

The start of a new year.

Since one year is over and another is just beginning, it's a good time to reflect on our values and decide what things are important to us and what things we'd like to leave behind with the old year. So, this month's Health Notes is titled: **Are you living your values?**

Massage is one of many holistic therapies, meaning encompassing body, mind, and spirit. My interest in this holistic field involves helping people find balance in all three of those areas. I ask you to think about how you take care of your **body**—by having regular massages, taking yoga or Pilates, exercising, stretching, seeing a physical therapist, chiropractor, or acupuncturist, eating well, getting enough sleep, etc. Think about whether you take time to improve your **mind**. Do you concentrate on positive affirmations, being patient with people and thinking before speaking, reading and researching areas of professional or personal interest, always learning? Are you making time for **spiritual** growth, either by meditating, attending temple/church, reading spiritually-based books, and living your values? What are your values? Have you ever written them down?

With my massage practice, I value helping clients find that calm place while they are on my table. Then, they can go out into the world and access that calm feeling everyday, at any moment. If you are calm and living from a place of inner peace, you will be teaching others to do the same!

No matter where I perform massages, I value setting up a supportive and safe environment. This includes a clean, quiet place to offer the massage session. It also means being hygienic--taking great care to have clean sheets, clean hands, and professional grade lotions with as many natural ingredients as possible. Safety also means emotionally safe. Clients can be themselves on my table. If old emotions come up during a session they are accepted and can be released. Some clients make critical comments about their bodies. I believe everybody (every body) is beautiful and amazing in how it functions! I hope that in time, clients learn to appreciate themselves as I appreciate them! And, of course, my sessions are confidential and without judgement, so all is accepted.

Other values related to my work? I love teaching, which is why I enjoy writing these Health Notes every month. I have a gift for massage and I'm happy to share it with all of you. I respect this profession and all my clients enough to take CEUs (continuing education units), & to read and research topics on the internet. I hope that in general I am a role model for holistic living.

As your "homework", I'd like you to write down a few of your values. Next, write down all the ways you are living those values or expressing those values. For example, if you value protecting the environment, you might write that you have switched to non-toxic household cleaners. After you wrote your list, did you realize that you are not living as many of your values as you would like? Make this year the year to change that! You'll notice your stress levels will decrease and your happiness will increase!