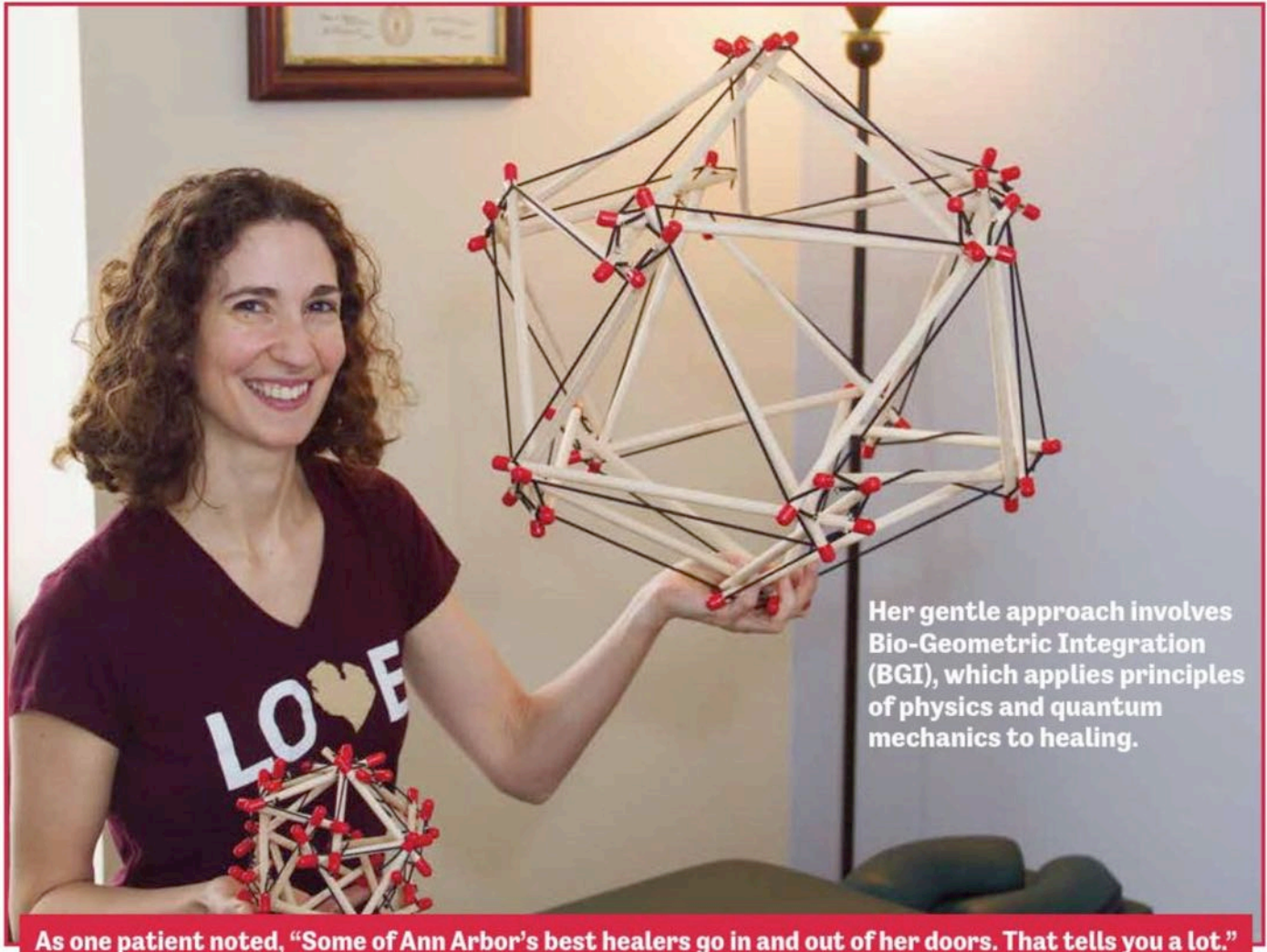


The Human Body— A Symphony in Sharps and Flats

Getting to Know Dr. Diane Babalas, Chiropractor and Healer



Her gentle approach involves Bio-Geometric Integration (BGI), which applies principles of physics and quantum mechanics to healing.

As one patient noted, “Some of Ann Arbor’s best healers go in and out of her doors. That tells you a lot.”

By Rachel Urist
Photography by Joni Strickfaden

Overheard:

- I don’t want to go to the reception. I hate these things.
- Leave early.
- But I don’t know these people!
- Just go up to the first interesting person you see and ask, “How’s your back?”

The above exchange works — as both a joke and practical advice to the socially anxious — because just about everyone has back trouble of some kind, at some point or another.

Treatments for back ailments abound. Choosing a modality depends on the predicament and the person. Yoga has long been a choice remedy and preventive for back problems, and it contributes to general well-being. Other activities also help to keep mind and body aligned. Swimming, biking, hiking, writing, praying, meditating and cooking are just a few. Finding harmony — a coalition of mind, body, and spirit — takes mindfulness.

Dr. Diane Babalas provides another remedy for back problems and other physical ailments. A licensed chiropractor with additional training in “BGI,” or Bio-Geometric Integration, she has developed a following among Ann Arbor’s holistic cognoscenti. Forty-one and the mother of two, she is slight and spritely, with dark, wavy hair that fans out from her face. “People look at me and think I couldn’t possibly manipulate

anything — I look like a kid!” she said, laughing. But Babalas has been building a successful chiropractic practice in Ann Arbor for the past sixteen years. Her gentle approach involves BGI, which applies principles of physics and quantum mechanics to healing, and has drawn many respected healers around Ann Arbor to her. As one client noted, “Some of Ann Arbor’s best healers go in and out of her doors. That tells you a lot.”

This same, well-traveled client has found inspired practitioners in far-flung places, but she is pleased that there are, today, many fine alternative healers here in Ann Arbor. In asking her to describe Babalas, she gets to the heart of her skill as a healer with heightened perception: “By lightly touching you, she can perceive soft tissue, muscle, bone, organ, cells, and the energy active in all those layers. Diane’s perceptiveness is on a par with the best I’ve worked with. I can feel accuracy in what she’s doing.” Babalas’ “adjustments,” as they are called, come from within the client, not from her manipulations. She speaks of hearing harmony in the body. While her mentor, Sue Brown, also used musical metaphors, Babalas came to chiropractic as a trained musician.

Babalas’ “adjustments,” as they are called, come from within the client, not from her manipulations.

On the day we met, she wore rust-color skinny jeans and a zippered, chartreuse fleece top. She has a ready smile and laughs easily. Her vernacular is laced with “like,” and her intonation includes a touch of up-speak. But she is savvy and sharp, committed, conscientious, acutely sensitive to her clients, and utterly convinced of the efficacy of her chiropractic technique. She graduated with high honors from

the Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa. (David D. Palmer was the founder of chiropractic in the late 1800s.) Babalas and her husband, the reflexologist Greg Knollmeyer, share a suite of offices. (He also teaches t'ai chi at his Ypsilanti studio in the Spiral Chi Center. Each has practiced in Ann Arbor for sixteen years.) They support each other in many ways. Child-care is shared. He often picks them up at school. In a pinch, if neither is free, the office help might pick them up. He also provides tech support for her practice and recently created a new database for them both. "It's attracting attention from my peers," she said, smiling. Their approaches are synergistic. They have shared clients, but they work separately.

She speaks of hearing harmony in the body. While her mentor, Sue Brown, also used musical metaphors, Babalas came to chiropractic as a trained musician.

Gateway Chiropractic, Babalas' enterprise, is just off Jackson and Stadium, on Ann Arbor's westside. The anteroom is a spacious area that doubles as waiting room and seminar room for the free hour-long classes that Babalas conducts monthly. A door on the anteroom's north wall leads to her large studio, equipped with eight cushioned "adjustment tables" (like massage tables). An adjoining studio, to the east, has a single, full-size adjustment table and a smaller wooden one, child-size, with a horse's head and shaggy yarn tail. Both studios are painted in muted blues and greens. Mission lamps enhance the serenity.

On the west wall of the anteroom is a door to the reflexology studio, where Babalas' husband conducts his practice. His brochures speak of "reflexolo-chi," drawing attention to the word's final syllable, the Chinese word for energy. It figures large in both reflexology and BGI.

Gateway Chiropractic exudes a sense of calm. This is attributable, in part, to the muted wall colors, chosen to promote equanimity. The anteroom, in pale salmon and ivory, has a small library and child's play area, complete with toys. To the right of the entrance is a wall panel of pegs for outerwear. Below are mats for shoes, which clients remove upon entering. Chairs of different varieties dot the circumference of the room.

"When I go to her office, she almost always knows what's wrong without me telling her. It's uncanny. She has the ability not just to identify issues, but to work with my body to get things back on track."

To get a first-hand sense of her practice, I scheduled two visits. After I filled out the forms, Babalas took me into her private studio, where she gently palpated my body from head to toe. She asked questions, including queries about physical trauma. That category included surgeries. I was reminded of a *New Yorker* piece I once read, which spoke of surgery as "controlled violence." She translated what she sensed in her fingers to numbers on a page that featured the outline of a human body. The numbers, one through ten, with ten signifying the highest degree of tension, corresponded to what she sensed in each section: head, neck, torso, abdomen, thighs, lower legs, ankles, and feet. I was surprised that she put "nine" at various points around my head. I felt utterly relaxed — but my body told her a different story. Only later did I realize that my history of craniotomies showed itself to her in those palpations.

We began adjustments. I lay face-down for the first half. For the second half I was on my back. Babalas' adjustments felt more like a laying-on of hands than like any chiropractic measure I'd imagined. Standard chiropractic manipulations are sometimes described as "crunching," and can result in popping sounds, as joints are readjusted. Babalas' adjustments, by contrast, involve a bare flutter of her fingers on the body. In our first interview, she explained that "the snap crackle pop sound that people associate with chiropractic is not always necessary or indicative of a deep and lasting release in the structures of the body." Her approach prompts the body to heal itself, a practice and philosophy developed and expounded by her mentor, Sue Brown, who discovered and developed BGI.

I felt utterly relaxed — but my body told her a different story.

I was extremely surprised by Babalas' technique. Her fingers lighted on select portions of my anatomy, but she barely touched me. After a few minutes of these ministrations, she left the room to let my body respond to the adjustment, while she ministered to others in the larger studio. I lay listening to the music piped in. It was soothing. The sunlight was relaxing, and the cushioned table on which I lay dissolved all vestigial tension. I was there for an hour, with Babalas going back and forth between studios, tending to each client in turn. At first I wondered how in the world such a method could possibly help. But I freed my mind of skepticism and enjoyed the tranquility of the occasion. I was open, receptive, curious, and completely relaxed.

I thought about some of the testimonials I'd heard from some of her clients. Tess had rhapsodized about "magical" improvements in her well-being. Emily talked about her younger daughter, Amelia, just two years old when she began seeing "Dr. Diane," as many of her clients call her. Amelia suffered frequent nosebleeds; she had sleep

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

Serenity. Equanimity. Balance.

Cultivating mindfulness is associated with reductions in stress, chronic pain, and anxiety and increases in health and well-being.



Paulette Grotrian, M.A., (734) 276-7707
mindfulnesswithpaulette@gmail.com



Libby Robinson, Ph.D., MSW, (734) 476-3070
libbyrobinson7@gmail.com

Experienced MBSR teachers trained at U. Mass. Center for Mindfulness by Jon Kabat-Zinn and colleagues

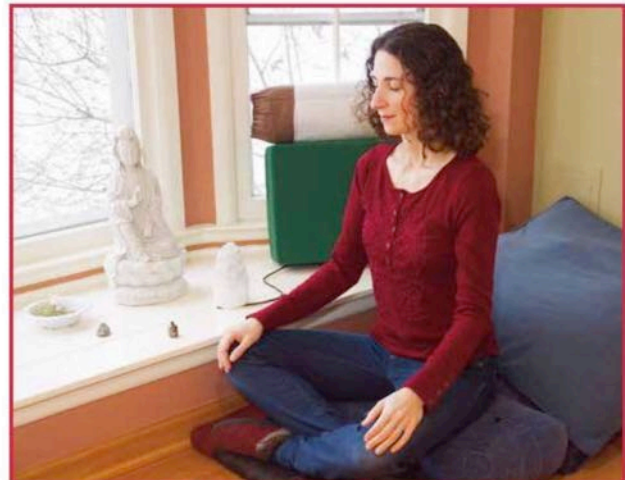
Free Informational Session May 4 (Paulette) & April 25 (Libby)
Requires Registration.

8-week MBSR Classes begin May 11 (Paulette) & May 2 (Libby)
Requires Registration.

www.mindfulnesswithpaulette.weebly.com

Founding Members, Ann Arbor Center for Mindfulness
www.aacfm.com

apnea; there was a bulge on her nose where she'd been injured. Doctors told Emily that Amelia might need surgery. But Emily was reluctant to subject her two-year-old to invasive surgery. Emily and Diane saw each other frequently, since their five-year-old daughters were in the same kindergarten. Emily asked for a recommendation. Diane offered to take a look. Emily was astonished and impressed by Amelia's quick improvement. "After the second adjustment, Amelia breathed really well and slept soundly, too." She *looked* different, too. The bulge on her nose was no longer evident.



Gateway Chiropractic exudes a sense of calm.

Emily herself had long suffered from pain in her hips and leg, so she also began seeing Babalas.

After first adjustment, the pain stopped. It started again, but with each adjustment, the pain grew less and less. After about a month, there was no pain at all. I have no issues with hips anymore. There used to be a constant, dull pain, along with popping sounds in my hips. It's all gone.

Continued on page 62

Getting To Know Dr. Diane Babalas



Dr. Babalas and her children

Continued from page 61

Babalas' treatments, she realized, were helping her in ways she had not anticipated. She became conscious of "a deeper level," something beyond the physical. She now sees Babalas once a week. "I walk out feeling as though I had a two hour massage." She talks about having developed "a deeper understanding of self and her own physiological response to things."

Over the years, Emily had tried physical therapy, psychotherapy, and various other treatment modalities for her pain. Nothing helped. "Now," she said, "I tell everyone about Diane; she has completely changed my life." At thirty seven, Emily holds a high-stress, managerial, full-time job in the tech industry. Yet she found herself considering becoming a BGI chiropractor! She is still in the tech industry, but her life now includes Diane Babalas, who is, in Emily's words, "positive, caring, and very talented at what she does."

"When I go to her office, she almost always knows what's wrong without me telling her. It's uncanny. She has the ability not just to identify issues, but to work with my body to get things back on track."

I thought of Terry, another Babalas client these last few years. He had never been to a chiropractor and, when he first went to Babalas, he didn't know what to expect. "I was initially skeptical about the healing aspects of her work, but that skepticism soon went away." At his first visit, Babalas asked, "What's up with your neck?":

I didn't know what she was talking about, but after a while I remembered that as a very young child I had broken my neck. Diane found that right away, something no other physician had ever mentioned to me. When I go to her office, she almost always knows what's wrong without me telling her. It's uncanny. She has the ability not just to identify issues, but to work with my body to get things back on track.

Terry is also impressed that Babalas regularly seeks further training to learn new techniques. "She has a natural desire to learn to do her work at the highest level."

Both Terry and Emily appreciate sessions in the large studio, with other clients. Terry was "surprised" to find himself in such a setting, but he is now accustomed to it. Emily likes the group setting. She enjoys hearing other clients talk about how Babalas has helped them. "It's cool," she said. Tess confessed that she doesn't understand how BGI works from a technical standpoint, "so I label it 'magic,' because it works so well on physical, emotional, and spiritual levels. Diane's healing touch is filled with kindness and wisdom."

Karolyn, a retired engineer, maintains that Babalas is "the best listener I've ever experienced. Her entire body, mind, heart hears what you're saying." Karolyn, who comes from a science background, credits Babalas for connecting her science side with her emotional and physical sides. After doing yoga for over thirty years, Karolyn began experiencing pain that wouldn't leave. "Diane helped me get rid of the grunge," she said. She noted, too, that her feet were always prone to dryness. "Diane figured out it was circulation." Finally, she said, "My heart is more open now. [Diane] suggested books. I've been going through her library — a book or two per week. She has opened my mind and heart." Karolyn is pleased, too, that in her circle of friends others have recognized the changes. "I get along with people better. I'm losing weight. And my art teacher noticed that I'm much 'quieter with my art.'"

Another client, Paula, spent much of her adult life dealing with an assortment of health issues and suffered residual pain from a debilitating illness. Conventional medicine helped her through the worst, but she was still left "hanging." She turned to alternative healers to help bring her "the rest of the way." Among the many techniques she tried were Alexander, Feldenkrais, acupuncture, fasting, cleanses, and various other holistic healing techniques. She had good results, but vestigial pain lingered.

Her friend, a person Paula respects and admires, referred her to Babalas. So Paula went. She found relief. Her praise of Babalas is unequivocal. "I'm healthier than I've ever been in my life. When you're already compromised, there's a lot of intuition that's involved, along with trust in friends and advisors." She pointed out that each individual must be her own test case; that using an empirical approach, one must ask whether the treatment feels useful or not, whether it is worth the time and money. For Paula, the answer to these questions is a resounding yes.

"The mission of a chiropractor is to release the interference to the expression of the infinite potential in all beings."

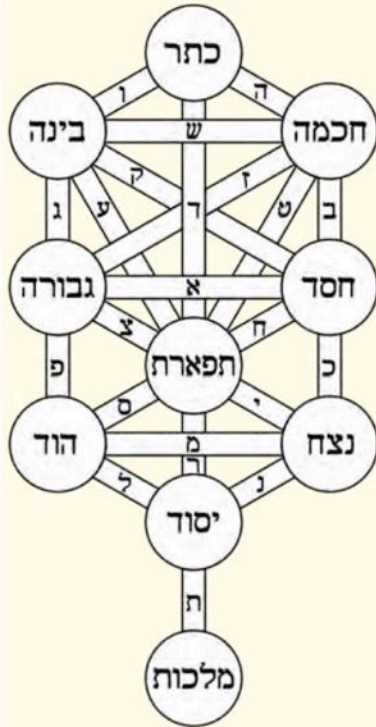
—Dr. Diane Babalas

My hour was up. I rose slowly from the table, feeling myself in an altered state — the way I feel after the best of yoga classes. I left Gateway Chiropractic walking on air. Several days later, I attended Babalas' evening seminar, along with 12 of her regular clients. Using a PowerPoint presentation, she explained the principles of her work as a chiropractor and BGI practitioner. "The mission of a chiropractor," she said, "is to release the interference to the expression of the infinite potential in all beings." This

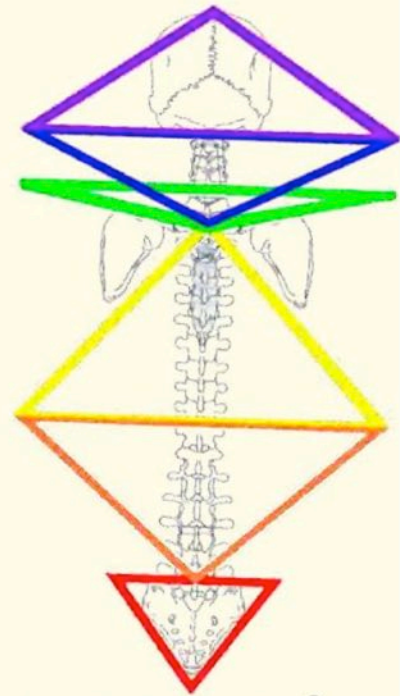
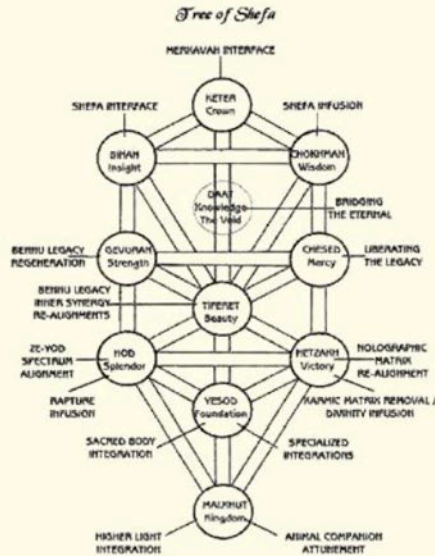
Continued on page 64

The SACRED GEOMETRY of BIO-GEOMETRIC INTEGRATION (BGI)

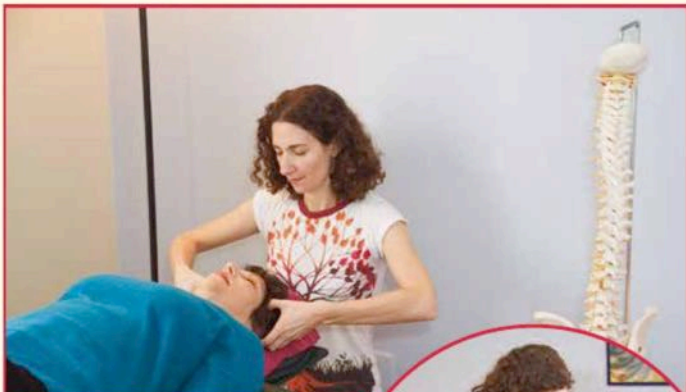
Here, side by side, are the Kabbalistic and BGI images of the body's geometric design. Sue Brown did not know of Kabbalah's geometric "tree of life" when she established the BGI's geometric image. The discovery of the overlap was an exciting one. For many, it confirmed the veracity of Brown's vision of the human body's geometric configuration.



- Shefa (Jewish theology) (עֶשֶׂה "Flow" in Hebrew). Divine influence in Medieval Jewish Philosophy, interchangeable with Ohr (אור "Light") Divine emanation in Kabbalah
- Al-Shefa, one of the most famous books of Avicenna (Ibn Sina), shefa is an Arabic word meaning healing or recovery



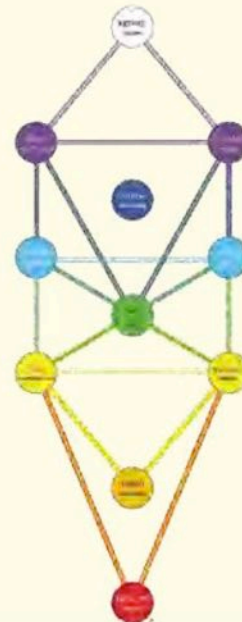
A graphical depiction of the body's innate geometry



Chiropractic

A chiropractor practices chiropractic (not chiropracy, chiropractics, or even chiropractic medicine).

The word "chiropractic" comes from the Greek words *cheir* (hand) and *praxis* (action), and simply means "done by hand."



Every experience (event) triggers energy. These events must be integrated by the body for the system to maintain optimal functioning.

Getting To Know Dr. Diane Babalas

Continued from page 62



Dr. Babalas and her husband, Greg Knollmeyer

is BGI-speak. It means that the energy (potential) stored as stress must be released to allow the body to heal itself. How? Every experience (event) triggers energy. These events must be integrated by the body for the system to maintain optimal functioning. If an event is not integrated, the result is tension, recognized by pain, knotted muscles, and other somatic indicators. Once the stored energy (tension) is released, the body can heal itself.

Imagine that you hold a geodesic dome in your hands and you press down on it. Rather than breaking, the force is evenly distributed throughout the structure. This is the tensegrity model, made famous by Buckminster Fuller.

To our bodies, every event we experience is simply information. In essence, whether it is pain or pleasure, grief or joy these experiences are waves of information that we either take in and flow with (“integrate”) or resist and store in our body. This holding can be subtle or obvious and can create an array of symptoms, postures, and conditions. Babalas’ professional synthesis is this: “When an event remains unintegrated it can wreak havoc on the body in many ways — from changes in our electromagnetic field, our emotions, to chemistry changes or musculoskeletal tension.” These maladaptive ways of holding on to that energy are called “subluxation” — a word that figures in both chiropractic and BGI.

Babalas’ mentor was Sue Brown herself, the originator of BGI. Brown talked about “vitalistic philosophy” and “sacred geometry.” Babalas explained:

Vitalistic philosophy is the opposite of a mechanistic philosophy. The body is more than the sum of its parts. It has innate wisdom, responsible for running, healing, and diagnosing the system. We’re trying to access innate wisdom of the body, uniting spirit and body. I want people to be aware that their body reflects their life. I map out the torque of their lifestyle positions, but I also watch for their emotional states. When you look at the body on a musculoskeletal model, it gives a sense of how the body functions as a whole. But we can also talk about it as that track of tension representing some event that couldn’t be processed at the time of the event.

“Sacred Geometry” is a concept that Sue Brown explained by using the “tensegrity model.” Imagine that you hold a geodesic dome in your hands and you press down on it. Rather than breaking, the force is evenly distributed throughout the structure. This is the tensegrity model, made famous by Buckminster Fuller. It is an amalgam of triangles linked by stretchy material. Think of the hard sides of the triangles as our bones. The stretchy substance is our tendons, ligaments and soft tissue that connect those bones. The tensegrity model functions at both the macroscopic and microscopic, cellular levels. Tensegrity is central to BGI’s idea of “sacred geometry,” an expression that reflects the ancient belief that the universe was divinely created according to a geometric plan. This belief can be traced through art, philosophy, and religion the world over. Sue Brown’s image of our bodies as tensegrity structures helped her understand why stress does not break us; our whole system bears the load. But as we carry more loads, we feel the stresses in our system more acutely. To further elucidate her vision, she created a geometric diagram of the body, a bodily illustration of the tensegrity model. Upon studying the diagram, she discovered that her design mirrored the Kabbalistic model of the human body.

Sue Brown’s image of our bodies as tensegrity structures helped her understand why stress does not break us; our whole system bears the load.

Brown described her model as the “innate geometry in the body.” She posited that by identifying, understanding, and utilizing that geometry, the chiropractor can better assess and release the subluxation, or unintegrated energy. Such energy (events, experiences) becomes stress — or potential energy — stored in the body. The body holds accumulated stress in three areas: the muscles, the soft connective tissue, and the hard connective tissue (bones). The force of the adjustment for releasing potential energy in the muscles and soft tissue is rather light while the force of the adjustment to release potential energy in the bony system is more dynamic and is the type typically associated with chiropractic.

**“The resonance of bone has a deep buzzing feel.”
—Dr. Diane Babalas**

Bio-Geometric Integration incorporates principles of physics and quantum mechanics in its understanding of the body’s state of ease and dis-ease. Echoing Sue Brown, Babalas notes that everything we see as matter is a wave. This is physics. Everything has a particular resonance, a vibration. (“The resonance of bone,” she told me, “has a deep buzzing feel.”)

Sue Brown used musical metaphors to convey her philosophy. Echoing Sue Brown, Babalas speaks of “a few notes, or a chord, or a whole symphony.”:

If I can match that resonance in me, I’m amplifying the resonance of those waves, and it triggers your body’s tension from hardness [she pointed to a chair, a handy example of a hard object] to wave. On the table, what I’m doing doesn’t look like much, but when I take my hands off, the person’s system has made that shift. I’ve matched the tone [by gathering the vibrations], and the person feels release. It isn’t about me doing anything on the outside. It’s the release that happens inside.

Babalas uses a musical metaphor to explain what she does — even while explaining how BGI incorporates certain scientific principles. Quantum physics has shown that we are a multitude of synchronized, organized frequencies. In other words, we are a musical symphony physically manifested and walking around on earth. When we integrate an experience of life we’ve simply added another note to the music that we are, ever so slightly, increasing in complexity. Our structure is determined by our music. If the music changes, the structure changes.



She began her adult life with aspirations for a life as a professional musician. She studied clarinet at Boston University.

If the system can’t integrate the experience then, instead of the new tone becoming part of the integrated whole, it is stored in the body. The system perceives it as a foreign, dissonant tone. It’s like the experience of someone yelling and screaming at you and you don’t know why. The dissonance of the tone distorts the body’s natural

Quantum physics has shown that we are a multitude of synchronized, organized frequencies. In other words, we are a musical symphony physically manifested and walking around on earth.

geometric structure and alignment. It causes tight muscles, misaligned vertebrae, and tension on the nerve system. In BGI, the chiropractic adjustment helps the person become aware of this dissonance and releases the potential energy that it stores, giving the system a second chance to integrate the energy and information of the original experience.



“I never think of ‘fixing’ anyone. I don’t come from that place. It’s not vitalistic. I’d say, ‘How can I serve you? What stored potential is in your system, generating tension? Can I help facilitate its transforming from this particle state back into a wave state?’”

–Dr. Diane Babalas

Babalas’ shift from music to chiropractic offers a telling bit of history. She began her adult life with aspirations for a life as a professional musician. She studied clarinet at Boston University. The combination of emotional and physical stress associated with a musical career led her to seek chiropractic help. The cut-throat nature of the musical scene and the physical toll exacted by hours of practice led her to reconsider her career path. She set music aside and embarked on the study of chiropractic.

It is quite possible that her musical aptitude and training contribute to her unusual ability to listen to the music of the body, to sense the buzzing resonance of bone and the tones emitted by other parts of the body. It is also possible that she is just plain intuitive. Initially, when I sought to understand what makes her method work and whether other methods might succeed just as well, I asked whether any of her clients have tried psychotherapy. “People who have done a lot of [psycho-] therapy,” she said, “tend to have a better sense of connectedness in their system; they get a chance to release those experiences on a more primal level — but it depends on the person.” Clients who never had psychotherapy “sometimes discover that they need it.” In other words, while BGI can disrupt disruptions, it can also enhance and benefit from other modalities.

During my preliminary interview with Babalas, I asked her a loaded question. “If Richard III came to you for help, could you fix his crooked spine?” She answered:

I never think of ‘fixing’ anyone. I don’t come from that place. It’s not vitalistic. I’d say, ‘How can I serve you? What stored potential is in your system, generating tension? Can I help facilitate its transforming from this particle state back into a wave state?’

Babalas has seen people’s spines shift position. The body, she said, is the expression of all one’s life experience. That amalgam, along with what one carries in familial, genetic legacy, informs the body’s state of “dis-ease.” Unfortunately for King Richard, the time machine to bring him to Babalas or Babalas to him has not yet been invented.

Gateway Chiropractic is located at 210 Collingwood Road, Suite 100, in Ann Arbor. New clients are welcome. Their website is www.gatewaychiropracticbgi.com. To schedule an appointment, call 734.239.6060 or email gatewaybgi@gmail.com.

**Osteopathy:
True Holistic Medicine
By restoring structural
health, the whole being
begins to heal.**



Susan M Rose, DO



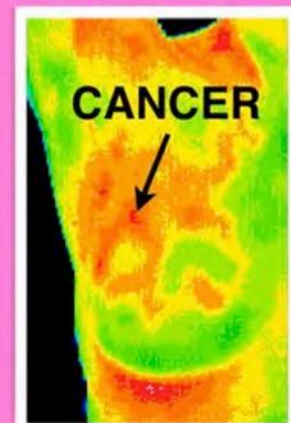
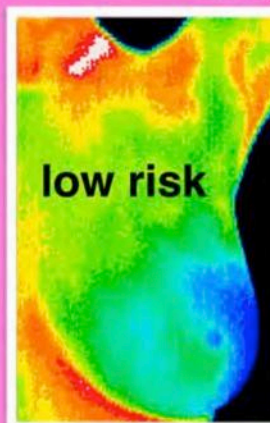
- Has the skill to evaluate and treat using conventional and non-traditional methods to relieve suffering and optimize health using gentle manual medicine techniques
- Treats pain and imbalances anywhere in the body
- Commonly treats headaches, head injury, TMJ, postural problems, joint pain, acute & chronic injuries or overuse
- Experience in treating high-level athletes, musicians and dancers
- Special interest in and ability to treat infants and children
- Trained and did research with Dr. John Upledger, DO, founder of The Upledger Institute and CranioSacral Therapy

810-588-6911 • DrSusanRose.com
5889 Whitmore Lake Road, Suite 4, Brighton
ONLY 15 MINUTES NORTH OF ANN ARBOR

* See Livingston Daily Article about Dr. Rose *
<http://ldpaa.com/1LpNKcc>

Protect your breasts: find problems early!

Cancer is hot: the cells are very active. With infrared pictures, doctors can find trouble early, sometimes earlier than mammograms. Gently and safely.



**Infrared breast cancer screening
No compression. No radiation.
Ann Arbor Thermography**

210 Little Lake Drive, Suite 10
on the west side of Ann Arbor

AAthermography.com
734-332-6290

A service of Malcolm Sickels MD. <http://drsickels.com>

Visit the
CRAZY WISDOM JOURNAL
WEBSITE & BLOG



READ. INTERACT. EXPLORE.

Starting May 15, new blogs will be posted, related to stories in this issue.
Guest bloggers include: Diane Babalas, Lynda Gronlund, Austin Szelkowski,
Michael Peters, Heidi Sproull, Will Swartz, and more . . .

www.crazywisdomjournal.com