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I am a registered nurse with 23 years of experience, an author and a teacher of RNs, MDs and laypeople my CEU course “the craft of compassion.” My education as a healer and a nurse, in and out of schooling, has been rigorous and eclectic. When my father died in 1977 I followed my mother’s lead in engaging as a volunteer in the burgeoning hospice movement. (Adelina Ortiz de Hill was a medical social worker). For three years I worked with the terminally ill and their families in Hospice of Santa Cruz, California.

Education:

Cabrillo College, Aptos, CA  
Associate’s degree in Nursing  
May 1986

Addiction studies  
Pierce College, Woodland Hills, California  
Addiction and the Family  
Addiction and Dual Diagnosis  
May. June 2008

Continuing education in:  
trans-cultural nursing  
AIDS care  
Medical Spanish

## Substance abuse

In 2003 I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and my work life shifted from practicing as a hospital RN to writing, teaching inner city youth and consultation regarding traditional African culture . During this time I wrote and published four books as well as three chapbooks about the healing of MS. I have also worked paraprofessionally with addicts through the Twelve Steps I m also a consultant with Beckman Addiction Care Systems from 2007 to current time. Brandon Beckman and I are currently working on a book applying the ideas in my text, *The Craft of Compassion* to the work of sustainable recovery.

The Board of Registered Nursing has offered continuing education credits for the teaching of the *Craft* and in 2008 and 2009 I've taught nurses and MDs with Dr Kjersten Gmeiner.

1996-2005

Founded and ran the not-for-profit Nganga Project, making alliances between the traditional African healer, Mandaza Kademwa,,western medical practitioners and Native American shamans. The Nganga Project has also been involved in famine relief in Zimbabwe.

2001 to current I have been a consultant for Everyday Gandhis , an NGO that works with grassroots peacemakers in Liberia.

### **Acute care and homecare experience:**

UCLA Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA

Feb 1994-Nov 2003 Float nurse in oncology, cardiac, telemetry, neurology, neurological rehabilitation, geriatrics, ocular care, liver-heart-bone marrow transplant care. Also served as adjunct in ICU and ER

Self-employed

Dec 1991-Feb 1994  
Shift work, home care with a teenage boy with muscular dystrophy

Independent contractor  
Nov 1987-Nov 1991  
ICU homecare for a patient with multiple sclerosis

Community Hospital of Santa Cruz, CA  
Aug 1986-Sep 1987  
Medical-surgical nursing

Earthquake relief in San Salvador, El Salvador, October, 1986  
Worked with earthquake victims under the auspices of Ejercito de Salvación. Assessing patients and translating Spanish for English speaking staff.

### **Teaching experience**

Title of course: The Craft of compassion

Teaching inner city youth from the text of The Craft of Compassion without the emphasis on the caretaking of the ill. Spring semester from 2005 to 2008 taught writing at Crenshaw High under the auspices of a Writing in the Schools grant awarded Red Hen Press.

Location: Crenshaw High School. Los Angeles, Ca

Month/ Year: 03/08 – 05/08

Title: The Craft of Compassion in the Care of the Dying

Description: A talk to the graduate school nursing students on death and dying Location: Mount St Mary College, Los Angeles, Ca

Month/Year: 10/07

Title: Multiple Sclerosis and African Medicine

Description: An honorarium lecture in a conference titled Imagination and Medicine: Healing in an Age of Neuroscience. The talk was about multiple sclerosis, mercury toxicity and the African understanding of how illness can teach the healer about the practice of medicine. This talk is anthologized by Spring Publications in a book on the conference.

Location: Pacific Graduate Institute, Santa Barbara. Ca  
Month/Year: 05/07

Title: African Medicine and the Origins of African-American Culture.

Description: Tour/lectures under the auspices of the NGO Nganga Project introducing participants to the ngoma tradition that was seminal to the formation of African-American culture.

Location: Bulawayo. Zimbabwe.

Month/Year: 11/1997, 08-09/2001 2001, 01- 02/2010/

Compassion as a Spiritual Practice. A continuing education course for health care providers. Mount Madonna Retreat Center, Watsonville, California. October 15-20, 2008. The California Board of Registered nursing has allowed thirty continuing education credits for RNs and LVNs for completion of this course.

The Craft of Compassion with Dr.Gmeiner, November, 2009. Santa Fe, New Mexico. A continuing education course for RNs and LVNs.

### Books:

I'am the author of seven books among which are:

--- Most relevant to my work as a nurse is the well received, *The Craft of Compassion at the Bedside of the Ill (Hand to Hand. 2011)*, which is intended as a teaching text for workshops about the “craft of compassion” alongside the ill and dying. It is theoretical and anecdotal and is framed by interviews with nurses, doctors, hospice volunteers, a Rabbi, a Muslim, a Catholic and a secular psychiatrist.

--- *Dreaming the End of the World (Spring Publications 1994, 2006)* is a study of the patterns of apocalyptic dreams revealing the process of healing traumatized individuals.

--- *The Village of the Water Spirits: The Dreams of African-Americans (Spring Publications 2006)* with Mandaza Augustine Kademwa is an exploration of the African patterns in the dreams of black Americans about white people.

Three “chapbooks,” written with wife Deena Metzger, about “sacred illness” and the passage through multiple sclerosis. These books are posted in their entirety at [michaelortizhill.com](http://michaelortizhill.com).