



COLLEAGUE'S VOICE

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Interview with Anna-Kaarina Lind by Vera Krijn

Having done several interviews with colleagues that I never met before, I realize that it has opened a world of different cultures and new friends. This was again the case with Anna-Kaarina Lind from Tampere, Finland, one of our northernmost countries and the "land of the Midnight Sun", while I am in the city that never sleeps, New York.

Vera Krijn - New York



So, let's discover the world of Anna-Kaarina. She has trained hundreds of reflexologists in Finland and Estonia, is the author of "Reflexology and Infantile Colic", and on the board of the ethics committee of RIEN.

Q: WITH 7 HOURS' TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US, I HAD TO ASK, "HOW MANY LIGHT HOURS DO YOU HAVE NOW (ON APRIL 27)."

A: The sun comes up now at 4:36 am and just went down at 6:03pm. Our day is now longer than the night.

Q: I WAS FORTUNATE TO MEET SOME WONDERFUL PEOPLE IN DENMARK AND SWEDEN, WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES FINNISH PEOPLE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER SCANDINAVIAN PEOPLE?

A: I believe that what sets us apart is our language, Finno-Ugric (which is nearly extinct). Finland uses compound words, meaning two or more words that are combined into one. This has given birth to one of the longest words in the world at 61 letters.





Anna-Kaarina
Lind

Finland is double language country, most of us speak Finnish and Swedish. Then we have our history of having had many “masters. Until 1809 we were ruled by Sweden, then by Russia until 1917. I think that this made us perhaps more “sopeutuvaisempia.” (adaptable) .

I believe we are often misunderstood. For instance, they often say that Finnish people are introvert, but that is not true. We are rather candid and straightforward, always keep our promises, but we don't engage in “chitchat”. When you meet a Finn, the first thing you'll notice is how open and vieraanvaraisia (hospitable) they are. Finland is also one of the best places in the world for women to thrive in many aspects.

Q: HOW DID YOU ENTER THE WORLD OF REFLEXOLOGY?

A: In 1993, I started out as a physiotherapist with a special interest in physiotherapy for children. I worked for 10 years as a physiotherapist in hospitals and different clinics, and in 1980, my husband and I established our own clinic. We named it “Active Physiotherapy”.

We became aware that our clients seemed to have challenges beyond the obvious physiotherapy issues, especially babies and children. It was not just their back, neck, and knee, etc, we noticed that there were lots of intestinal and stress problems that could not be resolved with physiotherapy alone.

My husband started to study psychology and I searched for something that would enrich my work. It was by pure “chance” that I noticed a small advertisement that offered a Reflexology course in Helsinki and curious enough to go and see if this course would give some me new concepts and methods to support my clients.

Q: WAS THERE ANYTHING SPECIFIC THAT TRIGGERED YOUR INTEREST IN THIS COURSE?

A: It was the novelty of the advertisement that sparked my curiosity, I never heard anything about zone therapy or reflexology before. You might call it some kind of “Humble-Dumble”. Being a Taurus, I must examine things for myself before having an opinion.

Q: WO DID YOU STUDY WITH?

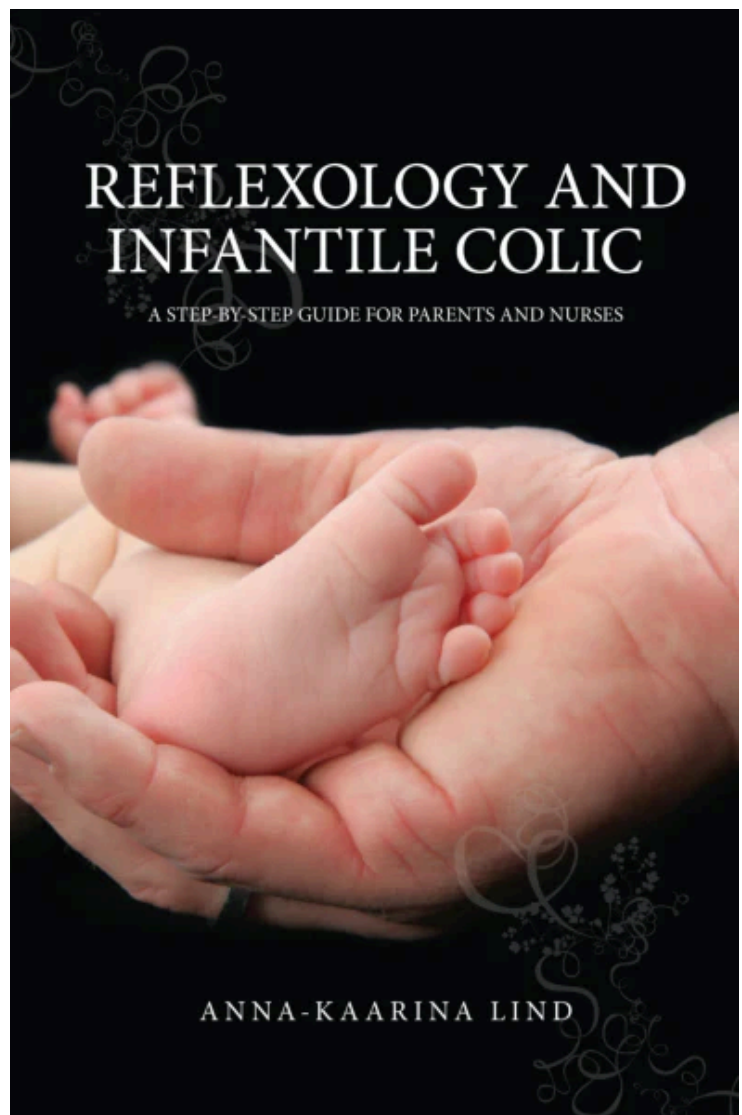
A: My teacher was Karl-Axel Lind (the originator of the reflexology method that consisted of projecting micro systems of the body in the foot, lower leg and foot, head, ear, and entire whole body) His attitude and teaching method was so different from physiotherapy that at first, I was very suspicious. So, I listened and learned.

He was marvelous and inspiring. He opened my mind and way of thinking about many health issues and introduced me to a new way of practicing. I tested everything myself in my clinic. For instance, if I had a patient with knee problems, I started with physiotherapy, after which I asked him/her “can I test also the reflexes”? This is how I observed that Reflexology really works. It didn’t take long before I started to use reflexology with all my patients because it worked, moreover, children’s parents noticed the difference. Nowadays, I don’t use physiotherapy methods at all.

Q: YOUR BOOK IS WORKING WITH COLICKY BABIES, ANY SPECIFIC REASON YOU WROTE ABOUT THIS?

A: In 1997 we did a pilot program at the University hospital of Tampere with colicky babies. We used a simple questionnaire for the parents whose child was in the program. There were 88 people from the 100 participants who filled out this questionnaire.

From these 88 people, 86 declared that reflexology had been a great help for the baby and the family and 2 participants answered that they were not sure if the sessions helped but that it was easy to take the baby and that the sessions were very gentle. We noticed that the relief of the colic symptoms usually came after 2-3 session and that some babies needed up to 6 sessions.



Q: WHEN YOU STARTED WORKING WITH PREGNANT WOMEN.

A: That was during that time, because one of midwives from hospital became so interested in reflexology, that she got permission to organize a research study. Thus, in 1998 we did a pilot study for pain relief during labor and delivery. It was a randomized, double-blind scientific research study. We needed 100 cases of healthy mothers with low-risk pregnancies in each group, and we had one year to complete the study. Unfortunately, it was difficult to get enough women to participate due to the high security rules.

Also, in my opinion, this kind of research method is not suitable for this type of study, because there are too many variables in labor and delivery. In addition, midwives who participated in the “placebo group” became frustrated because their mother were suffering, while the women who received the real reflexology treatment had a smooth, easy, and much quicker delivery than expected. Due to the lack of sufficient cases (In that time there were only 500 babies born that year in Pirkanmaa) we had to cease this study.

Q: ARE YOU STILL WORKING EXCLUSIVELY WITH BABIES?

A: I worked for quite some time just with infants and babies. However, over time my practice progressed to include teenagers and adults.

Currently a large part of my practice is with women who are dealing with menopausal problems. Many of these women suffer from insomnia, depression, stress, weight problems, hot flashes, and hip problems.



They want to avoid hormone therapy and rather use homeopathy, phytotherapy, functional medicine, nutrition etc.

In addition to reflexology, I work with a team of homeopaths, physiotherapists who all share the same goal.

Q: SO YOU MUST BE DEALING WITH MANY HAPPY CLIENTS?

A: Yes. That's right.

Q: DO YOU STILL WORK WITH PREGNANT WOMEN?

A: I have taught labor and delivery techniques in Estonia since 1993, and nowadays there are quite a few very skillful reflexologists who work with perinatal care. I do work with infertility patients, and I have now accomplished the birth of 47 babies. I work within “the cycle of women's health” from fertility thought menopause.

Q: DO YOU STILL TEACH?

A: Yes, though a little bit less than previously. I have now some colleagues who are “taking “ over the teaching responsibilities. Then there are the excellent colleagues in foreign countries, where I have been teaching. Especially my fellow reflexologists in Denmark with “Touchpoint” Dorthe Krogsgaard and Peter Lund-Franzen.

Q: WHAT IS A TYPICALLY DAY FOR YOU?

A: I work mostly in my clinic that is attached to my home and I see currently only about 8-10 patients per week. My focus is more on teaching, especially here in Finland, Estonia, Denmark. I also teach doulas and midwives and baby nurses.

Q: WE SEEM TO DO SIMILAR WORK AND SHARE A SIMILAR PHILOSOPHY. DO YOU ALSO FEEL THAT YOU HAVE THE BEST JOB IN THE WORLD AND BECAUSE OF THE EXCHANGE OF ALL THIS POSITIVE ENERGY YOU CAN DO THIS WORK UNTIL VERY LATE IN LIFE.

A: YES, that's right. I used to say that "once you stop working" you retire from life.

Q: WHAT DO YOU DO FOR YOUR OWN WELLBEING?

A: I have 2 dogs (you hear them barking in the background) they are small poodles, and they take good care of my exercise. We also live near a big lake and have a canoe that me and my husband use frequently. We pledged to visit all our National Parks (we have 42 National parks) all over Finland and Lapland. Thus far we have visited 37 parks and there are still some waiting for us.

I also like to read and my "handy" hobbies are doing mosaic and gardening. I have been studying mosaic in Ravennas Mosaic school in Italy, and it was very inspiring. I just love gardening, but here in Finland it is only possibly during the summertime. Music is also very near to my heart, my husband sings in Opera choir and we try visit the opera whenever possible, including during our journeys in other countries.

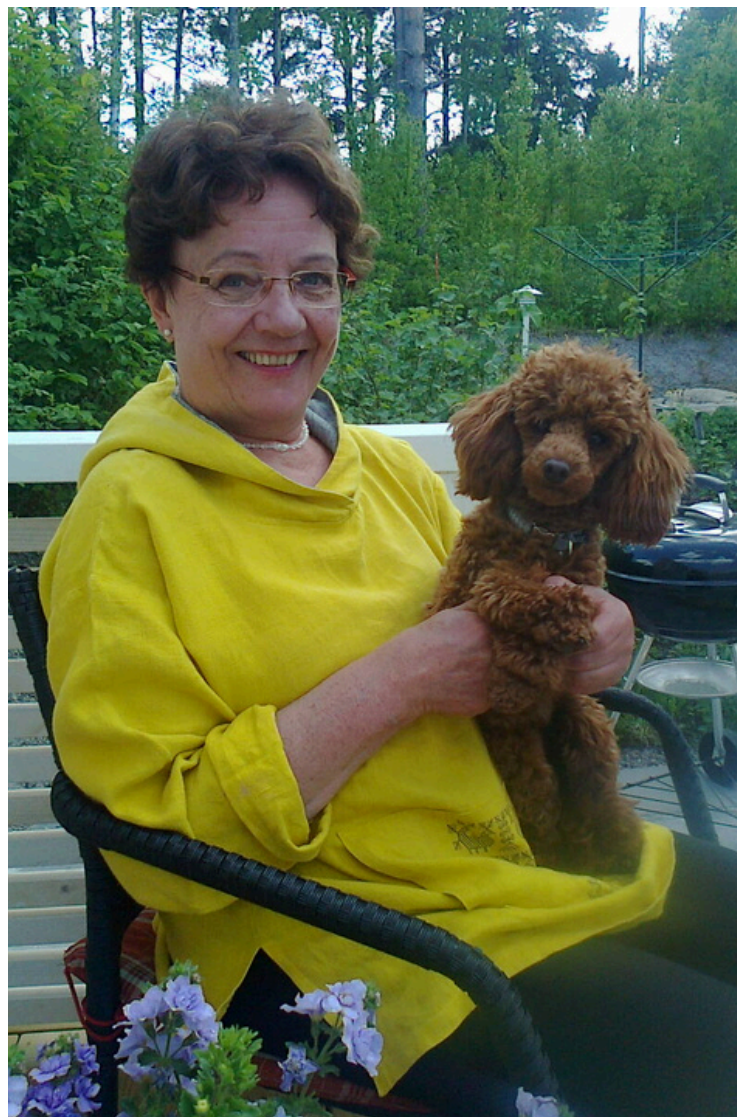
Q: ALL THIS MUST RUB OFF ON YOUR CLIENTS.

A: Many people asked me my secret for my wellbeing, and I used to say that I have "good genes" (my parents who lived a long life). I like to practice what I teach and be an example for my clients. Kiitos Anna

Q: OUR HEALTH IS OUR MOST VALUABLE COMMODITY, ESPECIALLY IF YOU LIKE YOUR WORK. OVER TIME I GAVE UP ON SOME THINGS, EXCEPT MY GLASS OF WINE.

A: I couldn't agree more. I have been a loyal customer to the only liquor shop in my little village. I told them that I don't buy red wine, I buy "antioxidants" in a bottle. It has become a running joke and they told me once "we just moved the antioxidants to the other side of the store".

KIITOS ANNA, IT WAS A JOY TALKING WITH YOU.



Please contact Vera if you want to be interviewed and read by our colleagues.