

Farewell: Keep Sharing the Love

By John Upledger, DO, OMM

After nearly nine years of contributing as a columnist for Massage Today, Dr. John Upledger tells his readers farewell and leaves us with inspiring insight to this special field of work.

Massage Today would like to thank Dr. John for his outstanding contributions and lifetime of dedication to, and accomplishment in, the advancement of CranioSacral Therapy.

A Simple Beginning

I never set out to change the world when I was developing CranioSacral Therapy (CST) at Michigan State University 30-plus years ago. I was exploring a barely understood body system with a group of talented PhDs who were all following their curiosity, as I was. At the time, it never occurred to me that CST would become my life's work.

Decades later, more than 100,000 therapists have been trained in CST, and they're in nearly every country in the world. While I never intended to make this global impact, I did want to give people who do want to change the world the opportunity to do so. It makes their lives more meaningful and more fun.

My deepest desire now is to get more people coming into understanding that we should all love each other. If you put your hands on people to help them feel better, love has to go with those hands. That's how you facilitate transformation. You might be working on someone who doesn't like certain types of people. When you put your hands on them from a place of love, that person is going to change. You don't even have to say anything about it. This work naturally changes attitudes, characters and how people respond.

The Essence of CST

Here's one viewpoint of that potential from Jackie Hutchison, MPT:

"My first CranioSacral class was with Tad Wanveer, LMT. He had me on the table for a demo on diaphragm releases. There was this profound stillness and he paused. In that moment, I felt so connected to Tad, this being of light and love; I had truly never felt that love before. The beautiful part of the story is that when I told Tad about it years later, he said he was thankful to have been the first to experience my love in that way.

"That is the essence of CST to me. It is in those moments of quiet connection, being profoundly present, that allows the work to happen. There is nothing to be pursued or figured out. Tad's ability to be present with me, even in a room of 60 students and teaching assistants, changed me. Now I have an awareness that life is so much bigger than I thought.

"I used to think it was all about the physical journey of the body. But I'm beginning to understand that the little things are the big things. The subtle things are the profound moments. I always feel appreciation for my client after we share a CST session. My intent may be their highest good, their greatest joy. And somehow I always feel healed, too. Or maybe blessed is a better word.

"So now I don't want to settle for anything less than that. Not for them or for the way I practice. No longer do I rely on the limited knowledge of my brain to guide my way. Instead, I open to the wisdom of the beautiful person before me and step aside as they lead. I extend this gift to myself as well. I do my best to connect to my own body's wisdom, and we move together. I am so grateful for all of my CranioSacral teachers, the formal ones in front of the classrooms and the ones that grace my table each day. Remembering that in the end, the goal is to love as much as you can from wherever you are, in spite of it all."

Meeting Them Where They Are

Nadine Saxton, MA, CMA, recently shared how she applies CST concepts to her life as well:

"There's a cranial concept that has turned into a mini-philosophy for me: Be neutral, meet the person where they are and add 5 grams. I'm a Registered Somatic Movement Therapist completing psychotherapy training as a result of my work with SomatoEmotional Release. I'm also a faculty member of a professional training program in movement analysis.

"In all the work I do, I recognize that creating relationships is the key factor for facilitating change. So in non-CST therapeutic settings, entering in neutral allows me to truly 'meet the person where they are and add 5 grams.'

"This is becoming a constant for me. The cranial concepts of blending and melding enable me to listen deeply and be present with whoever or whatever situation I find myself. Adding 5 grams gives them just enough push to work at being in the situation we're in. As an educator, I'm starting to give presentations to larger groups. I'm finding that arcing the room enables me to be more aware of pockets of energy. I ground and connect with myself going into neutral, and I meet the group where they are. I blend and meld, and I send my message.

"When I'm in neutral, I'm able to receive more clearly and not feel defensive if my message is not understood. I have inner-wisdom support. I'm amazed that this first CranioSacral lesson has had such far-reaching and unfolding effects on my life. I am grateful for the ongoing lesson, and the vision of Dr. Upledger."

Continue to Share the Love

I, too, am grateful to the thousands of therapists who have embraced the concepts of CranioSacral Therapy. For nearly nine years, I've had the privilege of sharing those ideas with you here.

My longtime editorial colleague, Sharon Desjarlais, will now be carrying on in my place. As founder of CranioSacral Success, she has devoted to helping therapists find deep and lasting success doing what they most love to do. She'll continue to bring you the ever-growing voices and views from the cranial world.

I've been fortunate to have many mentors, teachers, colleagues and friends who illuminated my path as I walked alongside them to where I am now. I hope that I have shone that light just a bit for you, too.
