

Professional Massage Therapist

Certified Empowerment Coach

By Colleen Steele

317-865-8179 studio

317-625-1046 cell

# Colleen's E-Words



Edition 15, April 13, 2009



Welcoming Possibilities

## WELCOME SWEET SPRING- TIME

NOW is a wonderful  
time to purchase that  
MASSAGE PACKAGE

**5 hours for \$275 - A  
savings of \$50!**

**GIVE SOME AS  
GIFTS -  
Mother's Day  
Memorial Day  
Father's Day  
Graduation, etc.**

*Mothers, Grandmothers  
Fathers, Grandfathers  
Sons & Daughters—  
Almost everybody loves  
a soothing, nurturing  
Massage!*

**A great big  
THANKS!**

To

**JAM Consulting, LLC**

**For the wonderful job  
with this website.**

**If you are looking for  
helpful consulting and  
web design,**

**Contact**

**Mike Pell**

**At**

**mjpell@jamconsultingser  
vices.com**

## Etiquette for Massage

For relative newcomers to massage, the prospect of those first visits and their unknowns can be unnerving. Here are some basic etiquette guidelines to help you get the most out of your session, create a healthy client-therapist relationship, and address some of those unknowns.

### ***Punctuality = Full Session***

There's nothing worse for you than rushing into your massage appointment late. In fact, if you are a first-time client, it would be in your best interest to arrive about 5-10 minutes early. My location is available by Mapquest® and Google® and the travel time is also given. If you are coming during the before-work or after-work hours, I would advise building 10 to 15 minutes more for traffic snarls. New massage clients need to fill out health history and intake forms. If you do get held up in traffic and arrive late, you will probably not get a full session. A call to let me know you are going to be late is

most appreciated.

***Cancellations*** require a 24-hour notice to avoid fees. The exceptions are cancellations due to your illness or family emergency. It is really case-by-case. But, if you have scheduled time I have saved that time just for you and might have turned away other clients who could have benefited. If the emergency is such that you cannot call prior to or during the scheduled time, a phone call afterwards is most appreciated.

***Honor Your Body*** Some people have a hard time even considering massage because they are so unhappy with their body. Poor body image can be extremely damaging. While it is hard to imagine that dressing down and lying on a massage table will make the situation any better for those dealing with self-esteem or body image issues, massage therapy and bodywork can do wonders.

Massage helps re-connect you with your body and gives a new per-

spective — giving body awareness and showing what it means to listen to your body.

Judgment is "educated out" of us during massage school. What is educated in is incredible respect for the person and his/her needs in general and the awe-some-ness of the body itself.

***Shower UP*** As was discussed in last week's [April 6, 2009] newsletter [*Frequently Asked Questions*], every person has their own "brand" of staph and bacteria and other entities on their skin. As time expands from the last shower, these grow. Massage therapists are among a minority of healthcare providers who still touch another's body without wearing gloves. While I take precautions to protect you from me [washing hands fre-

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Colleen is an intuitive Stress Relief "artist" functioning as a Professional Massage Therapist and Certified Empowerment Coach.  
317-865-8179 / mtcoach@comcast.net

COPYWRITE 2009

Subscriber Support: If you no longer wish to receive these E-letters, put the header and e-mail to me: mtcoach@comcast.net

WELCOME  
SPRINGTIME!

"unsubscribe" in

## Etiquette for Massage, *continued*

quently and using hand-sanitizer in the massage room, etc.], it is greatly appreciated if you offer respect for yourself as well.

Most often folks are coming in within 8-12 hours of a shower and that is acceptable.

It is very important, however, that you inform the therapist of any open sores, wounds or bruises.

**Consider Confidentiality** Even though I am not a medical doctor and not held to the same doctor-patient privilege, I do hold knowledge of you, your issues and your sessions in confidence. If I need to confer with your primary care or referring physician, I will have you fill out the proper release paperwork beforehand. That same confidentiality prevents me from talking with you about your friend's recent massage or what your spouse discussed during his/her last session.

**Get It Your Way** When I received my first massage, I had no idea what to tell the therapist when she asked what kind of massage I wanted or how deep the touch. That is not unusual at all.

Therefore, I will ask you what your expectations are for the massage – do you want to relax? Do you have some places of chronically held tension that you would like extra attention to? There is a place on my history form that asks what kind of touch you want. I find that touch is subjective and relative. So, what to do.

When I get started, I will check with you about the pressure of the touch, I also will tell you that if there is anywhere I am massaging and you believe it would be beneficial for me to spend more time there, tell me. If something tickles you and I have not picked up on that, tell me. If you do not like to certain areas massaged, please feel free to inform me of that [i.e., scalp, feet, etc.]

By all means, you should speak up about anything that diminishes your enjoyment of, or ability to focus on your session. *Communication is the key to getting your needs met.*

**Sobriety, Please** My massage studio is private and I offer no alcoholic drinks, as opposed to some resort spas who do have alcohol available. I would appreciate very much that you do not come to the massage table "tipsy".

There are several downsides to being under the influence during a massage, the main one is that massage increases circulation, which

will increase alcohol absorption rates, potentially making you nauseous or outright "losing-your-cookies" sick. I will refuse to work on clients who are intoxicated. Water, before and after a therapeutic massage, is what the body really wants.

If I am in your home or office and there is alcohol, I will warn you of the possible consequences and let you be responsible for your decision. However, again, I will not work with someone who is over the limit even in their own home and I will charge for the time.

**You're Human** The body can have a lot of responses to therapeutic massage. While avoiding food at least one hour before your massage will help, there's still the chance that you'll have tummy gurgles or even pass gas. As the body relaxes and systems get moving, the body can play all kinds of tricks. I have seen it all, but yet see well beyond these kinds of issues. Men sometimes worry that massage will cause an erection. This very, very rarely happens. This is a physiological reaction and a change in technique or moving to another area of the body will change the reaction.

**Time to Wake UP** When the session is over, sometimes you would like nothing more than to take a little nap. I most certainly do not want you to rush off the table. However, I probably have another client coming in. Please do take a moment to carefully sit up and allow your body time to readjust. Going too fast may make you dizzy.

**Tipping Tips** When it comes to gratuities, most experts say it's ultimately the client's decision whether or not to tip. Like in other service industries, providing a tip is usually done in response to excellent service. According to CNNMoney.com, the tipping norm for massage and bodywork services is 15-20 percent. If you are uncertain, ask if tipping is customary. Also, be sure to get clarification on fees and services at the time of the booking.

**Nope, Won't Find that Here** It is unfortunate that I feel the need to address this subject, but I do. The answer to late-night callers is, "No, I don't give happy endings."

If a misinformed client somehow ends up in my massage room and asks for something other than therapeutic massage, he/she will be asked to leave. Flirting, inappropriate touching, and sexual innuendos will not be tolerated.

It is my intention to be a valuable member of your healthcare team. We will keep the relationship professional and above board.

This information adapted from *Body Sense* autumn/winter 2008, article *Bodywork Etiquette*, by Karrie Osborn. *Body Sense* is published by Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

