

# Different Strokes

*the voice of ABMP*

## Grow Your Mind Nurture Your Practice

with Continuing Education from ABMP



The Most  
Important Things  
Ideas to Strengthen  
Your Business

**ABMP MEMBER OPPORTUNITIES**

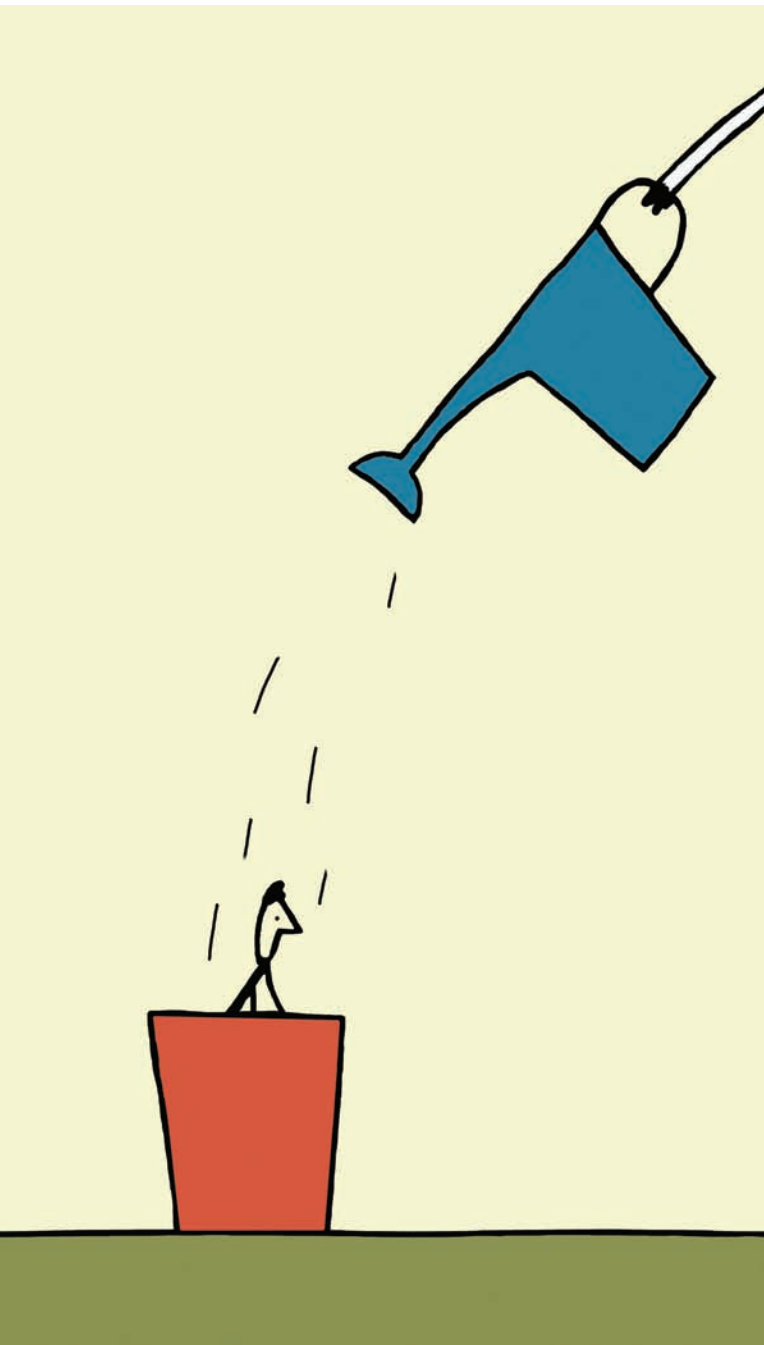
World Massage Conference

(50% off registration, see p.5)

# Grow Your Mind Nurture Your Practice

## ABMP webinars make continuing education easy

By Karrie Osborn



**T**eachers do it. Plumbers do it. Even doctors do it. Continuing education (CE) is an old concept finding new legs with today's technology. This type of education is typically intended for the non-traditional adult learner; for professionals like you, it's often a necessary endeavor to maintain your state, national certification, and/or association requirements, as well as to expand your knowledge and stay current with the profession.

In an effort to give members greater opportunities for continued education, ABMP has offered a comprehensive webinar program at ABMP.com since 2007, with sessions designed specifically for massage and bodywork therapists, school administrators, instructors, and students. These webinars have become an easy way for ABMP members to participate in lifelong learning and professional development at their own pace, all from the convenience of their own computer.

"Continuing education is an opportunity for continuing professional development," says ABMP President Les Sweeney, NCTM, "which means an improvement of one's skills and, ultimately, marketability." Sweeney says ABMP developed its webinar program to honor "our commitment to helping members be successful, to offer them a cost-effective delivery of services, and to demonstrate a continued added value of ABMP membership."

Many of you are taking advantage of that added value. In 2011 alone, there were more than 12,000 "views" of all the live and archived webinars available at ABMP.com. From "Using Facebook to Grow Your Massage Practice" to "Low-Back Pain," members took advantage of the variety of courses ABMP makes available.

In addition to offering topics that help you find success in your career, we also make an effort to partner with the top names in the massage profession who can offer our members exciting, often cutting-edge information they can utilize in their practice.

Our school and instructor members can also benefit from ABMP's Online Education Center, which offers a wealth of topics on developing effective orientations, preventing sexual harassment on massage campuses, implementing great admissions practices, and tips for classroom management topics, among many others.

## With ABMP's Online Education Center you can:

- > Choose from a list of meaningful, enriching courses and free webinars.
- > Start a course or webinar and finish it at a later date.
- > Earn CE hours and fulfill your state, national certification, and/or association requirements.



There are currently 60 recorded webinars available to members for on-demand viewing in the ABMP Online Education Center at [www.abmp.com](http://www.abmp.com). For live events, webinar invitations are sent out two weeks in advance. If you are not currently receiving webinar invitations, make sure ABMP has your correct email address by logging in to the Member section at [ABMP.com](http://ABMP.com) and choosing "Update Your Contact Information" under "Your ABMP Account."

Visit [ABMP.com](http://ABMP.com) today to see what educational opportunities are waiting for you!

*Karrie Osborn is editor of Different Strokes. Contact her at [karrie@abmp.com](mailto:karrie@abmp.com).*

## Start Learning Today

### For Archived Webinars:

- > Log in to the Member section at [ABMP.com](http://ABMP.com).
- > Click on the "ABMP Online Education Center" and review the available webinars.
- > Select and view an archived webinar instantly.

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- > Go to [ABMP.com](http://ABMP.com) and click on the "Upcoming ABMP Webinars" on the right.
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## Learning from the Best

ABMP has partnered with many of the top names in the profession. Here are some webinars you won't want to miss.

### Thomas Myers

Noted author and educator Thomas Myers offers an amazing series from his bestselling massage book *Anatomy Trains*. His course, *BodyReading the Myofascial Meridians*, is a revolutionary new way of understanding the body's myofascial patterning. In the first webinar, Myers overviewed the process of *BodyReading*: how it works in practice and how to get started in making useful assessments. In the following webinars, he will go through the *Anatomy Trains* line by line, teasing out the details, as well as the larger patterns and meaning within each line. If you haven't been participating in this series, which started in May, catch up by viewing the archived replays in ABMP's Online Education Center, and join us through February for the rest of this inspiring event. The series consists of seven one-hour webinars:



#### AVAILABLE NOW

"BodyReading the Anatomy Trains Myofascial Meridians"  
"The Superficial Front Line"  
"The Superficial Back Line"  
"The Lateral Lines"

#### STILL TO COME

November 22: "The Spiral Lines"  
January 26, 2012: "The Arm and Shoulder Lines"  
February 23, 2012: "The Core"

### Til Luchau

Another series of interest to our members, "Ethics for the Real World," comes from educator and *Massage & Bodywork* columnist Til Luchau, who presents real-life scenarios to offer a new understanding about the power and potential of the client/practitioner relationship. This course meets NCBTMB's requirement for six hours of continuing education in ethics. The focus is on fresh perspectives relating to boundaries, money, and other real world issues. Find this six-part series archived in the Online Education Center.



# Different Strokes

The Voice of ABMP

For questions or comments, please call 800-458-2267.

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[massageprofessionals.com](http://massageprofessionals.com)



# Members in the News

## Congratulations!

You can find links to the articles listed here on the ABMP website. Log in to [ABMP.com](http://ABMP.com), look for the "ABMP Community" section on the right, then click on the "ABMP Members in the News" link.

**Kimberly Blanton** in "\$1K Massage License Fee May Be Eliminated," *Potomac Local*.

**Scott Butler** in "Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork Course Open House Sept. 7," *Cape Gazette*.

**Cindy Carlson-Wilson** in "Study Provides Evidence About Benefits of Massage Therapy," *The Joplin Globe*.

**Litahni Coleman** in "A Massage for Alice: Massage Therapy for Seniors," *Eden Prairie News*.

**Sorina Durante** and **David Esposito** in "Massage Therapies Benefit Body, Mind," *Asbury Park Press*.

**Christine Gallagher** in "Acutonics Practitioner Employs Healing Vibrations at Natural Health Center," *Grand Junction Free Press*.

**Norell Leung** in "15-Second Pitch: Ajna Massage," *Boulder Daily Camera*.

**Bobby Lewis** in "GNTC Massage Therapy Instructor Also Has His Own Practice," *Rome News-Tribune*.

**Abbey Rhoads** in "Get to Know: Abbey Rhoads," *Des Moines Register*.

**Aura Rose** in "Expressing Healing Beauty and Life," *Live Your Peace* radio.

**Jean Sefocovic** in "Healing Path Massage," [WYNT.com](http://WYNT.com).

**Jerri Walston** in "Jerri Walston Incorporates Healing Touch Therapy at Sigler Chiropractic and Wellness Center," *Daily Republican Register*.



## Tell Us Your News

If your practice was mentioned in print, online, on the radio, or on TV, let ABMP know. Send an email to [differentstrokes@abmp.com](mailto:differentstrokes@abmp.com) with the subject line "Members in the News" and include a link to the news coverage online, or scan and attach a PDF of printed material.



## Great Opportunities at World Massage Conference for ABMP members

The fall session of the World Massage Conference (WMC), November 14–16, is designed to bring the massage community together for educational opportunities hard to match in a brick-and-mortar event. As in the spring WMC event, ABMP will host a free Education Day on November 16, and invites all massage educators to join ABMP's Education Director and others for great information you can use in the classroom today, including "Gen What? Teaching the Generations" and "Instructional Clarity Through Scaffolding." ABMP members get a 50 percent discount on admission, while each state-approved school receives two free registrations, courtesy of ABMP and the WMC, which give educators and students access to replays of the earlier June WMC conference, as well as the live event, November 14–16. To register for the WMC, go to [www.worldmassageconference.com](http://www.worldmassageconference.com).



## Connect With Colleagues

ABMP wants to make it easy for you to find us, and connect with colleagues everywhere. That's why you'll find us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and [Massageprofessionals.com](http://Massageprofessionals.com). Use these resources to ask questions, generate ideas, network with other professionals, and so much more. "Like" us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/abmppage](http://www.facebook.com/abmppage), follow us on Twitter @ABMPmassage, connect with our LinkedIn group, and join the conversation with colleagues at [Massageprofessionals.com](http://Massageprofessionals.com).



## Have a Story to Tell?

Traveled an interesting path to get you where you are today? Wish ABMP could help you with a particular business issue? Want to share your passion for your work? Then let us know. We'd love to hear from you. Email us at [differentstrokes@abmp.com](mailto:differentstrokes@abmp.com).



## Massage Week Success

Congratulations to all of you who participated in EveryBody Deserves a Massage week, July 17–23. We heard from many members who were using the event to connect with the community, to build clientele, and to give something back. We hope your endeavors were successful. Here are just a few ways you reached out:

- **Amber Hunter**, in Tremont, Pennsylvania (see photo, bottom left), collected canned goods for a local food pantry, with clients receiving \$1 off their massage for each item donated.
- **Lynda Jackson**, a new LMT in Illinois, gave complimentary chair massage, with proceeds going to Habitat for Humanity and YOU, a youth group in Evanston.
- **Connie Kates-Williams, Jessica Ballas, and Liz Fear** of Whitehall, Pennsylvania (see photo, top left), offered free massage in exchange for food donations. "We also gave out coupons and tried to promote ourselves, too. It was a win-win situation."
- **Sherrie Sims and Lynne Schwartz** offered chair massage and reflexology treatments. Proceeds went to ShelterCare, a nonprofit agency in Eugene/Springfield, Oregon.

Watch for details in the months ahead about the 2012 event on July 15-21.



# The Most Important Things

## Ideas to strengthen your practice

By Roberta Langley

While building two successful private practices during my 13-year career as a massage therapist, I've seen a lot of massage therapists fail. Even though there are those massage businesses that fail due to circumstances that can't be controlled, there are many more that fail because of something I call an "excess in ego."

People with an excess in ego are overly rigid in their decision making, are not open to compromise, will not explore other options, and will not engage or listen to constructive criticism or dissenting opinions. These are the individuals who, when making decisions, tend to get bogged down in minute details and insist on their own way, instead of focusing on the big picture and doing what is best for the business. They typically lose sight of *the most important thing*: the actual goal of the decision they are making.

Here are some examples of MT business decisions that can go wrong when ego takes over and the most important thing in each decision is forgotten.

### Business Cards

When choosing your business cards, get the most professional, yet least expensive cards you can buy. There are some online stores that offer them free of charge or for a nominal fee. ABMP members can log in to ABMP.com, click on the "Marketing Center" tab and create customized business cards through Vistaprint (cards start at \$1.99 for 500). Your budget may not allow for printing full color on both sides or using premium paper, but you can still add your own personal flair without using all your precious start-up money.

**The Most Important Thing:** You may not be able to afford all the bells and whistles, but you will be getting your name and number into the hands of the people who are your potential clients.

### Marketing

A good marketing plan is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. In fact, many variables that are unique to you and your business should help define your marketing plan.

Analyze your current situation and the type of business you want to have within the next few years. Are you in a small town or a big city? Are you with a group of therapists or health-care professionals, or alone? Is your office in a high-traffic area or in a quieter setting? How much of your financial resources can you afford to use? What type of clientele do you want to develop?

It is important that you be honest with yourself during this process. Saying you want to have high-end clientele and charge \$100 an hour when you are just starting your business may be true, but it is a highly impractical goal in the beginning. Making this a long-term goal is something to work toward, but not something most MTs can start out doing.

Next, research your marketing options. There are many extremely helpful resources at your disposal:

- Check out the array of books dedicated to massage and bodywork business and marketing practices.
- Investigate how other MTs are marketing themselves (websites, social media, print ads, flyers, community events).
- Utilize the business/marketing resources of your professional associations (ABMP, chamber of commerce, etc.).
- Draw on the advice and experience of other MTs.

Choose several options you think could work for your business and implement them one or two at a time. Deciding on one marketing strategy and directing all your resources toward it is an unnecessary risk. Keep in mind that marketing is not an exact science; being rigid and single-minded at this stage can wreck a business before it ever gets a chance to succeed.

**The Most Important Thing:** Even though marketing is a challenge, it is extremely necessary to promote your business on some level in order to be successful.

### Office Décor

Through my years, I have seen MTs spend hundreds of dollars and innumerable hours on a treatment room before they even have one client. Their rooms may be decorated exactly as they want, but they have no money left over for marketing, supplies, or anything else they will need to start their business. Forgo extremely eclectic decorating touches and keep it professional. It is possible to put your own



# What You Can Do to Make Your Business Stronger Today

(Visit [ABMP.com](http://ABMP.com), log in, and click on “Marketing Center” for all these ideas and more.)

signature on your office space without alienating clients. Get other people’s opinions.

**The Most Important Thing:** Your treatment area needs to be clean, relaxing, and comfortable in order to promote the overall enjoyment of the massage, as well as to ensure that clients will want to come back for another session.

## Professional Demeanor

How your clients see you and think of you is extremely important—even when you have established clientele. Always look clean and neat. Your attire should always be professional, never provocative, sloppy, or too eclectic. Avoid team logos or political and religious references—never assume that just because a person likes your massages they feel the same way you do about personal issues.

Do not discuss your personal problems with your clients and especially do not project any negative feelings onto your clients. Feelings of extreme sadness, anxiety, worry, and anger will transfer to the person receiving your massage. If you cannot put them out of your mind (and especially out of your hands), it is far better to cancel the session than to appear that you are not in control of your emotions.

**The Most Important Thing:** Even though we are in a very personal business, you need to present yourself as a professional. Keep your personal problems in check and keep them to yourself.

## Client Interaction

I have many clients that used to visit other MTs and switched because these therapists did not meet their needs.

First, avoid being a Chatty Cathy. If you are the least bit attentive to your client, this should not be an issue. Watching and listening to how your client is responding during a session is one of the basic tenets of massage therapy. Some clients like to talk during a session, but if they do not engage you, or never respond to what you are saying, it probably means they prefer to be quiet.

Second, always be clear with what the client wants. Pressure that is too hard is a common complaint. In the beginning, and periodically throughout the session, MTs should ask clients about the pressure or technique being used. If the client requests lighter pressure or to stop a certain technique, that request should be respected and implemented immediately. We should never forget that the client on the table can feel quite vulnerable

# 1

Create a website; today’s consumers expect it. Your website is free at [ABMP.com](http://ABMP.com).



# 2

Stay in touch with your clients by creating a customized client newsletter. Now is the perfect time to share holiday specials or your gift certificate program.

# 3

Educate your clients by forwarding them a digital copy of ABMP’s massage consumer magazine, *Body Sense*. (Find the newest issue in the “Marketing Center” under “Publications.”)

# 4

Create customized, inexpensive business cards for networking, professional referrals, and all client interactions.





and it is a privilege to have them trust us enough to give them a massage. No matter what we have learned or how much we know as a massage therapist, we should never assume we know what is best for the client.

**The Most Important Thing:** You should not only be aware, but be sensitive and respectful as to how the massage you are giving is affecting your client and be ready to amend your session/technique/attitude accordingly.

### **The Most Important Thing—It's All Worth It**

With all of the compromising, budgeting, and planning that goes into having your own business, it can be intimidating. But the fact remains—it is simply amazing to practice massage. A complete stranger trusts you to use your learned techniques to help them. Utilizing your gift of touch makes people feel better. There are many other professions in which you can make more money, but few will afford you the satisfaction and enjoyment of practicing massage therapy.

Roberta Langley, LMT, is an ABMP member from Dallas, Texas.

## **Embrace Humility**

The best way to ensure you do not suffer from an excess in ego is to practice humility. Here are a few suggestions:

**Listen more than you talk.** Hear the people closest to you when they are giving advice and seek out the counsel of others who are familiar with your business. Be open to any and all opinions—glean any useful information, and judge for yourself whether or not to take action.

**Never stop learning.** Read MT magazines and books—you can pick up some useful advice about business practices, techniques, and new trends in your industry. Explore the continuing education opportunities available to you.

**Make a scheduled day of reflection.** Block off an entire morning or afternoon for yourself every few months to take an objective look at all aspects of your business. Ask yourself: Are my marketing decisions resulting in new clients? Are my new clients returning? Why did some of my new clients not schedule future appointments? Are my clients reacting favorably to my office environment? What is the state of my finances? How can I cut my expenses? Keep the things that are working, let go of the things that are not.

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## **Join ABMP at the American Massage Conference San Diego, April 20–22, 2012**

Mark your calendars and join ABMP next spring at the American Massage Conference (AMC) in beautiful San Diego. This second annual AMC will be held at the Town and Country Resort & Conference Center, April 20–22, 2012.

A \$40 registration fee gets you access to 25 one-hour continuing education (CE) courses. For additional fees, you can participate in full-day or three-hour CE courses. You'll also have access to a trade show with more than 100 booths where you can connect with ABMP and other vendors, learn about new products and modalities, and network with other MTs.

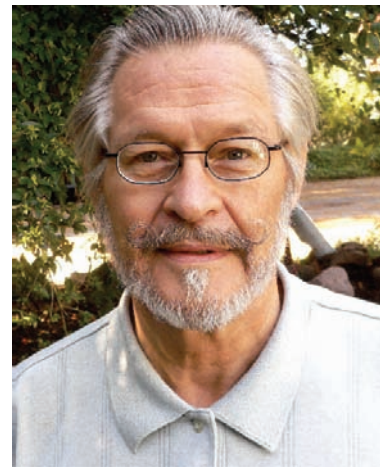


ABMP's Anne Williams, Leslie Young, and Brian Halterman hosted the booth at the 2011 American Massage Conference in Atlanta. Photo by Art Gibert.

ABMP is the conference education sponsor and is pleased to host the Friday evening keynote featuring Deane Juhan, author of *Job's Body: A Handbook for Bodywork* and *Touched by the Angel: The Physical, Psychological, and Spiritual Powers of Bodywork*. Juhan has been a bodyworker for 38 years and teaches workshops in anatomy and physiology. With a private practice in Berkeley, California, Juhan has been a practitioner and instructor of the Trager Approach for 32 years.

For his rare guest appearance at the AMC, Juhan will crystallize further reflections on *Job's Body*, his own decades of experience as a bodyworker and teacher, and the expanding potential of bodywork as a force for health and education in our challenging times.

Log on to [www.americanmassageconference.com](http://www.americanmassageconference.com) to register and learn more about the CE opportunities available. We look forward to seeing you there!



Deane Juhan will present the ABMP-sponsored keynote, "Job's Body Renewed: Healing Our Sacred Wounds," at the 2012 American Massage Conference.



# Government Affairs

By Jean Robinson

## Continuing Education: Changes Ahead

Since the beginning of 2011, continuing education (CE) has been a hot topic at the national level.

In the massage therapy profession, the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) has traditionally been charged with the responsibility of approving CE providers. However, many regulatory boards now are requiring CE providers to apply individually for state approval, instead of the previous blanket acceptance of NCBTMB-approved providers.

These duplicative approval processes are leading to a significant cost increase for providers who end up having to pay fees for approval in multiple states, instead of just being “NCBTMB-approved.” It’s probably no surprise to you that CE providers then pass on this cost to massage therapists and CE becomes more expensive for practitioners.

Continuing education is a vital part of the certification programs offered by the NCBTMB, and certification is voluntary. As an independent certification board, the NCBTMB sets standards for recertification, as well as what CE is necessary and recognized to meet those standards. A problem exists, however, because not all courses recognized or approved by the NCBTMB (and its recertification) are accepted for state licensing renewal. For example, some states don’t allow licensed massage therapists to count the CE they completed in a technique that is exempt from licensing. NCBTMB doesn’t keep track of what each state deems “acceptable” CE.

In March 2011, responding to requests from its member boards (which are state regulatory boards), the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) announced plans to develop a new national program to approve CE providers and courses. The FSMTB CE program is intended to provide a more unified structure to ensure that CE courses are taught by qualified instructors, are relevant to scope of practice, and focus on standards for licensure renewal.

In May 2011, NCBTMB hosted a meeting to discuss its plan to review, reassess, and restructure its Approved Provider/Continuing Education Program in 2011. Approximately three-fourths of the states that require massage therapists to be licensed require licensees to complete ongoing education in order to renew their licenses. ABMP’s position is that there is a difference between continued competency and professional development. The purpose of regulating a profession is to protect the public from unqualified practitioners. Which CE courses should be required to ensure the public is protected?

We hope this is one of the questions considered as the CE process evolves.

ABMP will keep its members updated on any further information surrounding the initiatives announced by FSMTB and NCBTMB. We intend to advocate for a thoughtful approach and streamlined process that considers cost to practitioners as part of the equation.



## Illinois Requiring LMTs to Display License

Governor Quinn signed SB 153 into law on August 23, 2011. The bill reauthorizes the Massage Therapy Practice Act until January 1, 2022 and makes several technical changes to the law.

The Illinois Massage Licensing Board (MLB) also revised several rules that are now in effect.

- The Massage & Bodywork Licensing Examination (MBLEx) offered by the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards ([www.fsmtb.org](http://www.fsmtb.org)) has been added as an approved licensure exam.
- Massage therapist licenses are required to be displayed in the licensee’s place of practice.

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By Jed Heneberry

## Diana Howell

Los Alamitos, California  
ABMP Member Since 2006

**A**s an engineer, Diana Howell was responsible for analyzing systems and making sure all the pieces fit correctly. Now, as a massage and craniosacral therapist, she sees many similarities between her current and former professions.

### Changing Paths

The joy in Howell's voice is evident when she discusses her journey from engineer to massage therapist. "It was sort of like a wave," she says. After a year of meditation classes, she enrolled in a class on bodywork. "I finally got to the point where I had to revisit why I was in engineering. I went to a career counselor and she laughed at me and said, 'You are such a round peg in a square hole.' I looked at her and said, 'Does this mean I can become a massage therapist?'"

Howell eased into her new career, relishing the newfound flexibility and enjoying the additional time available for family. "I started working with chiropractors, then worked with an osteopath for five years," she says. "I learned a lot and realized that if I had known what I was good at 20 years ago, I might have gone to medical school. But you have to take your own way to get there."

### Once an Engineer, Always an Engineer

Since making her career change, Howell has come to see the common bonds between her current and former professions. "This is the funny part," she says. "I haven't really left engineering because I'm still doing engineering for bodies every day."

While the two fields may seem very different at first glance, Howell feels like her experiences have uniquely prepared her for the challenges she faces as an MT. "It's really exciting to me to look at a person and see a pattern of pain or a problem going on and find out what's contributing to it, what it's contributing to, how the person is perpetuating this, and what I can do as a massage therapist to help start them looking at how to heal," she says. "The analytical part—the anatomy and physiology—is really interesting to me, but what really floats my boat is watching people heal themselves."

**"I haven't really left engineering because I'm still doing engineering for bodies every day."**



Diana Howell still applies her engineering background to her work as a massage therapist today.

One of the things that continues to help facilitate Howell's transition is her ABMP membership, which includes benefits she uses to educate herself and her clients. "I use the website resources to look up articles for my clients, for example if they were just diagnosed with fibromyalgia," she says. "Some of the really interesting articles to me are more about the physiology of things, and that's my engineering background, wanting to know how things work."

### Building on Inspiration

Howell's path has seen her work with chiropractors, osteopaths, and at the spa on the Queen Mary; currently it has her working with Massage Envy and in her own private practice. These varied settings have expanded her appreciation for the profession and created a thirst for new experiences and challenges. "The more I do it, the more I love it," she says. "I'm now focusing on my specialties—craniosacral therapy and somato emotional release—and pursuing further lymphatic training, because there's a huge need for that."

There are times when Howell thinks back on her days as an engineer, but she is confident that massage therapy is where she is supposed to be. "I'm an engineer every day," she says. "I miss my friends, I miss the steady money and the benefits, but I do not miss the stress, I do not miss any of the craziness. The benefits of doing something I love and working with people outweighs anything that I miss."

For those who are considering a career change to massage therapy, or who may have undergone one and are having second thoughts, Howell has the following advice: "If it's your dream, don't give up on it," she says. "If massage therapy is really what gives you a lot of happiness and a lot of essence back, even if you just keep doing it part time, keep doing it and keep your hands in it."

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