

To Walk with Joy
by Patsy Rollinger, RN

“As my heels touch the earth I am healed,” chants the petite soft spoken woman of 73 as she carefully walks along the sidewalk. Each step was a victory over the chronic pain in her heels that had plagued her over 60 years.

At the time she was referred to me, Tess* was unable to stand for more than half an hour without experiencing pain in her heels severe enough to keep her housebound for several days. She lived alone and used a rolling stool to move about the kitchen. She often had to crawl on her hands and knees to get from her bed to the bathroom.

Though the pain had been present in varying degrees since she jumped off a porch at age 11, doctors were unable to find any pathology.

We began treatment using Guided Imagery combined with Healing Touch and Jin Shin Jyutsu. At first she was not receptive to Inner Advisor work, a technique taught by the Academy for Guided Imagery, so we spent time in her inner sanctuary each week - always letting her feet lead the way. Tess learned to listen to her feet and to stop when they said “stop”. She learned to walk with awareness and to bathe her feet in love and appreciation. She began to view pain as a messenger instead of “something to get rid of.”

Gradually her standing time increased while recovery time became shorter and much less severe. Longer periods of restful sleep and deep relaxation replaced her insomnia, resulting in significantly more energy and vitality.

Tess believed that if she could just release her emotions her symptoms would further decrease or even disappear. Ten months into treatment she revealed a violent rape by a stranger at knifepoint and an earlier date rape at age 21 that had left her, a devout Catholic, feeling unmarriageable and shamefully dirty. She never married.

When she was ready to invite an Inner Advisor, a beautiful angel named Joy appeared. With Joy, Tess was able to walk through many difficult months of emotional turmoil. When she emerged on the other side of her emotional pain, though her physical pain and other symptoms did not completely disappear, they became more manageable and she was again able to be more sociable.

Though she struggles with bouts of discouragement and depression, Tess has found that life, with all of its challenges and unpredictability, is “...much more fun than I ever thought it could be when I remember to walk with Joy.”

*not her real name