

# My Story

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## How I began

My career path began as an undergraduate when I was introduced to yoga and meditation. A Chinese Master, Dr. Ho taught me acupuncture and the I Ching. I penned a letter to my idol Simone de Beauvoir. She wrote me back encouraging me to write. I still have her letter framed on my wall. I've since written 6 books with more on the way.



## I arrive in the jungle of México

At 20, I longed for adventure and self discovery. I traveled to the jungle of Mexico and lived in small Indian fishing village where there was no doctor, roads, or electricity. I started a small elementary school for children. We studied biology at the lagoon and math meant measuring ingredients for cooking. We wrote poetry and danced while listening to Ravel.

I got sick with all kinds of odd ailments and the village women taught me their medicine to help me heal and I taught them about reproductive rights and birth control even as the village priest paid me visits to tell me to stop. Thus began my career.

I learned natural medicine and indigenous healing rituals. These experiences and studies led to my innovative methods of helping clients recover from trauma and addiction by understanding the mind body and spirit in context of the great quest.

In 1977, I became certified in polarity therapy, therapeutic massage, and yoga, and opened a natural medicine, free public health clinic in



the jungle, which I ran for more than 25 years in collaboration with local healers. The indigenous population traveled by mountain path and canoe to obtain treatment.

I funded my clinic by offering training to thousands of health professionals from around the world whose studied bodywork, culinary and herbal medicine, and yoga with me in the jungle.



## City jungle or the psych ward

I returned to the jungle of Boston after 10 years and began working on my first master's degree in cross cultural health psychology. In a public hospital locked psychiatric ward, I did gentle bodywork and rocked schizophrenic women to sleep lieu of their daily sedative. I still teach rocking to clinicians and clients as an important treatment for people of all ages. I returned to the jungle for 2 years and then again..



## Training the people who treat the mind and body

I always returned to Boston to treat clients and my clinical practice was filled with dozens of psychiatrists who in turn referred their patients who were cutting, burning, purging, and generally traumatized, to receive bodywork and body-centered psychotherapy, nutrition, and to learn yoga to alleviate their distress. I have written up these many case stories in my published books.



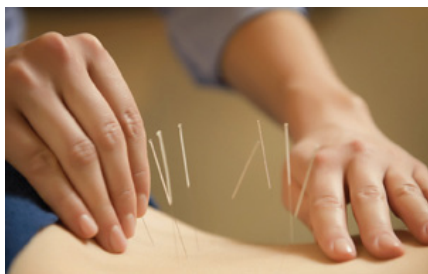
## Harvard Medical School

I accepted a clinical fellowship at Harvard Medical School. While there, I brought bodywork therapies into outpatient psychiatry and further developed my theories and practice of Mind Body therapies for the treatment of PTSD. I was appointed as a clinical supervisor, but I longed for the jungle of Mexico and my patients there and left Harvard.



## Therapy Dogs

Thirty years ago, I began working with the first of several of my therapy dogs and I continue to present workshops on how therapy dogs help to restore touch and sensation with children and adults who have been traumatized.



## Consulting to the Feds and the State

For 10 years, I ran a consulting agency that was funded by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency. My team of 15 instructors and I delivered team building and stress management and multicultural, wellness, arts, and esteem programs for children, adults, and elders in 8 different languages.

I also served as the clinical director of the New England School of Acupuncture, and was one of the founders of the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork in 1990 where I helped to write the code of ethics.



## Trauma + Tourism Harming Women's Health

In '97, I returned to the jungle where I reopened my clinic and the Center for Traditional Medicine was given a 6-figure multiyear grant to do research into the effects of trauma and tourism on women's health and their indigenous practices. I conducted scholarly research (published) and produced a community wide bilingual arts book (with feminist messages that the women added.) (Hard copy and iTunes book)



## NIH funds our Dementia Caregiver Project

I again returned to the US with a grant, to lead a 3-year research project funded by the National Institutes of Health to explore the benefits of touch therapies (polarity therapy) for native family dementia caregivers.

My husband Dr. Rudolph Ryser and I were invited by dozens of tribal communities to deliver seminars so health professionals and community members could learn more about how to prevent and treat addictions, diabetes, and mental illness by using culinary and herbal medicine.



## Plant medicine and women's stories

I received a Fulbright Research Scholarship to continue my research on indigenous health practices among indigenous women in Mexico in 2009. With this scholarship, I spent time collecting hundreds of hours of oral stories from women and local healers who shared their beliefs and methods of treatment using herbal medicines.