



Colon Hydrotherapy: The Shea Way

Written by Cathy Shea, LMT, CT
and Michael J. Shea, PhD



Reviewed by Nancy Eichhorn, PhD

I received the Shea's book in the mail. Unsolicited. I noted the title and glimpsed a memory of a movie I'd seen years ago entitled, *The Road to Wellview*. The main character, John Harvey Kellogg, was a doctor and clean living advocate (more of a zealot with a twist of instability) who ran the Battle Creek Sanitarium. One of his main interventions was colonic irrigation. The process felt farfetched and certainly did not seem relaxing nor healing. I added the book to the pile of 'needs attention' for another day.

A few days later a client, a nurse practitioner now on medical disability because of Lyme disease and its complications, mentioned she was going to start colon hydrotherapy to detoxify her body. My ears perked. What? Why?

I opened the pages, unsure yet curious. Now here is testimony to the power of good writing, my intention was to flip through the pages, provide a quick synopsis to create a review and let it be done. But the content and its presentation drew me in. Where I thought I would skim through each chapter, I found myself landing, staying, thinking about my own health and that of my clients in general. I was fascinated by the process—the art and science of utilizing water both internally and externally to treat disease and promote health—and the development of different medical devices used for CHT both in the United States and abroad. I felt a connection with this material at both a professional and a personal level and followed the urge to deepen my knowing, to take the time to slow down and be with Cathy and Michael's process, to absorb their words, experience their way.

Woven throughout the text is the importance of slowing down—letting our nervous system, which is typically jacked up, running at high speeds—slow down and let health and healing happen. The Shea's intention is to help people develop a personal wellness program to reduce suffering with digestive ailments and inflammation.

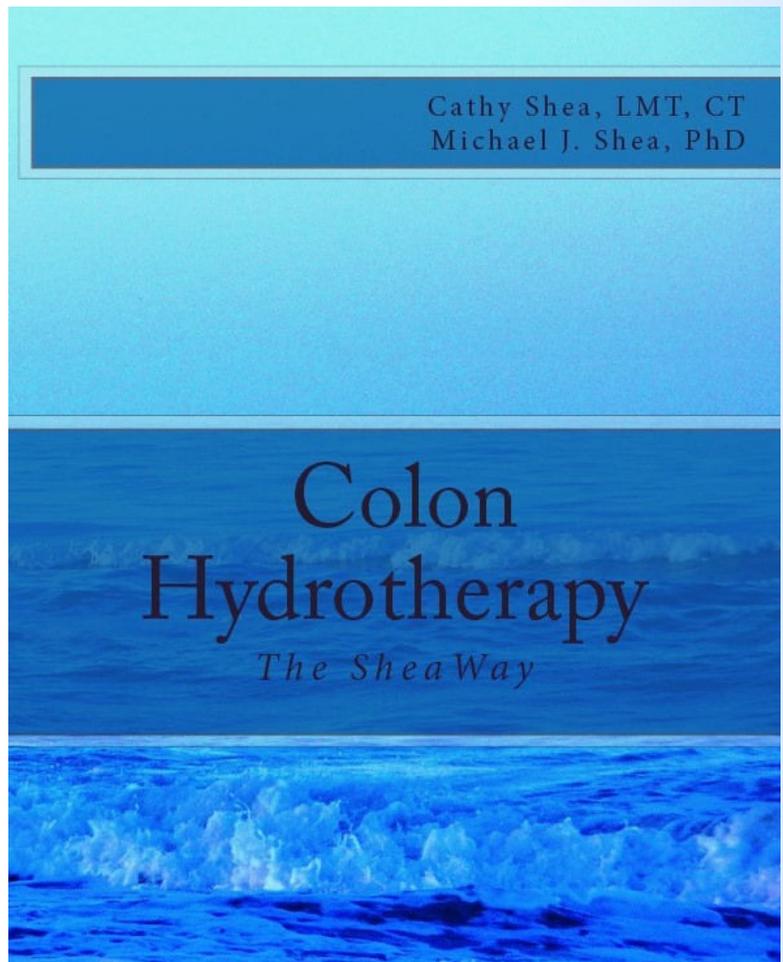
Although this is a textbook, it is written with the reader in mind: it is easy to read and digest the content. Even a layperson as myself with no background knowledge of CHT can be with this information and walk away understanding the history and development of CHT, what it is, how it works, and why it could be useful for clients with health concerns as well as for those simply wanting to live a clean and healthy life.

The layout was spacious, welcoming: two columns, large size font, pull quotes (large chunks of text separated from the body of the page), different font colors (shades of blue, aquamarine, dark red) to attract the eye, illustrations, pictures.

The structure clear. The book is divided into two parts: (1) the basics, which is geared for laypersons, and (2) the business, written with the intention of shifting the practice of colon hydrotherapy (CHT) from unofficial to official, from informal to formal, and to raise educational and credentialing standards. Both Cathy and Michael are licensed in massage therapy and colon hydrotherapy in the state of Florida, and Cathy is a certified instructor for the International Association of Colon Therapy (I-ACT). Cathy also received the highest credential in the field by the National Board for Colon Hydrotherapy.

Each of the 21 chapters begins with bullet points of what you will learn, each offers history, personal experiences, case studies, a glossary of terms and review questions at the end to bring to mind what you read and what you are expected to take away (the answers are provided in the back of the book). The Shea's also offer extensive appendices, abstracts from peer reviewed Journals supporting their assertions throughout the text, a bibliography, and a list of trusted vendors. This comprehensive book offers a step-by-step process to learn about CHT, to practice CHT, and create a business based on CHT practices.

Part one starts circa 1500 BCE and advances to the future as the Sheas move readers through snapshots of CHT's use and validation as a healing modality. They ground the content in science as well as personal experience. In part one, readers learn about fasting, cleansing and



detoxification. There is current data on the gut brain and psychology, on gut pathology and how it relates to various ailments including hemorrhoids and eating disorders. There is detailed information on nutrition, meal plans, and recipes. They even write about how to travel safely and well.

In Chapter 8, they detail the Shea Way, their approach to CHT that involves gentle efficient waste removal and the therapeutic relationship. According to the Sheas, CHT effects the autonomic nervous system and as such CHT therapists need to provide positive nurturing and ANS tracking via bodily signals to create a safe and comfortable environment. They made it clear that when they reference the 'therapist', they mean an "unlicensed person who is practicing CHT either in the United States or another country. Listening with the ears and the heart allow for compassion and kindness to emerge in the therapeutic relationship" (p. 199).

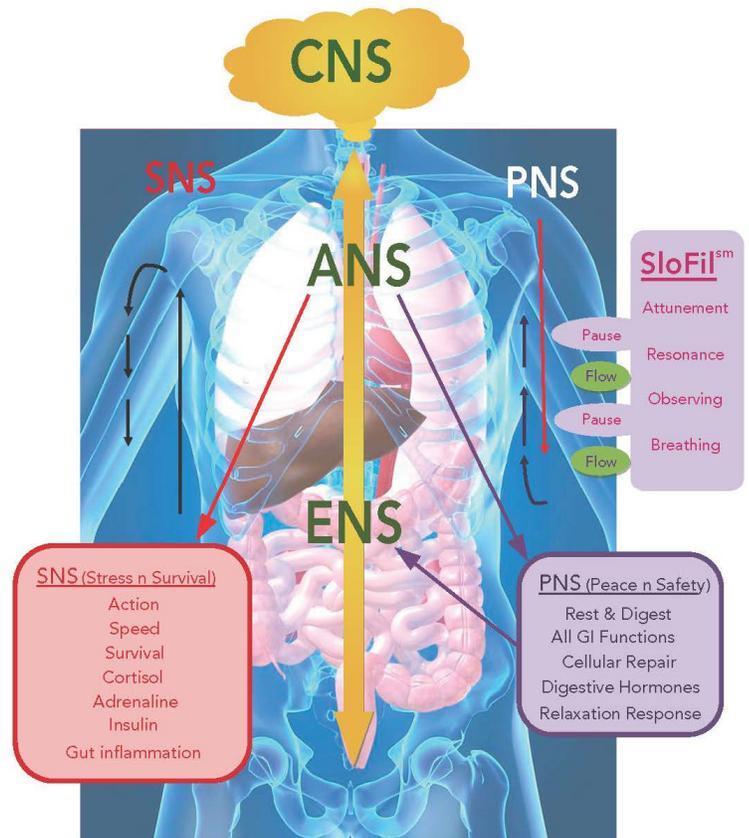
The Shea's are clear on ethics and quality standards. Medical clearance from the client's doctor is mandatory (a signed form) as well as a medical release so the therapist can maintain contact with the doctor. There are informed consent forms and health intake forms (samples are located in the appendices).

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They write about the power of attunement and that emotional release may come with CHT (there is a detailed discussion on the interactions between the ANS and emotional states and the ANS and CHT). The boundaries are clear—a colon hydrotherapist is not a psychotherapist; the Sheas outline in bullet points what can and cannot be discussed. There is information on the language of sensation and how to teach clients to listen to their body and speak its language along with multiple practices for sitting in stillness and being with one's body.

There are many points covering many directions from Dr. Mark Hyman's use of the work 'diabetesity' (p. 105) to the Mayo Clinic's guidelines for toilet training (p. 118), from orchestrating client interactions (p. 199) to infection control (p. 249) and record keeping (p. 265), the content is diverse and expansive. And it is written in simple sentences, with a personal voice that offers the reader a sense of being with the authors and learning from them in a slow relaxed pace. Nothing is crammed in, jammed in, forced in. It just flows much like their process of elimination and waste removal: a respectful, empathetic, relational process.



Information flows down from the head brain (CNS) to the gut brain (ENS) and back up again. All of this communication is regulated automatically by the ANS and depends entirely on the relaxation response. 95% of the body's serotonin is produced in gut cells.

Reflections on Writing Colon Hydrotherapy: The Shea Way

By Cathy Shea, LMT, CT



Michael and I have written this book for anyone interested in vibrant health. We have found that colon cleansing is the key. Over many years, the mythology around colonics has astounded us. This book will illuminate your mind and answer many questions. For instance, very often, cleansing will elicit an emotional response. The work of

helping others "let go" is quite a strong metaphor. We have learned the value of

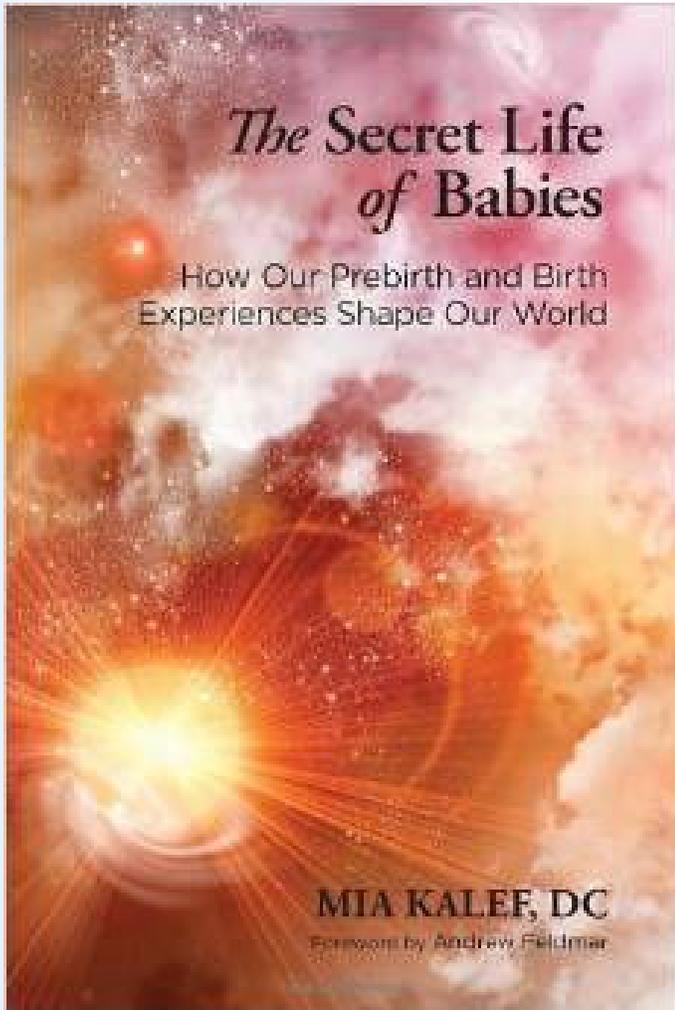
an appropriate therapeutic relationship and have dedicated an entire chapter to this important topic.

This text also informs us of the boundaries around scope of practice and honoring someone's process. We included this because we heard so much about it from our clients when they felt violated by other therapists. Our intentions include teaching from the heart and supporting resilience. Our text has numerous references that will encourage the therapist to be mindful and allow the client to declare needs. Safety is the key to healing, with any touch therapy modality.

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As we reflect on the writing process, it took three years to discern what we wanted to include from the vast pool of information. As a result, our commitment to our own wellness has become stronger. It has become even more clear that as we get older, cleansing is the best way to maintain vitality and clarity. We've gained many insights through the co-creation of this text and we thank all of our clients, mentors, and students who continue to bring



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birth and birth, Kalef suggests the family field model, which takes into account not only the lives of one's immediate family but also of more distant ancestors. This is an extensive treatment and beneficial to not only the individual but also to his or her extended family, as the family field model elucidates several mental pathologies.

Sue Roh is currently an undergraduate third-year at the Columbia University in the City of New York with a double major in psychology and mathematics. Beyond her course of study, she is interested in international development and founded Save Mae, a non-profit organization that provides medication to the Mae Ra Ma Luang Refugee Camp located along the Myanmar-Thailand border.

so much learning. We feel honored and privileged to help others on this path.

Cathy Shea, LMT, CT, holds the highest qualifications in her field as a National Board Certified Colon Hydrotherapist and an I-ACT Certified Instructor. She earned her license to practice massage and colonics in the State of Florida in 1992 and is an active member of several professional organizations. Cathy joined several doctors who made scientific presentations at the Italian Society for colon hydrotherapy in Bologna, Italy in 2014. She has taught nationally and internationally since 1994 and has trained over 1,000 therapists who practice in 25 countries.



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