



Joint Effort –Healing TMJ Dysfunction

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Not many people realize that pressure in the jaw, known as Temporomandibular Dysfunction is prevalent in a wide range of illnesses and imbalances. If this pressure and misalignment is not addressed and corrected, the outcome can lead to many problems in your health and well-being.

To give you an example of suppressed and unresolved tensions held in the jaw area, I will tell you about one of my clients, Janine, who had come to see me after a routine teeth cleaning by her dentist. She was one of my “regulars” who I had impressed with the importance of releasing compressions after dental procedures.

I first conducted a hands-on protocol from feet to head to bring in a gentle rhythm that started to balance and release surface tension and knots, while putting Janine into a relaxed state of peacefulness. Then I began to gently touch strategic areas inside her mouth with a non-latex glove. I felt each tooth at the point where it meets the gum and noticed the stream of pressure releasing quickly and easily.

To Janine’s surprise, memories of her tonsillectomy and adenoid operation came up and the associated feelings of panic. She remembered how she had struggled to breathe and how her heart beat had accelerated. She realized how fearful the whole experience must have been for her as a child, overwhelmed by doctors in white and understanding very little of what was about to happen. Her system quickly went into a very deep and peaceful still point and released the remainder of the suppressed pattern through an unwinding of energy. When I re-evaluated her cranial bones, I found more balance and circulation around the brain, and upper spine.

What’s Your Mouth Doing While You’re Asleep

Clenching, and grinding often happen while your guard is down and you are sleeping. Perhaps it's your body's attempt to loosen up the pressure accumulated in that area.

Whatever the case, your teeth are being weakened and worn down, and the pressure in the TM joint can lead to inflammation and cartilage damage. Mouth Guards are offered by dentists, but they do nothing to teach the body how to go to the root of the problem, and let go of the stress. Craniosacral treatments will address the underlying cause which has triggered the habitual behaviour in your mouth. Treatments will teach your nervous system to work with the craniosacral's therapeutic rhythm so that stuck energy is released from significant areas of the body. In addition and most important, related emotional patterns that have led to jaw pressure will be addressed as an essential part of the therapy.

Other signs of Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction (TMJ) are chewing on one side, clicking, headaches, facial ticks, tinnitus, pain to face or neck, or difficulty opening or closing the mouth. Along with bone compression, the muscles and ligaments that attach to the bones get released during a routine treatment. The temporalis muscle and fascia cover the area around the jaw and extend upward to the head. Since muscles are the elastic fibres that accommodate movement, a lack in tone or too much tightness can contribute to TMJ problems. Applying very gentle traction is possible because a CS therapist has learned to combine bioenergy with the release mechanisms in muscles, ligaments and connective tissue. The beauty of this lies in using less physical force and getting more effective results. To me it's the best of both worlds!

Unhealed Emotions and Trauma At The Root

The TMJ Syndrome was originally called "Costen's Syndrome", named after a medical physician who specialized in ear, nose and throat problems. Costen estimated that 85% of his patients were suffering from dental malocclusion (improper joint alignment and bite). He attributed 15% to emotional causes. In my own experience, I have come to recognize that a much larger percentage of TMJ problems are rooted in stress, suppressed emotions and previous unhealed trauma. Other factors that weigh heavily in TMJ Dysfunction are imprints in tissue memory from braces, wisdom teeth removals, operations to correct jaw alignment, and forceps or vacuum assisted deliveries.

When you watch a craniosacral therapist in action, it appears that very little is going on, because the touch is so light and the movement is so miniscule. But palpating the bones is a unique sensory, somatic experience in which one tunes into the incredible untwisting, balancing and letting go of stored stress. I've learned that it is in the nature of the body to strive towards more health

and balance if given a chance and if allowed to use its own natural healing intelligence. I feel as though I am the prompter for the body, just reminding it what it already knows but simply needs encouraging to do.