

## THROUGH DOWSERS' EYES A Survey of Deraying Techniques

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When I began to study dowsing in 1977 it was with the belief that the process is purely physical — the body's response to radiation and field effects. I soon became aware that a considerable body of opinion attributes dowsing purely to "ESP", a mental intuitive power of obtaining information unexplained by the present state of physics despite some attempts at rapprochement by leading thinkers on both sides. Between these two extremes lies a spectrum of views about the nature of dowsing in which the ingredients of science and parascience are mixed in varying proportions. I must confess that, unable to free myself from my rational upbringing I wandered up and down this no-man's land for several years looking for the right direction until it began to become evident that the puzzling duality of dowsing might be resolved by stepping back a pace to view them as twin aspects of an underlying unity.

Nowhere does this become more evident than in the field of noxious zones where many "progressed" dowsers (to use Terry Ross' word) have no doubt they are dealing with spiritual and psychic forces primarily, even though they may be working through physical means and acting upon the physical universe.

Nevertheless when one reads through the published accounts of deraying work, or peruses a volume like Christopher Bird's "The Divining Hand", one cannot escape the reality of the physical world which dowsers are having to come to grips with. "Black Streams" are thought of as real streams of water and the noxious radiation from them has on occasions been measured with scientific instruments. Dowsers describe their treatment in physical terms and discuss the efficacy of various devices by recourse to physical explanations.

Since dowsers should be in the best position to cast light on the nature of these things, it would seem both logical and fruitful to look closely at what our fellow dowsers actually say — or omit to say.

When they block or divert, what mechanism do they envisage? Do their devices possess objective powers of their own or do they act as channels for the powers of the dowser? When they discuss their work in terms of physical processes, such as electricity and magnetism, how literally do they intend to be taken?

If we do now take their words literally and tease out the overt or hidden implications, this is not to cast doubts on the dowser, who is manifestly getting successful results with them, but to shed light on the nature of the problem. Different dowsers use different

techniques, sometimes almost in apparent contradiction with each other. But they work. Let us try to find out why.

To describe these apparently physical processes which may be more than they seem I shall use the term 'crypto-physical', and by looking at dowers' own words will endeavour to explore them as they pass from something apparently quite matter-of-fact and scientific through to where the science breaks down and we need to seek a deeper explanation.

The most ostensibly scientific methods of deraying noxious energy are those utilizing various forms of coils, i.e. a helix or spiral of (usually) copper wire, whose function is often spoken of in terms used to describe electrical coils and circuits in general. One enthusiastic user is Frank Moody, a B.S.D. member who finds them beneficial not only for deraying houses but also improving the growth of plants. In B.S.D. Journal 188 (June 1980) he writes:

"I converted negative zones to positive by means of a one-turn coil wound clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere, anticlockwise in the Southern."

Let us pause a moment: we already have two polarities, positive and negative, as if we are dealing with a direct current or magnetic field, and in the difference between the two hemispheres we have a distinction suggesting the North and South poles of the earth's magnetism. Or is the clockwise/widdershins distinction in winding the coil analogous with the inertial Coriolis force which sends the Trade Winds whirling away from the earth's equator in opposite directions? He continues:

"The coil has an antenna . . ." (i.e. one short end) "pointing upwards and an earth . . ." (i.e. the other short end) ". . . the whole being formed of one piece of wire . . . The diameter of the coil governs the area to be treated, the length of the antenna also has a bearing".

So in this short space we encounter in addition to the analogies of direct current, magnetism and a hint of Coriolis force, the idea of a receptive aerial-earth system implying radio (i.e. electro-magnetic) waves, and the suggestion perhaps of tuning a radio set by the different diameters of coil and lengths of aerial. We are truly in the realm of physics.

As befits such a model there are stipulations about precision:

"It is essential that the gap between the bottom of the antenna and the top of the earth be small, —  $\frac{1}{2}$ in. to  $\frac{3}{4}$ in. As we shall see, other dowers are not so precise in their requirements but we are not told why this gap needs to be so small. Are we thinking of the analogy of striking an arc between two electrodes, or what?

Moody took four years to evolve this design (which traces its ancestry through a French work on "Radiesthesia and Agriculture" by Orcel in the early thirties to the resonance theories of Georges

Lakhovsky in the twenties. He evolved other designs for different applications.

Others have experimented with coils: for example J. Havelock Fidler in his 1983 book "Leylines: Their Nature and Properties" refers to what is in effect a Lakhovsky Oscillator, a large loop of copper wire almost surrounding a house. Fidler makes no bones about the physical analogy by adding:

"... an idea somewhat reminiscent of the wartime degaussing of ships by surrounding them with a charged copper cable to prevent them setting off magnetic mines."

This illustrates how easy it is to go along with a crypto-physical explanation for an ill-understood effect. In this vein Moody is insistent that:

"... the top of the antenna must be negative to attract the positive influences . . ." (opposites attract in physics) . . . "the other end of the coil, which enters the earth at least 6 inches, is positive. The current circulating in this coil broadcasts sideways and forwards of the vertical antenna . . ."

The problem is that a length of copper wire has no polarity of itself; it will not deflect a magnet and will acquire an electrical potential only by being connected to a positive or negative source such as a battery or generator. An electric current flowing through the wire will produce a magnetic field around the wire while the current is flowing, but this would not normally be thought of as 'broadcasting energy forwards' since broadcasting is the province of radiating electromagnetic waves. With one end in the ground and the other protruding into the air, one might envisage it acting like a lightning conductor to discharge atmospheric electricity to ground. However, if the source of the noxious energy lies in the ground anyway and is emitting upwards, then it is hard to envisage a physical mechanism whereby the coil could beneficially effect the situation, although perhaps if it removed energy from the point of emission to an earthing point some distance away, then a physical explanation might be on the cards.

None of these comments, however, can gainsay the fact that the device works successfully according to Moody's enthusiastic testimony supported by other users. He has caused pine seedlings to recover from near death and rejuvenated sterile land, among other things. He has helped people to sleep better in a house situated over "a broad stream of underground water" by placing a coil on top of a bedroom wardrobe. But after 10 days the improvement ceased and upon investigating, he found a wire coat-hanger "hung up just under my coil effectively shorting out its energy". Back to the electrical analogy.

But how do you "short out" a Moody coil? On the normal laws of physics only two ways seem possible: either you make an electrical contact between the 'antenna' and 'earth' bypassing the loop, or you

connect the coil to the ground. But the coil *is* connected to the ground anyway (according to the earlier description) unless the placement on top of the bedroom wardrobe omitted to earth the one end. So how can a coat-hanger hanging *inside* the wardrobe short out a coil from which it is insulated by an air-gap and the wooden top of the wardrobe itself? One might also wonder why the (presumably) metal rail in the wardrobe or the domestic electrical wiring have not also impaired the process.

As soon as one takes the analogy at its face value, these pedantic sounding questions begin to undermine it as an explanation. It is illuminating to juxtapose Fidler's remarks in "Leylines" on this subject:

"My few experiments with copper wire in the form of various coils showed that it could effectively stop a line as long as the end of the wire was held in the hand, thus presumably being charged. As soon as I let go the wire, the line came back to life."

So Fidler's coil worked *only* if shorted out via the body to the ground whereas Moody's failed to work if 'shorted out' by something not even in contact with it. Contact with Fidler's hand is said to have "charged" or activated the coil (presumably by conducting energy from the ground via the body to the coil?) whereas Moody's coil needs to be pre-charged to attract oppositely charged energy from the air and conduct it to the ground.

On any physical basis these two explanations are mutually contradictory and they can only be reconciled by accepting that the crypto-physical language in which they are couched cannot be accepted literally. The charge would seem more psychic than physical.

The electrical connotations of Moody's 'antenna', 'earth' and 'broadcast' terminology find their extension in other metallic devices. Fidler ("Leylines", Chapter 6), experimenting with methods of blocking his energy lines, employs sheet metal or wire mesh with a gauge of less than 30mm, thus reducing or eliminating the 'charge'. At one point he revealingly remarks:

"After this discovery I was careful to make all such measurements inside something like a primitive Faraday cage, constructed of lin. gauge wire netting . . ."

Thus strengthening the electromagnetic view. Later he develops a technique for blocking the line between two stones by

". . . setting up two strips of iron sheet, each 65mm. in width. The gap between the two strips was gradually closed until the line vanished; at this point the width of the gap between the strips proved to be 35mm. for the male line and 50mm. for the female line . . ."

Note the disconcerting switch from the previous electrical analogy to the sexual codings of Lethbridge (who was raised in the humanities and an archaeologist by profession). Fidler goes on to refine further by noting that:

“if a disc of iron . . . is placed exactly in the centre of the line, it will be broken.”

In his next sentence he introduces us to another well-known piece of deraying hardware used by many authors:

“. . . if a line was to be broken with an iron stake it would have to be at least 50mm. (2in.) in width and placed on the exact centre of the line if it was to be effective.”

The emphasis here is on the exact size and exact placing of both the stake and disc. The distinction that the stake is inserted in the ground whereas the disc is not does not appear to affect its performance.

With its overtones of vampirism and lightning conductors, the iron stake has a venerable dowsing history, utilized as it was years ago for the Creke method of depthing. In his “Dowsing: Techniques and Applications” Tom Graves mentions treating an oppressive landscape with stakes consisting of an “iron rod clad with copper tube” in preference to the method which had been used on the same ground a year before, which consisted of

“hammering in a small wooden stake each with a twist of copper wire at the top”

(a device sounding rather like a mini-Moody coil but with the copper insulated from contact with the ground by means of the wooden stake.) As a result of this ‘acupuncture’ “the valley rang with a quietness like that of a cathedral” although he has “no idea why these unlikely-sounding stratagems should work . . .” and indeed it is difficult to decide whether the important factor is the composition of the stake, the shape of the metal or the insertion in the ground, or all three, or none of them.

In 1982 Terry Ross published a review article in “The American Dowsers” entitled “Noxious Veins Revisited” in which he succinctly covers some of the early experiments in this field. At that time (1968) the rod was, for example, just an iron fire poker with which Sir James and Lady Paisley alleviated a physical condition by driving it

“. . . into the earth above a water vein ‘upstream’ from the desk under which it flowed and at which the person regularly worked”.

Ross then refers to the 1970 experiments of John Payne and himself using steel rods cut from reinforcing bar, when they settled on rods 16in. long and 1/2in. diameter.

“First trials were with trees growing over water veins, followed by volunteers among friends with arthritic conditions who either slept or worked over underground streams. Successful results were achieved by staking upstream from the critical area.”

No conceptual bias is here recorded regarding the nature of the treatment other than the acceptance of the reality of the noxious influence as being due to ‘streams’ of water in this context. Here the intent is to nullify or divert the influence: later it becomes to divert

the streams themselves, in a literal physical sense. Ross refers to the work of Dwin Gordon who, in 1972,

“begins the diversion of water veins by sonic means” from beneath a house because of its noxious effect and with a successful result. (Les Mooney is credited with having done this in another context in the late Sixties.) Ross does not elaborate on the “sonic means” but in personal discussion I held with Bob Brewer, the Canadian Dowsers, it was asserted that actual physical displacement of underground water may be achieved by striking the ground with an iron rod, the sonic or shock wave in the earth being responsible for the result. Curiously enough at a B.S.D. meeting late in 1984 Clive Thompson and Clive Beadon discussed the way in which shamans or witch-doctors could spirit away an enemy’s water supply by leading the tribe in a mass dance, the incessant rhythmic pounding of feet serving to change the permeability of the ground. We shall see that this may not be the whole story as far as noxious energy is concerned: what may on the face of it seem a purely physical effect may be accomplished by very ‘crypto-physical’ methods when certain claims are examined.

From banging and dancing we turn to more gentle means of persuasion. Terry Ross refers to the use of bar magnets by Dwin Gordon in 1978:

“successful results with a 4/16in. x 3/16in. magnet placed over a noxious zone . . .”

and strip magnets are briefly referred to by Inge Brown in B.S.D. Journal 202 (December 1983) where she also alludes to another practice coming from the U.S.A.:

“Placing a strip of blue-painted aluminium foil exactly in the centre where two veins of noxious radiation cross under a bed will also move it away out of the area of the bed . . .”

Terry Ross’ 1982 survey refers to the origin of this in the work of four Portland, ME, dowsers, Maclean, Gordon, Leighton and Alter, who in 1974

“experiment in the use of ‘Royal Blue’ on cards and tape as an attenuator . . . Use of coloured tape also seemed to them to produce the greatest degree of deflection.”

The physical analogy here seems to be that of diffusing or refracting a beam of light, yet the emphasis on the use of blue reveals the shortcomings of such a model. Indeed Tom Graves recommends merely

“spraying some surface above the stream with blue paint . . .” among his “unlikely stratagems”. We cannot tell whether the operative factor is the paint itself (perhaps containing lead?) or merely the colour, although probably the latter. And colour is, of course, a human percept.

The use of unpainted strips of aluminium foil to block streams by placing them under carpets is referred to by a Dutch worker,

Kleinman, in "Zeitschrift für Radiästhesie", IV/82 and for use out of doors he "buries them in bottles". In his 1979 book "The Divining Hand" Christopher Bird discusses the use of lead sheets for blocking out ionizing radiation as with radio-active materials and we shall return to this aspect later.

Many of these devices have been of a fair physical size but with the exception of Fidler, it is rare for a dowser to specify any relationship between the size of the device and the breadth or strength of the black stream. The latter may range from an inch or two wide to feet across (or indeed they may affect whole areas of countryside: should we call these 'black lakes?') Many dowsers use very small control devices, including brass pins, small pieces of brass or silver, iron pins or nails and so on. Here again it is often difficult to determine what operative factor the dowser is thinking of: is the metal itself important? or the shape?

In B.S.D. Journal 185 (September 1979) Enid Smithett remarks regretfully that three streams

"were spiked with iron rods and they should have been brass" but omits to explain why, although

"... I had always been careful to make this distinction . . ."

Earlier on the same job she treated noxious lines passing under the bedroom and

"used small pieces of metal or quartz to block off all but the first one . . ."

By any physical reckoning such as the comparison between physical structure and content, the difference between brass and iron would seem less than that between metal and quartz so why was it unimportant to distinguish between them in the latter case?

The mention of quartz leads us to that treasure chest of precious and semi-precious stones called into play for treating geopathic zones and manipulating energy lines. Since these devices are for the most part minute in size compared with the streams they are treating, they have a reputation for tremendous power bound within a small compass. Perhaps for this reason precision of placing assumes greater importance. That master of laylines, Clive Beadon, tells how (B.S.D. Journal 189, September 1980) he blocks a flow line:

"The system that I favour is to use two amethyst chips in tandem placed on the centre line of the flow upstream of the area to be protected. The amethysts have to be centred exactly, to the nearest millimetre, over the heart of the flow".

Later he states:

"I have observed that where two leys cross, if you place an amethyst exactly at the crossing point the leys disappear for some distance around the intersection. The amethyst seems to have created an environmental change towards a more tranquil and peaceful state."

Fidler, who brings to all such questions a systematic and quantitative approach, experimented with a wide range of minerals:

"I soon found that quartz crystals, jasper and flint, all gave good masking effect, while dolerite, serpentine, pegamite and quartzite all gave some masking, but were less effective than the rocks with larger crystals. Lewisian Gneiss, Torridonian Sandstone and glass had no effect, nor did the metals lead and iron, which, as we have seen, can stop a line."

After some discussion about the mineral characteristics he infers that:

"if silica is the necessary constituent of these materials it is clear that it has to be in fairly large crystalline form . . . it would also appear that low-grade, i.e. much crazed, quartz crystals are just as effective as the semi-precious amethysts, and they are, of course, much easier to obtain."

Once again, the underlying crypto-physical model would seem to be that of an energy beam refracted away by crystals just as a prism would deflect a beam of light. The "much crazed" crystals are perhaps seen as producing an incoherent diffusion rather than a sharp deflection. Amethyst however does not exhibit a particularly uniform crystalline structure and it is difficult to imagine how a small chip of it could cause more than a small eddy in a large 'stream' if we accept this rationale as it stands.

The ambiguity between a physical and non-physical process emerges in Beadon's 1980 article. He warns that energy leys can

"carry information not only of water but of minerals . . ." and they must therefore be excluded from one's mind when dowsing for those substances:

"I use a gemstone such as lapis lazuli in my hand to identify in a positive manner any ley in the working area."

Note that in this case it is not imperative that the gemstone be placed centrally on the ley to the nearest millimetre for it to do its work; the stone is held in the hand, just as one might use a Mager Rosette when dowsing, and the context indicates that Beadon sees this as a mental tool rather than a physical one. He has

". . . no doubt that other dowzers will find alternative methods of filtering out all the information except that which they require. The method employed is of little consequence; it is only the awareness of the problem on some sites that is important."

Fair enough, but if holding one type of stone physically in the hand is a method of tuning the mind so as accurately to filter out unwanted information, may we not legitimately ask whether the precise placing of another stone, "centred accurately to the nearest millimetre", may not equally be a means of accurately focussing the mind on the problem of dispersing a line? In which case Enid Smithett's fine distinction between a brass and iron rod may have nothing to do with the physical nature of either: for her the one may



represent a more accurate and fitting means of focussing the mind than the other.

We have now progressed just past that half-way mark along our spectrum of dowsing, and from here onwards the pendulum, if you will forgive the expression, begins to swing towards the non-physical and spiritual aspects.

I referred earlier to Kleinman's use of aluminium foils placed under carpets and buried in gardens but omitted one significant detail from the account:

"... It seems, however, that he magnetizes these foils by meditation (he is a healer by profession) *before they become effective*".

Now on any physical basis this is absurd. You may meditate till you are blue in the face and you won't turn aluminium into a magnetic material. But substitute the word 'energizes' and the proposition instantly sounds more feasible! Unfortunately this takes it right outside the domain of physics which knows of no energy with which to accomplish the feat.

Similarly Inge Brown, in her Jubilee Congress talk (B.S.D. Journal 202), passingly refers to the need to hammer in metal stakes "with a certain number of blows". In this I do not believe the important factor is the depth to which the stake is being driven into the ground: the number is 'ritual'.

Again, in "Zeitschrift für Radiästhesie" 4/82, Fr. Thomas, the 'Cancer Monk' of Graubünden in Switzerland

"... cures people by placing copper wire circles (1½mm. thick, 1 metre long wire, twisted together) under their mattress: one circle under their neck and another under the knees."

Significantly the Monk's personality is described as "a Rasputin type, awe-inspiring and mysterious". His coil sounds like a version of the Lakhovsky-Moody type of 'oscillator' but it looks as though the 'charge' is induced by the force of personality rather than by electricity or magnetism.

We have seen many variations on the staking of black streams, from 16in. long rods down to small brass pins and gems, but in 1973 Terry Ross and John Payne of the U.S.A. successfully blocked the noxious effect of one in a Scottish hotel room

"by *mentally* constructing a steel rod and *mentally* placing it in the stream below, and thereby achieved a restful night's sleep."

This deliberate use of a conceptual stake instead of a real one may provoke the sceptic to reply that the black stream was itself conceptual (which indeed at that stage it must have been since they refrained from digging up the hotel floor to find it), but what some dowers claim to do, namely divert not the *effects* of water but the *actual water itself* by a conceptual process takes a bit more believing. Here is how Terry Ross charts the progress from one to the other: First, the effect is removed:

"Imagining was soon replaced by a simple expression of intent, which seemed to work just as well and to achieve lasting results; this development was hastened by the mounting number of remote requests, by the existence of sites in high rises, and in the inconvenience of moving household or office furniture. The streams remained in their channels, their noxious quality apparently permanently removed. Other dowzers, not knowing of the treatment, would find the streams non-noxious."

Then the streams themselves:

"1977. Mental interdiction of the characteristics of the stream, however, progressed to the point of actually moving the veins themselves from their channels and around the afflicted areas. Dried basements, one of over three years' duration as of this writing, refilled wells, purified water sources, confirm the practicality of this method. It is teachable to those who understand that it is part of dowsing and who do not balk at the responsibility involved."

Those quotations confront us with the nature of the energies which the dowser is trying to control and by extension with the nature of the means he uses. Just as dowzers use language descriptive of water to describe noxious zones, there is an impressive body of evidence that they may be caused by a number of physical processes which lead to a build-up of ionizing radiation. Water may dissolve the products of radio-active decay from rocks like granite and pass along fissures which are themselves generating an excess of positive ions through the stresses caused by ground movements. In B.S.D. Journal 189 (September 1980) Richard A. Batchelor concisely summarized the evidence for positive ionization being implicated in many aspects of dowsing and human medical reactions to it. Several chapters of Christopher Bird's "The Divining Hand" explore it, as does Helmut Tributsch's fascinating account of the restlessness of animals before earthquakes, "When the Snakes Awake" (The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1982), which, after exhaustively considering every possible explanation, he convincingly attributes to positive ionization.

In "The American Dowser" February 1984, Californian resident Joan McFarlane records just such an incident with a cat and a canary immediately prior to an earthquake, and very significantly adds

". . . on checking my home for earth changes we ended up by staking my house with iron rods for three detrimental radiations where I have never had any before."

In his 1980 article (Journal 189) Clive Beadon says "I would draw attention also to the ground fault that throws a dowsing line, which again can be confused with flowing water". In a private communication to the writer, Terry Ross conjures a graphic picture of fault stress: "Standing waves from the latter seem elusive and indefinite to the dowser; there is rather a pulsing or cyclic effect, as if

the earth were breathing and discharging such bale force", a perfect description of the changing stress patterns in a complex system of earth faults.

If we go along with this evidence (and there is far more than I have referred to above), then it puts a considerable responsibility on us as dowzers to be sure that we have correctly identified the cause of the noxious effects we are trying to treat. Of course the problem must be tackled in toto, holistically, but we still have to decide whether to treat physical radiations with physical scientific methods or take the grave responsibility of relying solely on the means of the spirit lest, should we prove unequal to that task, the victim be left exposed to the bodily effects afterwards. Some of the methods used by dowzers might be appropriate on the physical plane e.g. lead sheets to contain ionizing radiation, or some forms of earthing, but scientific experiments are urgently needed, both to confirm the nature of the radiation (if radiation it be) and the efficacy of treatment. It is encouraging to read that the Z.V. Harvalik Chapter of the A.S.D. is launching just such a project ("The American Dowser", November 1984) but much more needs to be done.

Dowzers are also conscious that some forms of noxious radiation seem to be divorced from precise physical cause like a water flow. Even that veteran dowser, Herbert Douglas, who may detect well over a dozen underground streams crossing beneath a cancer patient's bed, has recognized that the same dowsing reactions may be due to changes in the nature of the ground caused by "lightning strikes or some presently unknown factor" (B.S.D. Journal 204, June 1984), and refers to his findings neutrally as "dowsing reaction lines".

Whether these are analogous to energy leys I do not know, the latter being a vast subject in constant flux of exploration. Perhaps some energy leys are pitched at a different frequency to the noxious type and lend themselves to being distinguished by dowsing with the aid of colour. They are often found in conjunction with ancient stone circles, whose builders are attributed with a knowledge of their purpose and function which we have lost but are trying to regain if dimly. More and more they seem to be found in association with the work of modern man: medieval churches, lecture theatres and the like. In B.S.D. Journal 205 (September 1984) Jean and John Watford ask the question:

"did humans attract these forces — perhaps either to an area where their presence is for a length of time — say in bed — or because it is in bed, when asleep and thus the body taking in energy and at the same time drawing into it these 'black forces'?"

Herbert Douglas (B.S.D. Journal 204) refers to an elderly man with arthritis living in a house which initially seemed free of dowsing lines:

"It turned out that he had a favourite chair where he sat most of

the day, right in the very corner of the room . . . In checking that spot we found dowsing lines that were crossing right under his favourite resting place.”

This story could be multiplied many times (how often does the noxious zone pass right beneath the victim's TV chair?) and raises the question as to whether the lines create the illness or the illness creates the lines.

This being so, the treatment is likely to be on the plane of the spiritual and subtle energies. The devices chosen by the dowser — the brass stoppers, the gemstones and the rods — will represent the physical channels through which the psychic and spiritual forces of the dowser are brought to bear on the problem. This is the more clearly shown when the dowser performs his act of clearing not even on the site itself but on a plan of the site, although perhaps few dowsers would not wish to check out their work on site in such a grave matter. For some, even the devices are redundant: Terry Ross' "simple expression of intent" and "mental interdiction" were powerful enough in themselves; Inge Brown simply uses the word "prayer".

Not all of us have travelled far enough to cast away our devices but at least one can try to understand clearly what they are, their strengths and limitations. Their choice must be determined either by their objective scientific effect on an as-yet poorly understood radiation problem, or by their fitness for the work of the spirit. But these alternatives are not exclusive: they are different phases going hand in hand, each contributing to the alleviation of the problem, unified by the purpose of the dowser.

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