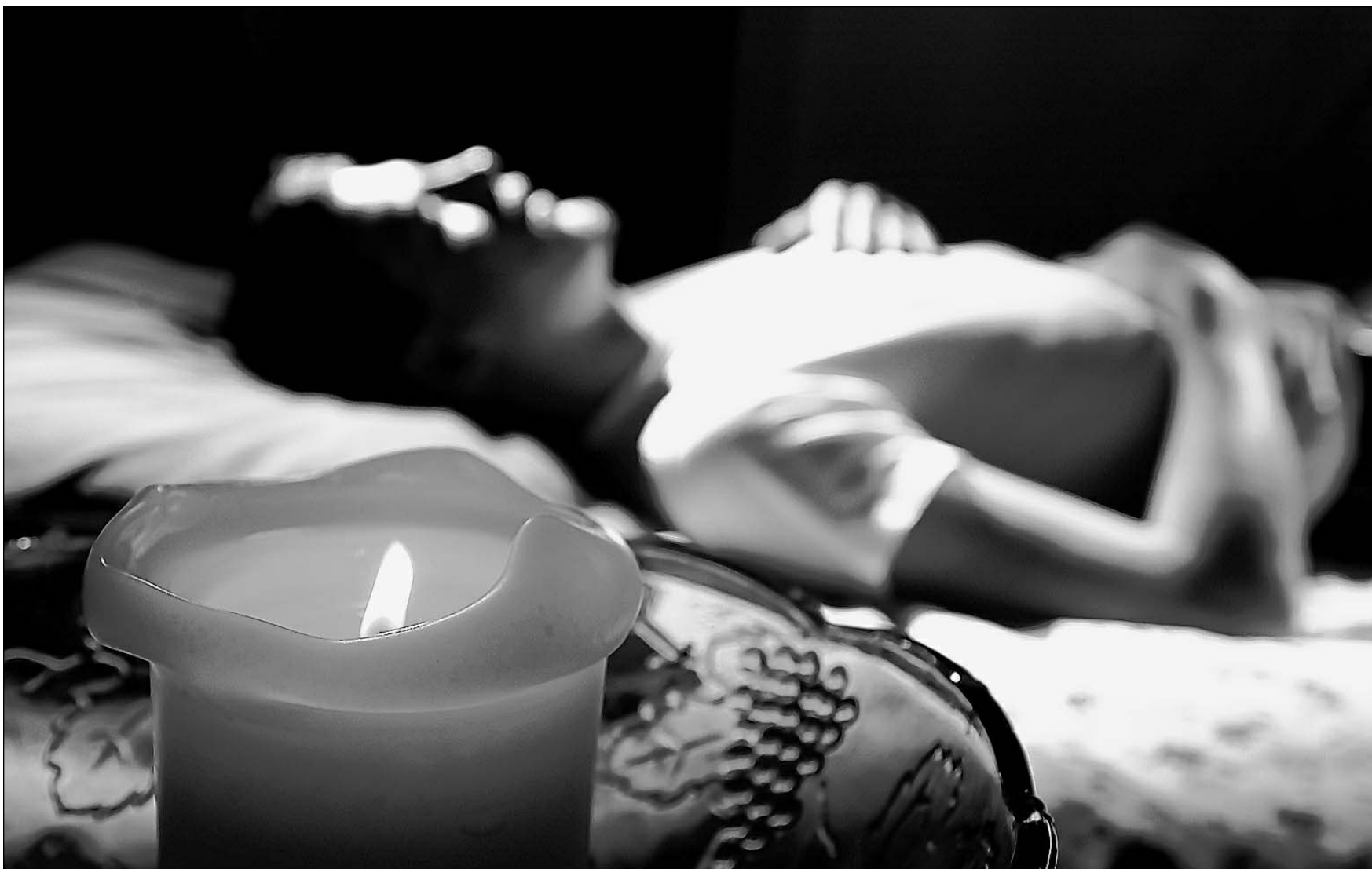




In Wednesday's Lifestyle
June parties celebrate
dads and grads.



This photo illustration shows part of what happens during a session of rebirthing, when a client lies down on the floor of the studio and gets comfortable. Reading Eagle: Ben Hasty

Coping better through rebirthing

By Félix Alfonso Peña
Reading Eagle

Corie Bilger knows about pain from two sides. As a physician's assistant in pain management, working in Dr. James Barrett's office in Wyomissing, Bilger, 45, sees about 20 patients a day.

She also has more direct knowledge of it because, eight years ago, a driver literally did a U-turn on a divided highway in the middle of severe thunderstorm and went almost head-on into Bilger's car.

The resulting injuries left lingering pain and anxiety. When conventional medical treatments, including traditional medical and chiropractic care, proved insufficient, she turned to a suggestion from her massage therapist, Judith Gabriel.

Bilger, who lives in Sinking Spring, tried going through rebirthing, of which Gabriel is a practitioner.

"I had developed a nice relationship with her through massage," Bilger said. She and Gabriel, who runs Judith Gabriel Integrational Bodyworks in her in-home office in Reading, discussed releasing anxieties, emotional issues and how mind and body are connected.

Bilger went through 12 rebirthing sessions about two years ago, starting out by learning the basic breathing technique of kriya yoga and learning to relax.

"Every time I progressed a little bit further," Bilger said. "I could deal with anxiety, everything kind of became clear. It helped me progress physically and psychologically."

"Physically I got better so that when I could feel a musculo-skeletal pain or issue, I could identify it. Sometimes when you have physical symptoms you're unaware of where it came from or what precipitated it. It seemed that I could control it or command it before I got out of control."

Almost immediately, Bilger said, she slept better.

"Driving was better," she said. "I had traumatic motor vehicle issues. Relationships were better. I could see situations better. People at work noticed it. I could see past experiences, how they influenced new experiences."

Encouraged by Gabriel to do breathing, relaxation and body awareness when she needed to, Bilger found this extremely beneficial.

Rebirthing, she said, gave her "an overall completeness of connection. It gave me some ability to control my reaction to my pain."

"I would do breathing, and she was observing my body posture," Bilger said. "Sometimes I was elated. I would feel joy, relief, sometimes sadness, and I would cry, but that felt good."

After the session, she said, "We would reflect back on what occurred, with an affirmation which I would do for the week until I would see her again."

Gabriel credits rebirthing with restoring her own health.

"I was at a breaking point when I found rebirthing," she said. "I was physically ill and emotionally distraught. I had done talk therapy through marriage counseling. The marriage did not survive, but the talk therapy was very good for me. However, something was still not right."

"I felt terrible even though I knew some of the reasons for it. It was not until I did rebirthing that I realized a lot of my bad feelings came not only from the failed relationship but from subconscious material held in my body from a near-fatal automobile accident and from some childhood traumas that did surface during the talk therapy."

"I am a very strong woman, so I kept repressing all my unhappiness until I was ready to burst. Rebirthing allowed all of those repressed feelings to come up, gave me more energy, a way to cope with depression stemming from not liking where I worked, and a feeling of calmness and happiness that I had not felt literally for decades."

After that experience, Gabriel said, she decided to learn to teach this technique, and she continues to practice it daily.

Fresh start

Using a technique called rebirthing, Judith Gabriel helps people integrate body and mind, past and present

By Félix Alfonso Peña
Reading Eagle

SOMETIMES THE NAMES for things don't necessarily capture their essence.

Such is the case with rebirthing — also called kriya yoga, conscious connected breathing, conscious breathwork, intuitive breathwork, breathing therapy and vivation.

In the popular imagination it is all about reliving one's birth and the trauma associated with it.

Ask Judith Gabriel, who does rebirthing at her in-home office in Reading, Judith Gabriel Integrational Bodyworks, and she is quick to point out the truth.

"Rebirthing is not about going back," she said. "It's about letting go."

"It is not past life regression, nor does it try to simulate the birth process by squeezing people through mattresses or smothering them in blankets."

Gabriel pointed out that rebirthing, a form of alternative therapy to which people turn when they find conventional medicine or therapies insufficient, is an actual physical technique of breathing and a philosophical way of looking at life.

"The big teaching about rebirthing is about letting go," Gabriel said.

Gabriel has taught the technique for some 18 years, having studied it as an extension of massage and Collardwork therapy, which she also performs.

Varied problems

Who typically turns to rebirthing for help? The problems can be many and varied, Gabriel said, but many of the people fall into one of four categories: people suffering from panic disorder, those dealing with compulsions and people who don't feel good but don't know why, and those who want to develop themselves, that is get past any barriers that keep them from being the best people they can be.

"Usually they have some kind of

personal, emotional or physical issue that has been treated by other people with little or no results," Gabriel said. "They're looking for another way to approach the issue."

Gabriel said she recommends people do 10 rebirthing sessions, usually weekly.

On their first visit, she fills out a questionnaire with the client, "everything from birth, traumas, diseases, all the way to the present," she said.

Meanwhile, she is studying their body language, she said.

"I look at what they say as opposed to what their body is saying — literally," she said.

After clients complete the questionnaire, she said, they lie down on the floor in her studio, which is comfortably supplied with pillows.

"They do this type of breathing," she said,

"that we (rebirthing practitioners) call a circular breath, that nonstop flugelhorn stuff. Whatever the person's chemistry is, what the breathing apparently does is bring it to the fore. Then we begin to deal with it."

"They may begin to feel any emotion — fear, panic, anger, laughter. It can be pleasant or unpleasant."

Phantom pains

She recalls one person who got phantom pains from an old operation.

"Obviously, something in his nervous system was incomplete around that operation," she said. "When those feelings come up, we tell the person to continue breathing, and the feeling goes away — what we (rebirthing community) call integration."

Most of the time, she said, people cannot identify the source of the thoughts that come to them.

"These really old chemical or neurological markers are held in the body," she said, "from some original trauma or pleasure that is now being integrated. That is a good thing."

At that point, she said, she relies heavily on intuition.



Corie Bilger says rebirthing sessions helped her physically and psychologically.

"I'm watching them breathe, watching their body," she said. "What I see and what I hear usually encourages me to say something. So I may just say, 'You're safe,' to get them past the marker."

"Sometimes, when I say things, people really start to cry or really release. We want the body and mind to release simultaneously, that's a bigger integration than just having one release."

"We want to replace the old paradigm, the old thought, so that the body does not go back to where it was."

"We deal with transformations and changing-the-self talk," she said. "It allows people to loosen their death-grip of control on their life."

Couched in religious terms, she said: "The term is surrender — surrendering to God, Jesus or whatever entity is worshipped. It doesn't mean giving up, giving in or being victim. It means let go of the past. Let go of your fear and anger, all the negative things that we hold on to."

States of mind

Forgiveness and gratitude as states of mind are also important, she said.

"I have to explain forgiveness," Gabriel said, and gave an example. "They think that if they were molested as a child, forgiveness makes that person (the aggressor) OK, that it makes the act OK."

"No. It allows you to sever your tie with that person, emotionally and energetically."

Because people tend to focus far too much on what they don't have without looking at what they do have and on the positive things they can do with those gifts, starting with your life, the rebirthing community also focuses on gratitude, she said.

"For example I rebirthed a man in

Rebirthing resources

For more information on rebirthing, refer to the following online resources provided by Judith Gabriel, a rebirthing practitioner in Reading:

- www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=50663
- www.philadelphiarebirthing.com
- www.breathaware.com/rebirthing.html

Gabriel also recommends the following books:

- "Rebirthing: The Science of Enjoying All of Your Life," by Jim Leonard. The second edition is co-written with Phil Laut and titled "Vivation: The Science of Enjoying All of Your Life."
- "Celebration of Breath," by Sondra Ray.
- "Open Heart Therapy," by Bob Mandel.

Stockholm, when I was taking courses there," she said. "His mother hated men, his father had deserted the family. He was raised by her and really hated himself."

Married and divorced three times, the man had quit his job. He wanted to keep telling his story, Gabriel said, but because of the language barrier: "I couldn't talk much to him. I had to be very strong. I asked him, 'Are you alive?' He said, 'Yes.'"

"I said, 'Then you have everything.' And then he just started to cry."

Later, the man wrote to Gabriel, she said.

"He recognized that first 40 years of his life really didn't define him," she said. "He could start fresh whenever he wanted to."

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An arsenal of options available to treat warts

But if you're willing to be patient, most will disappear within a couple of years without intervention.

By Darryl E. Owens
The Orlando Sentinel

They're embarrassing, sometimes painful, and conjure up images of nannies named McPhee.

If you've ever had warts, those black-dotted barnacles that sprout from skin or mucous membranes, you probably know they come not from smooching frogs but from a toad of a germ, the human papilloma virus (HPV). It enters the body through

moist or compromised skin through direct or indirect contact, and the virus remains present and contagious (newer warts contain more HPV than older ones) until the wart clears up.

Although warts are medically benign, for some they can inflict emotional harm — even if more than half of warts disappear within two years without intervention. For those who don't want to wait, an arsenal of treatment options have emerged in recent years both at home and the dermatologist's office.

"There is no silver bullet for warts," said Joshua L. Fox, a dermatologist and founder of Advanced Dermatology and the Center for Laser and Cosmetic Surgery in New York.

But with modern treatments, he said, "we are able to eliminate the warts" and that helps "prevent the spread from family member to family member and friend to friend."

A round of "benign neglect" is what dermatologist Randall Coverman prescribes in most cases. If standing pat isn't your style, he said over-the-counter wart liquids and patches that contain salicylic acid "do keep them from getting larger."

If after several weeks there is no change, a dermatologist can try freezing warts with liquid nitrogen, the gold standard for warts. However, Coverman doesn't advocate it for kids — who along with teens are most commonly plagued by warts. Freezing can

cause scarring and discoloration, and for kids, can be painful.

Cantharidin — an extract from the blister beetle — presents another option. Doctors mix the extract with other chemicals, slather it on the wart and cover the area with a bandage. After a time, the concoction blisters off the wart, which can cause discomfort.

If cost isn't an issue, Coverman calls imiquimod cream (sold under the brand name Aldara) "a great treatment." It boosts the immune reaction to warts and helps the body battle HPV.

Stubborn warts might require more invasive options. One infrequently used treatment involves injecting the diluted chemotherapy drug

bleomycin into the wart, which kills the virus. Coverman said the drug works, but "no more so than other things." He said the injections can be painful.

When all else fails, wart-sufferers can try laser surgery, expensive and potentially scarring, or minor surgery to excise or destroy the wart, both painful and presenting a scarring risk.

Which is why, although treatment can manage warts, Coverman tries to quell patients' desire for aggressive treatment by sharing his daughter's story.

"Every finger of her hands had a wart on it," he says. "It took her three or four years, but they all spontaneously resolved. No scars."