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The Heart of Healing in Clinical Practice

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When we talk of healing, the body is an important part. Rumi says, "We are bees, and our bodies are the honeycomb: we have made the body, cell by cell, like beeswax". What is the significance of being embodied? When I work to help a person to become more embodied, I urge him or her to explore the vibrations of the dynamic ground. That can mean standing on your two feet with one foot-length between the feet, kneel a little bit to come to a position of a straight back, eyes forward and I "brush" the body at certain places to reinforce the involuntary vibrations. The body starts to dearmor and unwind and thus feelings and images come. This is vertical grounding and is often a starting point in therapy. Vertical grounding facilitates integration between the inner child and the grown-up in what I call progression, an acceptance of death as a prerequisite for your life and that you still move on with it. Horizontal grounding facilitates regression and acceptance of your inner child. This movement happens along the lines of COEX themes (Grof). COndensed EXperiences along two or three feeling themes that basically constitute the tapestry of your life's story. The COEX lines co-ordinate psychodynamic, perinatal and transpersonal dimensions of experience. Some common horizontal techniques I use are: hypnotherapy, Bodyharmony, Holistic pulsing, craniosacral osteopathy, Holotropic Breathwork, and symbolization techniques like Symbol drama (Leuner) and Psychoimagination therapy (Shorr).

The relationship between body sensation and imagination is a crucial one when it comes to healing and integration in psychotherapy. From the beginning the child is very much body consciousness. Merleau-Ponty's concept, "moi-corps" or the body-subject shows that this level is more primary than the conscious ego. We are before we know it! At least half a second before. This philosophical idea has been well confirmed by scientific research (Libet et al). Thus it seems that the body-subject has an intention and intentionality (awareness of the world) of its own. I often see my clients express body awareness, like "running in the legs" as a little boy/girl, or as one female client who suffered from asthma during the first years of her life, now as a grown-up in therapy goes through a sequence of a 4-minute asthma attack. This is a real asthma attack, but in a therapeutic context. The attack contained the release of very early fear and facilitated the embodiment of her personality and body.

Many people live with a split between the body on the one side and the image on the other. It's like two continents that never meet and merge. I propose a name for this split: ASOMATI "without body for image" in Greek. This lack of wholeness is often shown in detachment from physical intimacy and difficulty in feeling empathy for the other. When you can feel that your "heart reaches out for someone", it's actually a real psycho-physical experience. Another difficulty with this split is the inability to experience sexuality in an integrated way in terms of body, psyche and soul. Often sexuality is experienced on a part-object level without rich embodied fullness. The healing of the ASOMATI split I call the body-image aspect of the dynamic ground. When this level of experience is healed, it's much easier to get a transpersonal experience and super-conscious access in gradual deepening of living presence in concentration, meditation and contemplation.

Some homework exercises I give to my clients is the yoga exercise; the Sun Salutation, very common in many yoga books. The next exercise is the Mothers Breath or 7-1-7-1-7 which is a Sufi breathing exercise which is now spreading in clinics all over the world. You breathe in and count to 7, count 1 on the pause, and count 7 on the exhalation as well, count 1 on that pause, and so on for some minutes. This evens out the in-breath and the out-breath and makes them equal in length. This makes you relax and get out of the neurotic breathing pattern that almost always has to do with an inability to exhale fully (as in asthma for example). Another exercise I give is the Microcosmic Orbit, a Taoist exercise that is very helpful to integrate the ASOMATI split. You sit with a straight back with your feet on the ground and your hands on your thighs. You imagine an energy (light or water for instance) coming up your spine on the in-breath to the top of your head (the crown chakra) and then imagine the energy coming down on the forefront of your body together with the out-breath.. The tongue should be on your palate all the time and you are to imagine the flow of energy as an orbit and feel it in your body at the same time. The Taoists made you practise this for a hundred days before you could continue the training. That gives an idea of how important this exercise is.

The original meaning of healing is "to make whole". We can be healed of our separateness through our contact with something bigger than ourself, yet expressing itself through us. This integration expresses itself as our Essential Self that is compassionate, expansive and free.

We exist and have evolved in an electromagnetic sea. Our planet has a characteristic electro-magnetic field strength and frequency. So does our nervous system, and it should not be a surprise that the two are closely related. The earth's magnetic field pulsates most strongly at a speed of eight to ten hertz. This corresponds with the alpha brain-wave frequency, the state of consciousness in which we feel most present. When our brainwaves are pulsating faster than about ten hertz, we are in a state of superficial, reactive thought; we feel frantic. This second state, beta, is the condition of modern society most of the time. A third state, theta, is slower than the alpha frequency. Theta, five to six hertz, is sometimes experienced by people when they are involved in creative expression or accessing the unconscious. If we could enter theta consciously, we would gain access to our own

subconscious and to our own (superconscious) creative depths. When the energy of consciousness is blended with the energy of the body, the whole organism is spiritualized, raised to another level of experience. Henry Corbin calls this realm *Mundus Imaginalis* (MI). Jung's Active Imagination is one technique to access this realm of experience. To re-dream a dream from the night of special symbolic meaning could enter this realm of experience. The MI is a higher mind imagination, beyond the ordinary phantasy level of the personality. It's the intermediary space between the personality and the Soul. In fact it could be called the Soul Body. At this level we can experience the inner mountain and the inner city, as real as any other physical reality. When a client seems ready for this level of experience, I use the Rainbow Bridge exercise. This corresponds to the lower Antakarana in the esoteric teachings. The client is guided uphill a mountain through a series of gardens. The first garden has a lot of red in it, the other orange, yellow and so forth following the spectrum's seven colours. At the top of the mountain there is a little church or temple that can be entered. The building has three rooms, first a big one, then a middle room that is used for cleansing and preparing for the innermost one that contains the numinous presence of the higher self. Then the client can put some questions to this presence and get answers, as if they come from her/himself. After leaving the church the client is guided down a valley and after a while comes to an old walled city. The client is guided to an old special house where an old woman lives. Knocks on the door and is instructed to receive something of importance from her. This exercise is meant to access the wise old man and the wise old woman inside to be able to integrate these archetypes for growth and selfmaturity. The significance of being embodied is to be able to sense and transcend at the same time, to realize that we can fine-tune our physical frequencies and that spirit and body can really be the same. The heart of healing is to be overwhelmed by Love. Marsilio Ficino writes in his letters: "Just as in Nature beauty begets Love, so in mind Love Regenerates beauty".

Thank You.