

LECTURE-EXPERIENCE

Bodywork for Spiritual Opening

Kuno Bachbauer, MD, LMFT (D.C.)

I feel great pleasure to offer some thoughts about one of my very favorite subjects. The topic for this month is: "Bodywork for Spiritual Opening". Below, I invite you to a discourse about how we connect to things bigger than us; how we all long for that sense of flow, inner expansion or deep relaxation that arises when we learn to use our body to connect with the Divine!

My first Experiences: Body Mind & Soul

I never thrived in med school. It all felt so disconnected from the human experience! I still can't believe that I actually made it through it! However, throughout my medical training (and beyond), I was fascinated by the study of psychosomatic medicine. Nowadays, people prefer to speak of it as the "mind-body connection". At that same time, I also had developed an interest in what now is called body-psychotherapy. (Then it was called Neo-Reichian work, bioenergetics, etc.) I also discovered spiritual methods that could be experienced through the body, notably Sufism, and Osho's body-based meditation techniques. It was the only way medicine made sense to me: As an approach to the whole person!

Some of the heady stuff I've had to learn then is actually coming handy now! It helps me to make deep intellectual connections when I try to understand how body, mind, emotions, will and spirit work together and it gives me insights in how the wholeness of "you" and "me" is created (and what happens if that wholeness is disturbed).

Further below, you will come to an understanding that we really should think of a body-mind-soul (spirit) connection. We really can't separate our body from our mind and our feelings. We also can't separate our Spirit from our body.

Tell me who you are

I am reminded of a "7-day Enlightenment Intensive" meditation camp I once participated in. It was in England, about 30 years ago. Midway through the week, and after many hours of meditation, far-out and very intense experiences, the leader checked in with me. She asked me the question we had been continuously meditating on, day and night: "Tell me who you are?".

Of course, I had an answer ready! "I am the Spirit!", I replied proudly. After all, I had just returned from a long meditation walk in the rainy English country side; I had communed with the clouds, danced between the raindrops, had felt one with the cows and embraced the Bromberry hedges along the way home. Poonam, the leader, looked at me patiently and said with a curious smile: "What happens if I prick your big toe with a needle?" Well, that comment set me right back to square one!

I had to go deeper into the question of who I really was. I knew it had to be simple. It even was supposed to be "easy" and "effortless". Everyone who was "in the know" had said so! I knew it had something to do with the body; but also with the Divine, with "God" (whoever that was). According to my sources, it had to be something beyond me and my body. To be honest, I had no clue what my friends were talking about!

Experiencing the "Full-Body-YES!"

In the mean time I have had many experiences of "something beyond me". I have danced Rock-n- Roll prayers, I have whirled with the Sufis, I have sat silently in meditation, I screamed my heart out in encounter groups, and in many Osho Dynamic Meditations, I have chanted with Masters, stretched with the Yogis, I lost myself in Holotropic Breathing, and mastered (some of) my fears in powerful all-night shamanic rituals in Brazil. I did it all! And, most often, I did it with my full energy. No holds barred!

Often nothing at all happened! And sometimes I have struck gold! Then I was able to feel that warm tingle in my body, the opening "streaming", the relaxing of deeply held muscles. I felt flow! The full-body-YES to life! And, I felt loved! I was at ease, content and in harmony; I felt, for that moment, that I was at the right place at the right time.

Feel Go(o)d use your Body!

How does it all work? Candace Pert, PhD, has published a wonderful book (and CD) that is called "Feeling G(o)d". She is one of the brilliant researchers that have contributed groundbreaking and world-changing information ("The Molecules of Emotion") for our understanding about how our emotions work. Candace keeps pointing to the fact that our being is not just limited to our body! She guides us to an understanding that we are also hardwired for our spiritual experiences. Our physical body, skin, muscles and bones, complete with nervous system, hormones, neurotransmitters, immune system are made both, to perceive and to interact with, our ordinary physical world as well as the Divine.

When the direct Line is blocked

Body Psychotherapy methods, such as Core Energetics, are psychological methods that are specifically developed to unblock the energy in the body. The direct line to oneself opens up again. Anxiety,



depression and anger may fade away. How this exactly works will be the subject of further lectures (and articles). Suffice it to say that there is ample evidence that these methods work. The effect of these approaches is a change in the overall energetic state of a person. It can be tracked as an opening of the body's flow, a balancing of one's emotions, as well as a change of one's mind by resolving rigidly held beliefs. Body-Psychotherapy, when it is effective, allows you to feel the warm tingle of aliveness and the streaming openness of the "un-defended" Self. At that moment, it can become one's doorway to another, bigger reality.

Bring your Body along!

One common denominator in my own mind-body journey is that all these experiences had their root in the body. I had to "do" something with my body in order to have that coveted experience of the Divine.

Spiritual seekers beware: Meeting God can be hard work! I had to breathe, smell, taste, sense! I had to physically move, charge up my energy, or release it, dance, stretch, sometimes exhaust myself in physical action, and sometimes relax deeply in motionlessness. For all that I needed my body! It did not just all come easy. I had to put "work" into it to have an experience! I had to bring my body along.

Come to our Lecture-Experience

I invite you to bring your body along to a lecture/experience of some of the work and exercises that I have alluded to above. The format will be lecture and further explanation of some concepts that bridge body-psychotherapy and spirituality, coupled with small explorations and direct experiences.

The Event will be held on THURSDAY, October 22, 2009. The evening starts at 7:30 and will go for about 2 hours. It is FREE. Please come and join us with an open heart, prepared to breathe & move.

Article written by Kuno Bachbauer, MD, LMFT (D.C.) © 2009

FREE LECTURE-EXPERIENCE:

When: THURSDAY, October 22, 2009 @ 7:30 PM. (approx. 120 min.)

Where: CoreConstellations Center in Rockville, MD

Register Now: www.coreconstellations.com 301-762-5866