



Physical Behavior, Phenomena, and Manifestations: “Pressure Leaks” that can Hinder Prayer for Emotional Healing

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I have observed in many clients that physical behavior, phenomena, and manifestations would begin and/or increase as they got closer to an important target and as the intensity of their emotions increased. I eventually noticed that the physical behavior, manifestations, and phenomena often appeared to drain off emotional energy. The person would feel relief, but at the expense of momentum in the healing session. A basic principle in prayer for emotional healing is that negative emotions provide the trail that leads to unresolved trauma. My observation is that the emotional intensity often has to get to a certain point before important connections are made. Putting all these pieces together, I realized that, at least in some¹ cases, the physical behavior, phenomena, and manifestations that were bringing relief were also draining emotional energy, and were thereby actually hindering the healing process.

My observation is that these “pressure leak” physical behavior/manifestations/phenomena are usually one of the following:

1. Things the person has learned to do to relax, “cope,” or release tension when upset.
2. Nervous habits that the person performs “without thinking about it” whenever they are anxious.
3. Obsessive compulsive behaviors (these can look a lot like nervous habits, but have a specific meaning and are used in some specific way as the person tries to cope with their anxiety).
4. “Involuntary,” spontaneous manifestations/phenomena that the person can suppress as long as they concentrate on doing so.
5. Involuntary manifestations/phenomena that seem much more difficult to suppress.

In my experience, the partially voluntary/involuntary phenomena are most often caused by demonic infection trying to prevent going to the root memories/issues and/or internal parts that are trying to control painful emotions and avoid going to painful memories.

As mentioned above, my observation is that these behaviors/manifestations bleed off emotional energy and often hinder/block the healing process. I have found that if the recipient chooses to not use any of their coping tools (including obsessive behaviors), suppresses nervous habits, and suppresses any manifestations/phenomena that are under his or her control, the emotional intensity builds more quickly and the healing work is enhanced. Likewise, if we address involuntary manifestations/phenomena by binding demonic spirits and/or working with internal dissociated parts, the emotional intensity builds more quickly and the healing work is enhanced.

I have had a number of experiences where people who had been persistently stuck with respect to

¹ Not all physical manifestations are pressure leaks. They can also be distractions, indicators of other underlying opposition/interference, physical memory, and direct manifestations of the Holy Spirit. See “Physical Behavior, Phenomena, and Manifestations: Summary and Practical Application” for additional comments.

certain emotional healing targets experienced important breakthroughs when “pressure leak” manifestations/phenomena were neutralized in one way or another. Most of these recipients experienced increasingly intense negative emotions for 5 to 15 minutes after the pressure leaks were stopped, and then began to perceive images, thoughts, memories, etc. that lead to breakthroughs.

Examples

Deep breathing: One recipient had learned that deep breathing would help him calm down if he was in a situation where he felt intensely stressed. During an emotional healing session he realized that he was experiencing increasing internal tension and that he wanted to start breathing deeply in order to relax. When he chose not to breath deeply, the emotional intensity increased quickly and he started crying within seconds. After crying intensely for 5 to 10 minutes, vague images and thoughts started coming into his mind. When he spoke these, we quickly realized they were important memories that were connected to the intense emotions he was experiencing. This connection lead to a breakthrough with an emotional healing target we had been working on for months.

Obsessive compulsive habits: One woman came with the request that I help her with her “nervous obsessive compulsive habits.” She was aware that she would experience increasing internal tension before performing the nervous habit behaviors, and that the tension would decrease promptly when she would perform the behaviors. During the session I asked her to choose to stop the habit behaviors and let the internal tension increase. I also asked her to observe and report all thoughts, feelings, and internal images as she did this. Within 20 to 30 minutes the images, thoughts, and memories that began coming to her led us to the unresolved trauma that was the root of her obsessive compulsive habits.

Involuntary, spontaneous laughter²: Another person experienced sudden laughter during prayer to expose spiritual opposition. She experienced that it was difficult to stop/control the laughter, and commented: “I don’t even know what I’m laughing about.” With further prayer and discernment we were able to determine that demonic spirits were causing the laughter. When we dealt with the demonic interference the laughter stopped suddenly, tears began to flow, and she quickly identified the traumatic memories that were at the root of the problem we had been addressing when the laughter began. On another occasion we determined that an internal part was using similar sudden involuntary laughter to interfere with the session. (This part got special satisfaction out of leading me to believe the laughter was again demonic, and then watching me try to deal with demonic spirits that weren’t there.)

Screaming: Some people scream at some point in their emotional healing work – screams of frustration, screams of rage, screams of fear, screams of pain, etc. In some situations the screaming seems appropriate and even helpful (for example, this is often the case when screaming is part of owning and fully connecting with intensely negative thoughts and emotions). In other situations screaming seems to be a pressure leak. I have worked with people who will

² Not all spontaneous/involuntary laughter is demonic. I have encountered situations in which involuntary laughter turned out to be caused by internal parts, I have encountered situations in which spontaneous, partially voluntary laughter was a manifestation of the Holy Spirit working in the person’s heart, and I have observed situations in which spontaneous, partially involuntary laughter seemed to be a part of legitimate healing and/or a healthy release of emotions after legitimate healing.

scream during times of intense emotion in the emotional healing work, but the screams come before they connect with the underlying traumatic memories. These people report short term relief immediately following the screaming, but the relief seems to hinder the process of finding and connecting with the underlying traumatic memories.

Voluntary larger muscle movement (for example, standing, pacing): One of my patients would frequently experience intense restlessness during her emotional healing sessions. In response to this restlessness she would usually either rock back and forth or get out of her chair and pace around my office. After writing the first draft of this essay, I realized that the restlessness would come when she was getting close to memories that were particularly important and painful, and that her standing and pacing were “pressure leaks.” After discussing the material in this essay she agreed to refrain from her usual pressure leak behaviors. The restlessness became increasingly intense over several minutes, and then she began connecting with memories and emotions that lead to an important healing breakthrough.

Addendum January 2026: During my first several years of working with EMDR combined with prayer and then EMDR combined with Theophostic-based³ tools, I observed physical phenomena that I perceived to be caused by demonic opposition/interference at least every week, and sometimes almost everyday. Curiously, this has become less and less common over the past twenty-five years. Now I rarely see any physical phenomena that I perceive to be caused by demonic opposition/interference. And observable indicators of clinical improvement indicate that my emotional healing work has become increasingly more effective during these same years, as opposed to less effective. For my and Charlotte’s thoughts regarding this progressive decline with respect to physical manifestations see, “Our changing experience in dealing with the demonic,” Section VII of the essay “Dealing With Demonic Interference/Opposition During the Session, Prayers and Commands to Neutralize Demonic Interference,” available as free download from the “Kclehman Website Archives” section of the Resources page of www.immanuelapproach.com.

³ We use the term “Theophostic-based” to refer to emotional healing ministries that are built around a core of Theophostic principles and techniques, but that are not identical to Theophostic Prayer Ministry as taught by Dr. Ed Smith. Our own ministry between 1998 and 2003 would be a good example – it was built around a core of Theophostic principles and techniques, but it sometimes also included material that was not a part of what we understand Dr. Smith to define as Theophostic Prayer Ministry (such as our material on dealing with curses, spiritual strongholds, generational problems, and suicide-related phenomena, and our material on journaling, spiritual disciplines, and medical psychiatry).