



In **Touching Pain II** we left things with exploring a direct connection between pain plus fear results in suffering. In his issue we will explore more directly our conditioning to connect pain directly with fear... and why that is so. I have stated that it is the fear element that leads us into inferences that the pain signals mean a threat to our life in the body. We all experience ordinary pains that cause us to adjust something we are doing in order to return to stasis and comfort. Perhaps the connection to fear is wired into certain kinds of pain. Perhaps we spend so much time in sympathetic hyper-alertness that we expect the pain and suffering.

Here we will be exploring our individual and collective addiction to the edge and rush of fear. Is it possible that we have learned to play with fear so much that we are confusing excitement that is fear-based with the joys of sentience, and the good feelings of aliveness in our bodies? In fact we do many things for enjoyment that create sympathetic body-based cathartic reactions. Competition plays a large role, matching winning against losing, risk taking, gambling. We use various stimuli in order to create an edge of fear around our living environment. For instance schedules, reminders in more and more forms... our fears in relation to time: being late, being early, forgetting appointments, postponing, all have edges of guilt attached to them.

Book of Job – Our conclusions and foreboding, we are Job's children: "Who know we've done wrong." We all carry incidents of guilt, blame, punishment, and shame from our behavior and the behavior of others. Behind Job's ordeals lay his good deeds and sacrifices to earn himself favor in his community and with God. But is Job innocent of a knowing sense that he was transacting with the intent to curry favor and avoid punishment? Job's response when his afflictions started to occur was and that which he dreaded had come upon him. "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me." In other words, Job was fully aware of the pain and suffering that most persons were experiencing. In fact like many of us, he assumed that he could avoid what was perceived as punishment for himself and his family by being a good boy. When his friends witnessed his afflictions and losses, they questioned him to find out just what he had done to deserve such punishment by God.



Book of Job – pain means punishment, pain opens a whole panoply of fear messages. Like Job and his friends we carry the long-ago conditioning of pain, fear, punishment and suffering. Though we feel compassion for our clients who are suffering and do our best to help them weather their storm, we still apply a cause and effect reasoning to their past to find solutions. In the past they must have done something wrong, or something untoward was done to them. Like Job we have to unhook ourselves from "life formulas." Pain is not punishment and yet it is our tendency to run on fear, using adrenalin as a motivator. This keeps our bodies in sympathetic reaction to much of life. Our heightened agitation and fear-based excitement does a number to our body stasis, and in itself, links directly to bodily pains and discomforts. We try to suppress those discomforts with drugs and alcohol and by inducing parasympathetic withdrawals.



Overall sensorium concept: We tend to think that our five basic sensory perceptions as experiences that are free from bias. We are convinced that what we witnessed has truly happened. And yet, consider how we are orchestrating our lives, like Job, around certain criteria and with biases toward winning not losing, also guided by sympathetic formulae like "No pain no gain." What we don't realize is that most of our perceptions derive from self-serving projections. Those projections are drawn from past-referenced memories of winning and losing. But we have a pathway out of our past-centered, fear-centered conditioning. Deane Juhan in his overall expression of body-based awareness states:

"Everything is proprioception." Proprioception includes sensory awareness: "What am I feeling now? Where am I feeling it? Where is it taking me?" Conscious proprioception shifts our awareness into the present moment and opens doors of curiosity and exploration. Our five senses can also become anchored in the newness of this moment. Because all forms of proprioception are directly facilitated by body feeling, we can use them to move beyond sympathetic mental states and release our thinking minds from the past-guided conjecture.

Proprioceptive as self-interactive and as other-interactive and present moment. When we join our clients in present-centered proprioceptive interactions, we are opening new territory together and we can both feel it. I call it "being surrounded by a cocoon of silence." In fact we are entering our shared ground of being, a cache of self-discovery, a holy encounter. Fear dissolves; pain is transformed into awe and mystery. And all of life becomes hushed, still, freed from time and interpretation, emptied of supposition, filled with suchness.

Touching Pain Applications: During these interactive meetings both persons can feel the tissue response; hence a shared experience. Tissue responses include melting of muscle, ligament, and fascial tonicity; warming, softening, pain reduction, client shifts from sympathetic to parasympathetic responses, and mentally shifting awareness from past story into presence. The main benefits of these applications is that they change our relationships with pain and break our Faustian relationship with fear!



Touch Pain Exercise 1 Interacting with breath expansion and contraction: starting by having the client taking deep in breath into different body parts; followed by deep emptying out breath. Client feels expansion with in-breath and contraction with out-breath. What matters is that client becomes capable of directly interacting with body parts by using the feeling of expansion and contraction into and out of any part of her body. In that way we are able to create a somatic interaction with the touch of the practitioner's hands.

Touch Pain Exercise 2 Proprioception, interaction, both giver and receiver entraining into presence... What is occurring is that the filling and emptying feeling on the client's part is creating a presencing and palpable interaction with the practitioner's hands. The client is actively propriocepting while the practitioner is palpating. As this is occurring the practitioner can apply various types of tactile interaction; e.g. tapping, compression, rotation, and positional releases, while asking the client to engage with practitioner's tactile signals by touching from inside her body or expanding and contracting towards a particular joint, muscle, attachment or other connective tissue including fascia.



Touch Pain Exercise 3 Practitioner/client creating interactive stimulus and palpating tissue response and at the same time interacting verbally. Practitioner narrates what she is doing so that the client has a presence-centered story line to accompany her sensory experience. This narrative creates another type of joining between both persons. Other benefits of narration are that it allows the client to engage with the tactile stimulation and monitor her tissue responses. As this continues the client becomes more adept at interacting with her own tissue. This is a skill she can practice on her own so that she becomes more and more somatically aware and present to her body and her life.

Touch Pain Exercise 4 Client reporting, practitioner mirrors words. Both monitor sensory responses. Here we are combining inner touch on the part of the client with outer touch on the part of the practitioner along with presencing verbal interaction derived from Focusing. Here the practitioner is using touch to enhance the client's process in

exploring her connection between her feeling awareness called felt-sense and issues that may be arising in her life. We will notice that as the client reports what she is feeling in a particular body part, and we reflect back what we are hearing, she will enter a process in which she is able to uncover insights that pertain to those life issues. Two unique body phenomena are produced in this combination of using and sensory accompaniment. As with the above applications there is a shift in both pain and fear due to the mutual sharing of presence verbally and tactilely. First the closer the client comes to verbally describing her felt sense the more tissue response is produced, Secondly, the combination of touch and Focusing is more likely to produce what is called a felt-shift in which the body and mind of the client coalesce in a flow of insight and elation.



Open hands

Open mind

Open face

Open heart

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