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**Modern Ethics and Massage Therapy**

 As a devoted employee of the health and wellness industry for ten years, I have been able to see first-hand not only the importance of ethics within the scope of massage therapy, but how this has evolved during the last decade. As our culture is evolving and we have become in many ways more connected (via social media), and in many ways more disconnected for the same technological reasons, these changes have undoubtedly reflected within the personal boundaries of massage therapy.

My individual journey began working the desk at a franchise spa, enthusiastically connecting with the environment and benefit of treatments, seeing people walk out significantly lighter and brighter than when they walked in. After becoming a manager and eventually a corporate trainer, I became tasked with reviewing and implementing safety protocols. Having worked for two different companies, I observed the differences and the parallels in how this sensitive subject is approached over the past decade. This perspective was buttressed by developing relationships with massage therapists and since being in school for massage therapy. Ethics offered as teaching and encouraged as practice in the field has rapidly changed in the past ten years and only continues to do so.

Ethics have changed as the discourse in our country has changed. There is a curve bending, with all our engagement and support, toward equality and personal respect. What once may have been viewed as innocent, playful, or easily hidden, is now shined on with the light of safety and boundaries. This has only been a boon to the massage industry, allowing it to trumpet its professional message and its healing benefits as it breaks away from years of being tied in with anything averse to ethical behavior. The key here is transparency: in everything from advertising literature, to communication from the start with any prospective client, to a clear description of the treatments rendered before, during and after each treatment.

It has been a pleasure to witness within the field over the years more courses mandated on ensuring workplace interpersonal boundaries, as well as training and preparing our massage therapists for delivering safe and effective treatment. These involve anything from proper draping techniques, to proper communication and response preparation, to the implementation of the “attention button” under each treatment table to increase a client’s feeling of safety within a personal environment even more.

In recent years, as the industry has evolved from public concerns, and our country has evolved from the same movement, better procedures and greater awareness has come at last. Now I am in massage school myself, and as a budding male massage therapist, the issue of ethics will be my greatest priority as the foundation for creating an environment of comfort and healing for each human being. A mission statement of sorts: healing is the passion and goal – which can only arise from this fully communicative and safely fostered personal environment.