

**How it is. How it was. How it could be.**

When I began ‘Bowen Therapy’, I was skeptical. My elbow hurt. My knee *really* hurt.

Gawking about and trying to keep pace with my long-legged partner, I sort of fell off a sidewalk, landing on a twisted knee and elbow. *Ouch!* Hurt my pride, too, but that’s beside the point. That was back in February. For two months my knee was unstable, and very painful. A physician-friend said that I would probably need surgery. “Wait-lists for orthopods are pretty long”, I thought, wondering how I would get by in the meantime. Then my memory flashed back to a naturopathic doctor whom I had met quite by chance, in Courtenay, a few months earlier.

Dr. Lise Maltais was having her business cards printed. While we were standing in the line-up at the print shop, she asked me what I thought of her card; on it, a photograph of her fingers ‘massaging’ a person’s back. “Oh”, I said, “Do you do massage?” She replied, “This is **more** than massage!” So began the conversation, and my introduction to The Bowen Technique.

Desperate, it was now three months since my injury and neither the elbow or knee, were improving. With some skepticism, I climbed up onto the massage table. Within minutes after the treatment, the pain in my elbow subsided. I wasn’t sure if this was just my imagination, but the next morning the elbow was still pain-free. My knee took five treatments. Relieved and amazed, it has remained pain-free for nearly three months.

Bowen Therapy is unlike any other physical therapy treatment I have ever had. It feels like a soft, trigger-point type of massage done on key pressure points along the muscle. Yet, like Dr. Maltais said, “It is much more than that!”

Dr. Maltais describes it as ‘strumming’ the tendons; her fingers picking up subtle vibrations. “It’s a little bit like playing music with the body”, she said, “strumming tendons is vibrational and it triggers the body to start healing itself. But more profoundly, it seems to re-boot the computer. The body seems to hold the cellular memory of the pre-injury state, and the body re-adjusts itself.” It definitely seemed to break the pain-spasm cycle that occurred with my injury.

The technique originated in Australia by a therapist named Tom Bowen. In the 1980’s the Australian government conducted an inquiry into his practice and discovered that he had successfully treated thousands of patients with this technique. Dr. Maltais echos this, and reports **an average of 50%** improvement in only three Bowen Therapy sessions. Even chronic conditions like frozen shoulder, sciatica and carpal tunnel syndrome respond to this technique, although they may take a few extra treatments.

Dr. Maltais believes that it takes more than one care-giver to make a sick person better, and she attempts to work as part of a larger healthcare team. Soon after graduating as a Naturopathic Doctor in 1992, she witnessed the dramatic effects achieved through Bowen Therapy and has fashioned her practice to specialize **in pain** treatment. “Bowen doesn’t compare to any other treatment”, said Dr. Maltais. “I have seen people completely transform from emotional despair and hopelessness”. Along with its ability to put the body in a deep relaxed state, Bowen seems to help release old patterning—both physically and emotionally.

When I think back to those few months when I could barely creep down the staircase with that sore knee, I have to shake my head in wonderment. My skepticism, like my knee pain, is gone.

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Photo – Dr. Lise Maltais, N.D.