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Wednesday December 14, 2005

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Healer adds pieces to health jigsaw puzzle

By Jo Keppel

Blackball's Heather Bruce has offered a range of healing services for more than 25 years but just now she is also driven by a compulsion to write it all down.

With three books and DVDs already published, Heather still has another 10

to come.

This is the first time I've talked to a naturopath. I don't really know what to expect but Heather is nothing like the stereotypes of old crones in cottages surrounded by strange plants, on the outskirts of villages.

After growing up in Christchurch,

Heather went to see her grandmother in Brisbane, when she was about 20, and "came back four kids and a husband later".

"I always thought I'd come back when I was 50 and I did," she said.

Meanwhile, she became qualified in acupuncture, naturopathy, massage and counselling and studied Chinese and Western herbalism.

In a career in Brisbane spanning nearly 30 years, she has worked with cancer and HIV patients, stroke victims and patients suffering brain damage as well as those seeking help with a variety of other complaints.

"I have also been able to help older people with arthritic problems fairly easily with a variety of herbal treatments and massage. There are a lot of men who, for example, can't ride a bike or run any more because of knee and hip problems. I can easily help."

At one stage I forget a question I was going to ask her but she tells me memory loss problems are easily fixed and recommends a cure.

"Whatever you throw at me, I can find something. Sometimes people come to me when doctors have given up on them, but they are still needing help.

"You have to be a counsellor as well, because you have to help people sort out what they have done with their lives before for them to get better now. You have to help undo anger that may be behind people's unwellness."

People thought that if they were ill they should go to the doctor but that was just one of a whole range of possible ways to

sort out problems. Often, as with my memory loss, it seemed just a trivial thing so people did nothing about it but it could be "sorted", she said.

"Often it's a case of looking at diet and lifestyle and what's behind what you're doing to yourself.

"We need people who are like signposts who can direct those who need help to people who can give it, over the whole range of services. I feel I can do some of that signposting. I'm not against conventional medicine. I just know there's more than that."

Because Heather was the only woman at a clinic where she worked in Brisbane city, she ended up treating many women and dealing with women's problems.

"I had a large clinic of women, some with fertility, menopausal or menstrual problems. Counselling as part of the treatment invariably brought out problems that went back to earlier in their lives. You have to sort out the

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health jigsaw puzzle

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problems that were at the beginning of ailments, not just the symptoms now."

Heather has set up her clinic in Blackball but her main reason for being there rather than staying in Australia, is that she finds it a good place to write.

After all those years of practising her healing techniques and teaching others how to do them as well, she feels there is a need for the information to be available to people to help themselves.

"It's just a waste if I just spend my time renovating houses and planting nice gardens when I could be supplying this very necessary information to people, so I thought I should write some manuals."

Heather's newest publication is *What Dads Can Do*, along with DVDs on *Massage and what Dads Can Do*, and *Birthing and What Dads Can Do*.

"In my mother's time, she went into a maternity hospital to have a baby and went home 10 days after. Now, in Australia at least, mothers are home in two days and fathers have to try to cope with things that can go wrong.

"This new book is a manual for partners of pregnant women and those trying to become pregnant. It sets out in 268 pages, with the help of diagrams and maps of the body, to demystify the processes of being a woman."

By finding the reasons behind commonly experienced problems, the partner, lover and companion can easily avert them, returning her to

well-functioning. It also involves the partner in the baby's life more.

Earlier books were *Living as Energy*, an *Owner's Manual* and *Living in it*, an *Owner's Manual*, both books to help people keep themselves healthy.

Heather has also produced a meditation CD called *Guided Meditation*.

"Much of the material is just commonsense. It's the kind of things our mothers used to tell us, 'old wives' tales' maybe, but based on hundreds or thousands of years of observation, as Chinese medicine is. These ideas have truth to them.

"There are more pieces of the jigsaw puzzle than just western medicine. It's just one piece. My books, owners' manuals for our bodies, tell us what we ought to know and how to help ourselves. I'm talking commonsense and I'm not a doctor so I haven't been trained to just think in lines.

"Now people are often in shells, tied to their work or their computers and not relating to one another. A lot of that commonsense stuff our mothers knew is just not happening. It's not people's ignorance really. They just don't know where to go to find the information. That's why there's a need for signpost people and things like these manuals."

Heather hopes to be able to practise from Blackball and even do some lecturing, but meanwhile, she is getting on with the next book.

Heather's clinic can be reached at (03)732 4262 or if people need to talk to her directly, at (03)732 3030.