

Presencing

Jack Blackburn's Newsletter

What's in a Symbol?

The symbol in the newsletter title is an image of the Primal Atom from Occult Chemistry by Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbetter, 1969.

Based on their clairvoyant investigation of the physical atom, two Theosophical pioneers first used the image shown. The symbol depicts intertwined continuous spirals, similar to DNA chains and to some of the recent Hubble telescope images. The symbol could represent the different electron energy states as they spiral inward and outward around the nuclei in continuous and instantaneous flow.

I choose this symbol to represent the work I do with my clients and in my classes. In my work with clients, I realize that there is a direct link—like the interlacing spirals in the primal atom—between what is occurring at various parts of their being, their bodies and their environment. The Egyptians are credited with the expression, “As above so below,” also called the law of correspondence. Throughout the universe, patterns of organization correspond at different levels of complexity and magnitude. Our bodies and minds seem to be organized in this intertwining way. One could say that our lives are lived in spiraling patterns that correspond to different levels of apprehension and relationship. As practitioners and clients we are continually interacting with one another in similar, patterned ways. I will say more about this symbol in the future.

What's in a Newsletter?

I have been thinking of producing a newsletter for a number of years. Each time, the task has seemed daunting—partially because I don't really know what you, the reader, want to consider. Whether you are a colleague, a student or a client, I hope you find these pages interesting and useful—enough so that you will want to keep your contact information up to date. I also want these pages to be inspiring and gratifying to me—otherwise I won't stick with it! I have thought about a number of subjects for future issues and here are a few:

- *Presencing the body using inner anatomy.*
- *Pioneers in fields of bodywork and healing.*
- *Spiritual direction and body-centered therapy.*
- *Working with fear and pain.*
- *The Enneagram as a personal-growth tool for clients and practitioners.*
- *Ethical dilemmas from our practices.*

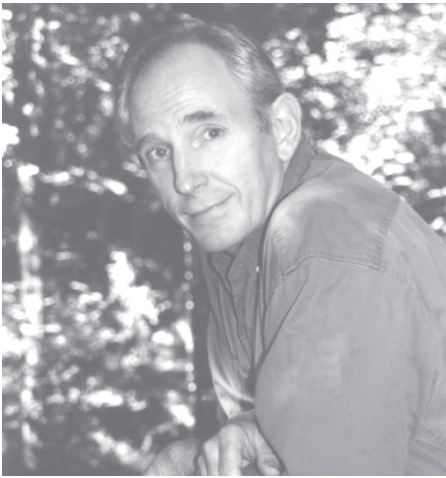
I would appreciate your feedback on these topics, and suggestions for the newsletter. I really want this newsletter to be meaningful to you, and not just another piece of mail for the “to be read” stack on your desk. My vision is that you will interact with me—and eventually, with each other—through my website and/or e-mail.

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My Background

Prior to becoming a professional bodyworker in 1986, I practiced Therapeutic Touch and Re-evaluation Counseling, and took workshops in Orthobionomy and Feldenkrais. I have been an earnest spiritual seeker since the 1960s. I studied and practiced various types of spiritual teachings – Eastern and Western mysticism, prayer, meditation, yoga, tai chi and Zen. I had been a student of A Course in Miracles (ACIM) since 1985 and had facilitated various ACIM study groups. From 1995 to 2000, I facilitated an ACIM group for prisoners at a state prison and participated in Gestalt therapy sessions for prisoners.

Questions to Ponder

Mind and Body

Milton Trager, MD, one of my teachers, was profoundly moved by his observations of the effects of general anesthesia on the body and the mind. When a patient is fully anesthetized, the mind is not present. Trager noticed that the restrictions in joints and connective tissue disappear when the patient becomes unconscious; when the mind is gone the holding pattern are gone.* Trager used this example to show that we need to change the mind to change the holding patterns.

So what is really going on here? A student in a recent class said, "Well, the holding pattern disappears because the pain is gone."

Is this so? Does this happen with local anesthesia; do the effects of the scar tissue and emotional guarding disappear? We all know that with opiates and alcohol, the patient does not feel his/her pain, **but do the movement restrictions disappear?**

*You can read more about this in on my Web site (www.jackblackburn.homestead.com). See Article 1 in series on the Trager Approach}.

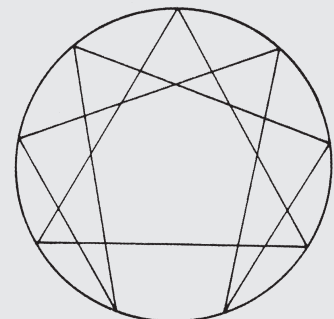
In 1979, I moved my family from Palo Alto to Washington and settled on Orcas Island in the San Juans. I managed a Theosophical camp on Orcas and a vipassana Buddhist center on San Juan Island. I worked as a Licensed Massage Practitioner in private practice and at Rosario Resort Spa on Orcas for over 5 years. During that time I took classes in Polarity, cranial sacral and Reiki, and became a Reiki Master in 1989.

In 1991, I moved to Seattle and was accepted into a Master's Degree program in Spiritual Direction at Seattle University. After completing my degree in 1994, I began practicing spiritual direction and combining counseling with my bodywork practice. Starting in 1988, while still living on Orcas Island, I worked at various clinics in Seattle. In 1994 I began teaching classes and tutoring Trager students and practitioners; I also switched entirely to private practice. While attending graduate school, I was exposed for the first time to formal peer, group and individual supervision of my bodywork and spiritual counseling practice. I started various peer supervision groups, including an inter-professional group in 1993 that continues to this day. My writings and classes have grown out of this diverse background of research, study and practice.

CLASS WATCH

The Enneagram

Many of my colleagues and clients have asked if I would be willing to teach a class about the Enneagram. I learned the Enneagram system in 1984, from Dhiravamsa, who was my teacher at the time. For those who do not know, the Enneagram is a system of nine soul-centered life patterns that affect how we unconsciously live our lives and what types of challenges we face. Like Jung's personality types, the Enneagram system is based on observations of human behavior. Unlike Jung's typology, the Enneagram is hundreds of years old. It was used by the Sufis as early as 1200 A.D and may be much older. Until recently, it has been kept secret by spiritual teachers and passed down only by oral transmission. In 1988, the essential workings of the Enneagram were revealed in print for the first time; spiritual seekers may now understand these essential workings and work with their unconscious life patterns. I have used the Enneagram for 14 years with clients and have explained the system to colleagues. Knowing the Enneagram can be personally empowering and professionally helpful. The first class will be held this fall and co-taught with Beth Oppliger Henriquez, MSW, Coach.



Issues from Supervision

The Case of the Disappearing Client

Every bodyworker has experienced the situation of the client who disappears from his/her practice without any explanation. Sometimes we learn the reason, but often we don't. We are left with very awkward feelings, wondering if did something wrong; we wonder if something awful has happened to the client; we wonder how to approach the client in a way that does not encroach on the client's boundaries. With some clients, we know that it is okay to get in touch with them and just ask a straightforward question like, "I haven't heard from you for awhile and I'm wondering how things are going?" With other clients this may not feel that this approach is appropriate. Lingered doubts

and concerns can persist; this is especially true when we have been seeing the client for a long time. The practitioner may feel like he/she is "left holding the bag."

This newsletter is going out to clients as well as practitioners. It would be good to have a dialogue about this kind of situation. It seems to me that the real problem here is a lack of communication. No one likes to lose a client, but it is far better to know *why* than be left wondering. There is a tacit agreement between both parties about the reasons for therapy. Could there be an agreement between both parties about communication that supports the therapy. What do you think? How has this issue affected you?

Excerpts from My Articles

The complete articles can be read on my website:
www.jackblackburn.homestead.com

Pain

Most clients want us to remove their pain. They see their pain as something that inhibits their expression and full involvement in life. We help the client to focus into the pain with our words and our touch. It is important that we do not use so much pressure that we override the pain signals. The client first contacts the pain from within, mapping and investigating the various qualities. The practitioner encourages the client to come in more fully, more objectively, translating the pain into a collection of basic sensations (e.g., burning, pulsing, sharp, dull, aching, stabbing, freezing, expanding, diffuse). While the client is describing his/her experience, the practitioner monitors the visceral responses with touch and encourages the client to stay with the process...

Healing

"If they are going to die, I tell them that they are going to die so they can switch their attention from holding onto their bodies to healing their lives."

—Dora Kunz, Co-originator of Therapeutic Touch, 1993.

Six major demons haunt our lives. They are: pain, suffering, illness, loss, aging, and death. When any of these demons gets too close, we become fearful and strive to extricate them or at least keep them at bay. We try to make sure that these demons will not touch us. When they do we, like Job, complain that we do not deserve such treatment. We look for some reason, some wrong, someone to blame, even God. Yet, like Job, we know by the evidence around us that these undesirable companions are with us for life. We flirt with them, make deals with them, ensure ourselves against them, fight them valiantly, and yet we know that they will touch us, and deeply...

Calendar of Classes

February

- 4-6 **Side-Lying Somatics:**
Level I
Seattle
- 12-13 **Introduction to Trager:
Basic Positioning**
Seattle

March

- 5-6 **Reiki for Bodyworkers:**
Level I
Seattle
- 8, 15
and 22 **Practicing Presence
in Bodywork**
Seattle
- 17-20 **Reiki for Bodyworkers:**
Master Training
Orcas Island
- 28-30 **Side-Lying Somatics:**
Level I
Portland, OR

April

- 5, 12, 19
and 26 **Developing Effective
Peer Supervision**
Seattle
- 8-10 **Side-Lying Somatics:**
Level II
Seattle
- 15 **Ethical Dilemmas
in Bodywork**
Port Angeles
- 16-17 **Introduction to Trager:
Basic Positioning**
Port Angeles

We set a minimum and maximum number of students for each class. Registration deadlines are two weeks prior to the start of each class. At this time, we may cancel a workshop if the minimum has not been met and refund all monies paid by registrants.

There is recommended reading for a number of these classes. Most of the books are available for purchase through the website.

At the end of each class, students who have been present for and fully participated in the entire class will receive completion certificates.

Most of these classes are open to all healthcare professionals or students of healthcare professions. Other pre-requisites are noted where appropriate. Please contact the office if you have questions about your eligibility.

We comply with the ADA (American Disabilities Act). We do not turn people away on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

Workshops in Japan

J will be traveling again this month to Japan to do sessions, tutorials and teach. I will be teaching a class to non-bodyworkers. Last year, I taught a body awareness class to martial arts students and another to business owners. This time I will be teaching a class called *Presencing Our Lives* to managers from different companies. I am grateful to get a chance to teach classes that grow equally out of my experiences as a manager, a bodyworker, and spiritual director. I sense that this combination of presencing our inner and outer lives though body awareness may be the wave of the future. Beth Oppliger Henriquez and I are planning some presentations here in Washington to professional caregivers and business leaders. We are also putting together a treatment package for clients who want to work more intentionally on their personal issues, inner lives and body awareness. These changes have grown out of from my experiences in Japan. I assure you, they are developing as a great surprise and wonder to me.

Please visit our website for additional interesting articles, reading material, and upcoming events!

www.jackblackburn.homestead.com.

We'd love to stay in touch with you, so if you would like to receive a newsletter or be on our email list, please email us: jackblac@oz.net.

Jack Blackburn is approved by the National Certification Board for Bodywork and Massage Therapy (NCBTMB) as a Category "A" Continuing Education Provider.

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