



## **Interview with Christopher Shirley, Principal of Pacific Reflexology and founder of the massive new resource for reflexologists and other therapists: The Reflexology Resources website [www.reflexologyresources.com](http://www.reflexologyresources.com).**

**Question 1. You have certainly put the Covid Lockdowns to good use in your extensive research. What was your starting point and aim at the beginning of this project?**

My students are required to research 5 health conditions as a part of their training. This is intended to break the ice for them in researching health conditions so that they are able to research any health condition that a client presents to them in the future. Consequently, I needed to have a large number of health conditions researched to evaluate their efforts and provide them with feedback. This was one of my starting points.

It has been my mission to bring reflexology into the mainstream of medicine and natural healing. So I am aware that when a student sets out to set up own practice that there is little support available for them – and, what is available is not always easy to find. From this, I saw a need for the development of a practitioner’s resource manual.

Secondly, it has frustrated me that when I research something in the field of reflexology that the information is often not kept current. To address this it became clear that it would be easiest to keep the information current by making it available through a website that could be regularly updated.

Third, when I started researching reflexology research studies I was very impressed with the volume of studies that have been conducted. I remember struggling to develop and publish my own research – there were many seemingly insurmountable hoops to master. Sadly, in the present, I discovered that published reflexology research studies are buried in journals along with many other studies and may never see the light of day – unless another researcher chooses to cite them.

Collecting and listing all of the published reflexology related research created a very impressive reflexology research journal where anyone interested in any aspect of reflexology research can readily view it in its entirety.

**Question 2. Please give a little background to your reflexology journey including your reflexology school and teaching career in Vancouver and beyond.**

I started practicing reflexology after attending the Ingham Method of reflexology workshop taught by Dwight Byers in 1977. It quickly became apparent to me that in order to appreciate the value of reflexology people needed to experience it. I also realised that with one pair of hands I could introduce a very limited number of people to reflexology. When an opportunity to teach reflexology presented itself – I jumped right in. When teaching, I began to require my students to complete a practicum. This way more and more people were introduced to reflexology.

Members of the Reflexology Association of B.C. believed that charging a fee or advertising their service would lead them to be charged with “practicing medicine without a licence.” Initially, I practiced and taught reflexology as the Reflexology Centre of Vancouver, in part to dispel this fear. I designed and produced matching Foot, Hand and Ear Charts and an instructional Video/DVD. I changed my business name to Pacific Institute of Reflexology to facilitate better distribution of my products throughout Canada and the U.S.A.

I have been an active member of the Reflexology Association of B.C. (R.A.B.C.) and played a key role in establishing professional standards for the practice of reflexology within the Association. When president of RABC (1985-1987), I obtained legal assistance to successfully have reflexology listed under its own heading in the Yellow Pages. (This was prior to the use of computers and the internet).

**Question 3. You must have spent long hours tracking down reflexology research papers. How did you do it? Did you request and receive help and input from any reflexology organisations?**

When I discovered a published research study, there were often listed similar studies. Therefore, I went through those to find more research studies. Eventually, all of the listed studies I had already recorded – signalling that I had done a thorough job. Eventually, there were so many studies that it made sense to group them in order to facilitate practitioners and others to find them with ease. The listing of research studies on the Reflexology Association of Canada website provided me with a model for this.

**Question 4. Please give examples of the feedback you have received internationally as this is a great resource pool for reflexologists to share with clients and elsewhere to inform the general public about the research behind our therapy.**

At the bottom of the home page, there are four reviews of the website, one of which is yours, Lynne. The others are by Karen Ball, Bill Flocco, and Christine Issel – all much-respected members of the international reflexology community. It would seem to me, that many people are feeling overwhelmed and stressed following COVID and the deluge of materials that were created because of the lockdowns, etc. I have chosen to not take a very aggressive approach to promote the website. I trust that its value will become recognised in time, and it will gain its due recognition.

**Question 5. What other resources do you offer through your website? I assume you have teaching plans, leaflet sales and charts /books etc that you sell ?**

I am excited to announce that I have just added a new section to the website: “The Roots of Reflexology and its Evolution Around the World.” Again, there are many partial presentations of the history of reflexology – often these presentations focus on the history of the local country. In this section, I have integrated all of the information that I was able to discover.

The other sections present knowledge that will support practicing reflexologists, students and organizations in their learning about, and their presentation of reflexology to their local communities. The other sections are Professional Practicing Reflexologists Around the World, Published Books, Charts, DVDs, CDs, and Videos (Over 800 from 1917 - present), Reflexology Related Products, Online Reflexology Courses and Conferences, Business and Marketing, Reflexology Chat Lines, Ethics – Guidance, Health Conditions (over 200), and Reflexology Associations world wide.

**Question 6 Do you have any future plans to expand this site even further?**

I am so happy to have this question. Of course, it is extremely difficult for one person to keep all of this information up to date. I like to think of this website as a reflexology Wikipedia – meaning that I am very open to receiving any published information that I have omitted.

I am also very open to proposals for any new sections that anyone considers worthy of adding. In my experience, reflexologists like to support each other. I see this website as an excellent opportunity for that to happen. I would also point out that what might seem like a “stupid” idea – is often the seed to an excellent idea, so, please do not discredit your ideas – I would love to hear them.

With this approach, I believe that the website has no alternative but to grow immensely.

Lynne Booth Winter 2023

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