

What's In a Name ?

For several years, the notion of increased public recognition of Therapeutic Touch has been discussed. Over the years, I have become increasingly aware of the power of language and this has led me to rethink the TT designation of Registered Practitioner (RP.TT).

Years ago in the Ontario In Touch Newsletter, there was a comparison of the requirements to become a Reiki Master and a R.P. in TT. As I recall, at that time the requirements to become a RP were considerably more stringent. As well, over the years, it has struck me that Reiki has a greater level of recognition with the public. TT has been somewhat under the radar of the public awareness and, as a group, we have been humble and low key about our practice. As a practitioner of TT in the patient support room (the Sunshine room) at the Queen Elizabeth 2 Health Sciences Centre, Halifax I have had the oft repeated experience of discussing TT with patients and having the response "so it is like Reiki?". This response is given even if they have not had a Reiki treatment.

As mentioned previously, I have become increasingly aware of the power of language. The word "Master" is strong and carries with it a certain understanding of knowledge, wisdom and skill. In general, it can be argued that members of the public and professional colleagues may give more credence to the term Master.

As members of the TT community, are we willing to explore changing our designation to that of Registered Master Practitioner or a variation thereof? This could possibly be an advanced standing designation or a straight replacement of the current RP designation.

I understand that such a change may well not be well received within our TT community, but I have a sense that having Master practitioners might convey a stronger sense of our training and standards as well as our commitment to ongoing learning and service to members of the public and professional colleagues. Might this enhance recognition of TT?

Of course, with any suggestion for change, there arise many questions and concerns.

- Would the use of the term Master imply a better outcome with treatments?
Does it devalue the treatment given by those individuals who may have completed levels 1,2 or 3? One of the things that I have learned through doing this practice is that we offer our treatments without ownership of outcome. Does the level of

training change the outcome ? In this context, the use of the term Master reflects a level of study and breadth of experience and does include a commitment to ongoing continuing education.

- Does the use of the term Master convey a message of exclusivity? Many people study the various levels of TT for their own personal use for themselves and others such as family members or friends. For the sake of argument, this would not change anything from our current situation. Individuals explore TT and incorporate it into their lives as they find helpful. Other people choose to work toward an advanced level of practice for their own personal growth or to be able to offer TT to the public or in professional settings e.g. health care settings, clinics etc.

In offering these thoughts, I am thinking only of TT and my comments are no reflection on our Reiki colleagues for whom I have much respect (I have studied some Reiki as have many TT ers)..

These musings may be only one contribution to a discussion of increasing the recognition of Therapeutic Touch.

So I ask, what is in a name? Does our current designation contribute to public recognition of Therapeutic Touch or can the power of language help to improve understanding and recognition of our practice? Is this something that we wish to explore?

From my perspective it is a good thing to rethink things periodically.

My hope in submitting this opinion piece is that it will stimulate some thoughtful discussion.

Contributed by

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