

## **Power to the People**

### **Extraordinary Ways for Ordinary Folk to Develop their own MET processes**

#### **Abstract**

Anyone can invent new therapies, but how do we know if they *really* work? Conventional medicine conducts ‘proper’ research; but we may not have their resources—and is their proper research relevant to us, anyway? On the other hand, we *do* want to know that what we ‘know’ has validity—whatever that means! Co-operative Inquiry helps ordinary people to carry out *appropriate* research into new ways of using energy therapies (or anything else, for that matter!)

Co-MET (Co-operative application of Meridian Energy Technologies), a third way of working that bridges the gap between self-help and working with a practitioner is also introduced.

#### **Author Biography**

James Hardiman M.PHIL.

FreedomFighter@Co-MET.org.uk

[www.co-met.org.uk](http://www.co-met.org.uk)

James has used meditation, co-counselling, Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), Reiki and many other disciplines over the last 30 years. His M.Phil. described a new method of Knowledge Engineering. Subsequently he spent 10 years researching *Overcoming Learning Blocks in Intelligent Adults*. James has worked with leading-edge thinkers in the field of new paradigm research for over 15 years.

Having worked for many large corporations for 25 years, James ran his own IT company for the next eight. He now works as an IT consultant to a major sailing company, and also works with individuals and groups, helping people to find their own power wherever and however they can.

James lives and works in Hampshire, when not travelling the world. In recent years he has spent considerable time in Turkey.

#### **Co-Operative Inquiry: Research with a Human Face**

##### **What’s the Problem?**

Anyone can invent new knowledge: all they have to do is to sit down, have an idea, write it down, and publish it. Once it’s in print, it must be true! Of course, we all know that isn’t the case. Often, what’s published isn’t true. But what does it mean for something to be true? Conventional scientists may put the claims of METs to the test, and find them to be not true. Yet thousands of people have found METs to be useful. So one measure of new knowledge is: ‘is it true’ versus ‘is it useful’. Some of us care deeply that what we know is *true*. The rest of us care that what we know is *useful* in some sense or another. *We all apply some* tests to the value of new knowledge.

Scientists, whether natural scientists (physicists, chemists, biologists), or human scientists (psychologists, sociologists) have to care about the process that they use to establish and verify knowledge. Mostly the human scientists have borrowed their methods from the natural scientists—they invent experiments designed to test hypotheses, they rely heavily on statistics, and they seek the ‘truth’—or some version of it. And the results have to be generalisable and verifiable truths.

But this is missing a lot of tricks. A metallurgist, for instance, won’t get much useful data by asking a chunk of iron for its opinion on the research. He would be, by and large, wasting his time wondering about the rights of the piece of metal. And he’d be *very* surprised if the metal started asking *him* questions. But that’s not so of a human scientist. Why shouldn’t the subjects of the research have a say in its design? Why shouldn’t they ask what use the results are being put to, or whether the researchers have included themselves in the research design?

If these questions are true for scientists (who’ve probably never heard of psychological energy fields) then they are even more relevant for researchers into METs and Energy Psychology.

To summarise: if I find new knowledge, either by accident or on purpose, how can I be sure it is either ‘true’, or ‘useful’? How can I be sure that it is ‘good’ rather than ‘bad’ knowledge?

## Power to the People

It has been said that knowledge is power. So people who understand the methods of gaining knowledge have all the power. A researcher (it might be a therapist, who writes up my experience while treating me, or simply someone with a clipboard in the street) who includes me in the research data, but doesn't offer to share the new-found knowledge with me, or even give me a say in what happens to this knowledge, has stolen something from me. But if we had a simple process whereby people could conduct their own research—and be reasonably sure that they had developed 'good' knowledge, this would be real 'Power to the People': co-operative inquiry is such a process.

So what happens in a co-operative inquiry? Firstly, co-operative inquiry is usually 'action research'. Conventional scientists try to study things 'as they are'—if the experiment is well designed, it won't *change* anything, just report on it. People inquiring co-operatively want change.

Research aims to answer questions. The sorts of questions that we might ask could include:

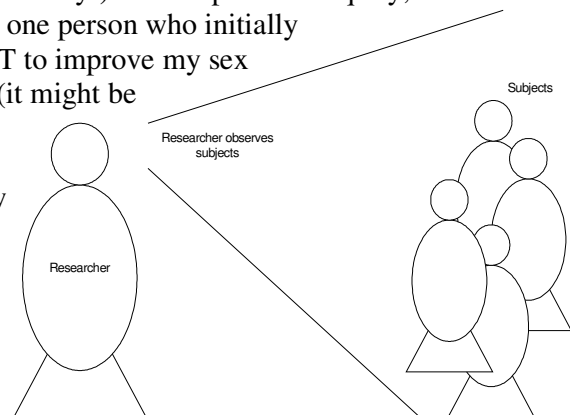
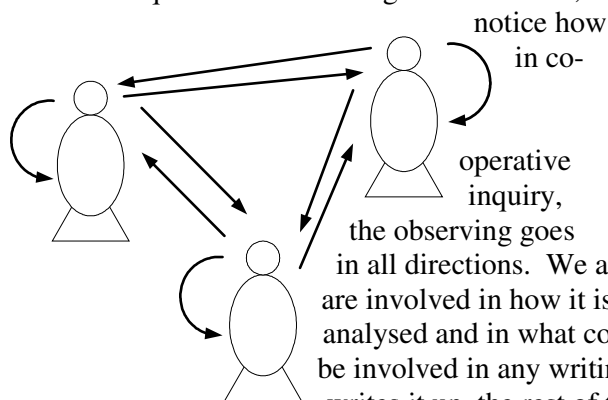
- *How can I use energy therapies to cure myself of this or that condition?*
- *How can we investigate how our energies interact in this or that group (work team, family, couple relationship, sports team)?*
- *How can we use energy psychology to achieve our various dreams (health, wealth, happiness)?*
- *How could we use energy therapies to improve our sex lives?*

If we are to judge the inquiry successful we will need to be cured, have better teams, be happier, or have better sex lives—at the end of the inquiry process, things should have changed for the better. Of course, if things *haven't* changed, then we still have useful knowledge: we did this or that, and it didn't improve things. So at least we can *stop* doing the things that *don't* work!

The next thing to understand is that co-operative inquiry will not reveal the Truth. In other words, what we find may not be generalisable (it may not work at all for other people)—it may not even be verifiable (you may not be able to repeat the inquiry and get the same results). This is because it produces 'grounded theory': it tells you what worked for us, in this set of circumstances.

## How to Do It

In conventional research, a researcher designs the research, does it, analyses the results, publishes it, and gets rich and famous as a result (possibly!) In co-operative inquiry, we are all researchers, subjects, and inquirers. There may be one person who initially thinks of the question ("I wonder if I could use EFT to improve my sex life?"). She involves a group of interested people (it might be a group of two—herself and her partner), and they consider the question. In the diagram on the left,



## Issues of Validity

Earlier I introduced the notion of 'good' and 'bad' knowledge. The official word for this idea is 'validity'. Scientists want their research findings to be 'valid' and go to great lengths to achieve that—if they are acting with integrity. Of course, scientists are human beings and sometimes *don't* act with integrity. The drug company that is sponsoring their research needs the drug they are testing to be safe, and so they find that it's safe. It's not until years later when babies are born with

missing limbs that they discover that their research wasn't as valid as they had thought, or hoped. In order to consider the question of validity, we need to look at two philosophical concepts: epistemology (how do I know what I know) and ontology (what is there to know). If you believe that what's out there has an objective existence whether you are there to observe it or not, then you have a different ontology than if you believe that what's out there is a dancing energy field affected by the way you interact with it. These two different ontologies will have two different epistemologies. Scientists mainly work with an objective model of the world: it's out there, independent of us, works according to rules, and we can discover and test those rules. A scientist will tend to work through 'rational deduction', starting with a guess at a scientific law (the hypothesis—where hypotheses come from is an interesting question). He says, "*If this hypothesis is true, then, if I do this, that will result*". He designs the experiment and observes the result. If the predicted result happens, then the hypothesis becomes a theory (until disproved!) This is deduction—starting by guessing a rule and using the rule to work out what the facts should be.

There's another way: looking at the facts, and guessing the rule. This is called 'induction'. If we look at facts that are there (rather than what *should* be there), we call it 'empirical induction'. This is the heart of what's necessary for MET research. We have empirical facts: "*When we tapped on these points, whilst repeating words in these forms, then these results were reported*". These facts don't tie in with any generally understood western scientific theories, so they tend to give western scientists bad headaches. But they do often tie in with other systems of knowledge—like Traditional Chinese Medical theory. For a western scientist, validity often rests with agreement with an existing theory. But we MET practitioners aren't even sure what system of knowledge we are using, let alone what theories within that system are appropriate. But we can look for *some* degree of repeatability: "*James tried this, and it seemed to work for him, so I tried it, and it seemed to work for me*". If we do it several times and for several people then we have the start of a process that can deliver some degree of validity. Other things that bring degrees of "validity comfort" are:

- The fact that the people in the group can monitor each other,
- The fact that the nature of the inquiry is iterative—it approaches the subject gradually,
- The fact that the inquirers are dedicated to keeping themselves sharp!

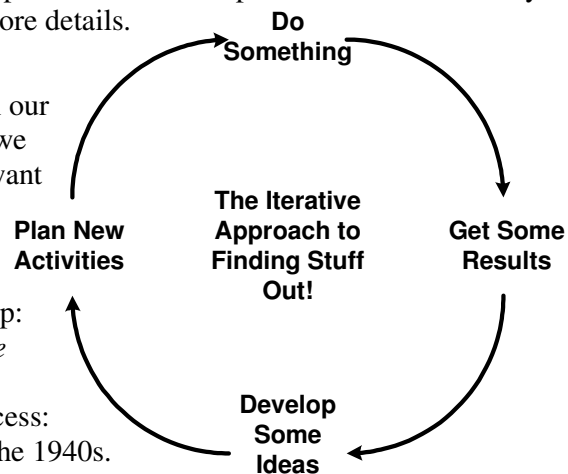
### Monitoring Each Other

Our main process question is "How do I know that I'm not kidding myself?" A simple answer is to acknowledge the importance of the question, and to sit down and come up with some answers for ourselves. An important test of validity is that we are thinking about the problem, and have some processes in place to address it. Each of the co-researchers/co-subjects is observing both themselves, and all other members of the group in a process of self and peer assessment. Clearly there's more to than this; see the bibliography for more details.

### The Iterative Approach

If we work in a rational/deductive approach, then our exploration starts with a map that is the theory that we begin with. We look at the map, decide where we want to go, and draw up a plan for making the journey. But what if we are exploring virgin territory? What if our 10-year mission is to boldly go where no one has been before? It's no use relying on a map: all it will show is white space with the legend "*Here there be tygers*"! The iterative approach is what we need. There are many different versions of this process: one of the earliest was described by Kurt Lewin in the 1940s.

They all accomplish roughly the same thing. You can join the circle at any point. If you know absolutely nothing about the subject, then you might as well start at the top. Do something—anything. It's no use trying to *decide* what to do—you've no data on which to base your decision! Having done something you'll have some data, and you can start to think about it.



A guiding principal is to remember where you were trying to get to, and to remember this NLP dictum:

*If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got.*

*If what you're doing isn't working, DO SOMETHING ELSE!*

### **Sharpening the Saw**

As MET practitioners (whether we practice on others or just to help ourselves) we are aware of, and understand, that the body has a subtle but profound system of energies. Some people say they understand these in depth, or can even see them—that's as maybe. However we think about these fields, whether we believe we can see them as objective fact, or whether we decide that they are just useful metaphors, the fields are the stuff with which we work, and that's true whether we are working on ourselves or on others. The interesting thing here is that we are using the energy fields to work on the energy fields. We may think that we are just physically tapping, with our physical fingers, on our physical acupoints in order to straighten out our energy fields. But, of course, it is the energetic person who's doing the tapping, whether on ourselves or on someone else, so we need to think about what happens if a person with a disturbed energy field is interacting with someone with a disturbed energy field. It seems likely that, the cleaner the fields of the 'tapper' the more likely we are to get clean results. Hence the notion of 'sharpening the saw'.

We *are* the tools of our trade. In the same way that a carpenter needs a sharp saw, we, as users or practitioners of METs, or as inquirers or researchers, owe it to ourselves, and to those with whom we interact, to keep ourselves sharp. How we do that is up to each individual to decide—to research into, perhaps. However, it's vital that we *do* do it. We may decide, at the beginning of any therapy or research session, that we will spend some time doing some simple tapping protocol. We might decide to meditate for 10 minutes, to do some Qi Kung, Tai Chi or whatever. We may also look at ways of aligning our energy fields with one another—holding hands in a circle and sharing some deep breaths, attuning, doing Qi Kung together, etc.

### **Co-MET: Energy Therapies 'With a Little Help from my Friends'**

For many years I worked with a simple process called co-counselling. 'Co-co', as it is called, has two people working together as peers. They share the time available; for half the time one person is client and the other counsellor—at half time they reverse roles. The most essential notion in co-counselling is that 'the client is in charge'. Clients ask their counsellor for a specific contract, defining the degree and nature of the intervention that they require. This has a number of powerful benefits: clients must accept responsibility for their own process, counsellors have deep empathy for the client (because within a very few minutes they will *be* the client), and no money changes hands (so clients aren't resource-limited in the amount of help they can get). People get to be co-counsellors by attending a 40-hour training course (in which the emphasis is on clienting, not counselling skills) and subsequently joining a local co-co 'community' (a pool of trained co-counsellors so that it's always easy to find a partner).

Co-MET uses the same model, but with METs as the substantive discipline—in my own practice I use EFT and Reiki, but any other MET could be used.

There are many potential advantages to working in this way. It requires a great deal of discipline to pursue any self-help process by oneself. A very high percentage of all those who try fall by the wayside. A simple buddy system can reduce the fallout rate substantially, and the establishment of some sort of community or group that meets regularly will reduce it still further.

Next, METs are new. As Gary Craig says, we are on the ground floor of the skyscraper. To begin to achieve the full potential of this new field, we need research into new applications and processes. Co-operative Inquiry, as described above, can help here, but these inquiries need an extraordinary level of self-awareness amongst the inquiry participants. Working in this co-operative way, and successfully completing the requisite training, develops a high level of self-awareness, and so creates a pool of people who potentially have the skills to participate in inquiries of this sort.

There are dangers though. Co-counselling has, I believe, become highly politicised, and has pushed the notion of the client being in charge too far. I have witnessed co-counsellors floundering around, or indulging in self-destructive behaviour, whilst their loving companions looked on, mute, feeling that they mustn't intervene, because 'the client is in charge' when it's quite clear to everyone that this client, in this instant, isn't in charge of anything!

### **Warrants and Loving Interference**

The way round this problem, without compromising the notion of self-responsibility, is that I take responsibility for defining my goals, stating what I'm trying to achieve, and making sure that there is coherence and consistency between these goals and my life values. I then let my Co-MET buddies and community members know where I'm trying to get to, and give them a warrant to 'interfere' in my process if they see me off course. If you look at me, judge me to be overweight, and criticise what I choose to eat for my lunch, then you are contravening the tenets of Co-MET. However, if I tell you that I believe myself to be overweight, that my health is in danger if I don't bring my eating under control, and that I would appreciate your help in this matter, then you do have a warrant to intervene. And if we are both trained as EFT practitioners then you not only have the warrant to intervene, but you also know what process I'm expecting you to use as your intervention. If I've told you of my sincerely held beliefs about what I'm trying to achieve in my life, and you observe me indulging in behaviour that leads me away from that goal, then 'interfering' is surely the loving thing to do.

### **Co-MET Training**

Co-MET training requires more time than co-counselling training—there's more to learn. We cover EFT and Reiki, self-awareness (so I know what I want to work on), the ability to shift state (so I can move between the awareness of my problem and being involved in it, and so that I can move between being client and practitioner), and the ability to hold the process for one another. We also spend a large amount of time engaged in practical exercises to develop the necessary levels of skills and awareness, and the attitudes necessary to be successful with Co-MET. For instance, an attitude that you know best what another person needs is definitely counter-cultural, as would be the attitude that you want someone else to 'make you better'! I use EFT and Reiki because I want to work on two 'energy fronts' at the same time. My current hypothesis is that the causes of our problems are two-fold: 'glitches' in our energy systems, and a sheer lack of energy. I see EFT as a good process to deal with the glitches, and Reiki as an excellent way to connect with the source. It's also important to develop the necessary empathy to be able to listen to another person, and to understand the direction that they want to take their life, and to develop the boldness and sensitivity necessary to intervene in another person's process, when appropriate.

Lastly, we spend a considerable amount of time in pure play: it helps us to develop the ability to switch elegantly between various states of being, and provides the continuous shifts of energy necessary to successful learning. And it's fun!

### **Summary**

Co-operative Inquiry provides us with a powerful way of having 'ordinary people' (non-academics) researching ways of using METs with a reasonable chance of coming up with valid findings. Co-MET provides the training and structure necessary to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to allow people to take charge of their own MET voyages of discovery.

### **Further Reading**

Heron, John, 1996, *Co-operative Inquiry: Research into the Human Condition*, Sage Publications  
Reason, Peter and John Rowan (Editors), 1981, *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research*, John Wiley and Sons  
Reason, Peter (Editor), 1988, *Human Inquiry in Action: Developments in New Paradigm Research*, Sage Publications  
Evison, Rose and Richard Horobin, 1989, *How to Change Yourself and Your World: A Manual of Co-counselling Theory and Practice*, Co-Counselling Phoenix