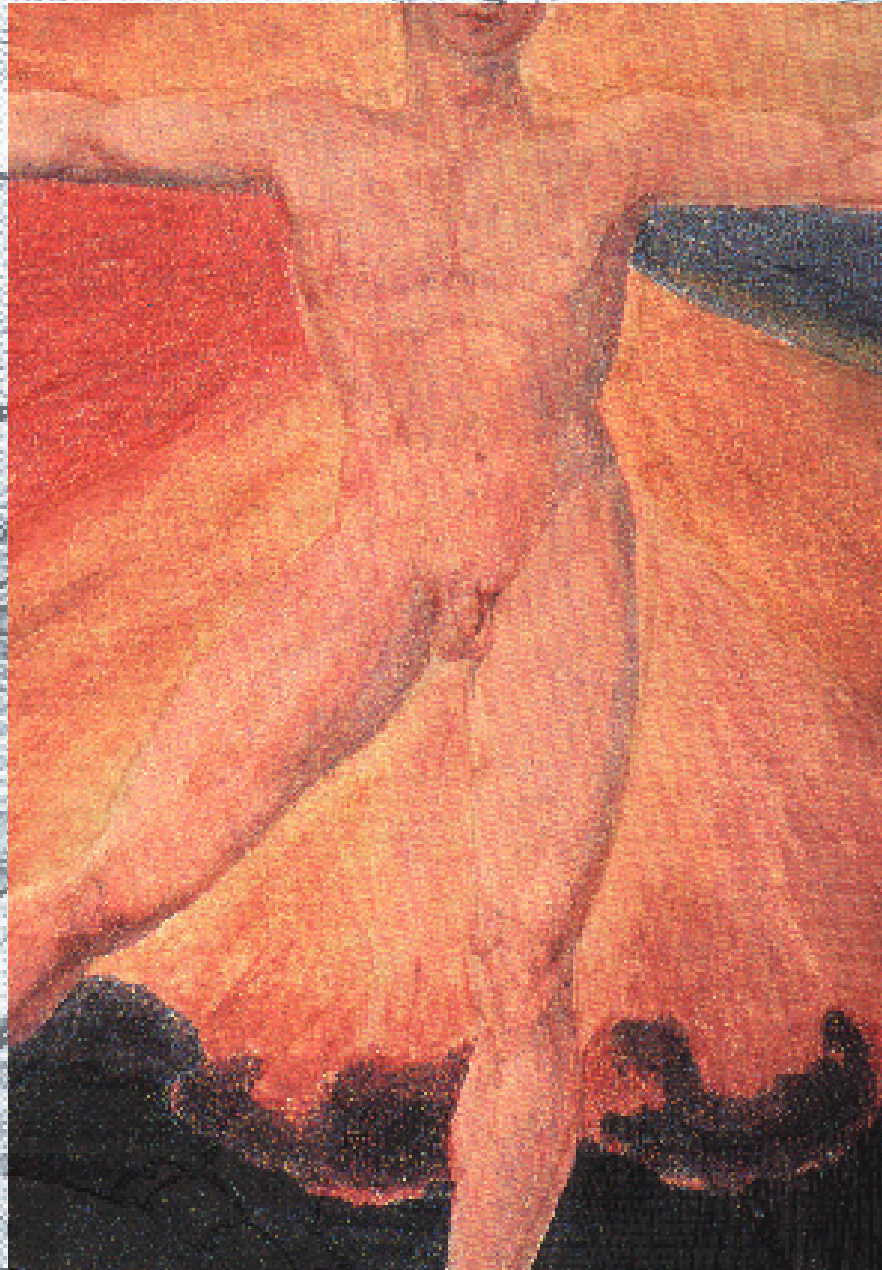


# BODY EPIPHANY

*Dialogues in Somatic Psychology for Bodyworkers*



EDWARD MAUPIN - IPSB COLLEGE

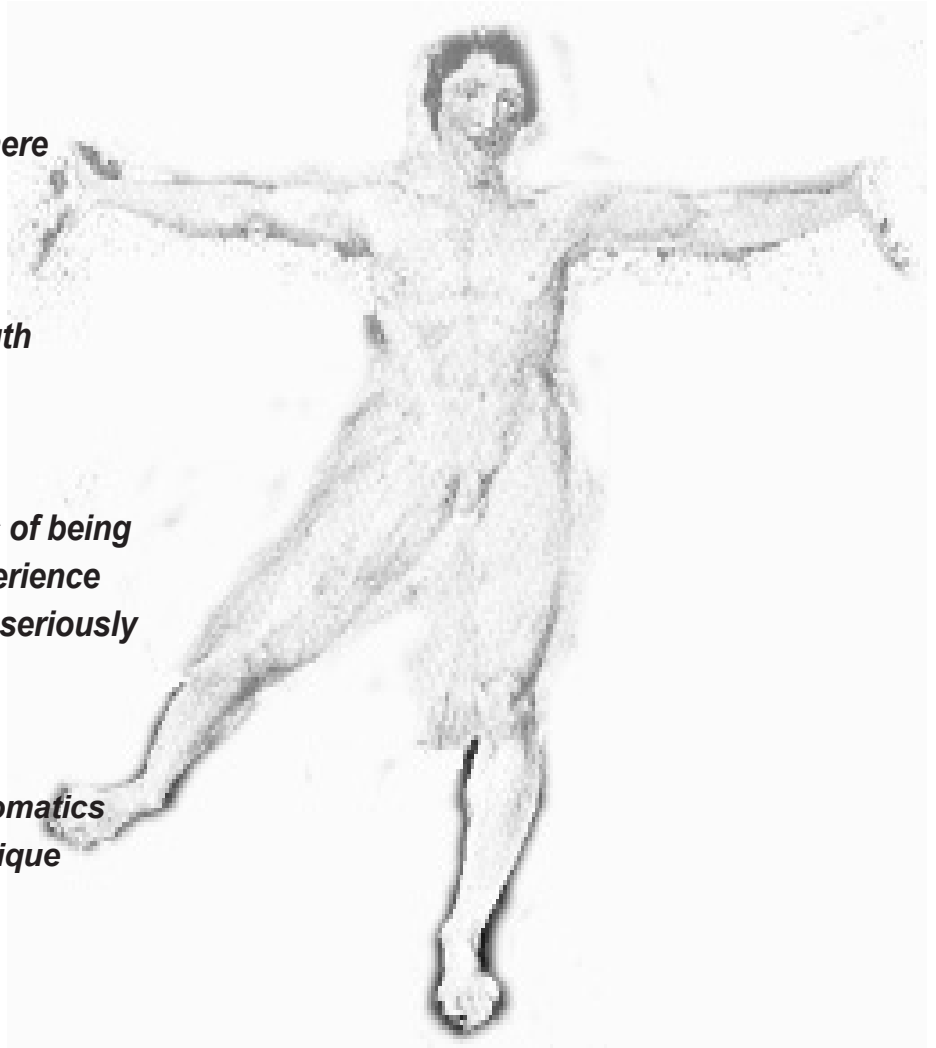
***Edition 2007***

***An Epiphany  
reveals a truth  
that was always there***

***When the Body is revealed  
it proves to be such a truth***

***The Somatic Viewpoint  
reveals the deeper levels of being  
by taking the experience  
of the body seriously***

***Somatic Bodywork  
applies the insights of somatics  
in hands-on technique***



William Blake's painting reproduced on the cover (collaged together with his etching of the same theme), depicts the awakening of Albion, or collective humanity. We might say it is a picture of Humanity One, awake at last. It is a very physical awakening. The body is alive with imagination. Its energy is holy and erotic, because, for Blake, 'the soul of sweet delight can never be defiled'

***PROVEN***

**January  
2007  
edition**

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# Preface

According to Genesis, God created Adam, and by implication the rest of us, in His or Her own image. Some traditions have interpreted this to mean that the body, fully understood, is the key to wisdom, the matrix of perfect understanding. If this is true, then bodywork must be an important part of the science of human realization. The present manual is dedicated to that proposition.

'Somatic' is a relatively new term, and Somatics is a new academic field of study. Thomas Hanna, a

philosopher-turned-bodyworker, adapted the Greek word 'soma' (body) to mean the "lived" body - the experience of living. The somatic approach is very old. Only the word is new.

Somatics approaches the body - and the psyche - experientially. The body, paraphrasing Blake, is that portion of the soul which can be perceived by the senses. Through all the modalities of somatic practice the body is the means of contacting the deepest levels of the being.

The 'experiential' body has been neglected in Western intellectual life, and yet it may be the most essential part of ourselves. The somatic viewpoint makes it possible to include it once again, and to approach it with clear-mindedness and academic rigor.

The International Professional School of Bodywork, (IPSB) has adapted many insights of the 'human potential movement' (Esalen) and various spiritual traditions to the training of massage therapists and bodyworkers. The goal has been to train "psychologically-sensitive bodyworkers." IPSB added degree programs (BA in Humanities, MA in Somatic Studies) to its catalogue in 1997, because we believe that modern insights into the somatic body deserve to be studied in the context of Western Civilization and its traditional concerns with freedom, authenticity, and the conscious pursuit of a good life.

The book grew out of discussions in IPSB classes, especially the Advanced Seminar of the MA program. It is strongly directed toward bodywork which uses touch contact as a major tool. This is only one kind of somatic practice, of course, and not even the most prominent in the field. Most of the publications in somatics are centered around movement practices or else psychotherapies which attend to the body experience. The somatic insight and the psychology of the body transcend the specializations we practice, however, and hopefully the material collected here will be generally useful.



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## How to use this book

Nothing in these pages is true or final. Everything is up for experimentation, for dialogue, and for experience.

The Three Major Sections are intended to stand alone:

Part I is a broad introduction to the field of somatics.

Part II is an initiation into Touch Communication. It can serve as the basis for short workshops and classes. If, as I think, everyone could benefit from being well touched and knowing how to do it, this is potentially the most useful part of the book.

Part III surveys general topics in Somatics. The intention is to expose chunks of relevant material rather than a polished and integrated general theory.

**What is the “Somatic Viewpoint?” What are the roots in Western and Eastern culture from which it has grown? Why is it important in some contemporary bodywork, education, psychotherapy, and movement practices? What are its major topics and interests? What’s ‘in’ and what’s ‘out?’**



# I. Introduction to the Somatic Viewpoint

## Soma

"The Body, lived from the inside out."

## Somatic

Pertaining to the lived body, the Subject.

## Experiential

The lived process, not conceptualized.

## Body Epiphany

The discovery that one is real *as a body*. First glimpse of embodiment.

## Embodiment

The state of being in touch with the experiencing body in the present moment.

## Somatic Bodywork

A variety of methods which use the insights of somatics to produce personal growth and awareness.

Somatics, the study of the 'lived body,' is a new word for a very old field. Instead of Western science's exclusive preoccupation with the objective body – the body as *thing* – somatics is interested in the body as *subject*, the body as it is *experienced*, the body that we each *live in*. Thomas Hanna, in the 1980's, was the first to adapt the ancient Greek word 'soma' for the interior, 'lived' aspect of the body. The Somatic viewpoint emphasizes this aspect.

Somatics is the arena in which the body and psychology meet. Many of the most important discoveries in psychology have increased relevance when grounded in the experience of the body. Somatic workers of all kinds—bodyworkers, movement specialists, psychotherapists and educators—can make good use of these psychological insights.

Somatics includes knowledge which has been neglected in the West, but which is crucially important for us today. It touches upon cultural concerns which are traditional in the West: freedom, authentic human living, creativity, and vitality, as well as realizing our fullest human potential and founding our lives upon grounded, *real* principles. Somatics brings us one step closer to Reality, because the body is, in its way, undeniably real.

Since somatics gives priority to what people experience, it is worthwhile to review the long history of distrust with which the West has approached experience. The early leaders of the Christian church, struggling to keep their movement alive and unified, attempted to formulate a credo of beliefs which would identify members of the communion. They attacked "Gnostic" Christians as heretics because they emphasized spiritual experience over belief. Twelve centuries later the Protestant reformer, John Calvin, firmly rejected personal spiritual experience in favor of scripture as authority in religious matters. The scientific revolution continued the tradition in secular terms by favoring the study of external, measurable, material reality, and rejecting internal experience as subjective and illusory.

But experience does not go away. Ignoring our inner lives and viewpoints leads to alienation and loss of meaning. Neither the theological nor the scientific European philosophy recognized that here-and-now human experience must be addressed in order to escape sterile intellectual idealism. Now, in America, Somatics continues this effort to reinstate experience into the center of human life through the application of its insights in movement, bodywork, psychotherapy, and education.

## A Partial History of Somatics

**Michael Servetus, 1511-1553**

Representative early somatic pioneer. Helped to discover the circulation of blood. Spiritual theories about the body. Burned at the stake by Calvin.

**Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1712-1778**

French romantic: Writer, educator, social philosopher. Inspired a whole generation to a new attitude toward human nature.



**William Blake, 1757-1827**

English Poet, visionary, artist. Had profound insight into the nature of human energy.

### In Europe

### The 19th Century Background

**Charles Darwin, 1809-1882**

Biological analysis of human evolution

**Karl Marx, 1818-1886**

Economic analysis of motivation and ideology

Naturalism

Wordsworth

Coleridge

value of personal experience

Bio-Energy

Reich

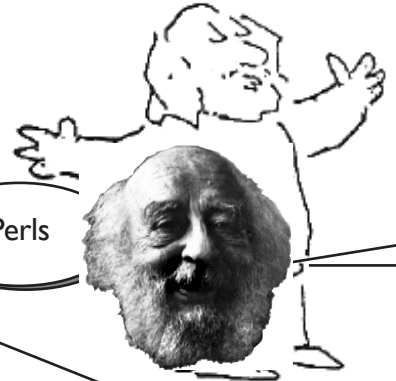
Biology-based Psychology

Freud

Jung

Psychology-based Spirituality

Perls



**Friedrich Nietzsche, 1844-1900**

Philosopher. Made a radical critique of value-systems based upon abstract concepts rather than the experience of life itself. A major influence on the generations which followed him, including Freud, Jung, and Perls. After Nietzsche, Western philosophy would never be the same.

Heidegger

Being and Time: The Here-and-Now

Bergson

Time and Duration

Husserl

Phenomenology

Sartre

Binswanger

**Existentialism and Phenomenology**  
After World War II the European philosophers became very interested in the actual experience of living. Body experience came to the foreground, and a rich body of careful observations of actual phenomena was collected.

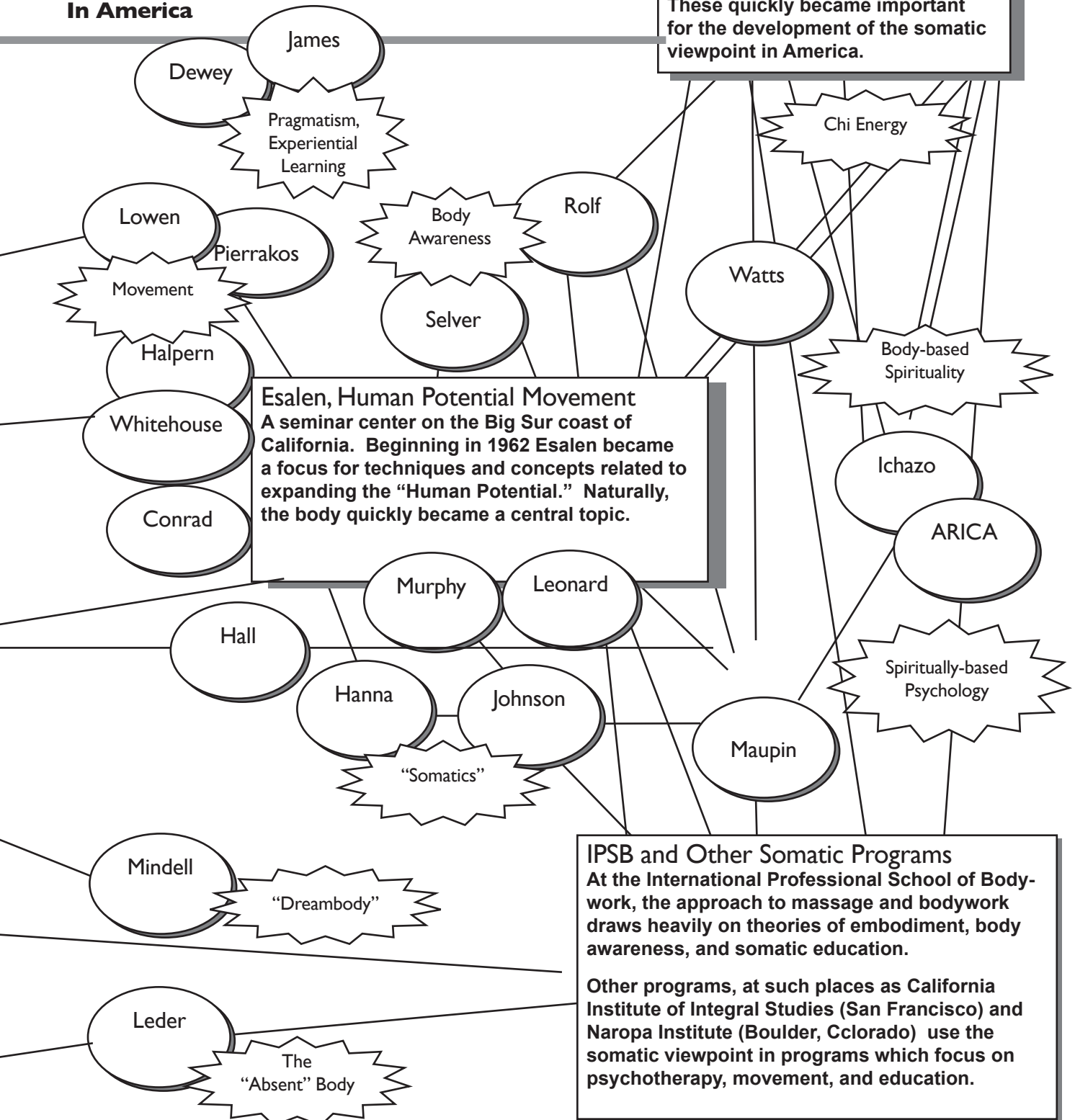
CONCEPT OF EMBODIMENT

Merleau-Ponty



**Oriental Sources**  
 Oriental traditions, such as TAOISM, ZEN, TANTRIC YOGA, CHINESE MEDICINE, and others include body-centered approaches to spiritual development as well as psychological approaches to physical health. These quickly became important for the development of the somatic viewpoint in America.

## In America



## The “Body Epiphany.”

Most of us began with a fairly dramatic personal experience in which the reality of the body became clear. I call this the “Body Epiphany,” or, less dramatically, the “Somatic Insight,” and I think it defines the beginning of the Somatic Movement historically. In other periods the reality of the body may have been too obvious to notice, or else so buried as to be inaccessible. At any rate, if people in other times were having the body epiphanies, they didn’t create a somatic movement from it. Now, suddenly, this was an experience whose time had come.

The discovery of the reality of oneself as “lived body” takes many forms, some subtle, others more intense. For me the epiphany came as a result of my exploration of Zen meditation in about 1959. I discovered the ability to ‘witness’ my consciousness in the ‘here-and-now’, and that led quickly to the discovery that my body was Real in the present moment. As a result knew several things: that my body is an ongoing process in the here-and-now; that it possessed an acute intelligence quite apart from my conscious thought; and that how awareness is distributed in it determines one’s consciousness. I had discovered my Existence and knew that it was Embodied.

## Different Kinds of Epiphany

Of course, the lived body becomes real to us in many different ways: for some it is a profound existential realization, for others it is the discovery that they are carrying emotions and feelings of which they had previously been unaware. Sometimes this comes in the form of an intense ‘primal’ experience, or else the discovery that an illness is not a purely physiological process. In one way or another the body becomes Real as something other than a physical object which the mind happens to be wearing.

C. G. Jung’s theory of the four functions is useful, perhaps, for understanding the different ways in which people enter into the body epiphany. Thought and Feeling, Sensation and Intuition: the pairs are reciprocal, so that for someone who relies heavily on the intuitive function the discovery of the body (sensation function) can be “numinous.” For someone who is adept in sensation, the discovery of intuitive depths has the same quality. Feelings are body feelings, and this can come as a surprise to someone who relies heavily on thinking.

## Embodiment

Whatever its form, the body epiphany matures into a more sustained state of *embodiment*, in which every aspect of experience maintains some link with the sense of the lived body. Embodiment is close to the center of what we attempt to bring about with somatic therapy and somatic education.

## **My body is me - I am my body.**

That’s it! This is me. My body is not a concept, something I made up with my mind; not an object my head rides on top of. My body is my extension in space, my presence in the world. My body *is* my mind.



### **My body is intelligent**

We tend to think of intelligence as a matter of the conscious mind. But the physical body is engaged in picking up and integrating immense amounts of information in an intuitive manner in order to adapt and survive. Adaptation can be a brilliant response to rich and complex situations.

### **... responding in the 'Here-and-Now'**

The physical body lives in the here-and-now. Only the mental and the emotional systems think in past and future time. The here-and-now is a point of power to which we can consciously return in order to gain connection with the whole being.

### **... to the world it *thinks* it lives in**

Aye, there's the rub! The body is incredibly adaptive and intuitive, but its view of the world and what's going on is strongly influenced by the conscious mind of thoughts, anticipations, memories, and ego attachments. The neocortex feeds misinformation to the deeper levels of the body-mind. This conscious mind must be slowed down and brought to attention, its "karma" (misinformation) clarified, in order to use the wisdom of the body.

### **Where I "center" in my body determines my experience.**

A person's experience of the world is partially determined by the distribution of attention in the body. People are 'head-centered' or 'heart-centered' and this gives them very divergent views of life. The East Indian chakra systems recognize this when they speak of each chakra having its own level of experience.

A related idea is that each part of the body makes its characteristic contribution to consciousness. Arica's system of nine rings, given in the section on "maps of the body, is an example of this.



## What Makes Something Somatic?

It is difficult to 'define' somatics, but it is possible to identify essential characteristics which enable us to recognize it.

**T**rying to find a "definition" of 'somatics' is a sure way to wind a group into endless circles of debate. Perhaps that is because defining is essentially a limiting process.

Definition makes something 'finite', which means bounded or limited. When we go about defining as if there were a space, a territory that contains things which are somatic—and excludes things

which are not then we are caught in a yes-no decision process. The very idea of "surveying" the "field" has this spatial metaphor. But maybe we don't have to define a bounded territory: we can name its central characteristics. We can ask, *What makes something Somatic?* The results are then less limiting. *When* is a viewpoint, an approach, a practice, or a method somatic? We aren't asking what *is* Somatics, but *by what characteristics we can recognize it.*

## Three Essential Characteristics of the Somatic Viewpoint

### 1. It is Experience-Centered.

The somatic viewpoint emphasizes the subjective experience of the person. "First-person experience has priority" in Hanna's words. This shift from Objective to Phenomenological seems fundamental to somatics, and it links us with European philosophy and the concept of 'embodiment'.



### 2. It Trusts in the Wisdom of the Body

This assumption has been expressed in many different ways. It is basically the trust that the inner, organic being is intelligent, adaptive, positive. Implied is a strategy of trust, rather than distrust, in the essential physical creature and in Nature.



### 3. It Uses Awareness as a Major Tool

Somatics makes use of awareness as a major tool. This is not to say that somatically inclined practices do not make use of other tools as well, but awareness is present as a significant and effective factor in the somatic viewpoint.



*Somatic elements in any kind of practice can be detected by looking for these three characteristics. Conversely, with these three characteristics in mind, we can identify what is somatic in any approach.*

**A wide range of practices share these characteristics**

It is clear that practitioners thinking of themselves as somatic vary widely in the extent to which they emphasize one or another of the three characteristics. There is huge variety, for example, between those who emphasize subjective experience and communication, on the one hand, and the relatively non-subjectivist psychological approach of, say, acupuncture on the other.

The subjective, “experiential” approach, expressed in Hanna’s view probably typifies the work coming out of Esalen. Here there is emphasis on the nature of consciousness and on the ‘body epiphany’ The body is used as an access to authenticity, higher consciousness and progressive development.

Acupuncture, nevertheless exhibits many somatic features, such as the rich tradition of experiential observation upon which it is based, as well as its concepts of the body wisdom, somatic theories of affect, and so on.

## Five Elements of Somatics

There are five major clusters into which we can arrange the topics relevant to Somatic Studies.

The “Three Characteristics of Somatics” aided us in identifying five clusters of topics which define somatics..

**SENSATION/PERCEPTION** and **MOVEMENT** seem to be primary topics because they are essential to Experience.

**BODY WISDOM** and **CONSCIOUSNESS** are the two elements of Mind which are studied together in Somatics.

**ENERGY** supplies the dynamics of process, and experiential texture.

### Elements of a complete somatic study

The clusters offer a way to break down a somatic topic so that we may be sure that we are discussing it from all aspects. A somatic study of something may need to include **CONSCIOUSNESS** (what is going on in the mind?) **BODY WISDOM** (what is happening in the body awareness and the less conscious aspects of the organic being?), **SENSATION/PERCEPTION** (how are sensory processes involved?), **Movement** (how are movement and structure affected?), and **ENERGY** (what energetic processes are involved?)

### Other Possible Element Schemes

Conceptual schemes such as these are intended to enhance clarity, not to limit discourse or promote dogmatism. Any body of knowledge gains from organizational schemata, but these schemata are themselves provisional and no doubt susceptible of further refinement. This is the way we are organizing our own study of Somatics, and we offer it for the consideration of our somatic fellows.



Psychology  
Attention  
Memory  
Body  
Alienation  
Focussing  
Trauma  
Spirituality

### Consciousness.

Being experiential, Somatics seemed to demand some term referring to consciousness and its limitations. Attention, awareness, mental structures, maps of consciousness. Social conditioning and most of psychology seem to belong here. There is overlap, though, with the topic of body wisdom, especially as regards body awareness and the effects of motivation upon mental structures.



Maps of the body  
Awareness  
Instinct  
Motivation  
Intuition  
Imagination  
Dreaming

### Body Wisdom

This was the most difficult topic to give a name. ‘Motivation’, though dry-sounding, was a close second. The topic seemed to include an enormous range. What is the Body Wisdom? How does one alter ones relationship with it. What are its parts, and the nature of its intelligence? Traditional maps of the body consciousness belong here. So does body awareness. Any theory of adaptation, of instinct, of basic physical impulse has to be considered here. ‘Pleasure’, ‘eros’, and ‘attraction’ are germane, and we briefly (but animatedly) discussed “Erotics.”





Physiology of the Senses  
Phenomenology of Perception  
Sensory Balance

## Sensation/Perception

The senses feed energy to the nervous system and organize consciousness. We do not experience the senses directly, however, but filter their information through a process of perception, which is learned.

The balance of the senses, which ones we attend and which we exclude, is important in determining our consciousness – and how alienated from our body experience we are.



## MOVEMENT

Movement  
Structure

## Movement

includes every kind of dance and exercise which has been used to deepen experiential awareness. Movement is the function which organizes structure in the body.



Energetics of Touch  
Trialectics (logic of process)  
Tantra  
Internal Feeling

## Energy

is a primary concept in the Oriental theories. It also appears when we examine touch, communication, the attraction involved in the relations between people, and the fundamental nature of process itself. There are important questions regarding the relationship between the energy of physics and the felt sense of the body.



## Somatics Today

The somatic viewpoint has many applications – in education, psychotherapy, movement, and hands-on bodywork. The goal is a state of relationship with the body experience which grounds mental and emotional process in the embodied present.

### **‘Soma’ - the body lived from the inside**

The idea of the lived body is not new. The German language distinguishes ‘das liebe’ – the lived body – from ‘der korper’ – the material body. When you dance, it is your ‘liebe’ which dances; when you go to the doctor, it is your ‘korper’ which h/she examines. The English word ‘body’ is derived from an old Germanic word ‘bottich’, the bottle in which spirits are fermented – clearly a lively concept.

It is probably a result of the materialist scientific viewpoint of Western Civilization that it has been ignored in recent centuries. The result is that many people view their bodies and their lives from an externalized and personally alienated perspective. The somatic viewpoint attempts to correct this imbalance by exploring the important benefits a greater connection with physical experience can offer.

### **The Search for Embodiment**

All of the practices which apply the somatic viewpoint are attempting to bring about a state of ‘embodiment.’ This term, which originated among the French phenomenologists, means that a person remains aware of fundamental physical processes taking place in the present moment, such as breathing and groundedness, regardless of what other mental and emotional events are taking place.

### **Grounding complex reality in body experience**

Thoughts and emotions can take us anywhere. They anticipate the future, remember the past, make all kinds of combinations and abstractions far removed from primary experience. This is a useful human function, but the physical present tends to be ignored. Much of what is disturbed in our modern societies is due to simple humane realities and values being superceded by abstract considerations, such as money and profit.

Remembering to breathe, moving slowly enough to feel your weight, all these are tools for recontacting the present physical moment. It gives you a grounded presence which is less easily carried away by passing events. You ‘remember yourself.’

### **Motivation and Meaning**

Ultimately, if people are cut off from experiencing present physical reality, their motivation dwindles or becomes cut-off and obsessive. Some of us think that this is at the root of our present cultural alienation and malaise. Meaning, with a capital ‘M’ comes from the soul, which is another word for the intimate levels of personal being. Many people, after living many years in a made-up fiction, discover that their lives have no meaning. A return to the body in the somatic sense is one way to reestablish the roots of motivation and meaning in the deeper psychic life. Illness or destructive adaptations of various kinds may be the alternative to regaining these roots.

### **Creativity and Intuition**

Getting in touch with physical reality is a classical method of enhancing creativity and intuitive resources. The body is sensing and integrating many subtle sources of information. Dreams and imagination appear to arise from physical and emotional perceptions far more complex than the conscious mind can take into account.

A martial artist may learn to center in the physical body and “turn off” the mind (thinking) in order to perform successfully in dangerous combat. An artist learns to “listen” to images and hunches which do not arise from the ordinary thinking process. Intuition, knowledge which comes from “taking in” or experiencing “from within,” is a process of attending to subtle cues.

### **Spirituality**

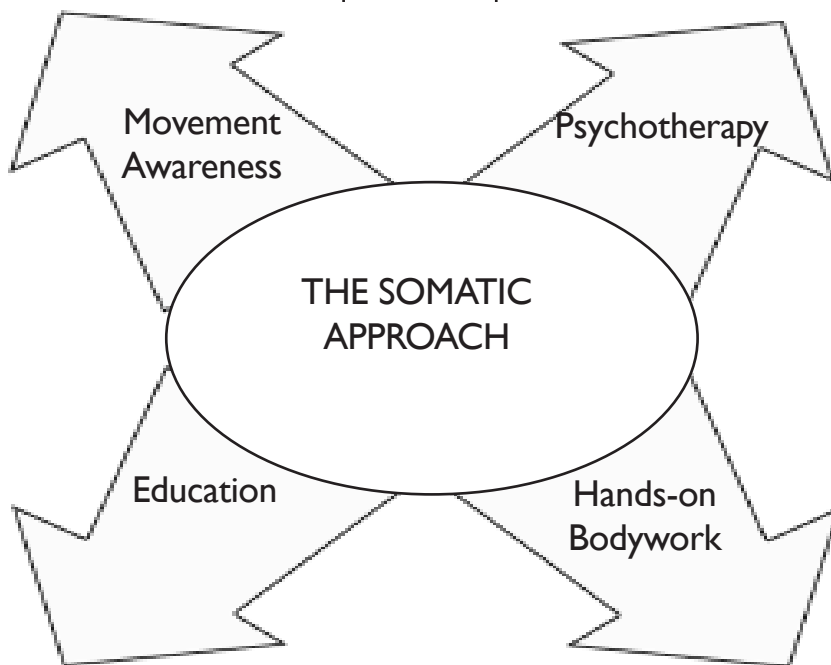
The emphasis upon the body is *not* a turning away from Spirit. The body epiphany is an intrinsically spiritual experience. ‘Soul’ is not a disembodied concept: it is the most intimate reality of ourselves, our core. Whatever “God” is, it is a human *experience*, and one which requires the whole of a person’s being to encounter. C. G. Jung says that the Imagination is necessary to experience God. All this implies that the somatic approach is inherently a spiritual one. The great archetypal transformers such as Christ or Krishna come to us as experiences rather than conceptual beliefs—but only when we are somatically present to receive them. Somatic practices can be seen as forms of prayer.

### **Movement and Awareness Methods**

From the beginning Movement and Awareness techniques have been at the forefront of Somatic practices. These powerful methods have been at the center of some of the most innovative Somatics programs in the United States.

### **Psychotherapy**

The somatic insights are powerful agents of change in the psyche. Making use of this have been Gestalt Therapy, Bioenergetic Therapy, Reichian Therapy in the United States, and the various Existential and Phenomenological approaches to psychotherapy in Europe



### **Educational Methods**

The use of the Somatics Viewpoint in education is only beginning. It means engaging *all* the systems of the body in learning (Multi-sensory learning), seeing fields of learning from an embodied (humanly meaningful) perspective, and paying attention to the body implications in any topic.

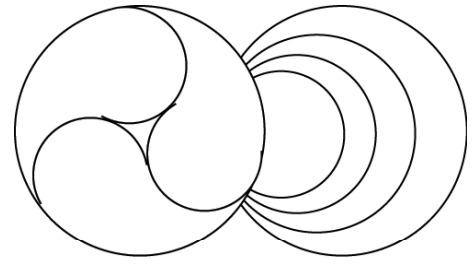
### **Hands-on Bodywork**

The communication of touch is one of the most powerful ways of discovering the reality of the body. Touch therapies can combine a competent interest in the physiological reality of the body with psychological sensitivity to the experience of the client.

What would a truly somatic method of bodywork be? Clearly it would focus on the experience of the client, assuming that it is the actual experience of touch which is important. It would emphasize awareness as a major tool for bringing about change. It would consider psychological changes, changes in state of mind as important as measurable physical changes.

Above all, it would start with the moment of touch, the actual point of contact between bodyworker and client, and examine the intention and attention which each of them brings to the meeting. It would formulate a way to develop communication and participation between them. It would be about *experience*.

## II. Awareness- Oriented Bodywork



There was a time when bodyworkers could carry out their work without a thought about psychology. The meat was there to be pinched and slapped, percussed and rolled, with much the same physiological emphasis used by physicians. In the 1960's, however, a great many previously separate traditions related to the body were brought together in centers of humanistic awareness. These included massage, but also eastern spiritual traditions which take the body seriously as a matrix of consciousness, and the existential and humanistic understandings of the West. The outcome was a new psychological awareness of the body exemplified by such developments as the so-called "Esalen Massage", which featured profound empathy on the part of the bodyworker in addition to the usual Swedish "strokes." Now suddenly the bodyworker was touching something more than the flesh. The body was a means of accessing the person as a whole, and the communication of massage was, in part, a psychological one.

Most of the bodyworkers thus employed were not psychologists by training, and, however profound their insights, they worked with theoretical smatterings rather than a general span of psychology. They were often producing powerful results in their clients, but their work relied on partial insights rather than systematic understanding.

More than three decades have passed. Authors such as Alexander Lowen, Kurtz and Prestera, Don Johnson, Thomas Hanna and others have written books about the body which are more explicitly psychological. But these books develop single themes, psychology in particular formulations. What remains to be written is a more general survey of psychology as it might be relevant to the bodyworker. There are numerous instances in which psychology could offer something to bodyworkers. There are various schools of consciousness which make use of the body as a map of the psyche, and which therefore are working with psychological imagery and theory. These sources need to be surveyed. General topics and major issues need to be defined. A psychologically sensitive bodyworker needs to have access to a range of psychological metaphors which may be useful at different times with different clients. This book is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather a source of possibilities, of images which may focus the sensitivity of the body worker on the psychological process which is literally at hand.



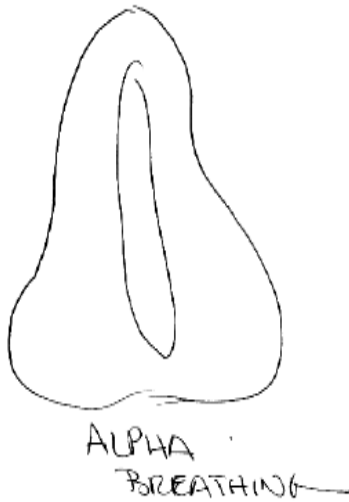
## Basic Awareness Techniques

If awareness is our major tool, we need clear, useful ways to develop it. Here are three traditional entries to meditation. Focussing is a major skill in somatic work.

### Breath Meditation

This is probably the most fundamental exercise for producing somatic awareness. The breath lies at the boundary between the controlled and the spontaneous, the natural and the contrived. You are probably used to controlling your breath; so learning to wait for the next inhale to come spontaneously may be difficult at first. It is a very important step, though, in learning to relate to the body.

The breath itself is always happening in the “Here-and-Now” and therefore it can serve to anchor the wandering mind in the present. Patiently, again and again, the attention is brought back to the breath. The mind wanders, you come back. Gradually you develop a sustained awareness of breathing, and this keeps you present in your body and partly related to the here-and-now present.



The thinking mind is going much faster than the processes of physical life. This is fine for certain purposes, but it can split us off from simple reality.

### Variation 1. “Alpha Breathing”

Sit erect on a pillow or a chair. Relax around the central line of gravity which runs from the center of the pelvic floor up through the crown of the head. When you exhale, feel the breath drop into the kath point, four finger-widths below the navel. Remain with your attention centered in the kath point while you wait for inhalation to begin. In this meditation you are only responsible for exhaling: your body will take care of inhaling. Feel it in your diaphragm and in your nostrils. Truly spontaneous inhales will be rare at first, so do not struggle with your breath. When they occur they are incredibly refreshing. When your mind wanders, patiently bring it back to the breath.

### Variation 2. Counting the Breath

As you breath out, imagine the numeral “1” in bright white light dropping from your lungs down to the kath point, where it stays until the next inhalation begins. During the next exhalation, imagine the numeral “2” dropping into the kath point, and so on, one (“1”) through ten (“10”). Each time your mind wanders, come back to the breath, but start with the numeral “1”.



## Observing the Mind

Imagine that someone has asked “How are you?” - and meant it. You immediately make a quick scan of your present state. You scan your body, your thoughts, your emotions, and your environment. For a moment it is nonverbal, before you put words to your awareness. This moment of nonverbal scanning can be expanded to a sustained state of consciousness in which you are observing everything all together. I call it “The Witness.” It is distinct from the mental process of thoughts and feelings, and it is also distinct from the subtle, nonverbal events in your physical process.

The witness state is very powerful. You can use it to detach from the contents of your consciousness. You can witness fear or other emotions and they become phenomena in the present which you simply observe rather than allowing them to drive you. You can observe the drowsiness which comes up in meditation and, sometimes, the act of witnessing will allow you to detach from it and wake up.

Once again, when your mind wanders, you keep coming back patiently to the here-and-now. Don’t get tight or try not to think. Simply come back again and again.



Perls: “Put your attention where your awareness is, and the next gestalt will take place.”

## Focussing

Focussing is a method of awareness proposed by Eugene Gendlin, a University of Chicago psychologist. Focussing involves paying attention to what is going on in the present moment. It is a state of attention which can be called up by questions like:

“What are you in touch with right now?”

“How do you feel?”

“What is this as a body experience right now?”

Although it sounds simple, focussing can be an extremely powerful tool. Even the most dreadful emotional states can be changed by noticing what is actually going on, physically, in the present moment. Peter Levine [reference] uses focussing as a major tool for reversing the effects of traumatic experiences.

Focussing is similar to the previous meditation (Observing the Mind), yet a little different. While observing attempts to stay aware of the present without putting it into words, focussing will often generate a word or phrase which describes what is going on and anchors it in consciousness. As a result, it becomes easier to be aware when something about the experience changes.



## Awareness-Oriented Bodywork

A bodyworker who wants to work consciously must get out of the way, direct attention, and be clear about what images guide the work.

### Technique Follows Perception.

What you do with someone's body should be a response to what you find there. This is rather like improvisational movement, which does not begin with an already structured move, but waits to feel what *wants* to move. That receptive waiting pays attention to all the stimuli in the situation. Suddenly a movement begins to occur. The Active (+) is emerging from the Attractive (-).

Likewise in bodywork, I am moving *in response* to the person I am touching. I am perceiving the body first, and my technique, my work, is occurring in response.

### Perception is a Form of Love

This might seem surprising, but reaching across and perceiving someone is an act of love. It takes interest, curiosity, or caring to perceive. This is what Freud knew, that libido is the energy which drives psychic activity, and that putting attention somewhere is therefore an act of love.

### What you Imagine is What you Touch

Here is where imagery comes into bodywork. It is important to be conscious about what you imagine you are touching. If I think about bones, then my clients will feel my work at the bone level. If I am like the majority of new bodyworkers, filled with facts about muscular anatomy, then my touch will never reach the level of bone, because I am distracted by muscular imagery. If I am attending to visceral organs, then my touch will reach there, or to energy meridians, pulses, cranial plates, skin, fascia, the geometry of joints, habitual movements, memories, chakras, or the Presence of the Divine. *Anything*

This means that the ever-so-receptive bodyworker quite actively brings images to the session which focuses intention and orient's the client's awareness. These images may be unspoken, or supported with verbal communication.

### Four Principles of Awareness-Oriented Bodywork

Technique  
Follows Perception

Perception is  
a Form of Love

What you Imagine  
is What you Touch

Awareness Makes the Change

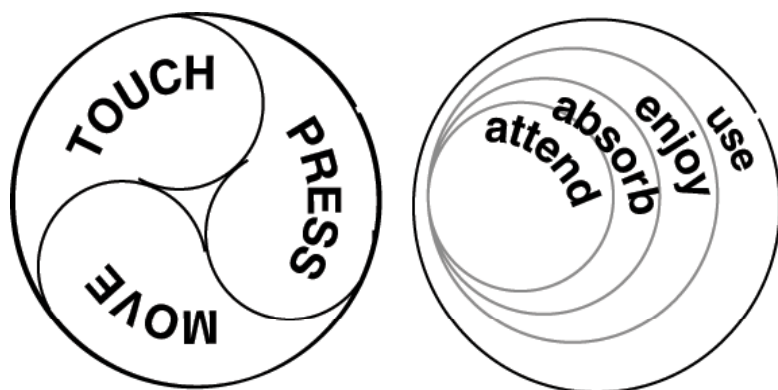
### Awareness Makes the Change

Only awareness makes the change – not pressure, not force, not *any* mechanical means. It is the client's awareness, and not their superficial ego awareness either, but the deep physical awareness of the body. It takes courage to implement this principle, but the results will surprise you..

## The Focus is on Communication

Somatic bodywork begins with the experience of touch—the experience of two people: how they interact, how the touch is given and how it is received and used. This is the Touch Communication. Touch communication has two parts. The Bodyworker's part is to "Touch to Know" (rather than "Do" or "Make Happen"). The Client's part is a process described as "Four Steps of Participation"

The two can be diagrammed like this:



### THE BODYWORKER'S PART:

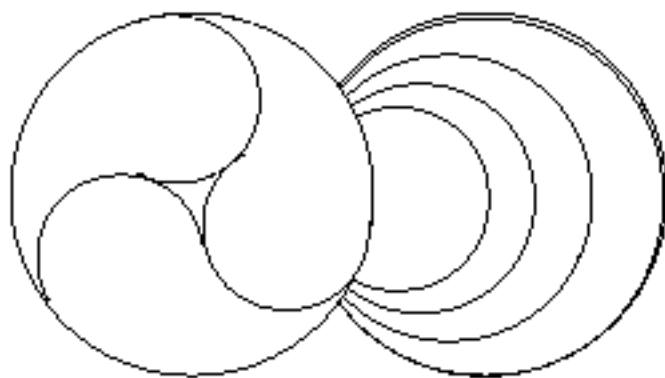
"Touch to Know"

Uses touch, pressure, and movement in an exploratory way, to find out what is there. Awareness makes the change in a client's body, so this approach engages the body awareness in the client.

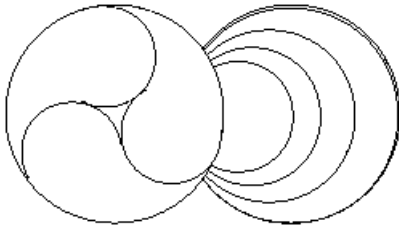
### THE CLIENT'S PART:

"Four Steps of Participation"

1. Pays attention to the touch,
2. Draws it in like a sponge,
3. Looks for the pleasure of it,
4. Uses the touch, attracting it in to particular places, making subtle movements which interact with it.



The interaction between the two people using these attitudes of receptivity becomes a dynamic communication in which the deepest physical awareness of the client eventually begins guiding the bodywork process.



## Awareness for the Bodyworker

### “Touching to Know”

Forget, for a moment, what you intend to do. Instead, pay attention to what you feel, – feel with touch, pressure, and the movement of your client’s bones. Let your technique be an outgrowth of this knowing.



Perls: “Don’t push the river;  
it flows by itself”

### “Technique Follows Perception,”

That means that *what* to do comes from *what* is being touched. By being receptive to the experience of what I am touching –how it feels–I respond correctly to it. The touch becomes an improvisation in response to what is touched. All the techniques I have learned, all the experience, all the practice, and all the right-now intuition

### Touching to “Know” rather than to “Effect”

We bodyworker are always trying to *do* something. The body needs to be organized, released, balanced, opened, relaxed, tonified and a host of other things which we know how to do. All this *doing* tends to rush past the point. The principle of awareness tells us that change comes from awareness–the client’s *own* body awareness–and *not* from all that doing.

What happens when we simply wait and pay attention to what we are touching? What if we simply want to ‘know’ it, to know more about it, to see what is there?

### Touch-Press-Move as tools of knowing

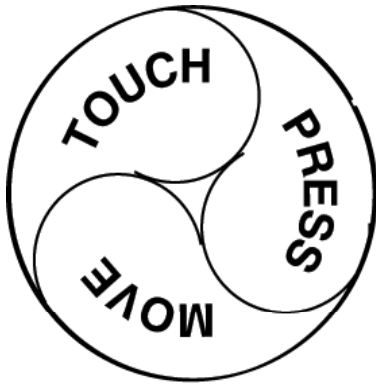
Let’s break our contact down into its components. Touching, Pressure, and Movement are like flashlights I can shine into the dark volume of someone’s body. Each one can be approached separately. First touch, feeling all the subtleties which are there for you to sense, like vibration, pulsing, and a host of other things. Then Press: another set of perceptions. Then move the bones.

### When the Hand becomes “Absent”

There is a subtle, interesting moment in which my awareness, which has previously been invested in my hand and what I intend to do it, suddenly shifts to the body I am touching. The body becomes somehow more real–present–and my sense of my hand recedes into the background–the hand becomes “absent.” Drew Leder has examined this and other phenomena discovered by the phenomenologists in *The Absent Body*. (1998).

### “Think Bones”

Your intention for this particular experiment, which is a deep tissue process after all, is to imagine the bony level of the body. Don’t get caught up in the skin layer, or in the muscles except as a kind of general ‘fabric’ which surrounds and positions the bones. The body is a segmented structure. the soft tissue creates balance across each joint between segments (bones) of the skeleton. .



### Touch.

Simply touch. As the “Touch Communication” pages showed, touch goes deeper than the point of contact, and can be felt inside your own hand. We do not end at the surface of our skins. All kinds of subtle things can be sensed in this way.

### Press.

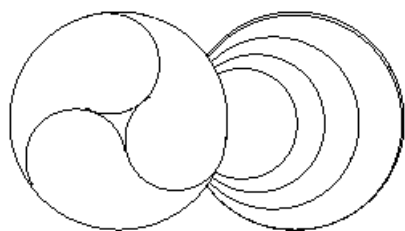
Pressure gives a different kind of information, about resistance, texture, and hidden actions. It, too, is a flashlight you are shining this person’s interior.

### Move.

I mean move the bones: passive joint movement rather than superficial strokes across the skin. The movement will tell you whether the bones are held by deep tensions or whether they can move freely upon one another.

### Touch to Know ...What?”

Your open-minded awareness permits you to be aware of many things: the feeling of the flesh, the patterns of holding, the energetic vibration of the body, and the energy which you can feel inside your hands, and more subtle things: the “being” of the client, images and feelings that come up in the contact, and many other things. A strange phenomenon appears: when you become aware of something in the client, the client often becomes aware of the same thing.



## Awareness for the Client

# The Client's Four Steps of Participation

Four steps for educating a client to pay attention and participate in the bodywork process

**A**t the beginning, most clients assume that their role in the bodywork process is simply to lie down and receive. Often they go to sleep in the comfort of being touched. However there is a much more valuable way in which they can participate—one which can mobilize the deepest levels of the body awareness to become involved in the touch communication.

These four steps are an effective way to train clients to be aware and fully participate in the bodywork process. It leads to a communication with the pure physical awareness of the body—the Creature—which can fully participate in the bodywork process.

### The First Step: Pay Attention

Tell them “Pay attention to my hands. When your mind wanders, keep coming back to the sensation of my contact.” Some clients find this very hard to do: they are inclined to allow the mind to wander. Touch in itself is likely to produce an altered state of consciousness, because moving into interior sensation is a change from ordinary awareness of the outside world. Nevertheless, as in meditation, they can patiently, repeatedly, over and over again, bring attention back to the touch. When they seem to be drifting off to sleep or losing contact, call them back.

### The Second Step: Draw Me In.

This step asks the client to become receptive in the process. Receptivity in the body feels like making a space which attracts. You can tell them “Draw me in like a sponge, or a magnet.” For many clients the sponge image is sufficient to find the sense of receptivity.

Some clients find it difficult to conceive of what I mean; so I work with them persistently until they can do it. For some it can be a major change in their feeling of themselves. Those clients, usually very active athletes, who say “You can press harder,” are often the ones who don’t have very much interior experience of the body. They are used to pressing and pushing, exerting and striving, but they don’t know. My answer is “You can draw me in harder.” When these people learn to do it they discover a whole new territory of experience. It is a major life change.

### The Third Step: Pay Attention to Pleasure

You can say “Does this feel good?” “Is this interesting?” “Does this make sense?” “Do you like it?” The sensation has many ‘flavors’ so I get them to describe whether some points in the body feel different from others. Even when I am touching sore and painful areas it is possible for them to discover that there is a kind of pleasure in it – rather like scratching an itch, sometimes, or a “salty” feeling.

With this step I am attempting to engage the client on a feeling level. A client can be perfectly aware of the sensation of touch and yet not feel it. Feeling is an evaluation of an experience, and one has to connect with the sensation from somewhere in the core to do it. This step is sometimes the point at which body alienation can be changed. [See the “No Pain-No Gain” example of Body Alienation later in the book]

Pleasure is the way the body wisdom orients itself to the world. Thomas Hanna wrote specifically of the “sarcial pleasure,” the fleshy enjoyment of touch. Think of puppies in a pile: it is very deep in our instincts, this pleasure. When the client can attend to pleasure, we have reached a whole new depth of contact.

***Change is brought  
about by Awareness***

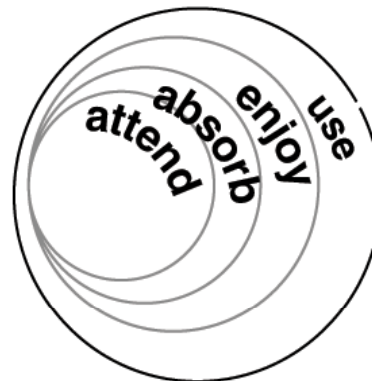


## The Fourth Step: Use my hands.

This step is highly variable, because, now that the core body awareness is engaged it will make use of the touch in various ways.

In the Rolfing process I ask the client to make small structured movements which organize the fascial tissue. I can ask the client to “use the movement to draw me in.” - or to improvise with several different movements in order to “use my hands to organize your body.”

Often no words are needed. Since the client is paying attention to pleasure, the body itself begins to participate in a deeper way. I find myself drawn to places which the body wants me to touch. Many other spontaneous and intuitive transactions take place as well.



## FOUR STEPS OF PARTICIPATION



Step <b>1</b>	<b>“Pay Attention to my Hands”</b>	This is the first and fundamental step in learning to participate in the bodywork process. The client is not encouraged to daydream or to snooze. Rather, as in meditation, the task is to return, patiently, again and again to the touch experience.	<b>client is Active</b> <b>+</b>
Step <b>2</b>	<b>“Draw me in” (like a sponge, or a magnet)</b>	Next, the client must learn to become receptive to the touch. Receptivity means ‘making a space’ into which the touch can come. For some this is easy, for others the bodyworker must find words which enable the client to find the way to become receptive.	<b>client is Attractive</b> <b>—</b>
Step <b>3</b>	<b>“Pay Attention to Pleasure” (does this feel good?)</b>	When the client pays attention to whether the touch is pleasurable or painful, the feeling level is engaged and an important aspect of body wisdom is invoked. Pleasure is a fundamental clue which guides the natural creature through life. To be inattentive to pleasure is a form of body alienation.	<b>“Core” is Attractive</b> <b>—</b>
Step <b>4</b>	<b>“Use my hands”</b>	At this point the body awareness is engaged on a very deep level, and how a client might “use the hands” is highly variable. The body can draw the hands toward areas which need attention, or the body may move to interact with the touch.	<b>“Core” becomes Active</b> <b>+</b>



## Is Pleasure a Problem?

For many people, the “p” word raises an image of wanton excess. However, pleasure has a very somatic meaning, and without it the deeper physical awareness is not engaged.

### “Sarcial Pleasure” -

Thomas Hanna offered the term ‘sarcial pleasure’ – fleshly pleasure – for the immediate body craving for touch and contact. The right kind of touch feels good, like scratching an itch, and the deepest levels of the body awareness respond to it.

*“The goal of psychotherapy is to change the expectation of pain into the expectation of pleasure.” – Wilhelm Reich.*

Hooooooo Boy! Mention pleasure and how the heathen rage! More precisely, the puritanical bones begin to writhe within us all, and our minds picture scenes of wanton excess. Pleasure is widely believed not to be good for us.

As the client learns to participate in touch communication, it is at the point of “paying attention to pleasure” that problems often arise. A body-alienated client may be able to attend to the sensation of the touch or endure considerable pain if the area is tense and sore, yet being aware of pleasure may be a difficult step.

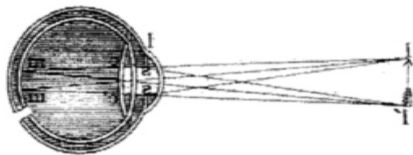
This kind of pleasure, however, is altogether less elaborate and more immediate than all this fantasied abandon. Touch is absolutely necessary for us. Puppies, piglets, and children like to lie together in piles. Abused children will get themselves beaten up rather than not be touched at all.

*Pleasure guides the organism in its adaptive responses.* When we ask a client to pay attention to pleasure, they are getting in touch with the deep levels of their physical being. The surface can sense, but to feel pleasure requires the core to be involved. Therefore the question of pleasure can mobilize the very levels of body experience which have been ignored.

Touch has many flavors of sensation. Sometimes it is too superficial to mean anything; sometimes it will seem ‘salty’ or ‘like scratching an itch.’ Paying attention to these qualities of sensation requires a connection from the feeling level. Feeling is not the same as sensation; it comes from the core. In this way, pleasure can serve to open the deeper levels of physical awareness and reconnect the conscious mind with its organic roots.

\* \* \*

Pleasure is an ancient and classical idea, of course, with a vast historical literature exploring it from many different aspects. Freud, Reich, Norman O. Brown (*Love’s Body*), and Foucault have all contributed to the psychology of pleasure: the natural body of a child is a body of pleasure: open, curious, and sensually engaged. Trauma, negative conditioning, and neurosis block the natural movement toward pleasure, and the pleasure-alienated person contracts in the expectation of pain. Touch can help.



## Imagery for Deep Tissue Touch

Here are two images which enable the bodyworker to contact deep levels of the body.

### Layers of the Body

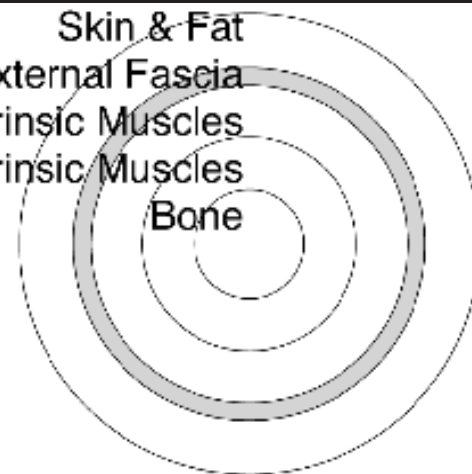
#### SKIN AND FAT.

This is the outermost layer of the body, and is usually experienced psychologically as the outer boundary and the interface with the world. Important distortions may be held as tension here. Attitudes toward being touched, entered, intruded upon, or harmed may be expressed here. Think of the skin as the external surface of the brain, and remember that it carries many images about the inner/outer encounter.

#### EXTERNAL FASCIA.

This is the fascial envelope which contains the entire musculature. The body may be shaped significantly by distortions in this layer.

**Skin & Fat**  
**External Fascia**  
**Extrinsic Muscles**  
**Intrinsic Muscles**  
**Bone**



#### EXTRINSIC MUSCLES.

These are voluntary muscles for contracting and drawing in toward the body. They are the muscles with which we "do" things. In that sense they are the yang, or active side of our movement.

#### INTRINSIC MUSCLES.

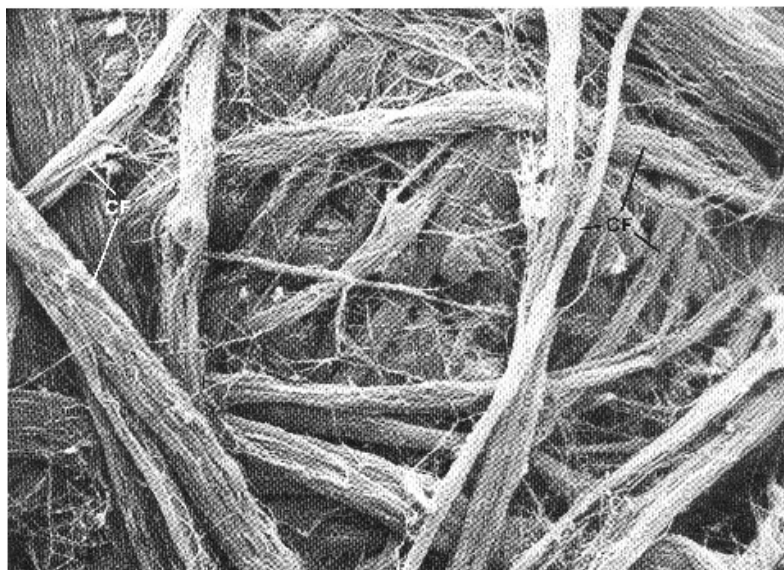
The small muscles closer to the core of the body are less voluntary. These muscles have to do with maintaining our position in gravity while we engage in voluntary action. They fire more slowly, fatigue less quickly. In our experience we "let" these muscles work. In that sense they are the "yin" or receptive side of our movement.

#### BONE.

This is the fundamental level. Even very deep bodywork may be less painful if it is experienced from the perspective of the bone level. Moving the bones helps give that perspective.

### Fascia

The external fascia shapes the outer contours of the body, but is only the outer wrapping on this picture. Fascia is a webwork of fibers surrounding literally everything, a "three-dimensional union suit with pockets for everything", the organ of form. These fibers, whose molecules make gelatin when meat is boiled, shift slowly to accommodate the body's habitual movement. If the movement is inefficient, it must be bandaged and supported by fascia which shortens and loses its elasticity. The bodyworker will feel, after the muscles are relaxed, a slow melting. This is fascia releasing. It is possible to restructure the entire body in its relationship with gravity by reorganizing the fascia. This is the principle of Structural Integration.



LEFT: a highly magnified picture of a dense, irregular connective tissue such as is found in the deep fascia of muscles. The irregular pattern of fibers provides resistance to stress exerted in many different directions. From Kessel and Kardon, 1981.



# Assumptions of Somatic Bodywork

What do we assume when we offer bodywork as a somatic solution?

## **Throughout history the Body has been called a Key to the Mysteries, a Vehicle for Conscious Evolution, and the Image of God**

All these metaphors indicate we are expecting much more from the body than some humdrum reality. Modern science has approached it in purely materialistic terms, as a physical object. In contrast, the somatic viewpoint takes into account its *experience*, its subjective being. But what are we assuming about it? What is it really?

The assumptions of any endeavor determines its outcome. In this case we are asking how the body and bodywork come together. What do we think we are doing?

## **Assumptions of Awareness-Oriented Bodywork**

According to Somatics, much of what has been called "The unconscious" may be simply the non-verbal, non-conceptual experience of the body. The same thing may be said for "the soul," the deeper, non-conceptualized core experience: on a basic level, "being" may be sensed, but not described in words. In that case, we have the peculiar situation in which the "soul" is really the "body", and both are more basic than the conscious mind.

Here is an attempt to specify what the assumptions are of this approach:

### **Assumption One. The sense of being is organized by awareness in the body.**

If a person identifies only with the mind or with the emotions, then fundamental aspects of existence are missing.

### **Assumption Two. The Organization of Awareness in the Body Determines the Experience of the World.**

The body is the "matrix" in that it determines the perception of reality. Tensions, defenses, energy blocks - these are all physical phenomena which, projected into life, determine how it is perceived. Releasing these blocks and bringing the body into better harmony is the means we have for changing that reality.

### **Assumption Three. The goal of hands-on bodywork is to contact and develop the physical awareness.**

In a sense we are not touching the body, but the person's awareness in the body. As the client pays conscious attention to the contact, deeper levels of physical awareness are contacted and h/she becomes more physically "present," a state of embodiment which lends perspective to thoughts and feeling processes.



**Assumption Four. The body is a safe entry-point for encountering the unconscious.**

Somatics is once again saying that our basic nature must be the source of our answers to life's questions. It has a basic trust in the Organic Wisdom of the body,, and in this it is supported by certain Oriental traditions (such as Zen Buddhism) which seek to uncover the Real Self and see the source of evil in the surface being.

The Body is a Grounded, Balanced, Integrated way to approach Basic Nature.

*"No bird flies too high that flies with its own wings."*  
[Blake]

**Assumption Five. The Basic Energies in a Human Being are Powerful, and Larger than Personal, but they are not Malignant.**

The terrible excesses which we call 'evil' come from the thwarting of natural life rather than from the nature of life itself. The movements of feeling and emotion are profound and powerful, but it is the elaboration of the mind and the selfishness of ego which are most likely to inflict harm. The solution to evil is a better relationship between the conscious and unconscious.

**Assumption Six. Spiritual Growth is Related to the Body.**

Higher, more integrated and "spiritual" experiences are 'hard-wired' into the nervous system, so that spiritual growth is also a body phenomenon, though distorting beliefs and mental attitudes must also be clarified. Conscious insight and self-observation are essential to spiritual maturity.

**Is the Body always Wise?**

Although we assume, generally, that the body wisdom is adaptive, this does not mean that it is always so. The body is always responding appropriately to the world it *thinks* it lives in. Therefore it is possible for it to be very confused by conscious mental activity. The mind has a thicket of beliefs and attitudes which have collected from a lifetime of experiences. These are not likely to be consistent, entirely adaptive, or remotely conscious. They still form the lens through which the body experiences life.

Bodywork, by redirecting attention to the physical awareness, reaches below much of this mental confusion, but there are still many possible sources of disruption and even disaster. Serious illnesses may also represent maladaptive responses of the body. Finally, there are deep issues of will and power which must be contained and directed, and these may be operating, uncurbed, at the body level. Once again, the problem resolves to a relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, the body and the mind.

Although bodywork is generally a safe and grounded way to approach the deep psyche, the bodyworker must always respect the power of the forces involved.



## Assumptions about Energy

Historically it has been difficult to discuss the topic of energy without being dismissed as irrational and unscientific. From Mesmer through Reich, history is full of intelligent and sensitive people who have tried to reason about their energetic experiences—and have been ignored, ridiculed, or even persecuted. For Western science energy is a thoroughly defined (measurable) physical concept, and what people experience as energy does not fit this definition. However it appears that subjectively experienced feelings of energy may be measurable physical energy after all.

### Energy and Touch Communication

In touch communication perception can be altered by attention, and many different introspective phenomena can be demonstrated. The 'vibration' or 'energy' which many people experience in touch, may be a perceptual registration of actual physical energy. If we are willing to take that step, for which an argument has been advanced by Oschman (1995) and Kagey (1998), then we are faced with a powerful implication: physical energy—not just thought—can be directed by the mind.

Some readers will not be willing to take this step, in which case we are still left with the conclusion that the perception of touch is highly directable by the attention, and may go far beyond the boundaries of the skin.

The flow of attention, receptivity, and response may be accurately sensed across the skin boundary. Both partners can perceive the degree, quality, and direction of the other partner's attention *even without perceptible movement*. How this can take place if touch is not energetic in the physical sense is not clear. If this is a perception of actual underlying electromagnetic events then a host of implications and possibilities arise.

### On the experiential side

It appears that subtle perceptual interactions in the touch communication could involve actual energetic transactions in which the flow of felt sensation can be altered with attention, and that intention can be directed toward levels of the body which are not directly palpable and nevertheless have definite effects. Organized perceptions, images and awarenesses are exchanged. Is this simply empathy? Some kind of emotional ability to "vicariously experience" the experience of another person? Or is the internal feeling of the body—and between bodies—perception of actual electromagnetic events?

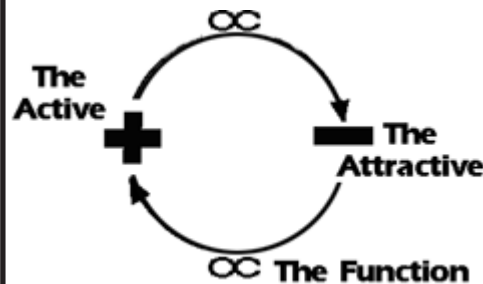


## TRIALECTICS

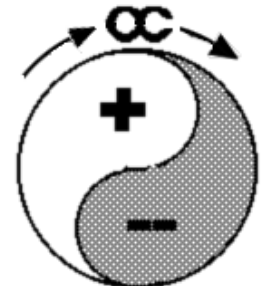
*"Trialectics" (Ichazo, 1982) is a 'logic' which understands change as a function of unfolding interacting elements moving toward equilibrium within an inclusive context. It is a logic based upon the assumption of Unity.*

*I have applied the Trialectic viewpoint through-*

Any process involves three elements—the Active (+), the Attractive (-), and the Function, or the movement toward equilibrium. The outcome is the Result, a new point of equilibrium, a new configuration.



The traditional "T'ai Chi" symbol shows active and attractive. The circle is the function



The possible configurations are preestablished patterns already contained within the situation. Acorns become oaks, not jackrabbits. There are higher and lower configurations, the higher being subject to fewer factors and elements. Blockage of the equilibrium, contradiction, results in a lower level resolution.

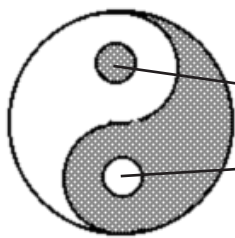
Opposites do not exist from a cosmic point of view.



## Many components of the body are generating electromagnetic energy.

At the tissue level this is true of the fascial system which, like an organic crystal, develops differences in potential when it is compressed. It is true also at the molecular level, since protein molecules are crystal structures which also develop minute electrical charges with compression. Every step, every breath has electromagnetic effects. The entire volume of the body must be a complex sea

Everything contains the seed of its apparent opposite and both are part of a larger whole. Equilibrium involves balanced circulation between them.



Each contains the seed of its apparent opposite: the active becomes attractive, the attractive becomes active.

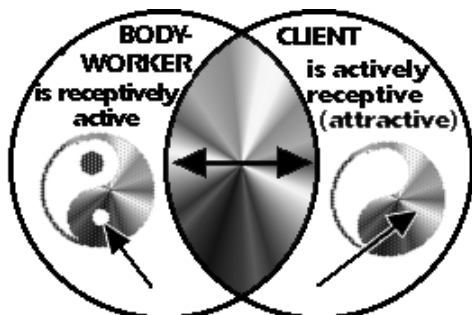
### What does this have to do with Hands-On Bodywork?

1. Active (+), and Attractive (-) are possible to feel. Control over the energy flow rests on the ability to decide, consciously, to take the active or the attractive position.

2. The client can be trained to take the attractive position.

3. The Active emerges from the attractive. The bodyworker becomes more spontaneous and intuitive, the deepest levels of the client begin to participate.

4. The result is already contained in the situation. Therefore there is no need to force the outcome. Awareness is sufficient to allow the situation to change to its next configuration. Noncontradiction ensures a higher resolution.



of electromagnetic event. Some of the body's electromagnetic effects are quite powerful: the pulse generated by the heartbeat (EKG) can be measured as much as fifteen feet away with proper instruments. Theoretically, the pulse continues through an infinite field.

Is all this just a separate level of phenomena, basic perhaps, but irrelevant to what we perceive?

## Some Questions

Are we, in our complex electromagnetic states, functioning as 'receivers' for electromagnetic information? What would be the sensory receptors for such information? How is it encoded and transmitted? Is what I feel inside your body, deep beneath my hands, a perception of electromagnetic signals you are actually generating?

And how about the feeling of the body in general: is it electromagnetic perception? Tension in the body blocks the flow of feeling and awareness. When areas of tension are significantly released, the interior of the body may be felt as a vibrating volume, the vibration being somewhat analogous to sound, although it is silent. Then we say the body is "open" and its external barriers are reduced. Is this an actual increase in the permeability to electromagnetic flow? Is "animal magnetism" (Mesmer) 'real' (related to material phenomena) as well as perceptible?

Henry Kagey has produced a model whereby certain concepts of "Chi" (Chinese concept of internally perceived energy) and its development might be understood as actual electromagnetic alterations in the body of the practitioner. The fascia of the limbs could be functioning like solenoids, changing the electrical nature of the bones. His reasoning is heuristic, and can lead to fruitful experiments.

My questions center upon the possible relationship between perception within the lived body and measurable electromagnetic events. If so, then my feelings, some of them, are then, within the limits of any perception, real. The interactions of touch communication would no longer be purely the empathic parallels between two fundamentally separate beings, but an actual exchange of electromagnetic information on a subtle level of sensitivity.

I want to know what happens on the electromagnetic level, when the person receiving touch, begins to "draw in" the sensation of that touch.

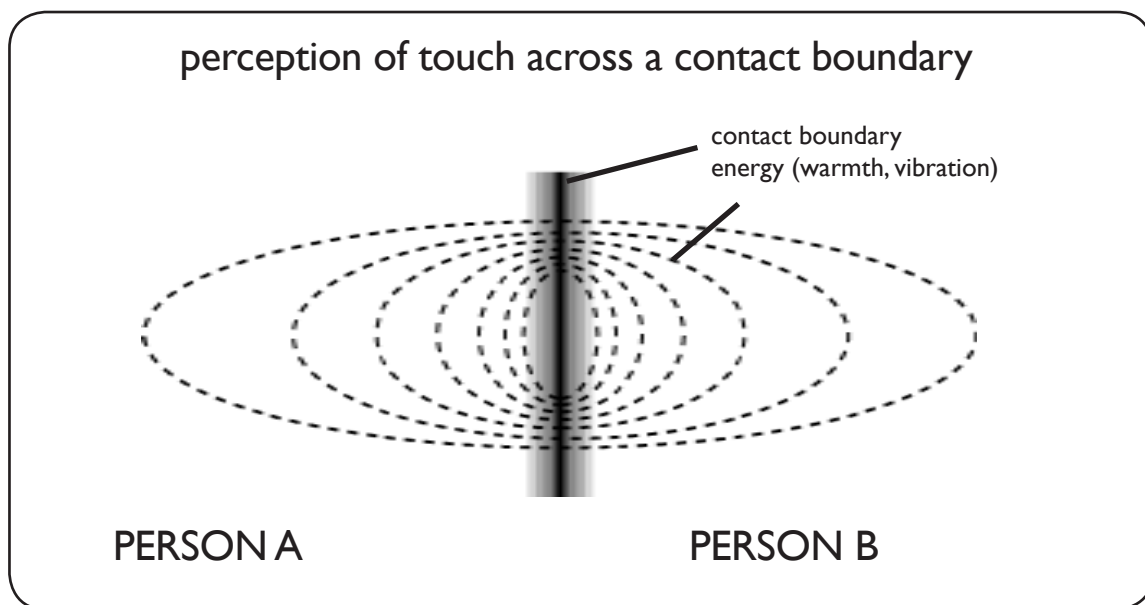


## Touch and Energy

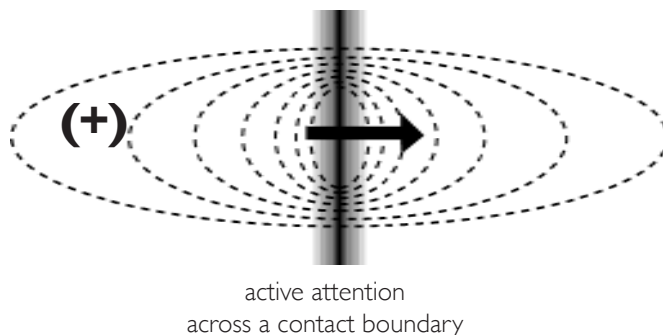
Touch reaches below the surface on both sides. Either person can influence the direction and depth of the touch energy by means of attention.

Anyone willing to attend to the matter will find that the experience of being touched is not limited to the surface of the body. The perception of a boundary is highly permeable and may disappear altogether. An immobile hand will radiate warmth (or chill) which is felt deeper in the body than the skin surface. The feeling of what is touched may come into the hand, or one may feel across the boundary to perceive many subtle cues within that body. The experience of touch, then, is not only of surfaces, but also of volumes. These relationships may be represented diagrammatically in this way: The 'Toucher' is on one side of the vertical line, the 'Touchee' is on the other. Lines of *feeling* (the 'touch perception') radiate on both sides of the point of contact- This *feeling* is called "energy" by many people.

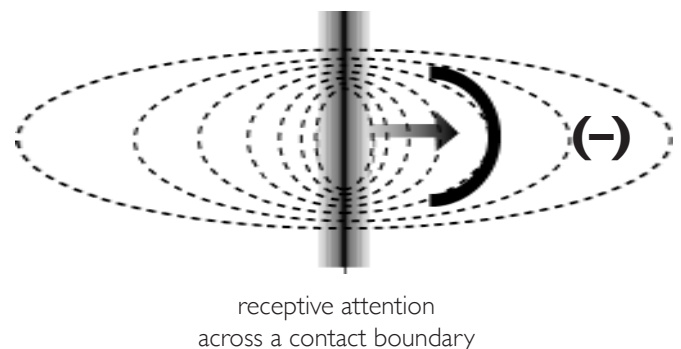
### Touch goes Deeper than the Surface



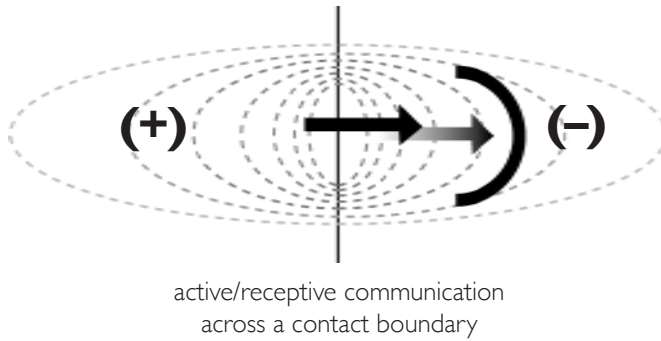
1. For example, we can speak of an active attention when someone directs attention across the contact boundary (into the other person) in order to perceive what is there. Active attention may be represented in this way:



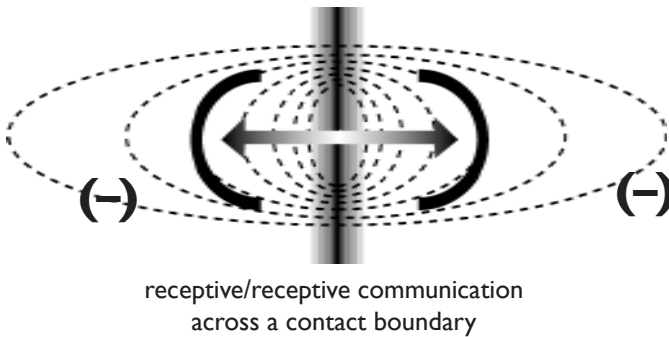
2. Similarly, either person can receptively 'draw in' the perception of the touch. Receptive attention may be represented thus:



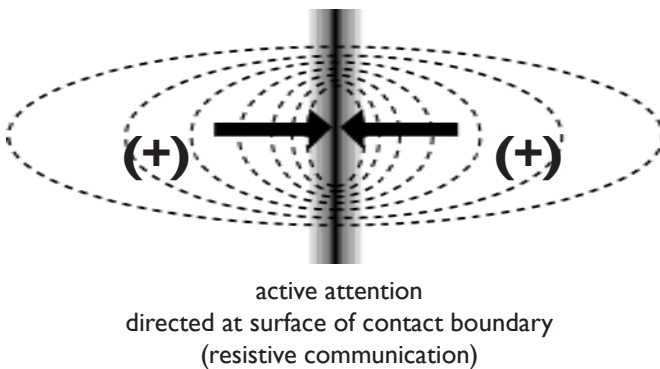
3. There can be various combinations between the two participants, which give rise to different patterns of communication:



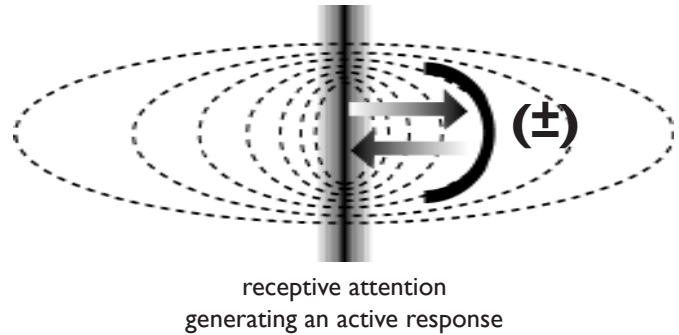
4. Both people can be receptive to the touch perception at the same time, as this diagram indicates.



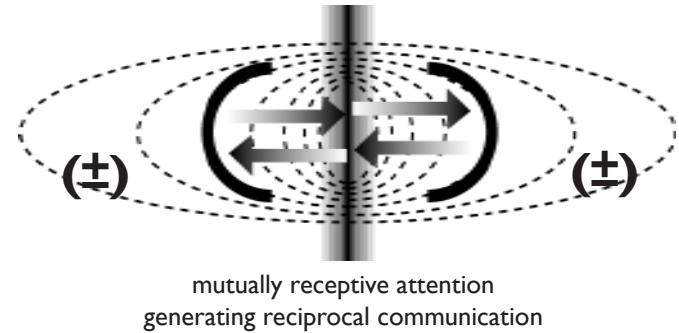
5. This diagram might illustrate a situation of conflict and resistance, in which both people are directing active attention at the contact boundary, trying to overcome (or withstand) each other,



6. Active and receptive attention circulate back and forth. In the midst of a receptive attitude, there may come a spontaneous, active response. This vitally important form of attention can be represented thus:



7. If both people are attending to the touch perception in this way, the result can be a mutual, circulating, reciprocal, communication—all at the level of touch:



8. Further, the flow of attention, receptivity, and response may be accurately sensed across the skin boundary. With training, both partners can perceive the degree, quality, and direction of the other partner's attention *even without perceptible movement*.



Touch communication is described here in terms of Tri-lectic Process: Active (+) and Attractive (-)

## Touch and Energy.

These relationships between perception and attention become especially interesting if we speculate that the internal perception of touch, deeper than the point of contact, is actually electromagnetic energy. This 'vibration' or 'energy' which many people experience in touch, may be a perception

of actual physical energy. If we are willing to take that step, for which an argument has been advanced by Oschman (1995) and Kagey (1998), then we are faced with a powerful implication:

***physical energy—not just thought—can be directed by the mind***



# The Energetics of Bodywork

An energetic interpretation of the bodywork process: the client and the bodyworker share energy across a common space. This engages each of their physical systems. A good somatic bodyworker is aware of his/r own body feelings and can guide the process to its best possible outcome.

Somatic body therapy is a transaction in interpersonal empathy

–on all levels, and with the whole body–

This empathy is energetic, and physical.

‘Tantra’ is a traditional term for the study of energy.

## Bodywork seen as an energetic process

We are sharing a field of energy with a client when we do bodywork. We can picture our own energy overlapping with that of the client as in the illustrations. The ‘mandorla’ is a traditional diagram for describing the interaction between two individuals or spheres. The overlapping area is shaped like an almond, and is called the ‘mandorla,’ which means almond in Sanskrit. Through the area of overlap can flow an increased energy—more energy than either partner has separately.

This field is, in very broad terms, *erotic*, because bodies are erotic. Physical energy is erotic, related to pleasure. This does not mean that it is specifically sexual, but only that it has a dynamic, which is the ebb and flow of attraction. The full, conscious use of this energy, so that the process comes to its best possible outcome, is an important empathic skill. The bodyworker can use her/his own body awareness to be sensitive to what is going on in the shared field.

In other words, somatic body therapy is a transaction in interpersonal empathy—on all levels, and with the whole body. *This empathy is energetic, and physical.*

The chakras or other maps of the central channel can serve as a useful map for understanding the shifting levels of interaction and attraction in the energy field. The bodyworker can use his/r body awareness in the different locations to assess the situation. Are feelings missing in the interaction? –is there not enough ‘heart’? –not enough clarity? –too much pressure? An adjustment in one’s own body may bring a change in the empathic field.

This kind of energy-awareness is sometimes called “Tantric.”

### The Mandorla

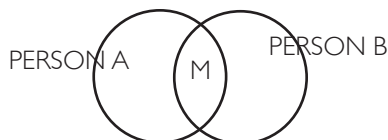
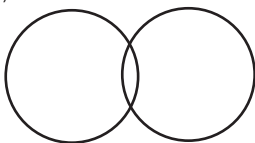
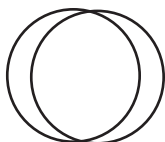


Figure A: Two people in any transaction: their fields of energy overlap. The central area (M) is traditionally called the ‘mandorla,’ (Sk. for ‘almond’). Energy can flow into this space—more energy than either person has separately.



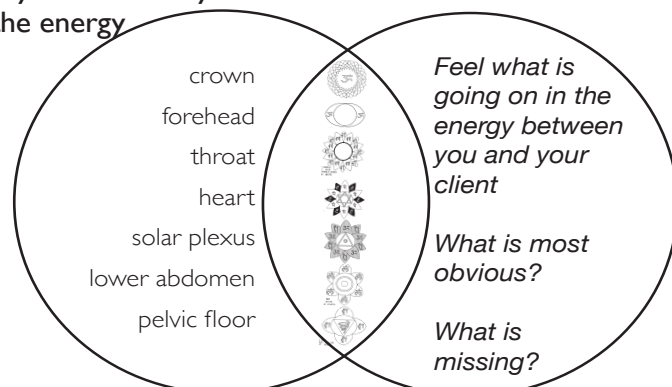
Some transactions are very superficial, with very little engagement of energy and feeling



Other relationships are so absorbing that neither partner has much separate identity. Here the overlap might illustrate a co-dependent couple.

### The centers of the central axis can be used to ‘map’ the energetic interaction between two people.

Sense your own body to feel the energy

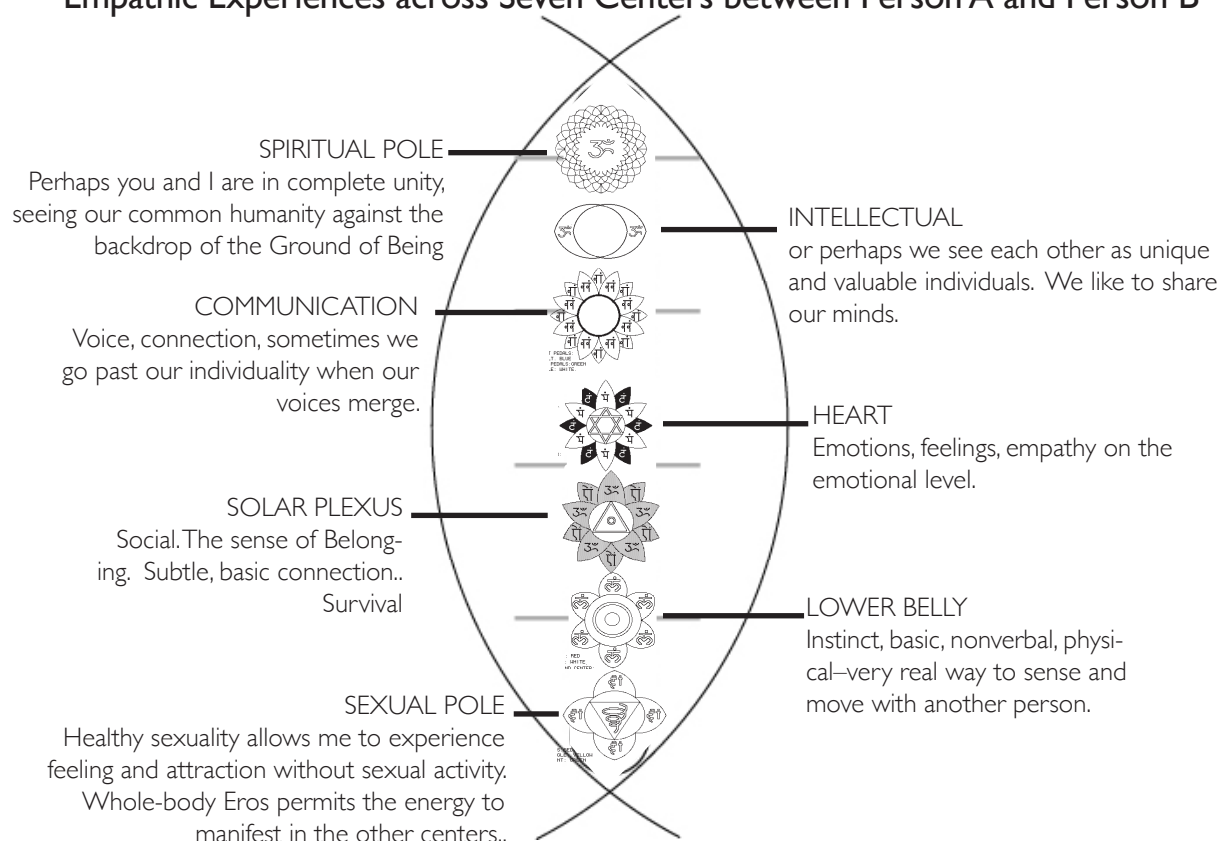


## Energetic Empathy across the Chakras

...personal impressions.

Sensing the different levels or centers along the central axis of the body helps to understand what a person might experience empathically with other people. Other maps of interior centers might work just as well. The point is only to use one's own body awareness to feel the bodywork session. Although the energy exchange is linked with sexuality, it is a more generalized Eros of the whole person which can be moved and channeled toward its highest possibilities of communication.

### Empathic Experiences across Seven Centers between Person A and Person B







## Skinrolling

The skin is the outer boundary of the self in the world. Loosening the skin from the underlying layers of fascia can clarify the body awareness and even the mind. Skinrolling has a powerful psychological impact.

### Theory.

We can think of the brain and skin as a single unit. The skin is the sensory surface of the brain. The brain is the internal coordinator of the skin. The skin is our boundary with the world. It must be the site of continual thought and fantasy about the surrounding world. Past experiences are felt as anticipations. We could say the skin is “thinking” about the surrounding world, and its “thoughts” are what the more internal levels of the body, the muscles and guts, are responding to.

The skin is the shape of my being in the world. It is my *body image* as no other system of my body can be. It is endowed with myriad nerve endings, through which my brain can feel the world. If there are areas of distortion, illusion, or numbness, these relay a distorted image to the brain.

Chaitow says he finds “lesions” in the skin layer, and these often reflect deeper organ situations. What can be happening in the skin? and how can it be related to deeper layers?

The skin has its own motility. Skin “crawls” and it tightens into goosebumps. This is very different from the movement of muscles and bones, but it is an ancient form of movement nonetheless. We can assume that these movements of the skin are related to the skin’s perceptions of the world and that anticipation, memory, and fantasy can mold these perceptions.

The arm which is forever tensed against being beaten may be communicating its tension into the skin, where tightening of the supportive matrix of the skin at that spot becomes chronic. The tension of the skin may help bear the load of muscles attempting to maintain an unbalanced position. Similarly, the aching stomach or the painful liver can be suppressed with tightening in the skin. And even the intolerable longing of the aching heart or the ancient terror might be suppressed by a thickened skin.

When the skin is pinched, a roll of skin is lifted off the underlying fascia. As the roll is moved along between the thumb and index finger, sore places are encountered. These areas of intense sensation are clearly places where something is going on. Sometimes the soreness appears to be in the skin layer itself, and sometimes in the margin between skin and external fascia. When the soreness is tolerated with a certain amount of equanimity, it becomes apparent that the charged stimulation is being released and the area of the body is left with a tingling, alive feeling. What is happening? Small thickened places in the skin are being relaxed. Binding between skin and external fascia is being released. Nerves are being stimulated, and circulation down to the external fascia is being released.

The technique of skin rolling is very simple. Grasp the skin between thumbs and forefingers, then move the welt thus created along the vertical axis of the body. Where the skin is very thin and tightly attached to the underlying structures, for example in the back of the calf, it may be difficult to grasp. Try, nevertheless, to keep a welt and roll it along. The same is true where the skin becomes quite thick, for example in the back of the thigh or the buttocks. It can still be rolled, even though you may be pinching a large amount of flesh.

Skinrolling helps to open clients up in psychotherapy. People with histories of violence or sexual abuse often do not want to be touched, and skinrolling has sometimes proved helpful in getting around this resistance. I once taught skinrolling to a group of recovering heroin addicts in Holland. These people, who were initially very resistive, ended the session very happy and relaxed. Later, all of them reportedly opened up in their group therapy sessions.

<sup>1</sup>Chaitow, *Neuromuscular Technique*.

<sup>2</sup>Montagu is the real poet of the skin. I have borrowed extensively from his descriptions in *Touching: the human significance of the skin*.



## A complete body skin-rolling



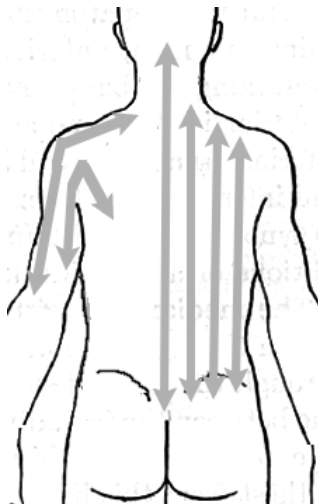
### 1. Anterior leg

- Start between 1st and 2nd toes, roll up middle of ankle, along lateral edge of shin, across knee, up mid-thigh to anterior superior iliac spine (ASIS).
- Begin between 4th and 5th toes, roll up lateral foot, up anterior surface of fibula, lateral kneecap, antero-lateral thigh to ASIS.
- Begin at side of 1st toe, side of foot, under medial malleolus, up posterior edge of tibia, medial kneecap, medial thigh to ASIS.



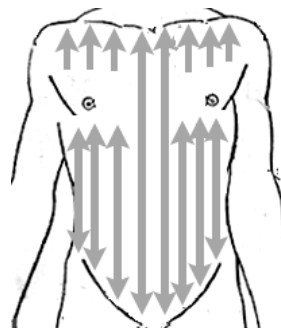
### 2. Posterior leg

- Start at center of heel, roll up middle of calf, knee and thigh to posterior superior iliac spine (PSIS).
- Begin on lateral heel, roll up lateral calf, knee and thigh, across buttock to PSIS.
- Begin at medial heel, up postero-medial calf, knee, and thigh, across buttock to PSIS.



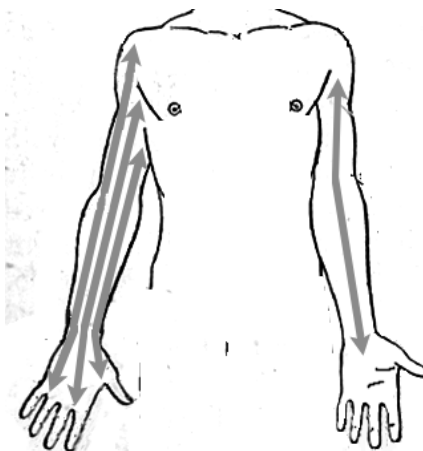
### 3. Posterior Torso

- Start on the middle of coccyx, roll up along spinal processes to base of skull.
- Begin below iliac crest, one or two inches to the left of the previous stroke and roll to top of shoulder. Repeat two more times.
- Repeat step b on the right of the spine.
- Begin at elbow. Roll up to scapula as shown in diagram.



### 4. Anterior Torso

- Start at pubic bone to side of midline. Roll up to clavicle.
- Repeat at one inch intervals to the left. On women, stop below the breast and continue above to clavicle.



### 5. Arms

- Start between index and middle fingers, Roll across back of hand and up arm to shoulder.
- Start between ring and little finger and repeat.
- Start between thumb and index finger and repeat.
- Start at middle of palm and repeat

The next section is intended to sketch some of the concept clusters which relate to somatic psychology. In this theoretical space are all the old concepts—attention, thought, movement, space, time, intuition, imagination, soul, emotion, attraction, pleasure and pain—all pulled together and “defined” again around a primary point of entry, the “moment of touch.”

There is no attempt here to bring all the concepts into a tightly articulated theory. The presentations are short summaries intended to serve as a basis for discussions in a graduate-level seminar. For this we don’t need ‘truth’ in any fixed sense, but simply conceptual clusters that we dialogue about. Such a webwork of concepts can accommodate a great deal of disagreement about particular points. Dialogue serves to add richness to the space: more concept-clusters, and more lines of relationship.

A THEORETICAL SPACE is rather like a three-dimensional fishnet in which the concepts are the crosspoints of the net, and the relationships between concepts are the strings. If one looks at a fishnet through a fish-eye lens, particular nodes and connections swim into prominence according to the point of focus.

As much as possible the “definitions” have an embodied referent: (e.g., ‘soul’ is what moves when “I am moved.”) In a sense I am going back through psychology and attempting to ground its concepts once again in experience.

# III. Somatic Topics



Sensation and Perception are the basis of all experience. Is there some way in which bodywork can alter experience through the senses?



Consciousness refers to whatever part of my awareness I am aware of experiencing. Obviously the mind and its psychology has a major role in forming the body experience.



Body Wisdom refers to the deeper body awareness, its instincts, and its tendency toward adaptation. It is not always conscious.



Energy is perceptible feeling or vibration. It can be directed and influenced by the mind. "Trialectics" is a useful model for understanding the movement of energy.



Movement, the fifth major topic of somatics, is not yet included in this manual.

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# The Mind (Soul) and the Body: how are they related?

Are human beings composed of two parts, a material body and a nonmaterial mind or soul?

Or are humans purely physical beings? This ancient philosophical question serves as a point of intersection between a variety of scientific developments and a variety of theological concerns.

Many scientists and philosophers today suppose that the person is but one substance—a physical body. Evolutionary biology and genetics both suggest our continuity with other life forms. The most striking recent evidence for such a view comes from current advances in cognitive science and the various neurosciences.

Neuroscience has in a sense completed the Darwinian revolution, bringing not only the human body but the human mind as well, into the sphere of scientific investigation. In particular, nearly all of the human capacities or faculties once attributed to the soul are now seen to be functions of the brain.

Localization studies—that is, finding the regional structure or distributed system in the brain responsible for such things as language, emotion, and decision-making—provide especially strong motivation for saying that it is the brain that is responsible for these capacities, not some immaterial entity associated with the body.

Here is a historical survey of the major positions which philosophers have taken through the ages.

## The Dualists

**For some thinkers, the sheer complexity of the mind makes a purely physical explanation unlikely**

**Plato (427?-348 B.C.E.)**

Plato, the most influential dualist for Western thought, described the person as an immortal soul imprisoned in a mortal body.

**Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.)**

Aristotle thought of the soul not as an entity, but more as a life principle—that aspect of the person that provides the powers or attributes characteristic of the human being. Plants and animals have souls as well. A vestige of Aristotle's earlier, Platonic dualism remains in his speculation that perhaps one aspect of rationality (Nous) survives death. This does not amount to personal immortality, since Nous is an impersonal rational faculty.



**Rene Descartes (1596-1650)**

Considered the originator of modern scientific philosophy, Descartes proposed a radical dualism of substances. He distinguished two basic kinds of realities, extended substance (*res extensa*) and thinking substance (*res cogitans*); the latter included angels and human minds. (Notice the shift from 'souls' to 'minds'.)

**If we have a dual nature, then how are body and soul (brain and mind) related?**

**Psychophysical parallelism**

This is the view that physical events cause physical events, that mental events cause mental events, and that the appearance of causal interaction between the mental and the physical is an illusion created by the fact that there is a preestablished harmony between these two independent causal chains. This harmony is either established from the beginning by God or is the result of constant divine interventions. Gotthfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) was one proponent of this theory.

**Epiphenomenalism**

This is the theory that conscious mental life is a causally inconsequential by-product of physical processes in the brain. The brain causes our thoughts, but our thoughts cannot influence the brain.

## The Monists

### Mind-Only Monism

**Impressed with the power the mind has to shape our experience, some thinkers have concluded that the basic nature of reality is mind, or spirit.**



William Blake, poet (1757-1827) offered a version of mind-only monism in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793):

"All Bibles or sacred codes have been the causes of the following Errors:

1. That Man has two real existing principles:  
Viz: a Body and a Soul,
2. That Energy, call'd Evil, is alone from the Body; & that Reason, call'd Good, is alone from the Soul,
3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies.

But the following Contraries to these are True:

1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul; for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.
2. Energy is the only life, and is from the Body, and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.
3. Energy is Eternal Delight."

Blake's resolution of the body-mind dualism is to recognize that body is one level of the psyche or soul - the portion which can be perceived by the senses. For bodyworkers this is to say that the body is the aspect of psyche we can get our hands on. We can reach through the body to touch the psyche.

### Matter-Only Monism

**More recently the balance has shifted in philosophy of mind from dualism to a variety of forms of materialism or physicalism.**

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) was a materialist, who described thinking as "motions about the head" and emotions as "motions about the heart."

Logical behaviorism, (1930s to early 1960s),

Talk of mental phenomena is a shorthand (and misleading) way of referring to actual and potential behavior, which is all that really exists. Gilbert Ryle (1900-1976) ridiculed the Cartesian mind as "the ghost in the machine." The view of the mind as a substance or object rests on a "category mistake" of assuming that because "mind" is a noun there must be an object that it names.

While Ryle's critique of dualism is widely accepted as definitive, it has not proved possible to translate language about the mind into language about behavior and dispositions.

#### **"Non-Reductive Physicalism"**

Recent brain research has been able to locate the physical basis of so many functions of the soul that even theologians are coming to consider that the soul may be not be a separate "substance" but rather a manifestation arising from the physical body.

"Reductive" materialism would then argue that mental phenomena are 'nothing but' physical events. But is this reduction necessary?

"Non-reductive physicalism" agrees that the physical brain is necessary for mental events to take place, but the mental events cannot be reduced to 'nothing but' brain activities. Mental phenomena themselves form higher order patterns (such as attitudes, or personality) which can double back and alter the course of physical events. For example, emotional attitudes seem to influence the functioning of the immune system.

\*Brown, Murphy, & Malony (eds.) *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* (1998)





# Sensation, Perception, and Consciousness

## What is the Relation between Sensation and Consciousness?

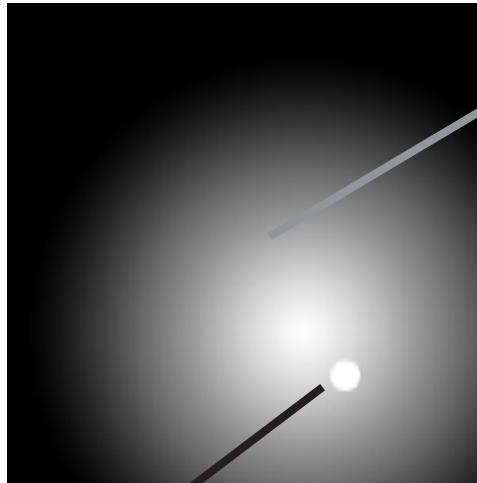
One of the great questions of philosophy and psychology has been whether there exists in consciousness anything which was not previously put there by sensory experience. Is there anything *à priori* (from before that), such as an innate knowledge of God, for example?

Whatever the answer, it is clear that sensory input plays a major role in organizing our consciousness.

**Bodywork may make its major impact by altering the balance between the senses and by increasing a person's contact with the sensory present.**

## The Field of Awareness

The Field of **Awareness** is the entire circumference of one's awareness at any particular moment, represented by the entire black square. The limits of the field are unknowable, since it shades by degrees into microscopic and cellular events which imply awareness (reactivity), but not consciousness.

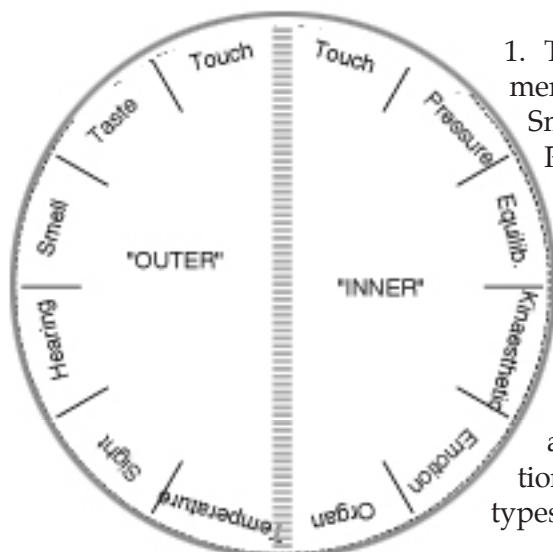


**Consciousness**, represented by the sphere of gray, is reflexive awareness – that portion of which one can be *aware of being aware*. At any moment, much of consciousness remains outside of focused awareness. It is potentially conscious, or “pre-conscious” but unattended.

**Attention** is focused awareness which selects what will be fully conscious within the broader area of potential consciousness.

## The Sensory Sphere and the Physical Present

Consciousness is grounded, first of all, in sensory experience. The Senses convey energy and movement outside and inside the organism. This information is always in the temporal present



1. The External Senses convey energy and movement from the environment into the psyche. Sight, Smell, Taste, Hearing, Touch, Temperature, and Pressure are usually listed as external Senses

2. The Internal Senses convey information about the state of the internal body, its position in gravity, and its emotional and visceral events. Kinaesthesia, Equilibrium, Temperature, Touch, Pressure, Organ Senses, and Emotional Senses compose internal sensation, which is complex and involves many different types of receptors.



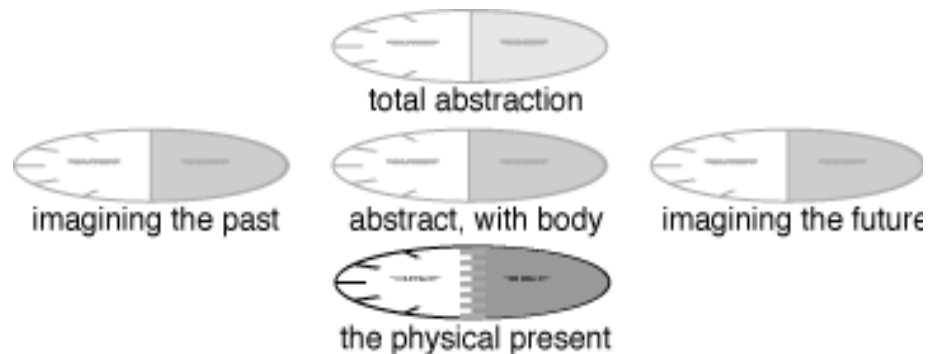
## The Conscious Psychic Process

### Consciousness

The word 'consciousness' was first used by English philosopher, John Locke (1632-1704) to refer to reflexive awareness, the awareness of being aware.

Consciousness is not limited to sensory experience in the here-and-now. Because the field of awareness includes also "representations" (thoughts, remembered sensations, and so forth) the conscious psychic process moves away from the physical present in various ways. This movement occurs because of the nature of thought, which is capable of representing past, future, and various degrees of abstraction, and because of the nature of feeling, which associates different representations according to affective similarities. Thus, the point of attention moves between several different polarities:

- (1) between external and internal perception
- (2) between present time and past or future
- (3) between concrete and abstract



### Attention

Attention is a learned faculty which brings into focus particular areas of the field of consciousness. Not all areas of consciousness are equally accessible to attention. Attention is closely related to the will, and is the faculty which is most free. This freedom must be learned.

### Thinking.

Thinking is a process in which images are manipulated and made to interact. It is not a completely passive reverie: various kinds of will or intention are involved: the images are manipulated to solve a problem or arrive at a conclusion. This is thinking: a trial 'space'. Any thought is a rehearsal in an imagined space composed by various senses.

Thinking works with different kinds of images: derived from vision, from kinaesthetic sensations of balance and volume, from hearing, taste, and smell. All these may be manipulated and, being images, or representations, they are not themselves present experiences.

There is a special kind of thinking which works with words and the concepts formed by language. This verbal-conceptual thinking represents a step further away from experience from sensory images. Language has already broken down the infinite flux of reality into recognizable elements. Cause, effect, self, other, and a host of other forms are already structured by language.

### Feeling

Feeling is distinct from sensation and perception in that an evaluation is placed upon the percept. That is, some part of the core being connects with the experience and evaluates it. Pleasure is not a sensation, but a feeling. **Feelings are body feelings.**

There are images derived from feeling and hence feeling-oriented thinking. Although feeling itself is a here-and-now process the images derived from feeling are not. Let no feeling-oriented person critique someone who thinks in other images for 'thinking too much': feeling-oriented thinking is just as removed from here-and-now experience as any other.

### Perception

The Senses are not experienced directly, but are organized and interpreted by a psychic process called "Perception" which is learned. Thus every perception is to some extent an experience of the past



## Relationship with the Unconscious

**Somatics is only a contemporary addition to the long list of philosophical and spiritual traditions which have placed special importance upon the body as a gateway to higher experience.**

The psychoanalytic quest for a relationship with "The Unconscious" has always implied a relationship with deeper aspects of the physical awareness.

**W**hat we have is a contemporary answer to the problem of how to relate with the unconscious.

For Freud, there was not much question of *relating* to the unconscious, because he saw it as essentially chaotic and self-centered. His goal was to establish ego consciousness. "Where id is, there shall ego be." Perhaps this was understandable in terms of his neurotic patients, whose consciousness had been invaded by repressed contents.

Jung, however, while conceding the potential destructiveness of the unconscious, nevertheless saw it as more organized – organically organized – and more adaptive. It contained not only contents which had been pushed out of consciousness, but also much which had *not yet* appeared in consciousness, and it also faded off into the mists of physical processes which *could never* become conscious. Moreover, he saw a mode of relationship which he called "compensation," in which conscious and unconscious were already balancing one another across various polar opposites. His goal with his clients, a very different, more adaptively successful group than Freud's patients, was to build a relationship in which the consciousness maintained an open attitude allowing the creative productions of the unconscious to enter. The ego in fact abandoned its claim to be the sole entity. A higher entity, called the 'Self' could emerge from the union of consciousness and the unconscious.

In these terms, somatic bodywork can be seen as an approach to the unconscious through the basic sensory awareness of the actual physical body. By maintaining awareness of the here-and-now experience of touch and movement, the client can maintain connection with the ongoing moment rather than diverting into the emotional or mental productions of the mind.

### **The power of the here and now**

"[W]e forget that our real being can only be found by being in the present time. When we are living in this Pure Present, 'here and now,' a mind of pure emptiness and Pure Light arises. By the specific mind of being in the present, we can look at reality without the duality of like and dislike, love and hate, or good and bad." –Oscar Ichazo, 1999.

## Historical Background: The Search for the Unconscious

Somatics comes in the wake of an historical development in social consciousness. There was a remarkable return of interest to the individual, subjective person 250 years ago. The preceding period, called "The Enlightenment" (ca. 1600-1750) was exceedingly invested in reason and rationality. Modern science was born then, and the Industrial Revolution occurred as a result. By the end of the enlightenment, the religious imagery which had allowed people in previous centuries to relate to irrational forces was no longer effective, and a new psychology was required.

Then came "Romanticism." Jean-Jacques Rousseau may be taken as an early representative of this movement. He was a French writer who captivated a generation of readers with ideas of natural living and personal freedom. The French Revolution at the end of the century (1789) was partly influenced by Rousseauian ideals. Of course it had far from ideal consequences. The later English romantics (Wordsworth, Coleridge), reeling from the failure of the French Revolution, turned inward, toward subjective experience. This inevitably led to a greater awareness, and thus to the "discovery of the unconscious." Personal experience became important in an entirely new way, but something else was in there too— a non-personal, irrational force outside of conscious control. It was variously seen as dangerous, alluring, exciting, morbid or creative, but always it was powerful. By the latter 1800's the idea of the unconscious had achieved the status of a major cultural theme. Nietzsche pointed to the 'Dionysian' forces underneath 'Apollonian' consciousness. In this way the unconscious was born into both literature and in psychiatric practice.

Freud observed the unconscious natural forces in the symptoms of his neurotic patients. Like a biologist, he attempted to base his psychology of the unconscious

upon fundamental instinct, which he thought to be "Eros," the pleasure principle. Others, such as Adler, followed Nietzsche in seeing the will to power as the basic biological motive.

Jung was less interested in reducing his observations to fundamental biological instincts, but saw the unconscious as an ancient terrain of collective human experience where prototype images (archetypes) gave meaning or disruption to personal lives.

### **The "unconscious" became a problem of relationship.**

The conscious rational being had to come to terms with "The Unconscious," which often acted like an organic being, a separate entity within. It could give meaning to life, but could also swallow a person in its swirling, super-personal chaos.

The Romantics had an very optimistic view of the natural creature. Rousseau published an educational novel *Emile*, in which the perfect education required that the student be kept away from the corruptions of society in order to develop natural, wholesome interests. As the movement decayed, its self-indulgent excesses became more evident. A darker picture of human nature emerged.

In the hands of 20th Century psychoanalysts, the relation with the unconscious was pursued in a very cautious manner. The "id" was a cauldron of unsocialized instinctual energy. The unblocking of natural human energies needed to be done very carefully. Professional help was needed. The human potential movement, emerging in the neo-romantic surge of the late 1960's, returned to the earlier, more positive view. Body therapies, encounter groups, and other processes encouraged people to trust themselves and to invite the creative internal being into expression. A new relationship with the unconscious was being born into portions of society.



## “The Creature”

This may be the most important metaphor for bodyworkers, that we touch a more real, more essential level of a person's being than words or social interactions can reach.

**W**e have said that bodywork is an excellent way to put people in contact with the Body Wisdom, and that this is an important aspect of its therapeutic potential. What is the nature of this Body Wisdom, this natural intelligence, and how does it help to touch it?

There are various terms for the body wisdom. I like “The Creature,” which evokes a sense of natural intelligence that is organic and Real, as distinct from mental or contrived. “Being” is another evocative term. Being itself is not completely knowable, but it is certainly at the basis of our experiencing.

### The Inner Being

We are going to encounter again and again the idea that the human personality consists of two distinct entities, often imagined as inner and outer layers. The outer layer is our conscious “I”, involved with the external world in various ways. The inner layer is not as familiar to us, though it may have everything to do with the actual destiny of our lives. This inner layer has been called the “Essence,” or pure Being. “Soul” is another frequent term. Freud called it “Das Es,” (‘the thing’ in English, ‘id’ in Latin) and considered it a thoroughly dangerous phenomenon. We will be encountering this image of an interior being in many forms. It is an important part of body psychology.

But how is this inner being to be conceptualized? Arnold Mindell, a Jungian derived therapist, calls it “Dream Body.” It is an entity which can never be completely known, but which manifests in our conscious lives in the form of dreams, creativity, spontaneous dance and movement, illness, and “emotional processing.”

### How Somatic Bodywork Works

It is easy to conceive of hands-on bodywork interacting with the inner being, at least part of it, because it uses touch, and because touch interacts with other interior body senses, such as kinaesthesia.

The Principle of Awareness tells us that “aware-

ness is what makes change.” Through touch and other interior senses, the inner awareness of the body is contacted and mobilized. This is absolutely crucial for Somatic Bodywork, because that awareness enables all kinds of change. The inner being is touched, becomes more aware, begins to participate with the outer consciousness, and change takes place.

The bodyworker's attitude is “Touch to Know.” Rather than having a busy agenda of strokes and techniques to be applied to an inert client, he/she understands that technique flows from perception, from an ongoing interaction with the client. It is the client's awareness that is being touched, not the objective, body-as-thing.

The four steps of training the client are absolutely crucial for bringing the contact into the deepest levels of the client's being. When all four steps have been established, “The Creature” is fully participating in the bodywork process, making use of the contact, and inviting further interaction.

#### **Arnold Mindell. The “Dreambody”**

“Dreambody” is Arnold Mindell's dynamic name for the unconscious. This creature, though not entirely knowable, has quite organic manifestations in many different arenas of our lives. It is as if the same creature were doing our dreaming, our creating, our illnessing, and our processing.

Mindell, a Jungian analyst by training, has developed a body-oriented psychotherapy which has often been successful in reaching the deep body-psyche to reverse life-threatening disease processes.

## Two fundamentally different attitudes toward inner being

There are two very different attitudes toward the inner being to be found in Western culture. In the more traditional one, human nature is basically flawed. In the other, human nature is basically perfect, but obscured by illusion. The two viewpoints lead to quite different approaches to people, especially in therapy and education.

The first viewpoint is derived from traditional Christianity, with its doctrine of original sin. If our deepest nature is sinful, then it needs to be saved by the intervention of an outside source. Education in this vein tends to be highly directive, aimed at molding people into acceptable forms.

The second viewpoint is sometimes associated with Romanticism, one of the recurrent themes in our culture. It is especially the romanticism of Rousseau which finds its way into most “new age” thinkers. Here our deeper nature is fine: the distortion is on the surface, in our social conditioning, or in the ego which is deluded by the illusion of duality. This theme, expressed with greater profundity, is also to be found in some of the Eastern traditions, such as Zen. Education or therapy based on this viewpoint is more optimistic about what there is to work with. The great consciousness movement of the 1960’s was one of our Neo-Romantic periods, and it is no accident that contemporary bodywork and massage grew out of those optimistic times.

Bodywork, of course, can be done from either

viewpoint, but I think it fits most congenially with the optimistic assumption that the inner being is, if not perfect, at least generally adaptive, and that bodywork can help to contact it. If “everything works perfectly when we know how to get out of the way,” then we are helping get out of the way.

It is easy to slip into an original sin mode of thinking, though, when we begin to *combat* the things which are wrong with the person’s body. Incidentally, Freud’s therapy, with its implicit distrust of the “id,” expressed the traditional pessimism.

The romantic viewpoint has its difficulties, however, as Camille Paglia has pointed out in her *Sexual Personae* (1990). Romanticism has a very shallow understanding of nature, which, far more than its surface prettiness, also includes awesome and irresistible phenomena far larger than human-scale. Most of it, in other words, is unlivable. Her word is “chthonic” [earthy, infernal]. Our sexuality is the most intimate way we experience chthonic nature. We like to dress it up as love and tenderness, but is that all of it? Paglia asserts that it is not. Sadomasochism, rape, and all the other intrusions of dominance into sexuality may be just as inherent in our nature as love. Society may not be responsible for the evil we find in ourselves: it may be our ever-so-flimsy protection against it.

How does this affect bodyworkers? I think we do well to remain optimistic about the nature we are uncovering in our clients, yet guard ourselves against naiveté. New age thinking tends to disregard power, especially in its uglier manifestations, only to be surprised, shocked, and indignant when power arises.





## Somatic Maps

“Where I center in my body determines my experience.” Different physiological systems, centers, even parts of the body appear to make different contributions to consciousness. A variety of maps have evolved out of meditation and somatic practices. Although individual systems vary, there appear to be certain general clusters.

### **Many somatic traditions have mapped the subjective experience of the body.**

Beginning with the easy-to-observe difference between the internal, private self, and the exterior, public self, almost anyone can agree on an inner-outer distinction and hence there are numerous inner-outer maps. (Ultimately, of course, the distinction is an illusion: the perception of an external world is constructed by interior sensory processes, and thus inner and outer are really one. Nevertheless it is essential to distinguish between ‘interior’ fantasy and ‘exterior’ action.)

Three-centers maps are almost as common, beginning with the difference one can feel between physical, mental, and emotional processes.

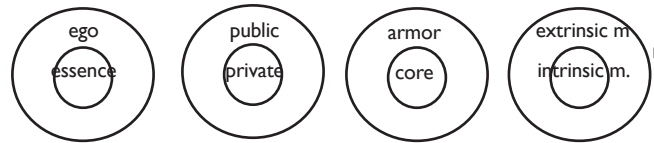
There are also many “central axis maps” which describe experiential differences between centers at various levels along the vertical core of the body.

And, finally, there are a few maps which are quite unique: the meridians of Chinese medicine, the centers of the Kabbalah, and the Mentational system of Arica.

### **“Inner and Outer”**

The most widespread “map” of the body distinguishes the inner from the outer. Beginning with the basic discovery of SELF (inner) and NOT-SELF (outer). We develop EGO, an Outer Being to deal with the world, and ESSENCE, which remains close to our intimate existence.

There are parallels in other systems: EXTRINSIC AND INTRINSIC muscle in the motor system, ARMOR and CORE for impulse and defense,





## “Central Axis” Maps

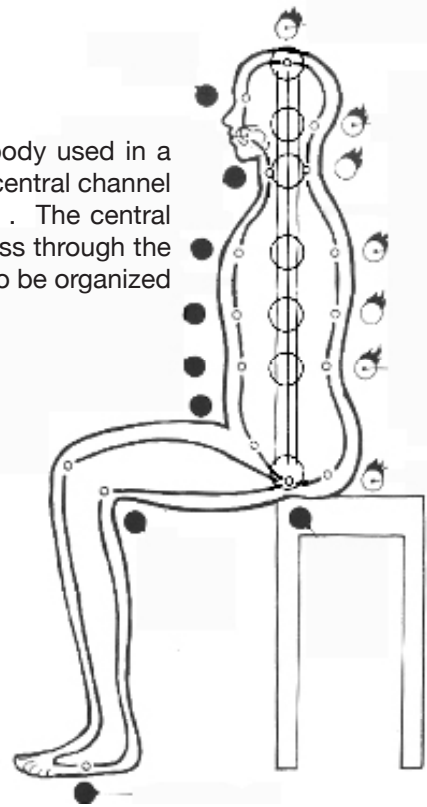
The diagram to the right shows a fairly typical map of the body used in a spiritual meditation practice. (Mantak Chia, 1984) It shows a central channel with its centers of awareness as well as an external channel. The central centers are energized indirectly by circulating breath awareness through the outside channel. This is also typical for the outer awareness to be organized in order to awaken the inner.

### Seven Chakras

In Indian yoga and meditation practice, chakras (means “wheels”) are internal centers of awareness. There are various systems, which differ somewhat, but the chakras are usually found near the central axis of the torso and head. They correspond to internal glands and nerve plexes, and they present different levels of consciousness.

### Arica’s Nine Hypergnostic Rings

Like Chakras, the Hypergnostic System of Arica locates centers near the central axis of the body. These centers, however, are considered to be the points of awareness for nine different physiological systems.



## Other Maps

There are no doubt as many maps of the body as there are spiritual traditions that have made use of the body. Most of these can be shown to be forms of the inner-outer, three-centers, or central-axis maps. Some, however, appear to be approaching the body in their own unique ways.

### “Mentations”

The Mentation Map of Arica describes **how the physical body thinks**. These twelve parts and organs can analyze anything into twelve “ontological” categories. This particularly interesting model of the body wisdom is an auditory model: the body can listen with all of its parts.

### Meridians

Chinese medicine maps the body into energy flows, or meridians. Included in this extremely complex theory are important insights into emotional imbalance and psychological distress.

### Kabbala: the tree of life.

Kabbalistic mysticism identifies 10 ‘sephiroth’ arranged in a diagram called the tree of life. This is a cosmic map of process, but it relates to levels of consciousness and parts of the body as well.



## Three Centers Maps

### The Three Phenomenal Worlds of Ludwig Binsvanger.

Binswanger set out to understand human experience by using an extremely rigorous method of self-observation. In so doing, he discovered that he could discern three distinctly different realms of experience, which he called the 'eigenwelt' (one's own world), the 'mitwelt' (the world of people), and the 'umwelt' (the surrounding world). Interestingly, these three "worlds" seem to corroborate Oscar Ichazo's instinctual theory. Whether we speak internally, of instincts, or externally, of the worlds they project, the phenomena appear to be the same.

The Chinese use of the *I Ching*, the Book of Changes, is in some respects similar to these three centers systems. The bottom two lines of a hexagram are sometimes interpreted in terms of "earth" - grounding,

the mundane, the practical. The middle two lines are interpreted as "man" - relations? the 'mitwelt'? Finally, the top two lines interpreted as "heaven" is sometimes like the broader view of adaptation or 'umwelt.'

### Other Three Factor Theories

There are other theories which are different from those covered above. Freud's Id-Ego-Superego, for example, has a physical instinctual entity, the "Id", which is similar to the kath, but the ego and superego are not as physically based as the Arica centers.

This is also true of systems like the Kahuna or DMA, which speak of Lower Self, Conscious Self, and Higher Self. The first is like the instinctual kath, but the other two, like Freud's, are on a different dimension. Compare also the many people who speak of Body-Mind-Spirit triad.

### THREE CENTERS THEORIES

#### Arica Theory

emphasizes three instincts and how they relate to the major parts of the body.

#### Binswanger

observed that he existed in three quite different worlds.

#### I Ching

Often interpreted in three parts: heaven/man/earth.

**Kath**, the physical center, lower abdomen. Center of consciousness for the conservation instinct.

**The "Eigenwelt"**, the world of one's own needs.

**Earth**. Often part of the interpretation of the bottom two lines of a hexagram.

**Oth**, the emotional center, located in the chest. Center of consciousness for the relations instinct.

**The "Mitwelt"**, the world of people and relations

**Human Being**. Often part of the interpretation of the middle two lines of a hexagram.

**Path**, the intellectual center, located in the head. Center of consciousness for the adaptation instinct.

**The "Umwelt"**, the world around, the general orientation to what is going on.

**Heaven**. Often part of the interpretation of the top two lines of a hexagram

### DIFFERENTLY STRUCTURED THREE FACTOR SYSTEMS

#### Freud's Structural Model

**Id**, originally "das Es" portion of psyche which seems outside ego control. Seen as the repository of all instinctual energy, and basically unsocialized.

**Ego**, originally "das Ich", the "I", which is responsible for organizing all the elements of personality for adaptive behavior in the external world.

**Superego**, the precipitate of parental injunctions and the demands of morality. Separate from the ego, and quite aggressive in its demands.

**Divisions of Consciousness**  
Many spiritually-oriented traditions use a similar threesome, with slight variation in terms.

**Lower Self**, repository of instinctual energies, able to control basic functions of the body. Intuitive, and able to call events in the real world. Also "Body" and "Subconscious."

**Conscious Self**, much like the ego of Freud. Must make a relationship with the other two selves. Also "Mind" or "Consciousness."

**Higher Self**, a spiritual presence, intuitive guide. Also "Spirit" or "Super-conscious."

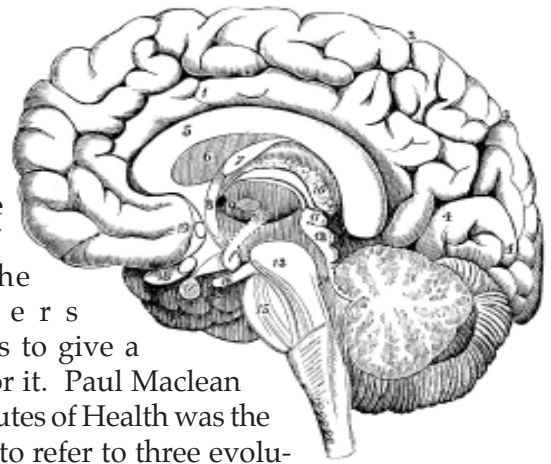
## The Triune Brain

### Plato's three-factor theory

Plato, and before him Pythagoras, taught that the soul is tripartite, and this schema is prevalent in Christian theological works. The soul's three aspects, or what Plato called "energies," are: the rational aspect, which is located in the head; the irascible aspect, which is associated with the heart and is the source of action and movement; and the appetitive or concupiscible aspect, which is the source of the grosser passions and instincts, disappearing upon physical extinction. The diversity of human personalities is explained by the different mixes of these three components of the psyche. Human well-being depends on the proper coordination of these three elements.

Plato also makes an analogy between the harmonious functioning of the soul and that of the ideal state. (Cf. page III-42)

The "Triune Brain Theory" seems related to the three-centers concept and appears to give a neurological basis for it. Paul Maclean of the National Institutes of Health was the first to use the term to refer to three evolutionary levels of the brain.



The "reptilian" brain, consisting of the brain stem and the oldest structures of the brain, is concerned with survival, the basic activities of breathing, eating, and territory.

Wrapped around this is the mid-brain layer, which he calls the "mammalian" brain: the limbic system which deals with emotion or affective feeling. All impulses from the sensory apparatus go through this portion of the brain to get to the higher or lower "brains." In other words, emotional interpretation precedes thinking on the upper end and vital reaction on the lower.

The neocortex, which Maclean calls the "neo-mammalian" brain is concerned with higher order processing of stimuli, including thinking. It is divided between the right and left hemispheres, which process information differently, and it includes sensory and motor areas which integrate conscious behavior.

It is tempting to identify the three 'instincts' of Arica with this system. Conservation, the survival instinct, is a function of the physical body, which is non-conceptual and immediate. Relations, the social instinct, is posited upon the emotional function, which, in Arica theory, derives from the circulatory system. In the brain it could just as easily be related to mid-brain function. Adaptation, or syntony, is the instinct which seeks to understand the environment in order to adapt it to our needs for survival. This is the function which is most easy to refer to the higher brain and conscious thought.

On the other hand, it is well to be cautious about giving too much importance to what is, after all, a neurological *metaphor*. It is tempting to consider this level basic or primary, but the three levels of the brain cannot function independently in a human being, any more than one of the three centers can do without the other two. In any case we are left with more or less useful schemes for differentiating various aspects of unified human experience.



## Somatic Maps Three Centers Maps

The Body Cavities: the earliest differentiation of body awareness.

From the evidence of language, the mind was originally experienced as a cluster of physical reactions rather than interior experience with which a person identified consciously.

### I. The Cavities of the Body

When you consult the feeling of your body, the most apparent impression is that each of the major cavities of your axial torso gives you a different experience. Cranial, Thoracic, Abdominal, Pelvic - each is subjectively different. Each gives a different response: mental, emotional, and physical..

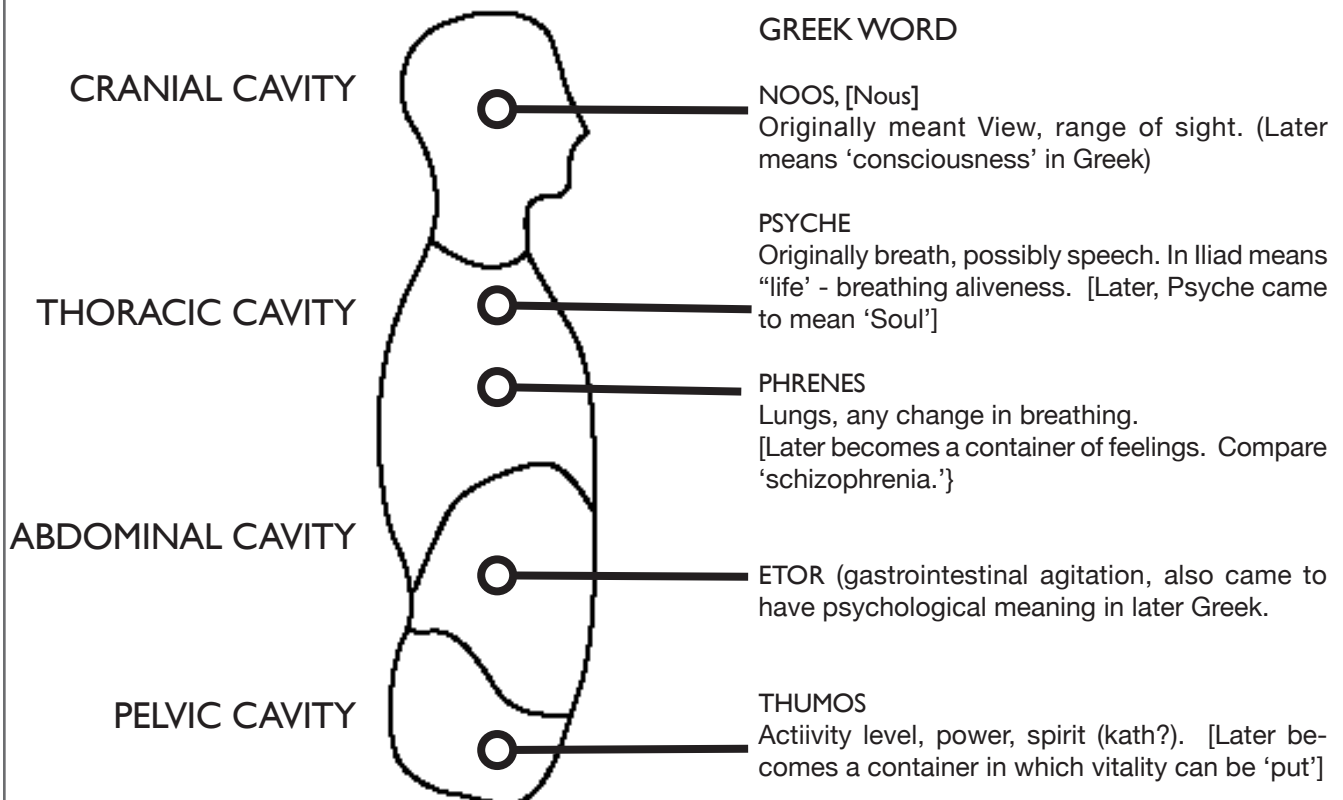
The Cranium, which houses the long-distance senses of seeing and hearing, gives us a mental sense of what is happening 'out there.'

The Thorax is the house of emotion and feeling

The Abdomen and Pelvis give us the physical sense of vitality (pelvic), physical survival and social feeling (abdominal).

### A Psychological Language based on the body

In the archaic Greek language of Homer and Hesiod psychological words referred to body processes. 'Psyche' meant life or breathing), 'Thumos' meant active arousal, and 'Phrenes' meant agitation in the lungs, or feelings. (From Julian Jaynes, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1990.)



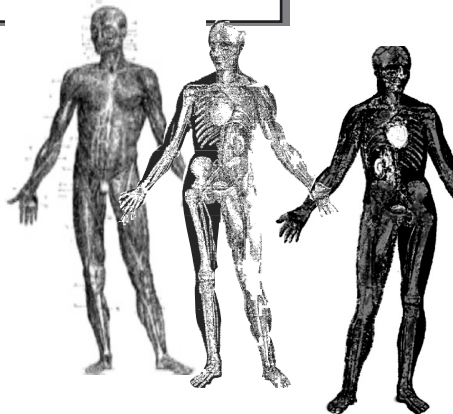
## Three Centers:

### Physical, Emotional, Mental

This gives rise to the “three centers theory” which is at the basis of our educational theory. At IPSB, we need to appeal to your mind, your emotions, and your physical body. concept of three in

### Three Bodies

Three overlapping bodies:  
PHYSICAL BODY,  
the gross body - muscles,  
bones, viscera  
EMOTIONAL BODY,  
the circulatory system  
MENTAL BODY,  
the nervous system.



## Three Instincts

Each center has a different contribution to consciousness.

### Three Instincts

We have three fundamental concerns

CONSERVATION:

“How am I?”

RELATIONS

“Who am I with?”

ADAPTATION

“Where am I? What is happening?”



### Three Worlds

Ludwig Binswanger: “We live in three worlds.”

EIGENWELT: My own world.

MITWELT: the world of people.

UMWELT: the world around

## Three ways of thinking

Analysis (mental)

Analogy (emotional)

Identification (physical)

### The Triune Brain

Three Levels of the Brain:

REPTILIAN BRAIN

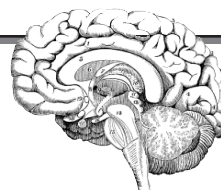
(brainstem)

MAMMALIAN BRAIN

(midbrain, limbic system)

HUMAN BRAIN

(neocortex)







## Somatic Maps

### Inner-Outer Maps

The most common “map” of the body distinguishes an outer layer from an inner one. However, this can have many different meanings.

*“Beloved Pan and all other gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul and may the outer and the inner person be as one.” Socrates’ prayer, Phaedrus.*

Socrates offered this prayer before he left the shady spot where he and his student Phaedrus had spent a hot afternoon in conversation. “Outer and inner person” - the idea comes up often in theories of the body.

#### Public and Private

On the simplest level, all of us recognize a difference between what we display in public and what we keep to ourselves. There are two parts of our conscious awareness.

But many experiences seem suddenly to reveal an inner being which is more profound and real than the ordinary state. Life-threatening events strip us down to an inner reality which has been obscured by the ordinary processes of living. Falling in love stirs us in emotional depths not ordinarily touched. This inner experience is frequently characterized by the sense of the eternal (when we fall in love we feel as if it is “forever”), meaningful, preexisting, and anciently familiar. This is what is often called “soul.”

Sometimes the idea refers to two levels of being

#### Ego and Essence

In this model there is an ego and an essence. Ego is “that which can call itself ‘I’, an agent for dealing with its learned and interpreted world. Although the ‘I’ seems very real, it is actually an idea, a learned concept, part of a learned

“external” world which one evolves in the course of development.

“Essence” means being, from the Latin verb ‘to be’ (esse). Ego is doing, essence is being.

The ego and its world is composed of language and conceptualization. It is a learned system of adaptation for survival. Society has a huge input, and this mind is completely conditioned, relative to its time and circumstance.

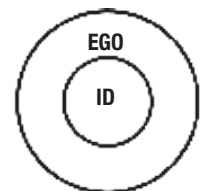
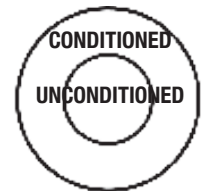
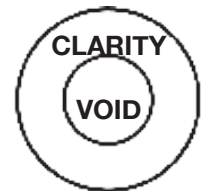
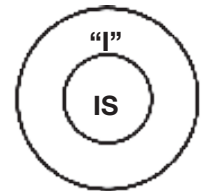
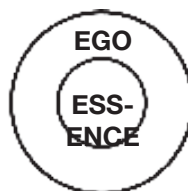
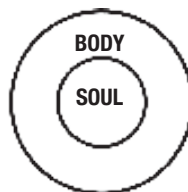
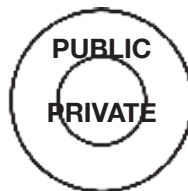
The essence doesn’t use language. Pure being is not a concept. From the standpoint of verbal consciousness it is “void” because it is void of conceptualization. Direct experiences of pure being are usually felt to be ineffable, transcendent, beyond description.

For the most part, then, the essence is beyond ordinary conscious (Ego) experience, though by learning to pay attention to our sensory awareness in the present moment we can at least touch the outer surface of our being.

Whether or not one is paying attention, the being is there. On the deepest level it is the organic process of living, the basic awareness involved in physiological reactions, organic functions, heartbeat and breath. Most of it is completely inaccessible to consciousness, except for the here-and-now sensation of the body.

#### Freud: Conscious and Unconscious

For Freud the inner being was the unconscious, the ‘id’ which contained the instinctual energies, forever at war with social values and the aspirations of consciousness.





He was deeply distrustful of it, seeking only to gain conscious control of its manifestations. "Where id is, there shall ego be." It was the age-old struggle to establish the domination of culture over nature.

Freud's version has been shown to be an extension of the Judeo-Christian position on the body as the 'seat of sin', to be controlled by reason.

Sometimes the idea refers to layers in the body

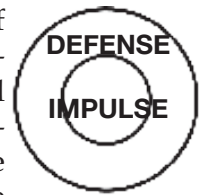
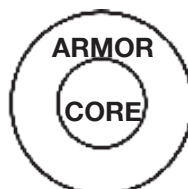
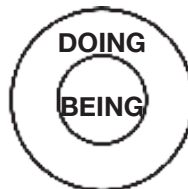
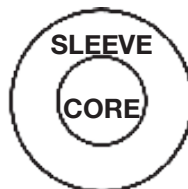
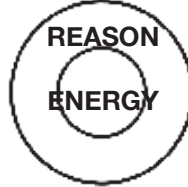
### Ida Rolf: the Extrinsic and Intrinsic Layers

Dr. Rolf conceived the body as being composed of an outer and an inner layer. The outer, extrinsic layer consists of muscles which are voluntary, meaning they can be controlled consciously and at will. They have the effect of contracting the body.

The intrinsic layer includes muscles which lie closer to the bones and are less consciously controlled. They have to do with expansion of the body and position it in gravity by means of involuntary reflexes. We have very little control over this expansion: we have to know how to let it operate. Thus, for Dr. Rolf there was an external layer of "doing" (Active, +), and an internal layer of "letting" (Receptive, "-") Bringing the two layers into balanced action is the goal of Rolf Structural Integration..

### Wilhelm Reich: Character Armor and Core.

Reich theorized about inner and outer in purely physiological terms. "Character armor" is his term for the pattern of contraction which the person uses to interfere with spontaneous life processes. These processes move in waves



along the longitudinal axis of the body: for example, digestion, orgasm, and emotional expressions. Patients in Reichian therapy must learn to let the less voluntary movements take place. "Letting" always implies receptivity, which we have attributed to the inner layer. What Reich adds to our idea thus far is (i) the same life energy can be channelled into natural vital process or opposed to it in armored contraction; (ii) the interior experience is expanded to include the wavelike motions of vegetative processes such as digestion and sexual orgasm.

How do the two ideas relate?

It would be premature to equate them completely. The outer musculature could hardly be the ego in any simple sense, nor could the soul be just another word for the intrinsic myoskeletal structure. Yet there seem to be remarkable parallels. The external musculature seems to be voluntary (consciously controlled), conditioned to the external world, and active, just as the ordinary ego-sense of self is related to our conscious, voluntary activity in the external world. The intrinsic layer seems to be receptive and less available to ordinary consciousness and control.

Perhaps they are two levels of the same phenomenon. The muscular layers form part of the basis for the human experience of an inner and outer being. By balancing intrinsic and extrinsic layers we can influence the relationship between the two levels of being. For example, in releasing the chronic contractions of the extrinsic layer, we may open up to a more interior sense of the body. This may lead to more awareness of the interior being.



## Somatic Maps

### Central Axis Maps

Another way to map the body is with a central line or channel running from the perineum out through the crown of the head.

#### The Rolf Line

The central concept of how the body should relate to gravity, according to Rolf Structural Integration, is a line running from the center of the earth out through any point on the earth's surface infinitely into space. This line of gravitational attraction obviously passes through any body happening to be on that particular point on earth. Efficient organization of the human body aligns the major segments of the torso and head so that their centers of gravity lie along this line from perineum through crown.

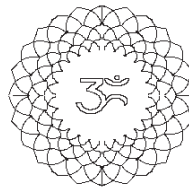


### The Core Channel

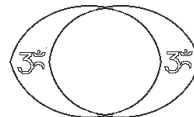
The same line, passing from perineum through crown, can be seen as a channel along which the major centers of feeling may be found. Different numbers of centers may be distinguished depending upon what is needed for the analysis. For example:

### Classical Chakra Systems

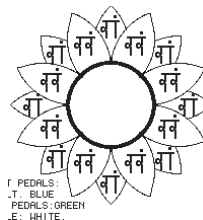
Typically these distinguish seven different centers with varying degrees of consciousness attributed to each.



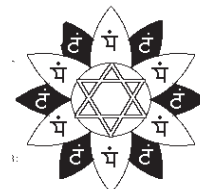
SAHASRARA, the "Crown Chakra."  
Level of Unity. Origin: Thalamus.  
Gland: Pineal.



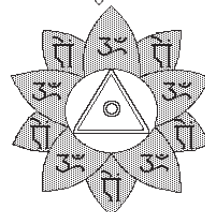
AJNA, the "Third Eye", felt in the Forehead. Archangelic Level..  
Gland: Pituitary.



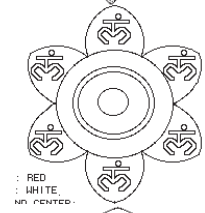
VISHUDDHA, the "Throat Chakra."  
Angelic Level. Felt in the Throat Plexus. Spinal Origin: 2nd Cervical Vertebra. Gland: Thyroid, Parathyroid.



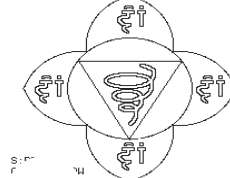
ANAHATA, the "Heart Chakra."  
Human Level. Felt in the cardiac plexus. Spinal Origin: 1st Thoracic Vertebra. Gland: Thymus



MANIPURA, felt in the Solar Plexus. Animal Level. Spinal Origin: 6th Thoracic Vertebra. Gland: Adrenals.



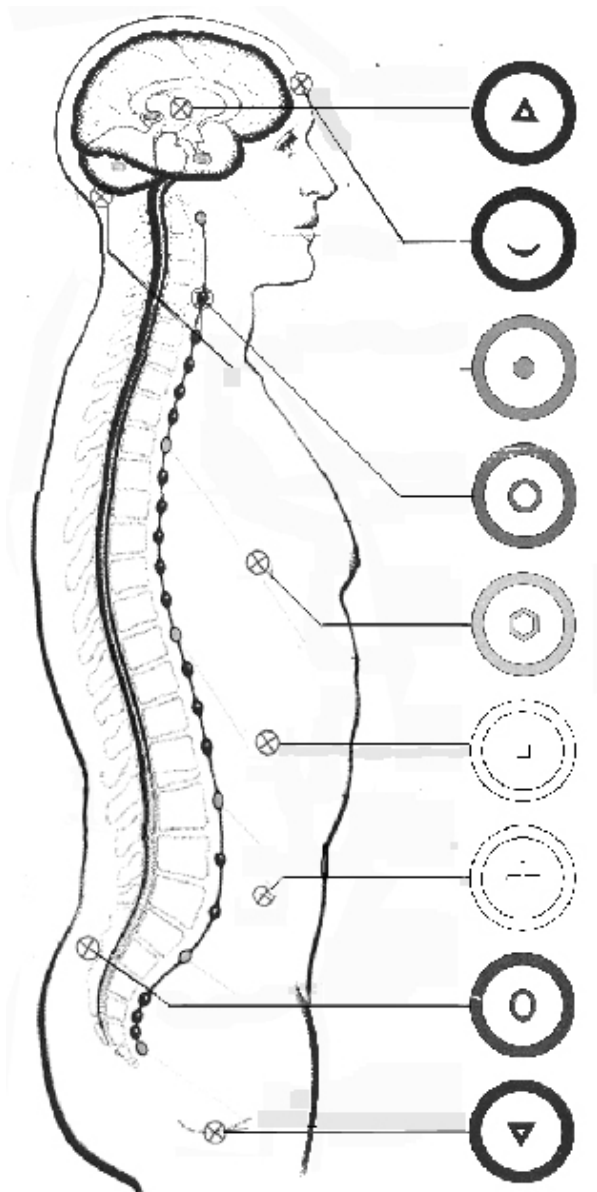
SVADHISTANA, felt in the Hypogastric Plexus. Insect Level. Spinal Origin: Thoraco-Lumbar Junction. Glands: Spleen, Pancreas, Liver.



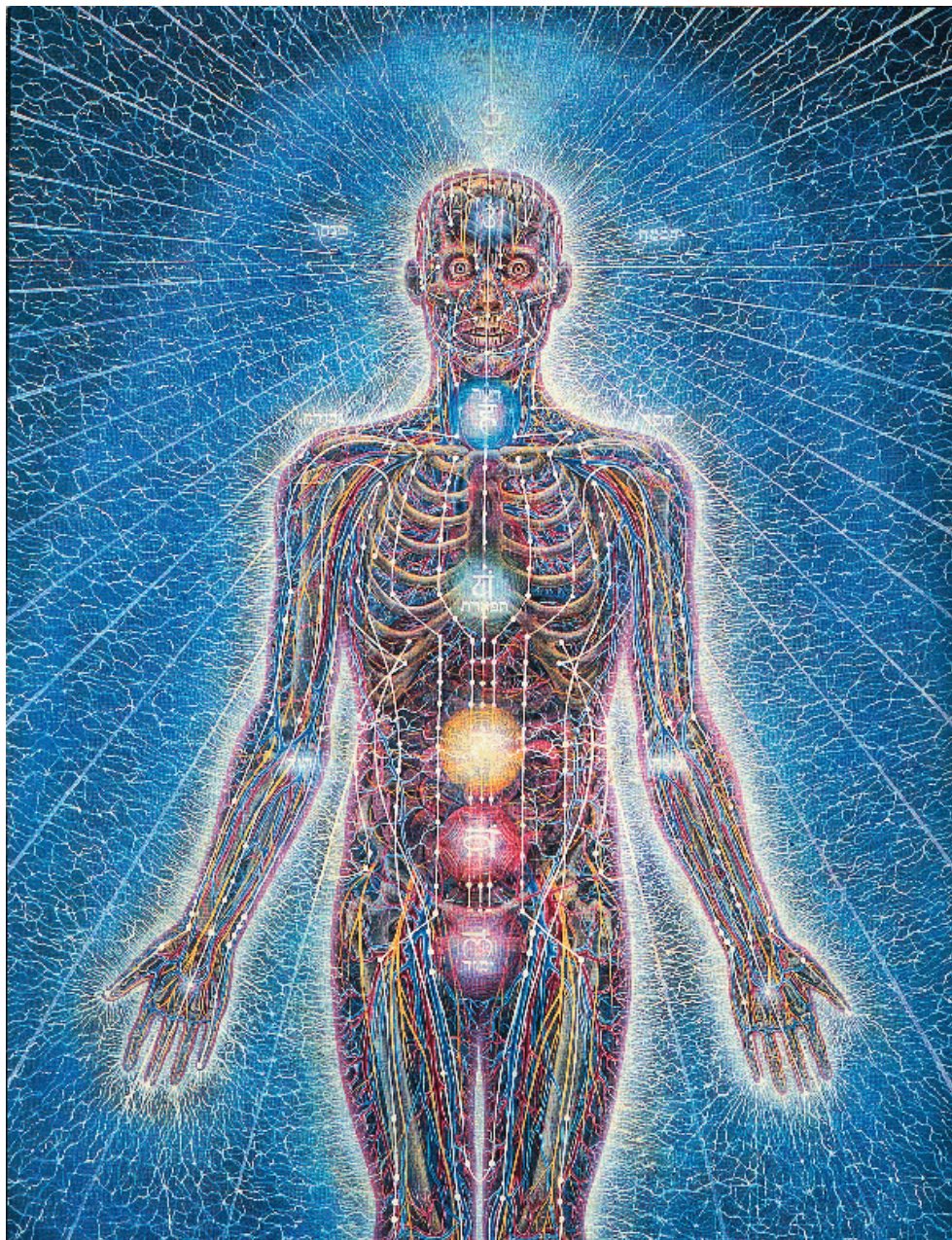
MULADHARA, the "Root Chakra", felt in the Pelvic Plexus. Virus level. Origin: Lumbo-Sacral Junction. Glands: Gonads.

## Arica's Hypergnostic System

These nine centers include the traditional chakra centers plus the base of the skull and the sacrum. The centers are linked with different physiological systems, each making a different contribution to consciousness







There are several other major systems which attempt to map the body energetically. The illustration on this page is "Psychic Energy Systems," a painting by Alex Gray which depicts three of these systems.

1. Acupuncture meridians and points (the white lines). Traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture contains a rich somatic theory which relates emotions with organ meridians and the balance of elements.

2. Chakras: the glowing areas with Sanskrit letters refer to chakras discussed on the preceding page.

3. Kabbalistic centers, called Sephiroth of the Tree of Life, shown here by words written in Hebrew. Some of these centers coincide with chakras while others do not. The entire "Tree" is a vast cosmological structure with which the seeker can align him/herself through meditation.

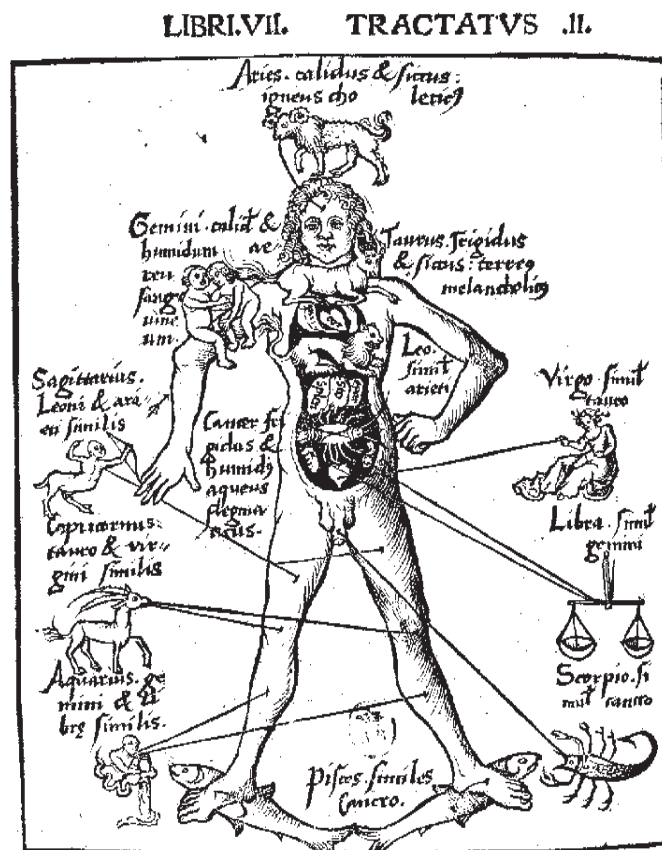
## Mentations

### How the physical body thinks

An Arica somatic map which appears to derive from very ancient sources suggests that the physical body analyzes objects and situations through twelve "mentations" which are related to twelve body parts.

The physical body "thinks" by identification, by becoming what it perceives. The parts of the body which are engaged in various activities, such as reaching toward goals (hand and feet) or eliminating (colon, kidneys, bladder, rectum) make an appraisal of situations or objects based on these functions.

Furthermore, the twelve parts of the body are related to twelve astrological signs, an association which can be demonstrated in very ancient diagrams, such as the one below.



ABOVE: a medieval diagram showing correspondences between parts of the body and the astrological houses which "rule" them. Typically such charts associate the arms differently than the mental system does. Otherwise the houses are the same.

### The Twelve Mentations are as Follows:

SUBSTANCE (Ears) answers the question "What is it?"

FORM (Eyes) "What is its form? What does it look like?"

POSSIBILITIES (Nose) "What can I do with it? What are its possibilities?"

NEEDS (Mouth) "What does it need? Do I need it?"

IMPULSE (Heart) "What is my impulse toward it? What is its impulse?"

METHOD (Liver) "How can it be broken into parts and assimilated?"

ELIMINATION (Colon, Kidneys, Bladder and Rectum) "What needs to be eliminated?"

ORIENTATION (Genitals) "Is it alive? Is it oriented toward more or less life?"

CAPACITY (Thighs and Upper Arms) "Am I able to do it? Is it capable of performing its function?"

CHARISMA (Elbows and Knees) "How does it present itself? How should I appear?"

MEANS (Lower Arms and Legs) "What are its means? What means do I have at my disposal?"

GOALS (Hands and Feet) "What are my goals? What are the goals of this person, object, or situation?"





## Memory and Emotion

# Memory in the Body

Sometimes bodywork uncovers old, painful memories which seem to have been stored in the body. This is certainly dramatic, but should we pursue it? Peter Levine has a different approach (next page).

**The body resists reexperiencing memories which were too much to handle at the time. The resistance appears as tension, the sum of multiple actions which the body is storing.**

**The Child is still holding up the arm to block the blow which was delivered years ago.**

## Traumatic memories

Perhaps all of us are aware that the body holds memories. Occasionally we see the most dramatic reenactments of the past.

How are we to understand this phenomenon?

First, it seems that the body holds mainly traumatic memories. The good times are not remembered, usually, in as much detail. The body reveals its positive experiences in its general sleekness and well-being. As in so many aspects of our lives, we remember the times we were hungry more than the times we were fed. It is a rare sexual peak which is remembered as vividly as the unconsummated yearning.

Second, there is a relationship between memory and physical tension. It is when certain tensions are released that the memories seem to return.

It seems to me that the body simply processes most of our experiences. They pass and are forgotten with the rest. Even painful events which cause us to react with anger or weeping may not last past the moment. But certain experiences are too much to handle. They must be blocked somehow, and avoided. We do this by tensing or flinching against them. We tighten so as not to experience them fully. We keep them out of the feeling body. Because they were not processed completely, the tension tends to remain – a phantom effort to resist a phantom event. Tension builds upon tension, and the body becomes insensitive to internal feeling in general. Then something – a good bodywork session, perhaps – brings awareness into the situation. First the tension comes into focus. It no longer seems like a general thing, but a very familiar, very specific tension. Then it reveals its secret. The tension is seen as a specific reaction to a particular, painful event.



## Memory and Emotion

# Traumatic Memory: Levine's Theory

The body continues to react to overwhelming trauma by freezing, just as an animal does when it cannot fight or run away from danger. Levine works with survivors to 'unfreeze' by focusing on the here-and-now.

**P**eter Levine is a "Bio-psychologist" who has compared the human results of trauma to natural animal reactions to life-threatening danger. His use of "Focusing" to unravel it is a major advance in the treatment of trauma survivors. (Levine, 1998)

### Freezing as a response to danger

Animals, from reptiles to humans, freeze in the face of danger when they cannot fight or flee. Freezing makes them unappetizing to some predators, and avoids pain if they are destroyed. They are in shock. Peter says our response to trauma is modelled on this reflex.

### Animals Unfreeze, Humans do not.

When the danger passes, most animals will come out of the freezing; they tremble, shake it off, and move on. Humans, though, process information through the human brain, the neocortex. They can move very swiftly through past and future "representations" and thus avoid the experience when they come out of active shock. They remain partly frozen, with many mental and emotional reverberations, never completing the unfreezing process.

### Using "Focusing" to Unfreeze

Levine teaches traumatized people to Focus (see page \*). "What is the feeling I have in my body in the present moment?" "What am I aware of now?" "What is this as a body experience?" – all such questions point toward what is happening *now*.

When traumatized people do this they return for short moments to feelings in the body which, if there is freezing, will still be related to *that*. It is like a freeze-frame on the frozen body. But gradually the frames grow more sustained, until the physical creature can tremble and shake and throw the thing off.

### Not Looking for Memories or for Emotional Release

Naturally there will be floating bits of memory which pass through the mind, but Peter isn't interested in that: he wants to stay with the physical body, not pursue memory. The floating bits will be enough. In fact, "reliving the experience" can create the traumatic reaction all over again.

Emotions will come up as well, but the cure isn't in emotional release – the emotional body lives in the past and future as well. Just discharging emotions doesn't move anything along: you are still in your mind. The question is "can you bear the physical experience of this emotion in this present moment?" "What is this emotion as an experience in your body *right now*?" Usually the worst of any kind of pain doesn't last very long if it is attended to in the present moment.

### Emotions which preceded Freezing: Fear and Rage.

Animals come out of freezing full of the fear or rage they experienced before they froze. Often these are the most frightening elements in the process. But again, they can be worked through with the here-and-now awareness of focussing.

### Trauma takes a long time to unwind.

This approach is a long and patient business. The physical mind doesn't unwind quickly. A person needs to focus over and over again, aware of small changes. Eventually, though, the natural animal responses can stir again, and we have succeeded in "*Awakening the Tiger*," which is the title of Peter's book. Who knows? Maybe many of the tensions we encounter in our bodies are the frozen responses to smaller traumatic events.



## Memory and Emotion

# Fear and Contraction

### **What do we find, psychologically, when we work with the body?**

The next few pages deal with emotional issues such as fear, shame, body alienation, how memory is stored in the body, and how much importance to give to 'history.' These are the issues of affect (emotion) as it enters into somatic bodywork.

Any bodyworker must decide how much attention to give to emotion. Some work hard for "emotional release" thinking that this will relieve the blockage in our clients' lives and bodies. Others of us place less importance upon emotional expression, yet find fear/contraction, shame, and body alienation central to what we find when we "Touch to Know." The debate over the usefulness of emotional catharsis as a means of healing goes back at least to Freud and his predecessors.

There is a major connection between fear and contraction in the body. Historically, the first fear a newborn infant displays is the fear of falling. Take the support from under a baby, and the reaction will be to draw the arms and legs into the body, a fear reflex which will later generalize to all other fears. This contraction pattern is a major physical component of fear, and it has several implications for bodyworkers:

1. Contraction is a protective withdrawal from contact with the environment. In the absence of fear, the body is expanding in space and into contact, especially through the hands, feet and head.
2. When we find tension in the body and the resulting areas of soreness and pain we must consider whether the contraction of fear is involved. Some tension is due to structural imbalance and consequent misuse of muscles, but most of it relates to fear.
3. The fear *is* the contraction. When the contraction is released, the fear is usually gone. That is, fear is not a separate, "emotional" event reflected in the body. Rather, the emotional experience is a reflection *of* the body.

### **Age and the Fear of Falling**

As people grow older they frequently become increasingly cut off from their legs. Sedentary habits, lack of exercise, and gradual loss of contact cause older people to lose their expansional relationship with the ground: they become less grounded. They "lose their legs." As a result a vicious cycle sets in. They become more afraid of falling; the legs contract more; they become more afraid of falling, and the legs contract more. The springing connection with the floor is replaced by a fearful hovering. Since the downward thrust of the legs is required for the upper body to extend upward, much of the bent and stooping postures of old age are due to the loss of legs.

T'ai Chi is one of the most powerful ways to maintain an expansional relationship through the legs to the ground. When your muscles "burn" the contractions are being released.

4. Some contractions are more deeply rooted than others. Severe traumatic experiences may result in “freezing,” a severe contraction which does not release after the danger has passed. Traumatic freezing may require careful work with “Focusing” awareness to give the subcortical brain a chance to catch up. (See Peter Levine’s theory of trauma, pages III-52, 53)

5. Pain, the kind of pain the client experiences in deep touch, is usually related to fear / contraction. Pain is a useful sensation which warns us of danger, but the bodyworker is not inflicting harm (or hardly ever); so the signal of pain is an inappropriate fear. In this situation Pain = Contraction = Fear. Letting go in the presence of pain is a major learning experience for the client. It can generalize into all areas of living in which fear has inhibited freedom of action and contact.

6. Contraction limits the interior sensation of the body: it is intended to limit pain. When the contraction is released, there is more interior sensation in the body. More interior sensation means more physical presence.

7. Since tension often implies the contraction of fear, it is necessary to move tactfully so that the client can choose to accept the touch and does not have to tighten further to protect him / rself. Heavy-handed pressure will not succeed in overwhelming the barrier.

8. Since bodywork involves contact, and the fear / contraction is a withdrawal from contact, bodywork offers a particularly valuable way to restore the original, open situation.

## Self Massage

***It is said that once there was a tribe of warriors called “the fearless ones.” Their fearlessness resulted from the fact that they practiced a form of deep tissue bodywork on themselves after every battle. Using their hands or an ivory implement, they massaged out tense sore places all the way down into the level of their bones. They considered their sore spots to be the residue of fear they had experienced in battle, so that, having removed them, the warriors became once again fearless.***

This form of self-massage is still practiced today, although not always using an implement. For bodyworkers, self-massage is like what practicing scales is for musicians. Working down through the layers of one’s own body all the way to the bones gives you a developed body awareness, and a good sense of how deep tissue bodywork feels to different kinds of tissue. You develop a more accurate sense of what your clients experience.

Because of the close relation between fear and contraction, fear is a useful metaphor in this work. You can assume the tense sore places you find in your body are contracting because of fear. That’s not all you will become aware of in your body, of course, but it’s a start.

## Technique

Expect to take a lot of time. Two eight-hour days is not uncommon for a full-body treatment. *It is also okay to work on one part at a time.*

Begin with one foot, then the other, and on up each leg. Spend a lot of time around where tendons attach to bones. Go all around the pelvis, the lumbar spine, the ribcage. Get a partner to work on your upper back. Explore all the bony surfaces of your hands, arms, shoulder girdle, your neck cranium, face. Be gentle, *feel the work* in your body.

Some areas will not feel any soreness initially. It is easy for deep tensions to lie buried under layers of insensitivity. Be patient: it may take several sessions of self-massage to uncover all the places of contraction and fear in your body.

The result of the work, when it is done thoroughly, is a considerable increase in body awareness. Those levels of deep tension are the physical aspect of mental patterns which avoid pain and actually introduce subtle distortions into consciousness.

When practicing deep self-massage, ‘be’ in the part being worked upon rather than in your hands doing the work. You ‘invite’ the hands in. Energetically you are being attractive, [ – ] or Yin. If, instead, you concentrate on what your hands are doing you will become tired and bored, and you will potentially ignore the sensations of your body.



## Memory and Emotion

# Shame

Shame is of considerable interest to somatic bodyworkers, because it affects a person in every way: how they feel about themselves, their bodies, their physical attitudes and postures, their sense of space, and their social interactions.

## Shame and Self Psychology

Shame is considered one of the “narcissistic affects” because it arises so clearly in connection with the stage (about 2-4) in which the child is struggling to develop a sense of self that is independent, autonomous, competent, and validated by other people. Shame and humiliation are the most terrible disasters in connection with this struggle. The need for validation continues throughout life; so vulnerability to shame is seldom completely absent.

## **While fear may be an earlier, more fundamental reaction, shame is related to the sense of self**

Beginning about 2 years old, the child becomes involved with developing a sense of individual selfhood. For a time sh/he is totally preoccupied with this independence, yet entirely dependent upon others for validation. Shame grows out of the vulnerability of this age. The self as an external object is exposed to unwelcome attention, seen by unfriendly eyes.

## **It is easy to overlook shame**

Almost every human life pays some tax to shame. but it is curiously unconscious. It is in the very nature of shame to want to hide, and even its apparent opposite may be a sign of shame. For example, brazen attitudes are another face of shame, bold impudence being used to hide or avoid the experience of shame.

## **Shame is a very physical emotion.**

With guilt we feel bad about something we have *done*, but with shame we feel bad about what we *are*. It afflicts our very ability to take up space.

Blushing demonstrates a relationship between shame and the autonomic nervous system. Because shame often comes like a sudden jolt to the nervous system it can also erupt easily as rage.

## **Shame and Sexuality**

Shame is closely related to sexuality, probably because of cultural attitudes toward sexuality, but also because the spontaneous movement of sexual stirrings leave us exposed and vulnerable. The shaming of sexuality is a way of controlling vitality itself.

Children use shaming to coerce each other in most cruel ways, and teachers often use shaming to control students in school.



### **Shame and “The Look.”**

Seeing and being seen is an important part of developing a sense of self. A child wants to be seen and acknowledged by positive observers. In an experience of shame, the look which one imagines being directed toward oneself is judging, jeering, cold or critical.

### **Shame and the Eyes**

Shame is a form of paranoia, in that one projects one's own eyes onto the environment, which then looks on and judges. A somatic solution is to “take back your eyes” and look out at the world rather than getting caught up in self-consciousness and being seen.

### **What shame means for the bodyworker**

We are only beginning to take shame into account in our work. Yet the concept of self is clearly related to the body. Many of the issues which have been identified by the Psychoanalytic Self Psychologists as afflicting the self concept directly translate into issues of the body. For example:

1. The self-concept involves both a sense of the interior, self-as-subject, and the exterior, self-as-object. The person needs to move between the two freely, in order to be in touch with his/r own impulses (“what do I need?”) and in order to check out the requirements of the outside world (“how am I coming across?”) Disturbance in either pole results in problems which are also experienced in the body awareness.

2. Self-consciousness is an affect related to self-disturbance. Instead of looking out at the world, the person projects his/r eyes into the world, which is looking at her/m. This is a body experience.

3. Shame involves being seen in a hostile manner. It is easily displaced onto the body. When the client comes for bodywork h/she is already subjecting him/rself to being seen. Many subtle issues can be worked through in this situation.

### **Shame and Self-Consciousness as Somatic Problems**

Shame is about the sense of self. In shame the body tends to withdraw from taking up space—or else brazenly demands more than its share. Shame is initially a reaction of the autonomic nervous system, as in blushing. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish this reaction from anger, and so it is easy to spill over into “narcissistic rage.”

Self-consciousness is a loss of grounded somatic awareness. Instead of being and doing from the center, one suddenly becomes an object of observation by imagined onlookers.

All this can be perceived in the body attitudes: how the person takes up space; how assured they are when they move or act; whether they are in touch with here-and-now process; what images of self they put forward.

4. Hypochondria, persistent fear of imaginary illness, is a severe form of self disturbance in which the split between inner and outer self is so extreme that the body itself becomes a treacherous enemy.



## Memory and Emotion

# Somato-Sensory Affectional Deprivation

Not all trauma is a one-time event. Some people are deprived of the proper kind of touch over long periods of time. This is reflected in certain very common symptoms in adult life. Bodywork may help.

**Lack of appropriate touch during infancy, due to neglect or abuse, afflicts millions of adults with depression, substance abuse, sleep, mood and sexual disturbances.**

A specific kind of traumatic memory which occurs to very many of us, especially in this culture, has come to be called "Somato-sensory Affectional Deprivation," which results in a rather identifiable pattern of symptoms.

Montagu's review of the literature on touch with animals and humans makes it clear that we need the right kind of stroking to thrive. We need it to grow, to organize our nervous systems, to become able to love. We need it so much we will seek painful stimulation in preference to no stimulation at all. However, given the ambivalence the culture has toward the body, and the vicissitudes of life, many of us do not get the proper somato-sensory affection at critical times in infancy.

Sometimes we are severely deprived, not touched at all (which, in extreme cases leads to infant death). Sometimes the touch we receive is painful: abusive, manipulative, or seductive. In any case, there comes to be a "syndrome" (pattern) which persists into adult life. Signs that a person suffers from this syndrome are the presence of

- (1) depression,
- (2) sexual dysfunction,
- (3) mood-swings and rage outbursts
- (4) sleep disturbances,
- (5) substance abuse.

In other words, the person is hurting, has difficulty loving, and uses various means to lessen the pain.

Sound familiar? When we, or our clients show any of these signs, it may be there is a history of Somato-sensory Affectional Deprivation. Although there are certainly critical stages when the growing child needs to experience the touch in order to grow well, bodywork, dealing as it does with touch, must surely offer some way to heal some of the wounds of Somato-sensory Affectional Deprivation.

Clients with this kind of history nearly always come to us with some kind of tension/reaction going on in their external skin barrier. Often they have trouble accepting any touch at all. Skinrolling may be the method of choice in such situations.



## Questioning the Historical Hypothesis

People often try to unravel psychological problems by returning to their roots in childhood memory. This 'historical hypothesis' has held center stage since the invention of psychoanalysis. But is it the only way to go?

**I**t is not uncommon for a person to glimpse traces of memory during bodywork. Visual images of past events, odors, feelings all float through the mind, seemingly held in the body tissue. Sometimes the reliving becomes a dramatic outpouring of memories and emotions. Some "core issue" in the body / mind has been touched. Undeniably the body stores memories, usually in the form of muscular tensions related to actions, especially defensive actions.

### The Historical Hypothesis

Bodyworkers often pursue these dramatic outcomes, and place special value on the recovery of memory as a means of personal growth. This interest in memory is an outgrowth of psychoanalysis. It is called "the historical hypothesis" and, in spite of its pop-wisdom popularity, it needs to be understood for what it is: a hypothesis. Freud initially placed great emphasis upon recovering traumatic memories in order to free his clients from neuroses formed around repressed contents. Occasionally one very specific traumatic memory would reappear with dramatic consequences for the subsequent life of his client.

### Problems of the Hypothesis

But there are considerable problems for the historical hypothesis if it is applied too simply. First of all, not all traumas are related to specific one-time events. As early followers of Freud discovered, many symptomatic difficulties come from the structure of character rather than from repressed memories. Children are often formed by long-term dysfunctions within the family. Toxic emotional atmospheres go on and on and can hardly be understood through a single memory.

A second objection, raised by Peter Levine, is that, even if a specific traumatic experience has occurred, attempting to *relive* it may re-traumatize the psyche.

Thus the somatic bodyworker needs to avoid pursuing the historical hypothesis as a single, stand-alone strategy. Fortunately the here-and-now experience of the body is a powerful tool in its own right. If memories and emotions emerge, it is sufficient to offer

mindfulness and support rather than more active interpretation, interference, or pursuit of the past.

### Many "Explanations"

There are many different possible schemes for understanding the body psychologically. Psychoanalytic authors look for enduring personal strategies related to psychosexual development, which slowly build up consequences in body patterns. For example, someone who copes with life by depending upon other people literally may not be standing on their own feet. In the long run the legs and feet may come to reflect this lack of grounding.

Some people prefer to understand character patterns according to astrological configurations. Others prefer "past lives." Although many people have experiences which seem to imply alternative lives, they are rarely so impelling as to convince us absolutely that another life existence is involved. The past life metaphor may enable us to grasp the essential drift of a character trait or subpersonality. It hardly matters whether an actual past life is involved, since the image is just as useful as a dream-figure.

### Looking at the Phenomenology of Living

We may not need to look at memory, but only the specifics of here-and-now experience. The research of the existentialists in the 1950's indicated important differences in people according to how they structured fundamental dimensions such as time and space. Binswanger noted a lack of future in a depressed patient. A psychologist, Bernard Aaronson studied the effects of post-hypnotic suggestions regarding time and space. When he suggested that the space around them was painted on a two-dimensional backdrop, they felt ominously hemmed in and quite paranoid. The suggestion of a background of infinite depth, they had serene and transcendent experiences.

These phenomenological explorations suggest that examining the actual ways we experience life now, in the present, may be more fruitful than exploring past memories, past lives, or astrology, for unraveling problems of living.



## Memory and Emotion

# Body Alienation

Body alienation, the loss of trust in the body's own signals, may be the most general problem we encounter in our clients. Body awareness may be the main benefit of bodywork.

One fundamental element we deal with in all our clients is the extent to which they are aware of themselves as bodies. The body itself is an ongoing response process—a highly intelligent synthesis of information and the appropriate response to it. A simple word for this is “feelings”—the body lets the present situation come inside the body where it is “felt.” Carl Jung has pointed out that the feeling function is an evaluative one. To feel a situation is to evaluate it, to feel something about it. He also argued that feeling and thinking are difficult to do at the same time.

The body is attuned to the here-and-now. It can be confused by the mind into having all sorts of emotions about past and future situations which are not here and now. But the feeling-intelligence of the body is richest and most accurate when focused on the here-and-now. Then its accuracy of response is often quite astonishing. Martial arts training often seeks to center the mind on the here-and-now, empty of thinking so that this kind of intuitive response can take place.

Body alienation is the absence of contact with the body and its responses to situations. Don Johnson, in his book, *Body*, emphasizes that body alienation is a lack of trust in one's own body and its signals. This can come from many sources: our culture's history has favored distrust of the body, and many aspects of education devalue what one actually feels about things. Cut off from the body, we become very confused. We also become susceptible to authoritarian control. If we do not trust our own feelings, we will be guided by outside signals.

What does this mean for bodyworkers? Body awareness may be the most general benefit we can offer our clients. Body alienation may be the most pervasive symptom they bring to us. We have all experienced the client who chatters all through the session and seems not to feel what we are doing at all. This is extreme body alienation, which means being lost in the mind. There are also many intellectuals who do not easily give up thinking during their sessions. Theirs is a way of being always in control.



*Medusa*

**In Greek Mythology, Medusa was a monster who could turn men into stone if they looked at her face.**

**One interpretation says she represents “the mind run riot” so that the body becomes paralyzed by mental preoccupations. Often these preoccupations can become bitter and self-centered, taking the sufferer farther and farther from here-and-now reality.**

**Thus Medusa can serve as a symbol for a kind of body alienation.**

Fortunately, it is not too difficult to get most people to pay attention to our hands. This brings them into a here-and-now experience of their bodies which can open into other discoveries.

### **Vision in Body Alienation**

As the physical senses are ignored or suppressed, a person comes more and more to rely upon vision alone for orientation. Thus vision is frequently overdominant in people who are alienated from the body sense. Usually, in somatic therapy, we are working to supplement vision with attention to other senses.



## Many Types of Body Alienation

Many different kinds of body alienation can be identified. The bodyworker needs to be alert to the ways in which the senses are used ("Sensory Balance") and to how well the client can participate in the touch communication. The four steps of "Training the Client" can be applied very carefully so that the touch experience becomes a way to regain body awareness and physical presence.

At the heart of body alienation is a dissociation from body feeling. Sometimes people have simply been trained to ignore body signals, but other are highly motivated to keep attention away from feelings, emotions and memories which might emerge in the body experience.. This latter, more severe dissociation tends to be automatic and non-conscious, and the therapist must pay careful attention to encourage the client to become aware of the mechanism..

### **Abuse**

Severe physical abuse at an early age can lead a person to dissociate - to leave the here-and-now present experience of the body in order to get away from pain. This defense tends to persist so that it becomes difficult to "stay present" in later life.

The same is true of childhood sexual abuse and other trauma too painful to recognize.

### **Feelings aren't Important**

The most common kind of body alienation comes from family training or schooling which imposes external standards of behavior and performance along with the subtle message that one's own feelings are not important.

Once a person has been programmed in this way, h/she becomes much more susceptible to authoritarian control, and much less likely to evaluate a situation on his/r own independent terms.

Don Johnson gives an example of military strategists planning in terms of "megadeaths" with no sense of the horror involved.

### **Purification**

For some reason, denying the body in favor of the soul and spirituality has been appealing to human beings at least since Roman times. Typically the body is seen as a dangerous arena of temptation which must be fought against in order to gain a spiritual goal. The result is body alienation.

Religious puritanism was prominent in the protestant groups which derived from John Calvin, but it can be found in some sects of all the major religions. There is Hindu puritanism, as well as Islamic, Buddhist, and Jewish.

### **No Pain, No Gain**

Strangely enough, even sports which might be expected to make people more physically aware can do the opposite. A person can push their body to perform far past its actual impulse, to ignore the severe pains of overexertion. The result may be an insensitivity to the actual core feelings of pleasure as well.

Since pleasure is a significant signal which orients the body toward authentic action, this leads to alienation from the body. A very physically effective athlete may be out of touch with the body.

### **Obsessive-Compulsive Personality**

This is a comparatively rare personality disorder in which the body is literally compelled constantly by the mind. There is no room for spontaneity. Life can become a continual preoccupation with rituals and repetitive behaviors designed to ward off anxiety.

Obsessiveness is a more mental form in which repetitive thoughts are difficult to throw off.

Both patterns demonstrate the possibility that almost any kind of psychopathology can be examined for the ways in which body alienation is involved.





## The Psychoanalytic Lineage

### Freud

No psychology of the body can leave out the contribution of Freud and the different schools which derive from his pioneering work. Today there are important trends in bodywork which have developed within this lineage: Freud, Reich, Lowen, Keleman, Kurtz, Object-Relations Theory, and Self-Psychology.

**S**igmund Freud (1856 - 1939) a Viennese physician, became the father of psychoanalysis and, along with Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche and Einstein, a major influence upon 20th Century Western thought and culture. As a psychologist, he was eager to find a biological (body) basis for the psyche.

#### An energy-based model

Freud based his theory on a concept of psychic energy which he equated roughly with libido or sexual energy. The organism moves toward pleasure which is experienced from the satisfaction of basic physical needs. Thinking involves manipulation of concepts which carry small charges of energy (feeling) related to this striving for pleasure.

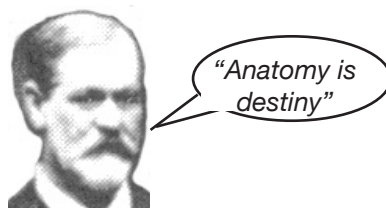
In early childhood, behavior is guided only by the relevance to pleasure (the "Pleasure Principle"), but with the process of "socialization" the child comes to learn that there are limiting factors (the "Reality Principle"). Some impulses toward pleasure must be given up or deferred.

#### Repression

Some feelings and impulses must be put out of mind because they are in conflict with reality or with other needs of the psyche. Anger may become dangerous because it might result in loss of love, for example. This process of putting out of mind is called 'repression'. It is the basic form of defense against psychic content and lies at the bottom of other defenses. Notice that repression involves psychic energy being used to *oppose* impulses which are also *expressing* psychic energy.

#### The Psycho-Sexual Stages of Development

Freud inferred a set of stages of development in the pleasure system of the child. These are the well-known Oral, Anal, Phallic, and Genital Stages.



That this is a body-based system is obvious. Erotically, the child is interested, first, in oral pleasures of sucking, feeding, chewing, and spitting out. These physical functions become generalized as psychological functions as well.

In the anal stage issues of will and power come up, as well as problems of safe boundaries. Cruelty, sadism and masochism may derive from problems at this time.

The phallic stage, during which the child discovers more feeling in the genitals, involves issues of performance, failure, shame, competition, and, as every mother knows, self-assertion..

#### Fixation

The feelings and experiences of childhood are extremely intense, and all of these issues may persist in very specific form in adult life. This persistence is called "fixation." Childhood fixations mold patterns of tension, longing, fear and wish, shaping the body throughout adult life.

Erik Erikson's discussion of the psychosexual stages in *Childhood and Society* provides a useful introduction to this material. The bodyworker who sees the work in terms of emotional release will do well to explore these residues of childhood in the feelings of his or her own body.

#### The Ego and the Id

Part of Freud's importance as a germinal thinker lay in his 'discovery' of the unconscious. He came to call one territory of the unconscious the "Id" ("das Es" in German, "it" in English) as opposed to the "Ego" or "I", the conscious being. He conceived the "Id" as a "cauldron of unsocialized energy". This was an early concept of "Body Wisdom" and one which remained quite distrustful of its dangerous power. In terms of the somatic viewpoint, Freud was somewhat experience-centered, but not at all trustful of the Body Wisdom.

## Freud and the Body

Freud was not a body-oriented therapist, but a highly conceptual psychologist. Several of his early students, however, explored body-oriented methods of therapy. Sandor Ferenczi, in an attempt to recreate the state of oral gratification, fed apples to a patient who was sitting in his lap. Franz Alexander studied ways in which psychic process was involved in physical illness. He became the father of "Psychosomatic Medicine." And, there was Reich.

## Erikson's summary of Freud's developmental theory:

Freud's great discovery was that sexuality does not suddenly appear at puberty, but moves through earlier stages of erotic pleasure which persist in various adult thoughts and behaviors.

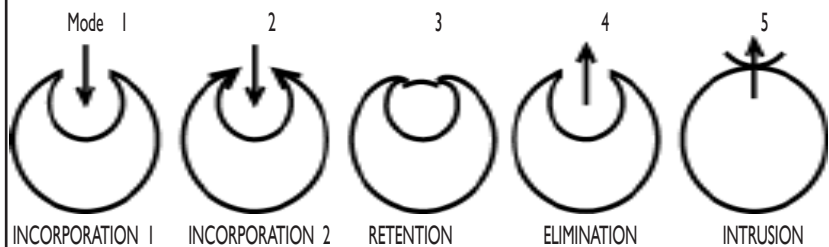
Erik Erikson, a rare artist among Freud's early followers, summarized Freud's developmental theory in terms of body orifices (zones) and the various pleasurable ways in which they are used (modes).

The child's early experience with these stages has considerable impact on later development. Attitudes are formed which appear in many aspects of adult functioning. The bodyworker will sense these attitudes in the body—defiance, weakness, dependency, pleasure, distrust, cruelty, stinginess, neatness, messiness, shame, guilt, or greed—still expressing themselves after all these years.

Furthermore, to accept these attitudes, which were originally tied to pleasure ("sexual" pleasure, as broadly conceived), the bodyworker needs to have accepted such pregenital and seemingly perverse movements toward pleasure within themselves.

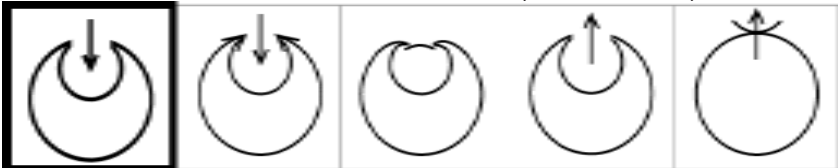
## The "Zones and Modes" of Psycho-Sexual Development

There are only so many things you can do with an orifice



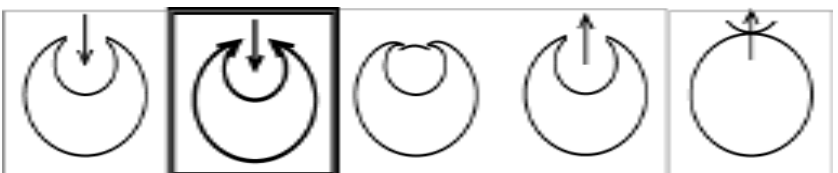
Passive incorporation receives, passively. Active incorporation grasps, grabs, bites. Retention holds in, Elimination gets rid of, and intrusion pushes into. These modes generalize to the entire body and psyche.

### STAGE ONE: ORAL-RESPIRATORY-SENSORY (ORAL EROTIC)



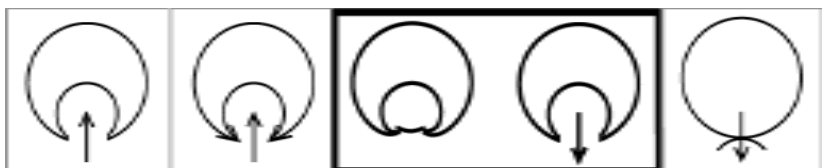
Receptive. No need to bite: just lie back and enjoy. Maybe a little holding on (to the breast) or eliminating (spitting out), but the whole action is in mode 1—passive incorporation.

### STAGE TWO: ORAL AGGRESSIVE



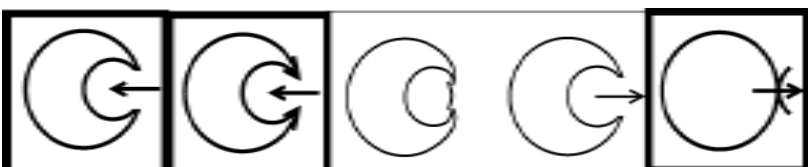
Active. Feels good to bite. A little more conflict with mom over this. A basic sense of TRUST vs. MISTRUST will develop in these two oral stages.

### STAGE THREE: ANAL-URETHRAL-MUSCULAR



Both. Feels good to hold it inside. Feels good to push it out. Will struggle with momma over how it is going to be done. The Nuclear Conflict at this stage is AUTONOMY vs. SHAME AND DOUBT.

### STAGE FOUR: LOCOMOTION AND THE GENITALS



"Phallic" Stage, lots of assertion. Little boys may be discouraged from expressing the active nurturing of Mode 2. Little girls may be blocked when they try asserting themselves intrusively. The Nuclear Conflict at this stage is INITIATIVE vs. GUILT.



## The Psychoanalytic Lineage

### Wilhelm Reich

Reich saw the full vegetative biological significance of the body-as-psyche when no one else in psychoanalysis could step out of intellectualized concepts. He also saw that body fears of pleasure and sexuality were easily projected into conservative politics. He died in prison.

**W**ilhelm Reich's *Character Analysis* is a fascinating account of his initial discovery of the importance of the body for psychotherapy. It is one of classics which no bodyworker should ignore. He is the first psychotherapist who was truly oriented to body in a psychological way.

Historically he was in the psychoanalytic movement when they were struggling to reconcile the phenomenon of masochism with Freud's "Pleasure Principle" that the deep psyche is invariably oriented toward pleasure, not pain. The movement was also attempting to extend psychoanalytic techniques beyond the field of hysterical neuroses in which Freud had made his initial discoveries. They were finding that, in some people, the very structure of the character constituted the symptom which needed to be cured.

Reich had the startling experience of observing one of his patients go into a dramatic vegetative physical reaction as he came close to an important psychological content. This was, in a sense, the first time anyone had seen a "primal experience." Reich called it "streaming."

Reich finally concluded that this patient's emotions were locked in a pattern of muscular tension which he came to call "character armor." This discovery of character armor suggested a solution to the problem of masochism. The masochistic character armor did not permit the release of tension in a pleasurable way. Instead, the patient was afraid of releasing the tension because of an unconscious fears of bursting. So, he looked for masochistic pain in order to break through his fearful resistance.

Many bodyworkers and psychotherapists find Reich's model of character armor very useful in their work; so we will do well to examine some of its major features:

1. The major life processes move along the long axis of the body in wavelike movements. This includes the peristalsis of the digestive system, laughing, sneezing, weeping, sexual orgasm, vomiting.
2. If the person opposes any of these natural processes, he must clamp against his expression in transverse rings of tension. See Figure 1.
3. The same energy which is expressed in natural life processes is used in the defense against them in the form of armoring. See Figure 2.
4. He saw the autonomic nervous system in balance across the parasympathetic functions which give rise to relaxation and pleasure and the sympathetic functions which give rise to anxiety and withdrawal (Figure 3a) The same functions in an armored individual give rise to anxiety and distorted impulse. (Figure 3b)

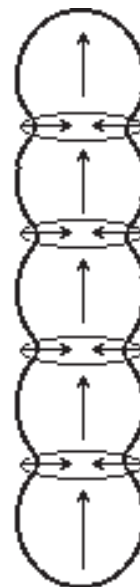


Figure 1. The direction of the streaming is transverse to the armor rings.

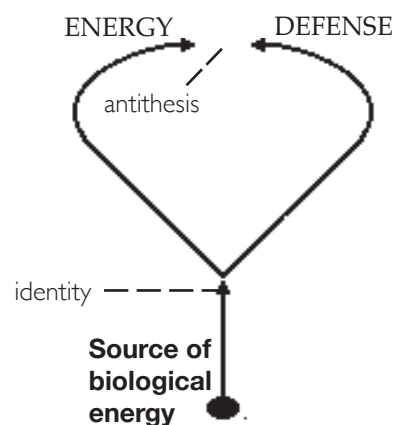


Figure 2. Psychosomatic identity and an antithesis. The same energy is used for both impulse and defense. Life, and the opposition to life; vitality and the fear of vitality use the same energy!

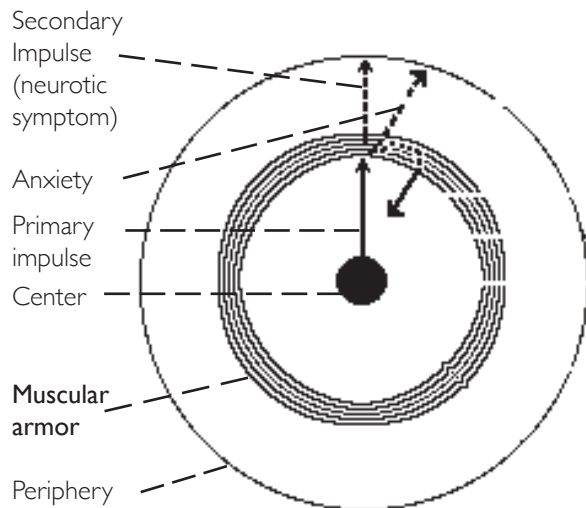


Figure 3b. The same functions in an armored organism. Inhibition of primary impulse, resulting in secondary impulse and anxiety.

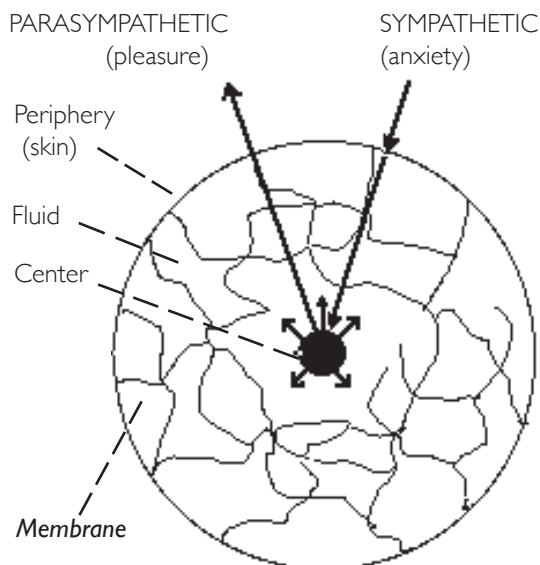


Figure 3 a. The basic functions of the vegetative nervous system.

#### **Parasympathetic**

Swelling, expansion  
Increased turgor  
Central tension low  
Opening up  
"Toward the world, out of the self"  
Sexual excitation, skin warm  
"Streaming" from center to periphery  
Relaxation

#### **Sympathetic**

Shrinking  
Decreased turgor  
Central tension, high  
Closing down  
"Away from the world, into the self"  
Anxiety, pallor;  
cold sweat  
"Streaming" from periphery to center.  
Hypertension

5. He came to recognize seven general rings of character armor: the ocular ring, the oral ring, the throat ring, the chest ring, the diaphragm ring, the umbilical ring, the pelvic ring. These rings correspond, roughly, with the usual chakra maps. Reich's rings of armor are somewhat like looking at chakras from the outside in.

6. Reich was among the first psychologists to do hands-on bodywork with his clients. He manipulated the rings of armor to produce release of the energy and emotion they were inhibiting. This was aided by the considerable charisma of his presence.

7. He came to feel that psychological understanding was relatively unimportant in the cure of neurosis. He felt that if a patient became capable of fully satisfactory sexual orgasm, the neurosis would vanish because regression to more infantile forms of pleasure would become unnecessary.

8. Reich's theories about energy are the most controversial part of his work. He called biological energy "orgone" after the orgasm, and he implemented his theories with many interesting experiments and inventions.

Reich ran afoul of the FDA which accused him of attempting to treat cancer using apparatus derived from his theories about bioenergy. He was sent to prison where he died within a year. (1957)



**Reich goes to prison, 1957.** His passionate belief in his energetic studies and in his right of free inquiry as a scientist caused him to ignore the seriousness of the FDA's attack upon his work.





## Bioenergetics

Lowen has developed many additional techniques for breaking through character armor

He has elaborated the psychosexual development model of Freud into a typology of body structure

The typology contains good information, though it has some major drawbacks

### Alexander Lowen

Alexander Lowen was a patient of Wilhelm Reich in the 1950's and later became a Reichian therapist. When Reich got into trouble, Lowen, who had been an athletic coach, became a medical doctor in order to legitimize his practice of therapy. He also altered Reich's theory in ways which rendered it more like conventional psychoanalytic thought and thus more acceptable. "Orgone" became "Bioenergy" and "Bioenergetics" was born.

1. Lowen's work is still concerned with patterns of muscular armoring which blocks the free movement of energy through the system.

2. He is much more interested in the "grounding" of the body, its contact with the earth.

3. Technically he added a large series of "stress positions" which are designed to force the body to release in blocked areas so that energy can circulate more freely.

4. He also had clients "enact" emotions so that blocked affects might be released in the midst of their dramatization. For example, someone who is blocking anger might pound a mattress with a tennis racket and shout some apt phrase. The underlying anger might then explode into genuine expression.

5. He also developed a system of body "types" in which various psychosexual "fixations" or characteristic defense patterns appeared to be expressed. For example, an oral dependent person might not want to stand on his own feet. The body might be soft and the legs undeveloped and ungrounded.

The typology has some major drawbacks. There is the matter of how the types are named: "Schizoid", "Psychopathic", "Oral Dependent", "Masochistic", "Phallic", and "Hysteric". These are certainly unlovely names to give somebody, and the assault on self-esteem might undo much of the other therapeutic benefits. (See also the original sin viewpoint discussed previously)

A typology also has the difficulty of being static, whereas reality is dynamic and changing. Identifying someone's body according to type can easily cause us to overlook that it has other aspects, moves between several types, and so on.

This typology contains some wisdom however, and we will encounter it, still further developed, in Ron Kurtz's "Hakomi Therapy



## Stanley Keleman

Stanley Keleman was a student of Alexander Lowen, among others. A gifted body therapist now practicing in the bay area, he has published numerous books during the past twenty years. His books deal with the role sexuality plays in forming the basic identity of a person, with the keen relationship between fear and excitement, and the need to rescue life processes from the strictures of fear. His recent book *Emotional Anatomy* (1986) presents a beautifully illustrated system of body types based on reactions to stressful challenge. Some bodies seem to be coping appropriately, while others stiffen in over-reactive bluster, and still others collapse. These patterns persist as enduring forms. Keleman's vision in this book is also unusual: he sees the "emotional anatomy" as consisting of "tubes and pouches." Of course, the tubes and pouches are actually there in the digestive and circulatory systems, and in the various cavities of the myoskeletal structure. His sense of the functioning of these tubes and pouches is very complex and interesting. Each of them can be hypertoned or in collapse, and both can be happening in various combinations.

The fact that Keleman has been able to put his remarkable empathic sense into a book of this type is a real achievement. Any bodyworker wishing to specialize in the emotional aspects of the body must include *Emotional Anatomy* in the course of study.

## Ron Kurtz's "Hakomi"

Ron Kurtz is a remarkable psychologist who, in his quest for an effective psychotherapy, has synthesized effective features from the work of many of the human potential therapists, from Perls and Schutz to Janov and Pierrakos. His first book, with physician-Rolfer Hector Prester, was entitled *The Body Reveals*. Since then, Ron has developed a systematic method of psychotherapy called Hakomi Therapy based on his genial synthesis of the best of everybody's work.

Hakomi therapy is notably non-coercive and Zen-like. The client is encouraged to be mindful of the here-and-now, from which he may (or may not) access pressing emotional material, or childlike ego states. The therapist occasionally probes gently to bring aspects of the present state into awareness.

Two things make Hakomi Therapy of interest to bodyworkers. First, its non-pushy orientation toward simple awareness is a good approach for bodyworkers interested in being of psychological benefit to their clients. Secondly, the method draws heavily on the body typology which Ron derived from Lowen and which he has developed extensively. It is this use of the body types which warrants his inclusion in the psychoanalytic lineage of bodywork. He understands the types in terms of their underlying problems and issues, and many of his therapeutic interventions are designed with these in mind.

As with Lowen, the types are: 1. Schizoid. 2. Oral. 3. Psychopath (two types). 4. Masochist. 5. Phallic. 6. Hysteric

These are heavy, pathology-laden names to give to anyone. Any typology turns the movement of process into something static, and as with many typologies, there is no way to be outside of the system; so everybody is "sick." Yet it seems people's bodies do reflect lifelong patterns of this sort, and much useful information is contained in the system.



## The Psychoanalytic Lineage

# Object Relations Theory

Object Relations refers to how the individual has learned to relate and to love with other people. (“Love Objects”) The ability to relate is learned through early interaction with the environment in a series of developmental steps. Bodyworkers need to know these steps.

## Psychoanalytic research into the development of object relations

Freud’s early study of adult neurotics has been supplemented by many other observations of infants and children during the last 40 years.. The development of love and relationship has been an important part of this study. Lawrence Hedges (1984) integrated a great deal of this research into four “listening perspectives” (perspectives from which the analytic therapist must listen to his or her patients) based upon four stages in the development of object relations. People manifesting psychopathological states may be struggling with unfinished business in one or another of the stages. Even in less disturbed people, the different aspects of relational behavior which develop from the four states require a different listening approach.

The stages develop Contact, Intimacy, Independence, and Reciprocity, elements which unfold successively, but which are current issues in all human relations, like four notes in a chord. We use them all the time, and most ordinary people display disruption and conflict in each of them, at least some of the time. Which of us has no anxiety or conflict about making or being in contact, or about entering and withdrawing from intimacy, and is thoroughly self-reliant, and always fair and equal?

## Using Object Relations Theory in Bodywork.

The bodywork situation is a laboratory of relationship with the interesting characteristic that touch replaces much of the verbal-social interaction.

1. It is possible to note disturbances in contact (organizational level) and sometimes to ease these difficulties by touch interactions which circumvent the in-your-face personal issues.

<b>Organization Stage</b> -4 to +4 months – development of the basic modes of CONTACT	Developmental: until about 4 months of age the newborn infant is reaching out to make contact in a variety of ways. Some ways are rewarded, others are ignored or punished. A webwork of contact ‘tendrils’ is established—or else the infant fails to thrive.
<b>Symbiotic Stage</b> (4 months to 2.5 years) –development of patterns of INTIMACY	(1) Developmental, 4 to 24 months. The infant bonds with the mother in a symbiotic union which involves merging, “becoming” the other. An entire world of interpersonal games and maneuvers is evolved here, which give rise to rules and expectations about relationships in later life. Ambivalences about commitment or involvement involve this level.
<b>Emergent Stage</b> (2.5 to 3.5 years) –development of INDEPENDENCE	the symbiotic union and requires attention from other people which validates his/her independent existence and self-worth.
<b>Triangulation Stage</b> (after 3.5 years) –development of RECIPROCITY	(1) Developmental. 36 months to 6 years. The child arrives at the “Oedipal Stage.” In Freud’s scenario, the little boy wants to possess the mother and eliminate the father. A more general reading represents this as a more complex discovery of other people in the world.

2. The symbiotic level can also be noted and the abandonment issues reassured by touch while avoiding too much involvement in the client's transferred social needs. The touch communication is itself based on the merging and intimacy skills of the therapist, and teaching the client to participate may be relevant to conflicts and anxieties at the symbiotic level. Since bodyworkers only rarely run into trouble, this seems generally to be a nonthreatening approach to intimacy.

3. The emergent level, especially as it persists in narcissistic preoccupation, is a particularly promising area for bodywork. While the client may be striving for self-validation through fruitless and repetitive behaviors, touch may succeed in giving validation through the body and aid in the development of the self-structure. A clearer sense of physical presence, a more organized and coherent body, may effectively promote more stable self-functioning.

	(2) Pathology: When the net of connections is minimal, painful, or met with indifference, the organizational level struggle continues. This is manifest in psychoses or in pathological states in which a person has not bonded successfully with a parent. In such cases it is dangerous for a therapist to make contact without first clarifying terrified resistances which may be operating.	(3) In more normal individuals, the contact level is apparent in ordinary patterns of reaching out for, or avoiding contact.
	(2) Pathology: The symbiotic level may be prominent in Borderline disorders characterized by terror of abandonment, and accompanied by strong transferences of "all-good" or "all-bad" projections onto the therapist.	(3) In normal life, the symbiotic level gives rise to the ability to achieve real intimacy characterized by deep, empathic contact. It also reveals its presence in conflicts about intimacy, intense sentiments, attachments, and emotional reactions.
	(2) Pathology. This self-centered preoccupation is called narcissism in people who remain stuck in this way of relating. Recent psychoanalytic theory (Kohut) has emphasized that a "self-structure" is being built in this stage. Individuals who remain narcissistically preoccupied are struggling for self-validation to maintain a self-structure which more normal people can take for granted.	(3) In normal life, "healthy narcissism" is an essential component of self-esteem and confidence in normal functioning, but is supplemented by reciprocal, two-way relational skills.
	(2) Pathology. Conflicts at this stage are the basis of neurosis, which Freud demonstrated to be disturbances in which repressed impulses struggle for expression in a derived form. This is a relatively advanced level of development, and most psychotherapists do most of their work with pre-Oedipal, pre-neurotic personality	(3) All of our relationships are triangular, in that they are experienced with other people in mind. Reciprocity and two-way relationship gradually develop.



## The Psychoanalytic Lineage

### “Self Psychology”

Recent developments in psychoanalysis have recognized that not all disturbance comes from repression. Much of it is related to the experience of the self, which is often quite conscious. Much of this theorizing about “self” could apply also to “body.”

**S**elf Psychology grew out of the work of Heinz Kohut, a prominent psychoanalyst, who first recognized that disturbances in self were more important than the contents of repression in people who came to him for treatment. (Chicago, in the 1960-70’s).

The development of the self-concept occurs largely in the “emergent” stage of object relations development [pages III-38, 39]. The child is asserting a newly found sense of self by insisting on power and autonomy beyond his/her actual attainment. She/he needs, and seeks, a lot of validation, often in the form

of attention-getting. The stage is narcissistic, in the sense that other people are seen mostly in terms of the self and its needs (“self-objects”).

But self-disturbance goes beyond self-esteem and its disruption. The self has boundaries of which it needs to be sure. It has both subjective and objective aspects which must be balanced, and a sense of autonomy, initiative, and belonging which need to be established.

Phil Mollon has summarized the primary issues of self disturbance in the chart below.

#### A Taxonomy of Self-Disturbance (Mollon, 1997)

	Characteristics	Main Authors
1. Differentiation	failure to distinguish self and other. Inability to have reflective awareness of self. At an extreme psychotic loss of boundaries	Mahler Jacobson Masterson/Rinsley
2. Subjective self	Impaired sense of agency and autonomy - or illusions of omnipotence.	Kohut Broucek G. Klein
3. Objective self	Pathology of self-esteem. Negative images and low esteem or else grandiose self-images	Jacobson Sandler/
4. Structure	Breakdown in the sense of cohesion organization and coherence of the self. Disorganization of the perceptual world and experience of the body. Depersonalization and derealization	Kohut Stern
5. Balance between subjective and objective self	‘False self’ - excessive accommodation to the other. Embarrassed self-consciousness or inability to be aware of other’s point of view Wright	Mead Winnicott Bach
6. Illusions of Grandiosity, self-sufficiency	sense of omnipotence. Denial of need for others. ‘Totalitarian ego’ Narcissistic rage	Numerous authors, including Freud
7. Sense of lineage	Denial of, or lack of connection to, origins. Inability to locate the self in a family and cultural line.	Lacan Abelin

## Bodywork and Self-Disturbance

Mollon's categories of self disturbance seem in many ways similar to the over-conceptualized and body-alienated mental patterns which bodyworkers customarily address. The body is an important part of the self, and many disturbances in self-experience seems available for change through a direct exploration of body awareness

### 1. Differentiation.

Disturbances in differentiation are clearly related to the body image. Bodywork is able to clarify self-boundaries. The increased awareness should enhance the ability of self-reflection.

### 2. Subjective self

Impaired sense of agency and autonomy - or illusions of omnipotence: By bringing awareness into the here-and-now physical experience, bodywork should enable a client to cut through a great deal of confusion about autonomy and the ability to do things (sense of agency).

### 3. Objective self

Pathology of self-esteem. Negative images and low esteem or else grandiose self-images – again, sensory awareness in bodywork should counter these illusions.

### 4. Structure

Bodywork should help a person to maintain a sense of cohesive organization and coherence of the self. Often patient tactile stimulation can help avoid depersonalization and de-realization.

### 5. Balance between Subjective and Objective Self

Bodywork can support the sense of interior self so that embarrassed self consciousness can be balanced by actual awareness of the physical present. Clients tend to be more aware of their own needs and to avoid unrealistic accommodation to the needs of other people.

### 6. Illusions of Grandiosity, Self-Sufficiency

To the extent that a sense of omnipotence or narcissistic rage are defensive responses to vulnerability, work with the body should help ground the client in reality.

## The Narcissistic Affects

Shame concerns the sense of self and the image of the self. Whereas in guilt, a more object-related affect, the pain is over an action or an impulse to action, in shame the pain concerns the image of the self. In states of shame, images of the self as weak, defective, pathetic, exposed and violated come to the fore. Shame may also arise when an *illusion* of grandiosity is exposed. As described by Kohut, deficiencies in the availability of responsive mirroring self-objects in childhood may lead to an intensification and fixation of infantile grandiosity which leave the adult prone to shame. In practice, shame and guilt often occur simultaneously.

Related to shame is the experience of humiliation which is associated with the experience of an other imposing their will and rendering one helpless or impotent.

Also intimately associated with shame is the painful and disturbing state of embarrassed self-consciousness. Embarrassment occurs when a person violates the other's expectation. Self-consciousness arises in the jarring between the collusive fitting in with the desire of the other and the actual separateness of the self. The person in this state feels him- or herself to be in an unempathic milieu identified with an unempathic observer looking on at the self. The 'short circuit' effect of focusing of one's self can be extremely disorganizing.

Embarrassed self-consciousness may be distinguished from two other varieties of self-consciousness: first, normal self-awareness which is not pathology but a developmental achievement; and secondly, what might be called hypochondriacal preoccupation with the self- an anxious awareness of a sense of the bodily or mental self breaking up or altering its shape. . . .

Narcissistic vulnerability may be regarded as a sensitivity to slights, insults, experiences of feeling ignored or overlooked or treated without respect or thought. This fragility in the sense of self may make the person prone to reactions of rage or depression as well as shame. This appears to stem from early experiences of failure to evoke a thoughtful empathic emotional response in the parents.





## "The Body Politic"

Can it be that politics and the state are projections of our experience of the body?

It is irresistibly tempting to see a parallel between the human body and the body politic. Plato was the first philosopher who suggested such an analogy. For him, the soul is tripartite and hierarchically organized, and there is an analogy between the harmonious functioning of the soul and that of the ideal state. The appetitive or impulsive element of the soul is analogous to the lowest class in society, the consumers. Reason is the highest element and corresponds to the ruling class. In between is an element corresponding to the soldier-police. The name for this element, *thumos*, may be translated "spirit" (in the sense in which a horse has spirit). The proper coordination of these three elements or faculties constitutes human well-being. Plato's third element might also call to mind Arica's "relations instinct" which, in society, might be seen in the army and police which function to maintain the existing power relationships within a society.

The traditional caste system in India has a similar implication derived from the three elements of matter, the "gunas," which comprise existence. The Brahmin caste at the top are the priests and intellectuals by hereditary right. They represent the element of clarity, "Sattva." The element of force, "Rajas," is embodied in the military caste. The dark, inert, dull element, "Tamas," is, of course, represented in the lower castes. The caste system has many more subcategories, including the craftsmen who work with their hands, and "untouchables" who are without place in the castes. Here, both the hands and the unspeakable and repressed in body experience seem to find expression in a social order.

Wilhelm Reich was the most political of body psychologists. He saw that the overriding problem of individual psychology is the relationship with energy. Many people are highly defended against the natural flow of energy in their own erotic feelings, emotions, and capacity for pleasure. He saw these people as suffering from an "emotional plague" which causes them to attack life and pleasure in other people as well. The "emotional plague" can affect whole societies, and Reich felt this was at the root of the Nazi phenomenon which he had observed in Germany.

## “Puritans” and “Humanists”

The Affect Theorist, Sylvan Tomkins, and his followers believe that people differ according to whether they are “Puritans” or “Humanists.” Puritans tend to perceive phenomena in terms of judgements of what they “should” be. Humanists tend more to look at things as they are, without judgements. They interpreted the recent political process around President Clinton’s sexual indiscretions in these terms: the puritan part of the population were out to inflict the maximum shame and humiliation because their standards of morality had been violated. The humanists were more matter-of-fact about the matter. In fact, before the outcome of the impeachment process was known, the website of the Affect Theorists predicted that humanists were in the majority and would ultimately reject impeachment. The accuracy of this prediction became apparent in the public outrage and boredom which ultimately greeted the “Puritans” leading the impeachment process.

The 19th Century English critic, Matthew Arnold made a similar distinction between the “Hebrew” and the “Greek” elements of Christian civilization. The “Hebrew” element is concerned with right-action and with “walking in the ways of the Lord;” the “Greek,” on the other hand, tended to “see things as they are.” These personal modes of perception clearly characterize the ways in which an individual views his/r own life as well as the perspective h/she will take on political process.

What does this mean for bodyworkers? The two attitudes will materially affect how a client views her/is own body as well as the bodywork process. There is a curious tendency for the most judgemental people to approach their own bodies in the most externalized and medical-scientific terms. Rather than looking to their own experience of somatic processes, they often deal with the body as a purely material object which, in illness, is to be given over to a medical authority for “treatment.” The conflict between religion and science is thus resolved in an odd way, in which both operate to distract the individual from his/r own experience.

William Blake has, as usual, been one of the most radical in rejecting the difference between inner and outer experience, and thus to offer a basis for the projection of body experience into politics:

“&all you behold; tho’ it appears Without, it is Within For all are Men in Eternity, Rivers, Mountains, Cities, Villages, All are Human, & when you enter into their Bosoms you walk’In Heavens & Earths, as in your own Bosom you bear your Heaven And Earth & all you behold; tho’ it appears Without, it is Within, In your Imagination, of which this World of Mortality is but a Shadow.” (K709)

—quoted by Kathleen Raine, 1991.



## More about the Senses

**The Senses convey energy and movement outside and inside the organism. This information is always in the temporal present**

1. **The External Senses** convey energy and movement from the environment into the psyche. Sight, Smell, Taste, Hearing, Touch, Temperature, and Pressure are usually listed as external Senses

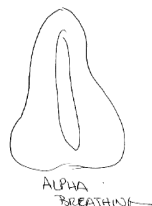
2. **The Internal Senses** convey information about the state of the internal body, its position in gravity, and its emotional and visceral events. Kinaesthesia, Equilibrium, Temperature, Touch, Pressure, Organ Senses, and Emotional Senses compose internal sensation, which is complex and involves many different types of receptors.

### **Body as Vibratory Volume**

The senses are not perceived separately at any time, but merge into an experience of self and environment. In the touch communication modelled above, the body becomes a perceived volume, a vibrating interior space. Touch, an “exterior” sense, is used to access a whole range of internal (“proprioceptive”) awarenesses. Sound is also an external sense, and it can be used to access proprioception in much the same way. In fact, sound is a good analogy for the way the relaxed and open body feels inside. The interior volume may also be a visual arena, in which lights are seen and images move. Dreaming takes place within this volume.

The vibratory volume is bounded by sensations of tension. One's characteristic sense of self is “shaped” by these tensions. When they are released, there is more internal awareness of the vibrating volume.

It is worth repeating that the feeling within the interior volume can be directly influenced by attention, and that this may parallel actual changes in electromagnetic phenomena.



### **The “I” and the Eye**

**Self-consciousness is an eye thing: looking and being seen.**

**Maybe the “I” is an eye thing.**

**Is the Eye contained in the “I”?**

**Is the “I” contained in the eye?**

## The Senses and the Formation of Thinking

Recent developments in cognitive theory (Lakoff, Johnson, others) have drawn attention to the role of the body in the development of thinking.

### Stage One: Kinaesthetic Mental Forms (“understanding”)

Thinking uses many basic “ideas” which were first formed from the experience of the body. Basic “image schemata” such as balance, scale, force, cycles, paths, containment, and center-periphery, which lie at the foundation of abstract thought develop out of early experience of the body. The idea of “Space” which the philosopher Kant showed was necessary to every idea must be derived from body experience. (He thought it resided *á priori*, in the mind.)

When the infant becomes a toddler, standing and walking, how much more complex must be his/her new “concepts!”

### Stage Two: Visual Forms (“seeing”)

As vision becomes more important, the infant becomes aware of discrete objects, and they, too, have balance, scale, force, etcetera. Vision breaks things down into separate objects which are related in various ways, and so it seems to be closely related to analytical thinking which does the same thing with concepts. Concepts, then, have a strong tendency to carry visual and kinaesthetic imagery with them.

It should be noted that vision is involved in a great deal of thought. The neocortex, which appears to have evolved in primates as an organ for perceiving space (especially in the coordination of hand and eye), becomes, in human beings, an organ for generating imaginary spaces, that is, thoughts.

Vision can become overly dominant, to the exclusion of internal awareness, in certain kinds of body alienation. The person struggles to “see” and fails to “understand.” Visual thinking can also become a preoccupation which distracts from actual perception of the external world.

### Other forms of Thinking.

Of course, imagery from any of the senses can be a part of thinking. Musical intelligence, for example, seems to be a kind of auditory thinking which perceives patterns in time (rather than in space.)

Another type of thinking which is also related to hearing, but in a different way, arises from subvocalizations which can be measured in the throat and are experienced as verbal thoughts.

**The senses comprise most of the present awareness. Thinking is an abstraction or ‘representation’ of sensory experience. It seems obvious that thinking should derive its basic forms from the senses**

### Voice and Toning.

Voice must be considered from its sensory aspect as well as the motoric. First, the vocal apparatus can sense vibration as well as emit it. Second, the experience of vocalizing is a two-way experience of sensory exchange with the external world, one which, under certain circumstances, can open up transpersonal experience. The ability or inability to express oneself verbally influences a person’s fundamental being in the world. This may involve tension and disorganization in the mouth and throat which can be addressed with touch. Third, vocalizing, especially with toning rather than speech, vibrates the inside of the body, opening up closed areas, setting in motion vibrational states, and influencing the vibrational experience of the external world.

Toning, of course, deserves far more consideration beyond these few sensory considerations. Its practitioners have been prompted to describe mantra and seed-sound in the most transcendent terms: of Logos, and of worlds beyond worlds, and their creation. But these lie beyond our specific purposes here.



## Six Sensory Surfaces

Bodyworkers touch bodies which have become accustomed to habitual patterns of sensation and action. Bonnie Bainbridge-Cohen and students such as Susan Aposhyan have identified basic components of movement and sensation which are important for bodyworkers.

### Six Sensory Surfaces.

Six areas of the body are primarily engaged in interaction with the world. These are the face, the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, and the pelvic floor. They engage in most of the actions which bring us into contact; so it is not surprising that they are the most important receivers of sensation into the body. While other areas, such as the back and legs, can sense, their function is not primarily to interact. Sensation “feeds” the interior of the body. The interior feeling of vitality is an interaction with sensory input from the outside. The brain is organized, and its organization maintained, by this sensory interaction.

Clearly, blocks in any of the sensory surfaces profoundly influence the rest of the body and psyche. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the palms and soles in this respect. Although it is not immediately apparent that they connect us with reality, when they no longer contact, touch, and receive, we are seriously out of contact.

Since the palms and the soles are organized without reference to these surfaces. The load which improperly organized arms and legs place on the torso cannot be resolved by work on the shoulders and pelvis alone. And, finally, the torso cannot be organized without resolving the effects of contraction in the limbs. This constitutes a critique of Chiropractic theory.

The importance of the six sensory surfaces for the interior state of the body offers promising leads for somatic bodywork. Touch communication with the feet and hands can circumvent many difficulties. Contact organs of the face are receiving increased attention from senior practitioners (Lowen), and seem to offer important possibilities for personal expansion.

#### **When elderly people withdraw**

they withdraw in their hands and feet. If we want them to reconnect, we must renew contact through those same surfaces.

When people are depressed and agitated, they tend to wring their hands. It is almost as if they were thinking, ruminating around and around, with their hands. Bringing them back into the sensory present may mean reestablishing contact through the hands.

#### **Somatic Experiment: ‘Audition Plantar’**

(From Arica): “Listening with the soles of the feet,” can be done, for example lying with feet toward the speakers while listening to music. It is effective in opening the connection of the feet outward, and at the same time brings felt vibration inside, as if the feet were, indeed listening. As if the natural sense of the feet were a kind of ‘sonar’ akin to hearing. As if the body lives in an auditory world, and vice versa: an auditory world within the body. (“an immense world of delight. . .”)





## Four Basic Actions

*"If one examines the functions of our endpoints interacting with the world, one realizes that we are constantly giving and receiving through them—giving and receiving objects, information, love, energy, anger, and so forth. Neurologically this flow of giving and receiving occurs through actions of either pushing, reaching, pulling, or yielding." – Susan Aposhyan.*

### The Four Basic Developmental Actions

#### Yielding and Receiving

This is the basic and most subtle action, learned in utero and in early infancy. It means resting in contact, receiving, not yet moving. It is at the basis of the other actions—pushing, reaching, and grasping/pulling in. Because of early experience, most of us have at least some problem with yielding, but without it our other actions are out of contact and distorted. This is, of course, what a bodyworker needs for receptive touch. Technique (action) comes from Perception (yielding).

#### Pushing

Pushing comes next. The body compresses around the point of contact to push something away or to push itself away and thus become denser and more substantial. Four-year-olds push just to assert their own power, as a part of forming an identity. Adults can have inhibitions against pushing. Pushing strengthens the body so that it can reach and grasp without toppling over; so it is fundamental to other movements.

#### Reaching

When we reach we open toward something or somewhere. The body eccentrically lengthens the musculature around the reaching limb. As our endpoints become alert to something "out there" and move toward it, there is a sense of release through the reaching part. As we reach, our attention is focused externally. "Psychologically, reaching manifests curiosity, desire, longing, compassion," says Aposhyan. Pushing is required to give grounded support for reaching, and often an inability to reach out is due to inhibitions against pushing.

#### Grasping and Pulling In

When reaching brings us into contact with something we like, we may want to grasp it and draw it toward ourselves. This is the end result of being able to yield, to push, and to reach. If we cannot reach, we cannot grasp, or we may grasp all the time, never satisfied because it does not touch the core of ourselves. Grasping may also be a protective response, which draws us in away from contact.

#### **What it means for bodyworkers**

We sense actions in our client's bodies. Their tensions are doing something. The Four Developmental Actions help us analyze and understand some of what we may be perceiving.

Bodywork works to release life. Life is movement and contact. We are working to free the body and its natural, wise, and undistorted movement. The concepts of movement therapy may be equally useful in bodywork.

Notice that the Touch-Press-Move components are strikingly similar to the Yield-Push-Reach actions in this system.

Triectically the yielding is attractive, pushing is active (obviously enough); Reaching is a combination of both, as Grasping must be if it is to be connected.

We ask our clients to yield (pay attention, draw in) so that they can connect from the core (pleasure) and begin to respond (push, reach). Most of them already know how to grasp (contract).

Footnote: This is paraphrased from Susan Aposhyan's book.



## Mapping the Levels of Touch

Michael Shea's discussion of the levels of touch used in cranial-sacral manipulation leads to the possibility of a comprehensive map of the levels of touch.

**T**ouch extends through many different levels, from the relatively straightforward touch of massage to exquisitely subtle modes of receptive touch which appear to involve no movement at all.

I read with delight Michael Shea's sensitive description of cranial-sacral touch in a manual he produced in 1997. He noted that Dr. Sutherland, the originator of cranial manipulation went through three major stages in the development of his work. At first, he was addressing the bony plates of the skull in order to induce movement. Then he became aware of the cranial-sacral pulse (which is the focus of the method taught by the Upledger Institute, the major source of instruction in cranial work today). But still later, Sutherland discovered a further level of fluid pulsation which was even more subtle and involved cycles of pulsation more than a minute in duration. By now his touch involved nearly immobile contacts with the cranium lasting 30-45 minutes!

Finally, Shea mentions an even deeper level in the touch communication in which something profound is contacted. He calls it the "Breath of Life", a vital movement which he feels is a contact with "The Other."

I was delighted with Shea's obvious sensitivity, and the clarity with which he can describe subtle touch experience. I can identify my structural work with Sullivan's bony level; I have experience with the membrane and fluid levels; and I can see the usefulness of all three. As to the "breath of life," all of us connect sometimes with something like this, even if we describe it in different ways.

But the drift of his argument was strongly in favor of the deepest and most subtle touch, and, as a Rolfer, I still feel that there is plenty of work to be done at the bone-and-fascia level.

Also, I had devised my own diagram of the "Levels of the Body" which seemed to fill in some additional pieces. All of the levels of the physical body involve fascia, including the bone level at which Sutherland began his work. Could it be that the two charts could be combined?

### Sutherland's Three Models for Cranial Manipulation

(Michael Shea, 1997)

#### Bone

Sutherland first began working with the cranium by mobilizing subtle movement in the plates of the skull.

#### Membrane

Later he discovered the cranial-sacral pulse of the meninges, the membranes of the spine and cranium. This pulse, which occurs 6-8 times per minute, is the central focus of the cranial sacral therapy taught in the Upledger Institute.

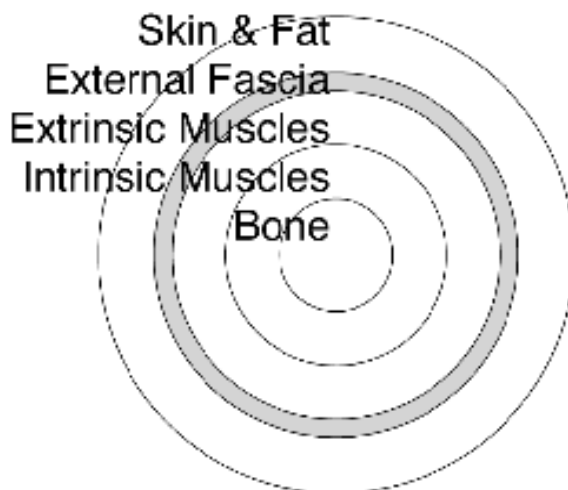
#### Fluid

Still later, Sutherland discovered many other fluid pulses, some cycles lasting more than a minute. Working with this level requires a highly receptive contact for a half hour or more.

#### Breath of Life

Furthermore, Shea identifies an even deeper level in which one contacts a purely spontaneous movement of vitality which is deeper than any pulse. He feels this is a contact with "The Other."

### Layers of the Body



This chart is useful for discriminating what systems in the gross physical body are being touched in deep tissue bodywork. Fascia is everywhere in the body, and so each level can be conceived as a level of fascia: even bone is embedded in a fascial matrix, and any shift in skeletal relationships involves fascia.

## Levels of Touch – a deep tissue continuum

The intention of deep tissue bodywork can extend from the most superficial layers of fascia to the bone, and beyond into the intracranial membranes, the deep fluid pulses, and the impulse of life itself. From the standpoint of touch communication this is a continuum.

	INTENTION	TOUCH
<---FASCIAL LAYERS---	<b>Skin</b>	Directed Superficially. May want to loosen skin from the external fascia. Varying degrees of pressure. Stroking, Skinrolling, etc.
	<b>External Fascia</b>	Directed superficially. May loosen distortions in the external fascia. Highly directed sustained pressure toward specific targets.
	<b>Extrinsic Myofascial</b>	Highly specific intention directed at fascial distortions in the outer muscular layer. Sustained pressure, broad or narrow in span, directed at specific targets.
	<b>Intrinsic Myofascial</b>	Moderately specific intention. Difficult to distinguish deeper intrinsic muscles from bony layer. Broad pressure, directed in long, sustained contacts toward carefully conceived skeletal targets.
	<b>Bone</b>	Specific attention to bones and how freely they move upon one another. Cranial plates also move. Same as above.
	<b>Membrane</b>	Careful attention to cranial-sacral pulse (6-8/sec.) Sustained contacts, light touch
	<b>Fluid</b>	Broadly receptive attention to many kinds of pulse. Very long, sustained contacts with a range of light contacts.
	<b>“Breath of Life”</b>	Totally open attitude toward the unpredictable movements of Grace. Long, sustained contacts. Practitioner is engaged in transactions in highly altered states of consciousness.



## Sensory Balance

At any moment the field of awareness includes our sensory perception, but not all sensation is equally perceived. People pay varying amounts of attention to different senses, and, frequently, some senses are neglected or ignored. “Body Alienation” is often a matter of excluding certain sensory perceptions and overemphasizing others.

### **Beginning with Light and Gravity**

The infant is always stimulated by gravity, and, if it has sight, by light. These two inputs are the fundamentals from which it will construct its orientation to the world.

### **Kinaesthesia and Equilibrium**

Gravity is perceived by internal physical senses. There is a continual interaction with gravity at every moment. We roll over, we sit, we stand. Gradually we evolve a sense of ourselves, our position and balance in space

*Out of the experience of gravity, the body sense develops.*

### **Vision**

Light, of course, is perceived by the eyes. Actually, light comes into our bodies through the skin, but we mostly perceive it through our eyes. The perception of light permits the body to construct a sense of the world.

*Out of the experience of light, the world sense develops.*

## **A Balance between Inside and Outside**

Attention moves continually between the internal sense of ourselves and the world in which we move.

### **Hearing is both External and Internal**

Hearing seems to operate both internally and externally. Sounds come to us from the outside world, and, in fact, add dimension to our experience of external space.

Hearing also has a close relation with the interior senses: it can be used to heighten interior awareness, for example, by “listening” with the body. A full sense of embodied presence includes a vibratory sense of the interior of the body.

The obvious relationship between hearing and feeling, as in music, is another indicator of hearing as an access to interior perception.

We can “listen” with our entire body, however, and the sounds can be felt as vibration throughout the body. Hearing then connects us with the interior body as a ‘vibrating volume.’

### **Touch: on the border between Inside and Outside**

**Touch**, is an exterior sense, but it also offers an important entry to internal feeling. Obviously it is experienced within, rather than only on the surface of the body. When touch and pressure are used to uncover tightly tensed and sore areas in the body, it can be used to extend the area of open (proprioceptive) sensation in the body.

The sense of touch may be excluded in body alienation, as in mild numbness, or by not investing **feeling** in the experienced sensation.

### **Other special relationships among the senses.**

Smell and taste have close associations with internal senses of visceral organs and emotions. A remembered odor can bring to mind an entire scene.



# What's Missing in This Book?

## **We've touched upon**

Energy

Sensation/Perception

Touch

Psychoanalytic Lineage

Somatic Maps

Consciousness, Awareness, and Attention

None of this was intended to be definitive or complete. I wanted to present enough material to promote dialogue. I have often presented my own ideas without attempting to represent the entire range of discussion in the somatic field.

## **Conspicuously missing are**

Movement

Structure

These two topics clearly belong in any competent survey of somatic topics. Movement practices, of course, are the most powerful and regular sources of somatic insight, and many people, including my own students and workshop participants, have had initial body epiphanies as a result of movement. But my own movement work is very particularly connected to my structural work as a Rolfer. Rather than attempt a review of movement, which would surely fail to do justice to the wonderful contributions of Feldenkrais, Alexander, Aston, and other practitioners, I have decided to wait for another book in which to present the specific joining of Geometry, Movement, and Structure which characterizes Rolf Structural Integration.

## **Major Contributors have been Ignored**

In particular two important scholars formulating the academic study called "somatics" are not adequately represented. They are Thomas Hanna and Don Hanlon Johnson.



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*Essential Being at twenty-one months.*



## **What is the Somatic Viewpoint?**

Since the end of World War Two, centers like Esalen Institute in Big Sur as well as psychoanalysis, Oriental spiritual disciplines, and the European schools of phenomenology and existentialism have been converging upon a new psychology of the body. No longer content with a purely material scientific view, somatic practices emphasize the subjective experience of the embodied person.

## **Basics of Touch Communication**

The book presents an easy-to-learn method of touch communication which anyone can apply. Both bodyworker and client can learn a profound and effective way to reach the deepest levels of physical awareness, where profound and beneficial changes may be brought about.

## **A free-ranging Survey of Body Psychology**

This new understanding of the human being casts new light on many old issues and suggests body-oriented approaches to many human problems. Alienation from the body may be the most important factor which causes people to become lost in mental and emotional difficulties. A return to embodied existence through the various somatic methods offers new hope for better living.

This book grew out of over 40 years of  
somatic bodywork practice and classes at  
The International Professional School of Bodywork

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