



(excerpt from cover story)

the new healers

Backed by an army of celebrity patients, buttressed by clinical studies, alternative medicine is winning new respect in New York. Some of the best practitioners in the world are a cab ride away. And also some of the loopyest. *By Nina Burleigh*

DONNA KARAN AND ROBIN QUIVERS ARE A few of the devotees of Barbara Biziou, a ritualist who devises ceremonies for people who are grieving, terminally ill, or undergoing surgery, or who simply want prosperity and happiness. Biziou, a red-headed native New Yorker, also spent some time in California in the sixties and seventies, where she studied with a variety of spiritual teachers including Brugh Joy, a medical doctor and spiritual healer.

"What I do is in addition to Western medicine," says Biziou, who sees many cancer and AIDS patients. "People need both medicine and healing rituals. Some people who have, quote, terminal illnesses say their quality of life is so much better, they have more energy, they feel calmer."

A ritual, Biziou explains, can be anything from having a group of friends come over before surgery and give you gifts that represent their strong characteristics to writing down a wish and lighting a candle. It's about focus and intention.

"With cancer patients, the first thing I teach is how to calm down, center, and relax," she says. "We do breathing techniques that will immediately calm them down. Then we work out a ritual." For one lawyer who had colon cancer, she created a healing stick and had him visualize his favorite place—a beach—by putting on sun-tan lotion and using lamps and ocean music. The lawyer brings the healing stick with him to his chemo treatments.