



Presencing

JACK BLACKBURN'S NEWSLETTER

**Presencing Issue 100 New Paradigm Extensions
Our Client's Gifts Towards State of Presence XXVIII
Upcoming Webinars:**

**Building Case Studies from Our Sessions
Touch is Always a Two-Way Connection
Sciatica and Related Conditions ~ DS + Side Lying
Presencing Somatics Intro, Table Talking**



Path of Pain Cont'd - Sufi Poet Rumi Whirling:

Seventeen years ago I named this newsletter *Presencing* because of the unusual doorway that clients like MJL were finding in their sessions. I was looking for a word that could convey a transformation which I witnessed in clients who experienced sudden transmissions of inner truth. MJL found her key by attending to her pain, a most unlikely place. Rumi found his verses and poetry while whirling in ecstasy. Prior to becoming a bodyworker, I myself had spent countless hours dwelling in pain during hours-long sessions of *vipassana* meditation. I was trying to escape the pain that accrued as I kept still. Now I know to go into the pain! Because of MJL and clients like her, I realized that there's something inherent about our bodies that opens us up to inner guidance. In *Presencing Issue 2*, I quoted Indian prophet Sri Aurobindo who was transformed like Gandhi, while spending years in prison for resisting British rule in India: "*Most of all things on earth I hated pain till God hurt and tortured me; then it was revealed to me that pain is only a perverse and recalcitrant shape of excessive delight.*" MJL Article II continues below...



Our Presencing Motto: As we attend more to the sensations arising from within our own bodies, a new essence starts to companion us from within. We start to experience presence as the arising of each moment, as a taste of eternal awareness. All living systems are attuned to NOW. Every event; past, present, and future is a part of this eternal moment. This growing awareness of NOW seems to put many things, especially fearful ones, into different perspectives. The body is temporal. If we pay close attention, we realize that the body only exists now. So that which is implicitly temporal may lead us to experience that which is explicitly eternal!

****Extra CEs for your writings:** I have been including narratives and case reports in these last 6 presencing newsletters. I hope to stimulate you to do the same... and get used to writing your learnings and understandings that come directly from your

practice. I am *salting the mine* so to speak. I hope that you will join me and others in this effort. Posting and publishing your writings can earn you extra credits. *****Note: this has never happened before!!*****



Entrance to Hell: *"Give up hope all ye who enter here."*

MJL was in extreme pain when we started working together. For me her situation seemed impossible. I am grateful that we found a way to work together in spite of her torn tissue. The picture to the left is William Blake's first painting of The Divine Comedy, Dante's descent into the tortures of hell being guided by Roman poet Virgil. When I saw this painting in person, I thought of MJL's situation in the beginning of our work together. Going into untreatable pain is very scary. As she interacted with her pain, very surprising doors started to open. As I treated her, I was learning things about pain I would have never expected. We were both aware that her pain was continuing. We all spend much effort trying to escape from pain. And yet for MJL, going towards her pain was producing new insights, new poesis, new entrees into presence, and out-of-body experiences.

Discovering Jacob Boehme: MJL continued her poetry and inner life experiences. I continued to give her bodywork sessions and at some point I said to her that her poetry was starting to sound like Alchemy. She said: "What's that?" I explained that during the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries various philosophers, spiritualists, and protoscientists were rediscovering hidden information about the material world, life in bodies, connection with Creation, and inner direction. Some were publishing esoteric theosophical writings and MJL was herself was opening some of those doors in her poetry. After that session she found a book on Alchemy in her library. The book Alchemy, was written by Maria Louise von Franz, whom MJL had known in Switzerland years before. Von Franz had used an MJL illustration for the book. MJL found her own illustration and then, towards the front of the book she found an image from the 17th century, done by Alchemist and spiritualist, Jacob Boehme which was almost the same. MJL realized that her previous married surname Jacobe, at that time could be "Jacob B". She also recalled her travels through Europe. And when she arrived in a small German town she could speak and understand the local dialect! She had never studied or learned German. Now she was amazed, because she discovered; that was the town where Jacob Boehme had lived his whole life!

Sing Past Winter, A Modern Psalter: MJL was composing and illustrating her first book of poetry. As therapist and witness to MJL's discoveries, I too was spellbound by what her pain was opening up. During all of our work together her pain persisted. The poems that emerged from her pain were not condemning of the pain. She had opened a dependable link. I realized that, in no way was she disparaging of her life, her body, or of her seeming connection with a previous lifetime. A lifetime which was suffused with spiritual mystery and revelation. As witness to her inner journey I was honored to write an introduction to her book, which incidentally won a national book award, and was even the inspiration for a original symphony performed in Seattle. Years later in a phone call with MJL she intimated that she was working on a first person biography of Jacob Boehme's life!

Doorway of Pain: MJL was not my first client whose life was shifted by entering pain.

Dr. Paul Brand, in his book The Gift of Pain started exploring pain from his discovery that the horrors of leprosy arise mostly from the fact that the disease inhibits the feeling of pain. And after years of researching pain from those perspectives, he realized that we need to change our understanding of pain. Most caregiving professions and most forms of touch therapy are primarily focused on ridding clients of pain. We are evaluated based upon our ability to end client's pain. MJL discovered that her "compass," or source of inner guidance was her pain. She can be an exemplar for all of us. We need to stop linking pain with signs of guilt or punishment. We even project pain beyond life in the body, in our notions of eternal damnation! My learning so far is that when we explore pain signals with curiosity, we start to open an entrance to *presence*. And we stop looking for escape from now! What our minds are used to doing is looking for a cause-and-effect relationship between pain and our past. We are thus holding ourselves in bondage, by what Jesus called "*Looking through a glass darkly.*" Meaning; we try to escape suffering by interjecting our past on our present life and missing the release of NOW!

Misunderstanding Pain: Rumi - "The Question"

"God's presence is there in front of me, a fire on the left, a lovely stream on the right.

One group walks toward the fire, into the fire, another toward the sweet flowing water.

No one knows which are blessed and which not.

Whoever walks into the fire appears suddenly in the stream.

A head goes under on the water surface, that head pokes out of the fire.

Most people guard against going into the fire, and so end up in it.

Those who love the water of pleasure and make it their devotion are cheated with this reversal.

The trickery goes further.

The voice of the fire tells the truth saying, I am not fire. I am fountainhead. Come into me and don't mind the sparks.

If you are a friend of God, fire is your water.

You should wish to have a hundred thousand sets of mothwings, so you could burn them away, one set a night.

The moth sees light and goes into the fire. You should see fire and go toward the light. Fire is what of God- is world-consuming. Water, world-protecting.

Somehow each gives the appearance of the other. To these eyes you have now, what looks like water, burns. What looks like fire is a great relief to be inside."

~Rumi, The Question (translated by Coleman Barks)



**Generating Case Reports From Our Practice:
Writing: Our Client Sessions, Methods, Records**

****October 11, 13, 16, 18th. Time 4pm PST****

2CE hours per class, Cost \$160

Posting Online, Publication = up to 2 extra CEs

NCBTMB Approval in Process

Writing down the bones - a joint enterprise: I'm planning to start a Webinar in October aimed at the Bodywork community in general; to take us through steps in writing and publishing about our real experiences and learnings from our work, using touch therapeutically. In 2004 I first became aware when writing articles for the *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapy*, that most of my colleagues were not writing about their sessions with clients. I realized that if we do not communicate publicly about our work, and what has been happening in our sessions, the public and other caregiving professionals would not really understand the full benefits of touch, and the unique things we were learning. But now, after three years of Covid, I realize that the other caregiving professions only partially understand bodywork. Even less is understood by a touch-wary public.

Thinking about your practice over the years: What stands out for you? What clients and learnings do you recall from those relationships? What insights and curiosities did you receive and how many of those *gifts* are you still keeping inside? Undoubtedly it would be good for all of us if we could share them with all our colleagues. For 12 years I hosted an inter-professional supervision group biweekly. The group included professional caregivers from medicine, psychology, physical therapy, psychotherapy, bodywork, and theology. We found that we all were dealing with similar situations as helpers for others. We all shared personal difficulties as well as insights derived from our work with clients. What a treasure trove of sharings those group meetings were. I came away realizing that it's important that we end the false *hierarchy of care*. Professional touch has a very significant role to play in personal healing, well-being, and self-empowerment.

The many unique elements of professional touch: Touch is a form of communication that's deeply effective in releasing pain, tissue constriction, sympathetic autonomic states, and creating somatic awareness. Using touch, we learn that when we teach our clients to feel directly into their places of distress and interact in ways that release those discomforts they increase their own bodily confidence. We can also use touch to encourage client self-awareness by entering a state of *presence*, which helps to release them from past regrets and future worries. Every session is a lesson in body mechanics for ourselves as well as our clients. We can also teach our clients to practice *inner touch* and *felt sense* that they can practice by themselves, and to create their own movement patterns that free up areas of restriction. Finally, we can empower our clients by teaching them to interact with our hands and our words in ways that give them equal authorship of their session's results.

Register



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 teaches Bodywork Focusing classes for professionals. Jack is also a Reiki Master and teaches levels I, II, III and Advanced Reiki for Bodyworkers.

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