

## Where have we truly come from and where are we going?

One of my latest delights has been reading the new book by Charles Krebs and Tania McGowan: “Energetic Kinesiology: Principles and Practice,” and achieving a deeper understanding of our rich past, but also our incredible link to science and quantum physics. Sadly, our days of using the “K” word are now behind us, but I thought it might be important to understand how we came to use the many specialties of “K” for a title.

With initial techniques developing in the 1920’s and 1930’s, one major shift for manual muscle testing began in the 1940’s with academic kinesiologists, Florence and Henry Kendall beginning the study of muscle movement and the use of manual muscle testing as their assessment tool. They began in physiotherapy work with polio patients and the muscle test was used to determine the level of strength achieved by the polio patients with the testing of the muscles. Icon’s in their academic professions, this husband and wife team received many accolades for their achievements. Their book, “Muscles: Testing and Function,” first published in 1949 would go through 5 editions up to 2010 and remains a standard of practice for the physiotherapy world, (Teyhen, 2006).<sup>1</sup> It is only now that physiotherapy is shifting their focus from “kinesiopathological” conditions, which were the Kendall’s approach, to “pathokinesiologic” conditions which improves their understanding of movement from an isolated approach to a systematic approach to movement. But, still based on the structural understanding of the body.<sup>2</sup>

When you open John Thie’s Complete Edition: “Touch for Health: A Practical Guide to Natural Health with Acupressure Touch,” his opening in the acknowledgments begin with recognizing his colleague and mentor Dr. George Goodheart, DC. “...he discovered that tension and muscle spasm may be treated by strengthening opposing weak muscles – for applying the manual muscle test (Kinesiology) as biofeedback in a clinical setting, to identify muscles that “switch off”: and for innovating so many techniques to turn muscles back on, balance them and stimulate the healing system. In the forward by Dr. Bruce Dewe, MD, he recognizes that “the body of knowledge that began with Dr. Goodheart’s work became known as Applied Kinesiology.” This was a logical step in naming the body of information that Dr. Goodheart was compiling, and what the “dirty dozen” were playing with expanding further knowledge, the colleagues of Dr. Thie. In the 1960’s to 1980’s Quantum Physics was just beginning to be realized, and it would be decades before science could even begin to attempt to explain some of the phenomenon being achieved by the AK specialists in the 1970’s, (John Thie, 2005).

Spring forward to our most recent chronicle by Krebs and McGowan and they open their first section with “EK is a powerful healing modality that combines ancient eastern energetic healing arts with western physiological healing sciences. The main tool used in EK is muscle biofeedback, which makes the subconscious stresses and imbalances within the body observable.” How did we get from muscle testing for tension and muscle spasm to eastern energetic healing arts using biofeedback? I find this part of the journey most fascinating as a Touch for Health Instructor and as an avid Tai Chi enthusiast. Dr. Goodheart was the first to realize that the eastern medicine information linked to his understanding of muscles and health. Through his research he was able to link the muscles to the meridians and create the energetic loop that we now take for granted through the 5 Elements. It seems a natural transition

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<sup>1</sup> For a full outline of the development of muscle testing techniques please go to <http://www.oneillcollege.com.au/blog/history-of-kinesiology/>.

<sup>2</sup> To read the full study please go to <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24627430>.

for us as we were given the link of knowledge, but in 1970 there were not many documents on eastern medicine available in the west, nor written in English. It was through Dr. Goodheart's efforts to reach a better understanding for his clinical observations that we were gifted such a vast body of integrative knowledge. The exploration goes deeper into each of the techniques that we now use, but what is most important for our understanding is that the combination of eastern and western philosophies created a "centerpiece of all EK's: the muscle-meridian-organ-gland matrix. Thus, the tried-and-true thousands-or-years-old system of the Chinese was integrated into modern western physiology and now accessed through the unique feedback of muscle testing," (Charles Krebs, 2016).

I can honestly say that when I first took my Level 1 Touch for Health class, I had no idea the richness of information that was laid out before me in the textbook or in my notes. I just thought about how much fun it was to muscle test and affect a muscle with a little rub or a sweep of the hands. I remember the giddiness of that first experience, and I delight in the same look in my student's eyes now as I share these techniques as an instructor. And, still, I have not really realized the vast amount of research and knowledge that has been passed down to me as I pour over my hundreds of textbooks assisting me with realizing my dream of holding a master's degree in Complementary and Alternative Medicine. I got all of this exquisite experience from one weekend in Greg Webb's Level 1 Touch for Health class.

So, as we reach the dawn of a new era in Canada and beyond, we are tasked with finding the right words to describe what we do. Our muscle-meridian-organ-gland matrix assessed with muscle monitoring or muscle biofeedback combines the wisdom of Chinese medicine in a combination of balancing body, mind and spirit. That word should be easy to find, don't you think?! Although "K" was originally the word used to describe manual muscle testing, the modern definition of Kinesiology, as found on the Ontario Kinesiology Association website, defines it as: "the science of human movement, applying the latest evidenced-based research to improve function, health and wellness of people in all settings and populations."<sup>3</sup> Further, "Kinesiology can help prevent and reduce the risk factors for some of the most common serious medical conditions that affect Canadians, including coronary heart disease and diabetes. It can cut the risk of heart attacks and some types of cancer significantly. Kinesiologists also help you treat and recover from injuries. The science of kinesiology builds strong bones, joints and bodies." You can see by our historical use of Kinesiology and the academic version of the word, our two descriptions we are very different in our scope and focus. As we do not diagnose, our self-empowering tools for the layperson offer instruction or clinical experience where the student or client is able to use muscle biofeedback to explore uniqueness and personal experience to balance or realign the energy systems in the body. There is so much more to what we do than the science of movement.

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<sup>3</sup> To learn more please go to <http://www.oka.on.ca/site/what-is-kinesiology>

## References

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