

## BRIGHT, Mary Anne. *Holistic Health and Healing*. Philadelphia: F.A.Davis Company, 2002

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### BOOK REVIEW

Mary Anne Bright was born in Indiana. She received a Nursing degree from St. Peter's General Hospital School of Nursing in New Jersey (1968), a Baccalaureate Degree in Nursing (1974), a Masters Degree in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing (1977), and a Doctoral Degree in School Consulting and Counseling Psychology (1986) at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She is a practicing clinical nurse specialist in Psychiatric Nursing with a specialization in bioenergetic analysis. She has been teaching for 22 years, and became interested in holistic health 15 years ago, after learning about the Therapeutic Touch, and as an alternative therapy movement developed. She is also a practitioner, teacher and researcher on Therapeutic Touch, and a Bioenergetic Therapist, which is a body-oriented psychotherapy.

She has become familiar with a number of alternative practitioners and their healing methods, and has offered a course at the University of Massachusetts in Holistic Health, which has become very popular. This book has been written with 25 expert contributors in their fields, from a variety of alternative treatment modalities, as a textbook for the course. In 2002, the book was honored by being named Book of the Year by the American Journal of Nursing. Nursing and university students from other departments have been taking the course for the past 10 years. The book is structured in four units, each containing chapters that discuss, in theoretical and conceptual details, various complementary health-care treatment modalities.

The first unit, called *Health as Wholeness*, is composed of the following chapters: (1) Paradigm Shifts, (2) Health, Healing and Holistic Nursing, (3) The Bioenergetic Basis of Health, (4) Psychophysiology of Mind-

Body Healing, (5) Culture and Holistic Healing and (6) Global Health Issues. In this unit, Mary Anne Bright and contributors develop philosophical support for alternative health care practices, in the context of human wholeness understood as interdependent with the environment. The authors start from the presupposition that "personal values and beliefs reflect worldviews that influence culture, social interaction, and individual behavior, both conscious and unconscious. Health-care practitioners' effectiveness will depend on a working knowledge of varied worldviews, personal beliefs, and larger systems dynamics. 'Think globally, act locally' is a good reminder of the connection between individual and larger systems levels. Support for individual health needs and preferences can coexist with advocacy for a healthy environment, health promotion, and disease prevention at the macrosystems level" (p. 28).

The second unit, "*Holistic Healing Modalities*", introduces the reader to (7) Meditation, (8) Imagery, (9) Nutrition, (10) Herbs Through the Ages, (11) Therapeutic Massages and (12) Therapeutic Touch. Here we find the basis of several strategies for alternative care, each with its specific description, techniques, study cases and benefits for health promotion and healing. Relevant information, current research, organizational resources and extended bibliography are also described. "*Complementary Healing Practices*" is the third unit, including chapters (13) Naturopathic Medicine - *Vis Medicatrix Naturae*: The Healing Power of Nature, (14) Homeopathic Medicine, (15) Antroposophic Medicine, (16) Osteopathy, (17) Chiropractic and (18) Holistic Dentistry. Each practice is described in its unique contribution to healing and is demonstrated in study cases, special box information, current research, resource addresses and recommended reading. The last unit, "*Traditional Healing Systems*", is composed of chapters on (19) Chinese Medicine, (20) Ayurveda; (21)

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Yoga and (22) T'ai Chi. Systems are described by detailing their history, meaning, methods and feature case studies, current research, resource addresses and bibliography.

This book is designed to give the health-care practitioner a starting point when dealing with clients who are either curious about or who already use alternative therapies. Mary Anne Bright's professional expertise and writing skill create a special view of complementary alternative medicine and its interface with Nursing practice. At the same time, the book is a useful reference for all health practitioners interested in the theory, practice and research of therapeutic approaches based on a holistic understanding of human health and its relationship with the universe. The uniqueness and strength of this book is its holistic perspective and the importance of enhancing integration with the self, other people and nature in the healing process.