

**Testimonial, 2015**  
**Alison Young**  
**A Year That Changed My Life**

It was just over a year ago when I limped through the door of Body Mechanics wracked with crippling pain and hopelessness; that was until I met the two women who were to change my life, Alison Young and then trainee Natalia Jannert.

I have had the most effective series of massages I have ever had at the hands of Alison and Natalia, more effective than I could have hoped for; beyond the mere but treasured outcome of having a lot less back pain; I and my body have changed beyond all my conceived expectations. I have had over 40 years of involvement in holistic therapies and therapeutic massage and I knew from the very first session I had with Alison that I had found my therapist. With Alison I encountered not only an extremely knowledgeable and skilled physical therapist but someone who has a rare and deep intuitive ability to heal.

**The 'Sarling' Technique**

While being expert in the Sarling Technique Alison's approach is an entirely holistic one. She has an extensive knowledge in many aspects of health in her 'whole' approach to body therapy. As part of my treatment Alison gave me instructions on a series of gentle exercises to do at home.

She told me of the exercise classes she ran in the dance studio at the back of the centre. These classes along with the massage therapy lead me onto my next and most startling stage of recovery.

**The Exercise Classes**

The exercise classes, facilitated by Alison, have been a revelation for me in learning how to retrain my body in movement, posture and balance. Whereas once I stooped and stumbled in pain when moving and walking; I now stand straight and tall and take pleasure in moving, walking and dancing too!

At the end of the class Alison takes all of us on a guided fantasy of gentle relaxation. I and all the group members treasure Alison's classes which are full of life, laughter, light and love.

**Fibromyalgia**

At the beginning of my treatment Alison took my health history. When I disclosed that I had been diagnosed with Fibromyalgia Alison told me that she was a sufferer too. I had never come across another person with my condition, someone who I could share experiences with of this very distressing syndrome. She received me with empathy and compassion when I spoke of the

pain, the exhaustion and the emotional impact this has on my life; as well as tears there has been many moments of laughter with Alison. Alison has done extensive research into Fibromyalgia and shared her knowledge freely with me during our massage therapy sessions. I decided to attend a course that Alison was running for people suffering from Fibromyalgia and Fatigue syndromes.

## **The 'Sarling' Technique Fibromyalgia and Fatigue Clinic**

### **The Course**

#### **Group Facilitator: Alison Young**

We met as a group for a series of 6 weekly one hour sessions to learn about and discuss our experiences of Fibromyalgia. At each of these series of meetings Alison encouraged us to discuss and explore each of the 6 topic matters and share our own personal experiences of Fibromyalgia, both practical and emotional. We shared our problems and also our solutions. Alison led the group by expanding on and demonstrating some of the tools and methods described in the handout she had given to us at the beginning of the course... she invited and encouraged our input and interaction as an integral and organic part of the group and individuals experience.

Although the course was well structured it was also facilitated by Alison in way that flowed and gave a natural place to all the individuals while keeping on track in being informative, solution orientated and cohesive.

On a personal level and as aspects of my experiences as a counsellor I was delighted that Alison encouraged the exploration of the impact that mental attitude and emotional responses have on physical health.

### **The Handout**

I loathe calling the document that Alison gave to the group a 'handout'. It is both a wonderfully concise manual, full of tools, as well as a seriously informative document on the subject of fibromyalgia.

### **The Food Diary**

Alison led us into exploring the impact that the foods and the supplements that we choose to consume has on our Fibromyalgia and health in general. She introduced a food diary in which we were to record what we eat over the duration of the course. Issues around food are of particular significance for me. An area of expertise in my professional life is in eating disorders and for that reason the importance of food diaries is familiar to me and yet I have not kept one myself. Through participating on the course I became aware that the food diary is an essential tool for me to find a path to healthy eating.

I have recently been diagnosed with a syndrome which, for over 4 years, has had me calling ambulances and being repeatedly admitted for periods of time to hospital to recover. Its effect is devastating and seriously dangerous and its name is self-explanatory; Cyclical Vomiting Syndrome.

I have needed advice and guidance on nutritional matters for a long time especially as to diet and my syndrome. I have not been able to get support in that area. The only advice I had been given was my doctor suggesting that I eat dry toast and ginger nuts when I feel queasy and during my last hospital stay I had a special visit from the hospital nutritionist and the only thing she came up with in terms of diet was that I drink a nutritional body building supplement.

I decided that I needed nutritional life coaching from Alison.

I have spent most of my life ignoring my body including the pains I suffered. Alison has awakened in me the affirmation that the health on my body has an absolute impact on my spirit and I should cherish both equally as they are entwined.

### **Harlow Holistic Centre**

The Harlow Holistic Centre is a little jewel of a place set amongst a maze of small roads and an eclectic collection of small businesses. Louise To and her husband Chris, the owners of the Harlow Holistic Centre along with Alison and others have created a serene little oasis amongst the bohemian feel of the area, tucked away in the Stow.

Although the premises are small the two practice rooms with high ceilings feel airy and light, gentle and safe. The intention of love and healing put into creating this lovely little place is palpable. I have had my first Nutritional Coaching consultation in Alison's practice room at the Harlow Holistic Centre.

### **Holistic Nutritional Coaching**

My first coaching consultation with Alison consisted of an in depth look at my health history and eating habits as well as my attitude and emotional responses to food, past and present. Alison's questions were probing, extensive and thought provoking for me; the questions elicited in me a growing awareness of my difficult relationship and response to food and to health in general. We discussed my specific goals in terms of what I wish to achieve through the nutritional programme that Alison is tailoring to my specific needs.

I am keeping a food diary for a week at the end of which I will give it to Alison who will analyse my eating habits and nutritional intake with reference to the extensive health record she took at our first meeting.

I look forward to our next consultation when we will embark on my nutritional programme. I give with all my heart the deepest and profoundest thank you to Alison for this year that has changed my life.

My journey has not ended but begins and goes on and I am privileged to have Alison as my healer and friend on this difficult but wonderful adventure.

**Jane Cherry MBACP(accred)**

**ITEC: Anatomy, Physiology and Therapeutic Massage (February 1992)**

**ITEC: Anatomy, Physiology and Holistic Massage (April 1992)**