine and how to beat chronic conditions naturally.

McTaggart's seven books include *The Intention Experiment*, *The Field*, *The Bond* and most recently, *The Power of Eight*. Her latest work examines the transformative power of small groups of people sending thoughts together for a common goal.

Can you summarize the results of your experiments of healing through collective intentions?

We've done hundreds of experiments using small and large groups; 30 were tightly controlled scientific studies conducted in conjunction with researchers at institutions such as the University of Arizona, University of California and Penn State University.

The experiments have involved all kinds of intentions, ranging from the relatively simple to the impossibly complex. The large-scale intention experiments involved upwards of 25,000 participants remotely logging onto a website to view photos of the targets, sometimes 8,000 miles away, and sending them a well-defined intention, like changing the pH balance of water or healing a war veteran of post-traumatic stress disorder.

To date, 26 of those 30 experiments resulted in positive, measurable, mainly scientifically significant effects. We've



seen the pH of water change by a full pH number and seen seeds grow twice as much as control seeds.

We also conducted three peace intention experiments with interesting results:

After our eight-day intention for Sri Lanka during its civil war, violence levels fell; the government had won several decisive battles that week; and within a few months that 25-year war was over. We can't say with certainty that we had a hand in this, but our other peace experiments showed similar results. If it happens a few more times, that becomes compelling.

What conditions were the most conducive to manifesting positive results?

Was it intention, the power of the group or altruism? I think it's a little of all of these. We've found that larger groups do not have a larger effect, which brought about the "power of eight" concept. I've discovered all that's needed is a group, whether it's eight or 8,000. In a group, we seem to lose our sense of individuality and separation from the world. We experience an overwhelming sense of oneness with the other intenders, which may be why our influence then becomes more powerful.

How did the act of sending positive intentions affect the senders?

I was most surprised by the rebound effects reported by participants, whom I started surveying after the Sri Lankan peace experiment. Thousands of extraordinary comments related not only how participants felt during the activity, but

also afterwards; they were experiencing major shifts in their relationships, health, careers and well-being. All they had done was sit individually in front of their computer holding an intention, yet they experienced the altered and mystical states of consciousness described by psychologist Abraham Maslow as "peak experiences".

Life University, a large chiropractic university in Atlanta, worked with us to study the brainwaves of participants in six "power of eight" groups and found that senders had decreased activity in their frontal and parietal lobes, which govern the sense of self. It was like the boundaries between participants were dissolving into a state of oneness. To me, this partly explained the sense of oneness, compassion and love they experienced. Andrew Newberg, director of research at the Marcus Institute of Integrative Health, in Philadelphia, recorded similar effects in Sufi masters, and nuns and monks engaged in prayer and meditation, but only after years of learning certain techniques. My participants, all novices, were primed only by watching a 13-minute YouTube video of me explaining how to send intention in a group. Group intention appears to be a fast-track to the miraculous—no experience necessary.

Why does "grouphink" have such a powerful, multiplicative effect?

I think a huge part of it has to do with the power of getting off of yourself and setting an intention for someone else. Another is the connection created in a group. When we engage together in an activity like praying or setting altruistic intentions, we create a powerful virtual circle that proves healing to both the receivers and senders.

Connect with April Thompson, in Washington, D.C., at AprilWrites.com.