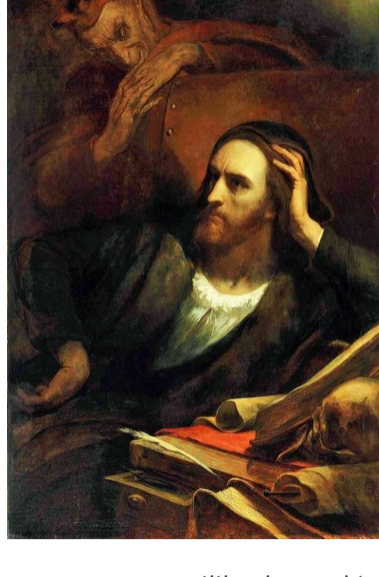


Presencing Issue 58

Touching Pain IV



Our Faustian Bargain - Our egos attempt to win/survive at the cost of everyone else, we become used to feeling the adrenalin "rush" of competition. Our collective conditioning favors fear over love, individuality over collectivity; control over freedom. This is our ultimate Faustian bargain. We have substituted fear of one another for mutuality and appreciation and recognizing that we are all on the same journey together. Unlike every other species and life form, we have embraced the belief that we, individually, must compete and win our place in life. That need to compete and win at the cost of everyone else predisposes us to forming laws that protect our winnings in terms of status, material goods and resources, and in terms of self-justification. And in order to stay in control and protect our winnings, we keep ourselves in a constant state of rush, distrust and suspicion.

Fear is necessary: Much of what we are working on in clients' bodies are the physiological effects of our needs to protect our holdings. Fear is necessary, competition is used to discern who are the worthiest to be our leaders and receive the plaudits and rewards of society. Our notions of Heaven and Hell are projections from our self-generated system of reward and punishment. We are the only species that lives in constant fear of itself. And we are still using 19th century Darwinian evolutionary "survival of the fittest," concepts to justify our actions towards one another as well as to all the other species on this planet. And we are the only species that does not live in presence.

Terminology for opening new doors:

Energy: If you are using energy work in your practice, try thinking of it as an energy exchange. Like gravity there is no such thing as bad energy. Bring your mind into presence, not into self-protection. In presence you will feel the energy of healing flowing back and forth between you and your client.

Meta-Thought: Is the thoughts we have that accompany our work with clients... it is very important to monitor and take responsibility for our own thinking, noticing judgments, projections, solutions from the past, frustrations, counter-transference, and past-conditioned mind. Bring yourself into presence and share.

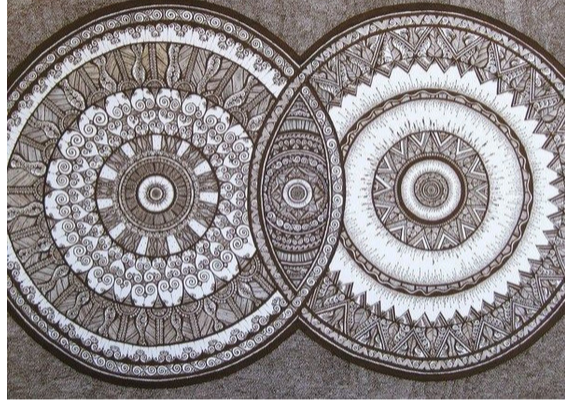
Interactive: Most bodywork systems do not recruit clients into their own process, or conceive of the client playing a role that is equal in activity and importance to the role of the practitioner. How can you pass the mantle-of-authority and expertise on to your client so that her involvement is underscored?

Proprioception: In the recent past physiologists defined proprioception as our awareness of our body's parts position in relation to one another and to the effects of gravity. Now there are variants on that concept since we know so much more about our abilities to consciously feel sensory information inside and around our body. Terms have been added like interoception, what we feel inside our body and exteroception, what we feel around our body. When we engage with our clients' feeling awareness we can create various kinds of proprioceptive interactions with them, and share presence sensorily.

Entrainment: The alignment of our sensory awareness with another's sensory awareness. We can call this a direct experience of sharing presence together. When we are mutually experiencing the same phenomena, for instance harmony in music, shared improvisation as in jazz or dance, accompaniment in bodywork or in speech therapy... we experience a feeling of mutuality that entrains us to one another.

Healing: All caregiving professions have avoided using the term "healing" which actually means coming into wholeness, because even a complete recovery cannot last. I prefer to use the word healing to describe a sharing of wholeness. When we reach an epiphany with clients in a session it is a two-way experience... like sharing presence. Like "two or more persons gathered together."

Presencing: The key to opening the doorway of presence between practitioner and client is a mutual interaction of sensory awareness; inner touch meeting outer touch, client proprioceptive engagement and interaction with practitioner receptive palpation, mutual monitoring of sensory awareness and tissue response as client and practitioner engage in a verbal Focusing interaction. In all cases once both persons share presence, fearful past-centered conditioning disappears and a new dawn of healing arises.

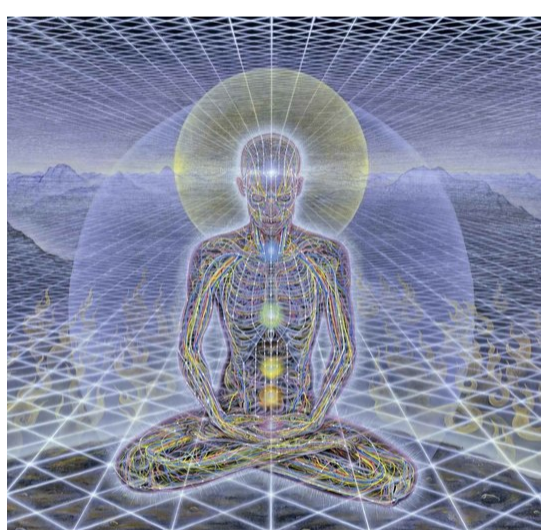


Mandora Diagram: The mandorla is an ancient symbol used in spiritual teachings to represent our connection with heaven. The darkened portion in the middle represents the overlap between our Earthly experience and our heavenly experience. I use the symbol to represent the overlap as the shared experience between practitioner and client when both become present.

Mandora of healing - both persons affected: Mutually sharing a journey into NOW. The reason we are exploring the above terminology is that the possibility of accompanying a client into a breakthrough in relation to pain and other noxious signals. Instead of reacting to

those signals as if they signal some kind of demise, we can help our clients open a doorway into presence and heightened conscious awareness. This direction is interactive rather than reactive. It can lead to a direct reversal of our tendency to associate fear, judgment, blame, and punishment with pain signals. The reversal is directly tied to examining those noxious signals as doorways into a different state of being. The practitioner is taking this journey with the client instead of doing her best to erase those signals. Rather than erasing those trail markers, both persons can follow them into new territory with presence as their guide.

Chronic pain reciprocity with chronic fear: Evidence shows up in clients' bodies as they escape fear and pain by spacing out or sleeping. Many bodyworkers were taught that they can do their best work when the client disappears. I want to point again to our tendency to charge our bodies with the edge of fear. We are conditioned to fight for our place in life and hold it at all cost, even the cost of friendship and trust. We measure ourselves against winning and losing. This training starts early in life and continues in the background of every aspect of our living. Our perceptions are mostly wary projections from our past. Winners are so addicted to excitement that their bodies are running sympathetically. They often have to induce parasympathetic states in order to escape from the rush of fear. Losers are constantly reminded of their failings by pain and fear. Some writers are convinced that clients' chronic pains lead to anxiety and negative ideation. Perhaps we need to take stock and recognize that chronic fear is the source of chronic pain. Hands-on healers are in a perfect place to gather evidence.



Client homework: Rather than taking the client into a parasympathetic state in which she has almost no involvement in the session, we can encourage her to become directly involved in the process. Thus both persons can enter a realm of creativity flowing from joint participation in what is showing up now. Clients can learn to feel the somatic effects of fear and pain and discern the differences. Pain can induce fear, fear can induce pain. When we experience the rush of fear, e.g. excitement grounded in "what ifs" anxiety, our minds mostly go to what we have learned from the past. We rarely can enter a creative space in which our body and mind can move easily and freely. We do things from rote and as such nothing new is likely physically or mentally. This is especially prominent in care giving situations when fear takes over.

Practitioner Homework: Caregivers overwhelmed by client symptoms tend to resort to what has worked in the past. In our CEs we look for new silver bullets which will improve our treatment results. Do we overlook the direct participation of the client? To be better prepared to accompany our clients we can practice presencing our own patterns of pain and fear. Here is a growth possibility for us as practitioners. We become more and more familiar with the sympathetic edges of fear in our own lives. What are our own symptoms, and what bodily sensations do they convey? We can explore our fears and where they take us. For instance discomfort in the solar plexus, is quite common when we feel fearful.

Follow the fear: We treat those painful sensations by mollifying them in some way... food, antacids, fermented soured drinks etc. But as an experiment we can first notice what kind of fearful situations are we anticipating... Next we focus directly feel the sensations of fear. Remember those sensations are happening now. We can use our curiosity to explore the sensations from a variety of ways; breathing into and out of them; expanding and contracting them proprioceptively; contacting them with our hands and interacting between our body feeling and the sensory tonus conveyed by our hands; describing what the sensations feel like, their shape, their connections with any other part of the body. In all these ways we are becoming more conversant with presence, rather than following our fear-generated memories and stories we have stored away.

***New classes as of January. Teachers Deane Juhan, Brian Utting, Anastasia Brensick, Jack Blackburn**

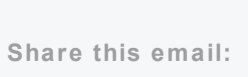


- Open hands
- Open mind
- Open face
- Open heart

Jack Blackburn, LMP, Master's in Theological Studies, Certified Spiritual Director, specializes in body centered spiritual growth and healing. He has been a Trager® practitioner since 1986. He has been a Trager tutor since 1993, has taught Trager electives classes since 1996, and teaches a variety of classes to care giving professionals. He is a NCBTMB Approved Continuing Education Provider and AMTA National Presenter. He is a Focusing Trainer and Focusing Bodywork Educating Classes for professionals. Jack is also a Reiki Master and teaches levels I, II, III and Advanced Reiki for Bodyworkers.

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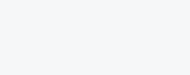
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