

The Heart of African Spiritual Healing

**An interview with spiritual healer Onye Onyemaechi
by David Klein, Ph.D.**

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Onye Onyemaechi is an internationally known healer, teacher and musician. Originally from Nigeria and now residing in Santa Rosa, California, Onye blends the soul of African culture with the best of traditional cultures and modern lifestyles in helping individuals, organizations and diverse communities find deeper purpose and understanding of Self through the Grace of God for personal and planetary healing and unity.



An Ordained Minister and spiritual leader of the Center for Healing and Miracles Ministries, Onye serves as a spiritual life coach to those who are seeking guidance for personal transformation and spiritual development. He is also a spiritual advisor and presenter for academic institutions, hospitals and other organizations in the United States and Europe. He is the founder of “Village Rhythms,” which presents a wide range of educational, entertainment and celebratory events.

Onye has taught at prestigious institutions, businesses and conferences, including Harvard University, Holy Names College/ICCS, Esalen Institute, Omega Institute, International Conference on Business and Consciousness, the Institute of Noetic Sciences, Boston College, Sonoma State University, the California Academy of Sciences, the de Young Museum and the College of Marin. He has been a featured presenter at International Conference on Shamanism and Consciousness, International Conference on Sound Healing, International Conference on Science and Consciousness, Memorial Hospital, Kaiser Medical Center, Sutter Health Center, International Medical Interpreters Association, California Institute of Integral Studies, California Library Association, Open Center, Sonoma Development Center, Elaborate Technologies, the Stadt Theater in Germany, the de Young Museum and over 1,000 schools. As adjunct faculty member, he founded the Drum and Dance Society at Sonoma State University.

Here we illuminate the rare gifts of this godly man. Those who experience his healing talents are consistently delighted and astonished. Does spiritual healing have a place amongst Natural Hygiene, Naturopathy and Modern Medicine? Is healing solely dependent upon the physiological effects of diet, lifestyle and therapies? Are we “spiritual beings”? Let’s explore the meaning of spiritual healing and then you can decide for yourself.

DK: *Meeting with you and experiencing the transformational effects of spiritual guidance and bodywork has sparked a new awareness, spurring me to place more emphasis on the spiritual aspect of healing for myself as well as in my professional counseling practice. The Natural Hygiene "Western-style school of self-healing education" heavily emphasizes physiology and largely assumes that wholeness and happiness will automatically follow a healthful lifestyle regimen. I have come to believe that disconnection from spirit plays a primary role in the issues of disease and world turmoil. I thank you for sharing your cultural approach to healing with our Western society. Let's look at why it is important to re-connect with spirit and how you work to help heal people. First, please tell us when you came to the United States from Nigeria and why.*

OO: Thank you, Dave, for this opportunity to talk about the work I do. I came to the United States in September of 1970 to further my education and experience diverse lifestyles in America. I was told it is a melting pot of people from a wide range of ethnicity and that drew me here. I attended College of the Holy Cross and then Boston College School of Management. At first I wasn't sure of my course of study. I thought I might want to study medical anthropology or theology. I decided upon business.

The year before graduation, I was recruited by three major international banks. However, my father was killed in Nigeria and my student visa expired. As a result, I was unable to work without proper documents and challenged the U.S. immigration for three years until permission was granted. During that three-year period my destiny changed, leading me to the spiritual work I do today.

DK: *When did you begin the healing work?*

OO: I believe I felt my calling to heal in my mother's womb. I have always felt it is normal to see into the uncharted territory of the mysterious world and natural to have premonitions. I feel blessed to receive visions and revelations effortlessly about daily events.

Since birth I have been fascinated with the mystery of Life, its wonders and its multifaceted dualities. I sense that we are connected to the source of Life without limitations and, therefore, we can each represent the Light and use its powers to dispel and eradicate our past failures, fears and weaknesses and transform darkness into strength for

fostering peace on Earth.

I contribute to humanity by sharing my gifts and aspirations with others. My religious belief is personal and my love extends to all, regardless of race, beliefs, creed, cultural backgrounds or nationality....we are one; we are the children of God!

DK: *Where did you grow up in Nigeria and what was the flavor of your cultural heritage?*

OO: I was born and grew up in a town called Obinze where the Igbo tribe lives in the southeast of Nigeria. I lived together with my parents, grandparents, uncles, aunt, cousins and nieces, as one big family.

There, everyone was involved in the individual and group maintenance of the healthy psyche. Spontaneous celebration was encouraged via drumming, dancing, chanting and storytelling. These traditional practices foster respect, responsibility and love of self and the community. Our communal spiritual customs reinforce our coexistence with God and the Divinity of Nature

DK: *What was your intention in coming to the U.S.?*

OO: I wanted to bring the joy and soul of African culture, lifestyle, music and the celebration of village life to individuals, businesses and organizations. By valuing and honoring the heart of the village, we support

and strengthen each other and build a bonded community. We all participate in one another's livelihood by showing kindness and unconditional love, which fosters interdependence in the village. We live and commune holistically and not as a fragmented society. The social fabric of the village, the wisdom of the elders, the drumming and dancing all contribute to the healing and well-being of the community at large. Blending our diverse cultures forges qualities of respect, compassion and goodwill. In this way we can break bread and drink from the same cup, eat from the same bowl and bond in oneness.

DK: *How did your parents influence you and what did they do in life?*

OO: My father was an elder in our church. He wasn't originally a Christian; my mother influenced his conversion. She was our main influence in living with joyful glorification of Christ and God. I love my parents and enjoyed rich childhood experiences. Through several rites of passage and



guidance from the village elders, I was fully prepared to deal with the enormous challenges of life. With this, we learn, grow and develop from young boys and girls into fully matured men and women. Growing up in the village was not always easy, but there were plenty of opportunities to search for the meaning of life, purpose and the reverence of self-worth and nobility. In my work I have had opportunities to mentor youngsters toward becoming fully responsible adults.

DK: Please talk about the essence and importance of spiritual healing.

OO: Spiritual healing is the act of faith and prayers for healing through the grace of God. My focus is on the divine aspects of healing. Those who are ill and who have unsuccessfully tried medical options come to me when they are considering natural spiritual healing as an alternative. Most people call on God only when their situations worsen or when they have “hit bottom.” We make healing possible through trust, faith, surrender, openness to blessings and thanksgiving.



Any disconnection to spirit certainly causes imbalance and disharmony to our health, longevity and well-being. As a result, we are subjected to a variety of illnesses. It is imperative to identify the root causes of disease in order to heal and maintain a positive and healthy outlook on life. The causes and effects of disease signify disconnections from ourselves, showing us where we are not living with integrity or exhibiting good principles and core values. Without belief and personal faith, we are unable to resolve our challenges.

I believe that when we center our heart and soul in the Divine, we're enabled to live a full, sustainable life with abundant blessings. We experience the connection of

body, mind, heart and spirit to the heart of God. This means that we are no longer subject to distractions, fears, confusions or limitations that prevent us from accomplishing our real purpose and finding meaning in life. It is wonderful when people realize their place in Divinity and Creation.

I don't heal people—only God can do that. I am very grateful and humbled to assist in God's healing work. Even though I am gifted in mysterious ways, I claim no authority of cures or treatment. I help lost souls reconnect to God and help them overcome their agony, grief, sorrow or depression. Although my work is not about religion, I feel that the best approach to healing is to know and find thyself, through prayer, divinity of nature, diet and transforming negative attitudes toward love and kindness.

DK: So you feel connected with the spirit of everything?

OO: Yes. I am certainly connected to the spirit of God in every aspect of Life. I feel connected by constant reminders of His love, care and mercy. I am a conduit for this purpose.

DK: So, your role is to communicate with the person, contact the spirit that needs the healing and intuitively sense what this person needs to become whole?

OO: Yes. I act as an intermediary between the individual and the Holy Spirit. God is certainly the mastermind that knows and cures all things. Love is what matters the most! Spiritual healing is a great opportunity to completely and unconditionally surrender to the Divine with all your heart and soul.

During healing sessions, I am guided through the grace of God to receive revelations about the individual's situation and am instructed on what to do. I am able to see the imprint that past thoughts, decisions and relationships have left on an individual's soul memory. I receive clear spiritual insights and determine what is needed to foster healing and liberation from the past, thereby opening the heart and soul to the healing grace of God. During our time together, I work in the Divine realm and my prayers continue afterward. With God's loving mercy upon us we are richly blessed with miracles.

DK: Some modern “schools of healing” focus only on the body, relying on dietary and lifestyle changes. Embarking on a broader investigation of healing, I learned that we must consider the four components of every illness: physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual. It seems that health begins and ends with the spirit. For individuals and health practitioners of all kinds to comprehend spiritual

healing, I believe they must receive it from a healer like yourself. I, for one, did not know what it was about until my session with you. You heard my story, read my energy, intuited and expressed to me my unique gifts, explained the areas which needed healing and gave directions on how to go about that. In other words, you seemingly plumbed the depth of my soul and affirmed and reminded me of who I truly am. It's magically healing to be fully seen and hear such validating words. But I think that those who have never had such an experience with a spiritual healer such as yourself can relate to the feelings of wellness when someone who loves and cares about them gives some form of loving kindness. When the person receives this grace, reconnection and wholeness happen and we become healthier. This may be the missing part of their healing puzzle. When someone heals via your work, I do not call that a "miracle." It only seems amazing because there had previously been no one in the person's life to affirm who he or she truly is, give Divine love and express genuine caring. It's sad that our Western society is so out of touch with this spiritual aspect of living.

OO: Indeed! The healer is an emissary of God. What is truly important here is the authenticity to serve with all your heart, soul and might and be guided through Divinity. If you have a spiritual gift, just be prepared to serve. Your only requirement is to trust, be faithful, surrender with humility and compassion and love others more through grace.

DK: What were your first experiences in doing your healing work and how did that progress?

OO: In the beginning, I wasn't even aware of it happening. People in my village didn't talk about these things. Understanding of such things was just assumed, as part of our Godhood. When the healing is taking place you're grateful and you know that it's happening.

At Boston College, athletes complained about their broken bones, twisted ankles and so on. I would just touch their injuries and they would heal. It was merely the healing power of God. Those kinds of things just happened over and over. I have gone on to help many people heal all kinds of sickness, including cancers and unexplained ailments. People receive hope and healing when they hear me affirm God's healing love and powers.

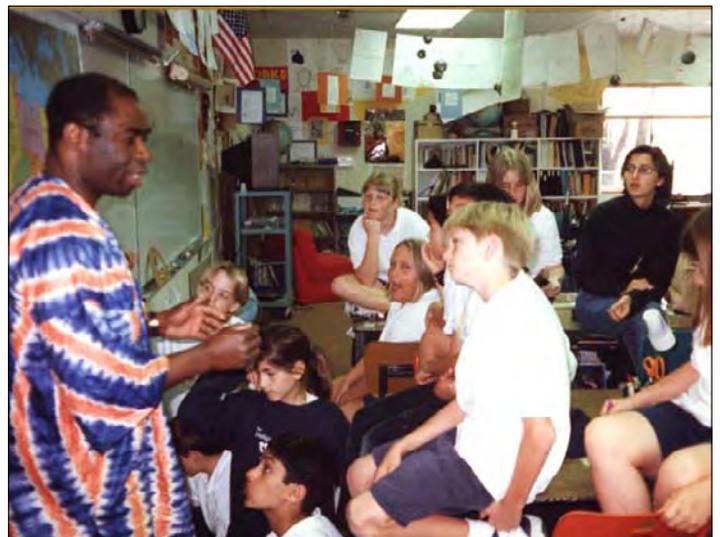
DK: Please describe the hands-on work you incorporate into your healing sessions.

OO: Over the past 25 years I have studied the healing arts of polarity therapy, massage/bodywork, acupressure, re-

flexology, cranio-sacral therapy, stress management, subtle energetics and other methods. I blend modern and ancient techniques to promote natural healing, pain relief and relaxation. I am naturally guided to locate blockages and trauma or disconnection in the physical body, mind, heart and spirit to promote healing and health.

DK: Is the kind of healing work you do typical of African spiritual healers?

OO: What I do is not necessarily typical of all African healing approaches. Yet, I do not separate one healing method from another. I am very present and spontaneous with the client at the time of the healing session. However, my primary focus is to receive the flowing love of God's healing powers and transport the energy to the individual.

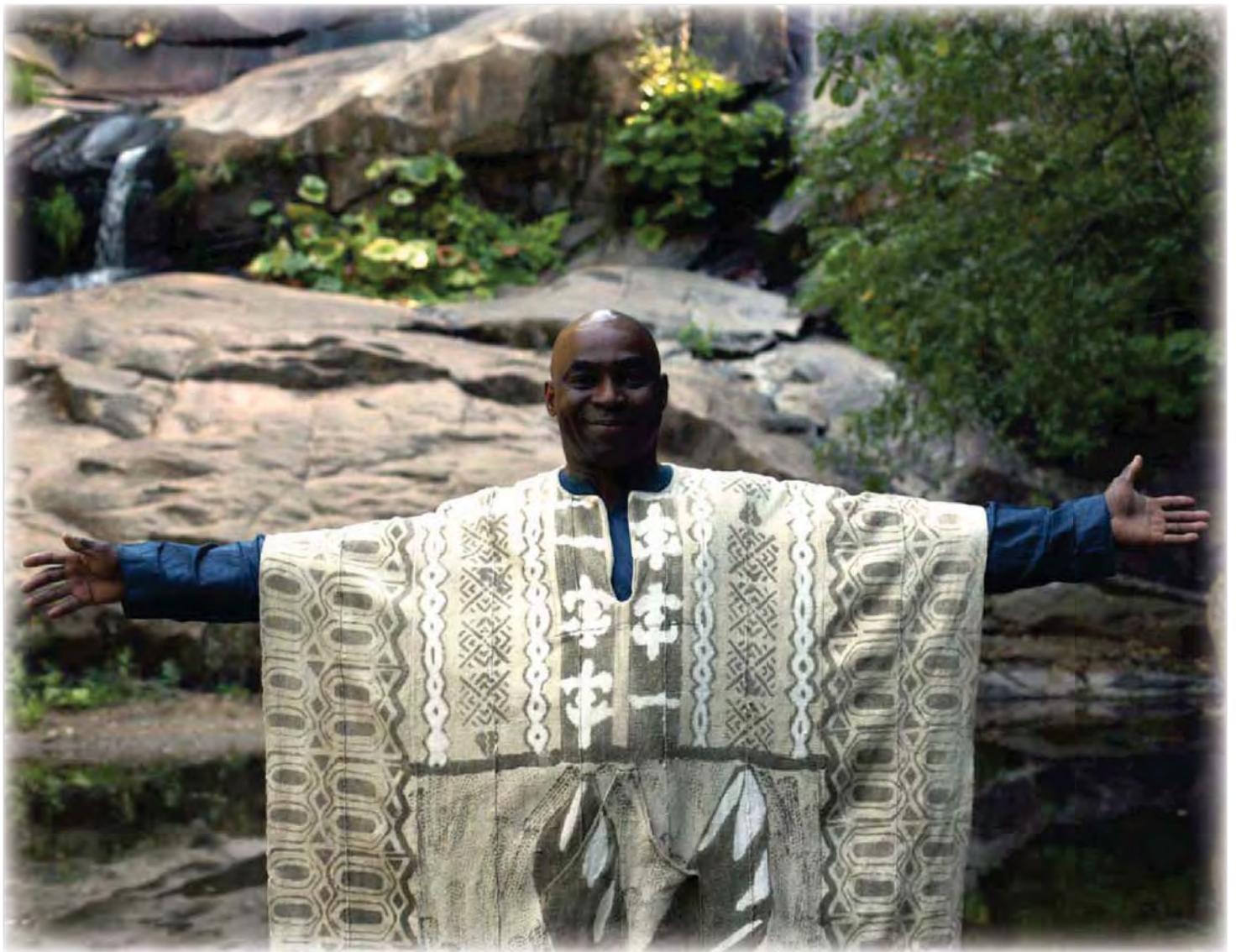


DK: What is your dietary approach?

OO: I believe our natural habitat determines what types of foods are needed to nourish our body, mind and soul. When I was growing up, my grandmother boiled yam with herbs in water. We drank the nutrient-rich water. Most of the food eaten by forest dwellers was raw vegetables or cooked meals. I am very mindful of my food choices and eat a primarily whole-food vegetarian diet when I can.

Today, here is my whole health diet model:

1. Pray regularly, keep your conscience clear from negative thoughts and reclaim your connection to the Creator.
2. Incorporate spiritual fasting to restore your body-soul balance.
3. Listen to your body, open your heart, clear your mind and vow to live abundantly.
4. Exercise regularly, lose excess weight naturally, enjoy



dancing, music and singing and mingle with positive folks.

5. Wisely choose and celebrate the foods your body knows are best for you.

DK: Please talk about "Village Rhythms."

OO: Village Rhythms offers a wide range of life-changing programs to individuals, professionals, schools, colleges, universities, corporations and businesses, special interest groups and other organizations. Among our programs are: workshops, events, life coaching and interpersonal skill development, consulting, music entertainment and celebrations that inspire participants and enlighten our society.

Village Rhythms' programs also combine the therapeutic and healing effects of rhythms, celebrations and ceremonise with meditation response, stress relief, prayer, subtle energetic framework and techniques, laughter and fun. These integrated approaches to music, rhythms, movement and

sound promote physical, mental, and emotional balance, fostering profound and practical insight for living and self-expression. Drumming and dance are the spiritual heart of African village cultures and communities.

DK: How have people received you in community centers and schools?

OO: Most people have enjoyed my program because it is motivating, impactful, active, fun, promotes cultural awareness and diversity and brings communities together. People experience a peak transformation that allows them to go deeper into themselves, and to discover new ways for renewal and positive change. The parents, teachers and school administrators take notice. There are plenty of benefits: one becomes more balanced, focused, awakened, enlivening and inspired.

DK: You've presented at many prestigious venues. Please give us an overview.

OO: For more than 25 years I have taught and performed at numerous academic institutions, organizations, conferences and entertainment venues across America and Europe. The result is an electrifying musical feast to uplift the human spirit into a joyful, buoyant union of body and soul. The venues have included cultural communities, hospitals and clinics. Doctors, psychotherapists and health practitioners refer clients to me for healing sessions.

DK: How do you sum up the keys to healing and creating a world of wellness?

OO: The keys to healing are: forgiveness, surrender, truth, honesty, letting go of control and trusting in Divinity, mercy, kindness, a positive attitude, self-expression and living with integrity and dignity. We must recognize that we are all children of the Universe, and each of us is precious. It's our inheritance to be here, therefore, we must be at peace with God. We must also keep our promise to stay healthy, keep a positive attitude toward life and expand our knowledge to our loved ones, friends, community and the world. Despite all its shame, grief, sorrow and broken dreams, it is still a rich planet blessed with the treasures and the seeds of life. Be careful, diligent and discerning. Be yourself, be affectionate and strive to be joyful. Spread world peace and unity. Together, we celebrate life and living!

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