



# Presencing

JACK BLACKBURN'S NEWSLETTER

**Presencing Issue 98 New Paradigm Extensions**  
**Our Client's Gifts Towards a State of Presence XXIV**  
**Upcoming Webinars: Table Talking,**  
**Building Case Studies from Our Sessions**  
**Touch is Always a Two-Way Connection**  
**Presencing Pain**  
**Sciatica Decompression Somatics in Side Lying**  
**Presencing Somatics Intro**



**Learning to Stack Rocks:** The case study I cite in this issue of *Presencing* provided another real turning point in my work with clients and my understanding of bodies. From the beginning of gestation, when we're starting to become an embryo, we are feeling the impact of gravity through our mother's body. Every breath she takes, every move she makes, becomes basic data in our own orientation towards filling and emptying breathwise, the pulsing entrainment of our heart and her heart, and our shared body home alignment towards the continual pull of gravity. All of our lives the breath pulses filling and emptying, the heart throb cycles of blood oxygenation and redistribution, and our whole body's adjustments to gravity continues. We always reorient to gravity, every step we take, every body movement we make, and every body position we assume. The beauty of balance is that it is mostly unconscious, depending on our body positioning. When we stack stones in improbable alignments we are re-assembling our unconscious relations to gravity very consciously! And it becomes a meditative tool because we are focusing our feeling awareness into something that is always with us, always NOW.



**\*\*About Koito as clairvoyant reader:** But her private *readings* have helped so many people in deeper ways. In Japan she has never advertised. I'm letting you know about Koito's other work, because it is now possible for you to have private sessions thanks to Zoom. You can reach Koito Kusunoki at: [trilliumthrice@gmail.com](mailto:trilliumthrice@gmail.com)

**\*\*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!!\*\***

**Our Vimeo Webinar Library:** Koito has now completed our video library of previous Webinars on our website: [www.presencingsource.com](http://www.presencingsource.com). You can pay much less for any of previously videoed classes and you can also get home study CEs by completing the NCBTMB requirements and submitting to Barrie Robbins our Home Study coach. [barrierobbins@gmail.com](mailto:barrierobbins@gmail.com)

**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!*



**Learning Decompression's Effectiveness:** Twenty years ago I took a day-long class in decompression techniques from my colleague, Richard Polishuk. The class was a follow up to sessions that Richard and I had exchanged with one another in which he demonstrated some decompression techniques on my body. I was curious to try out what I had learned by adding decompression to my Trager® practice. Later that same week I had a client, who was working on his PhD at the University of Washington. Andre was studying changes in brain waves using electromagnetic resonance when healers were working. He had just come back from Mexico. Before his session he showed me some photos he had taken on his trip. He had been studying with traditional Huichole Indian healers. He also showed me some interesting photos of a man in Jalapa who made his money by creating very tall stacks of balanced rocks on the beach for the tourists. I was impressed because I had stacked stones but these stacks were as many as 20 rocks high.

**The Lines of Balance:** I had given Andre about six sessions – But something happened in this session that neither of us would forget. I told him that I was going to try a new technique during this session for his left shoulder stiffness we had never been able to resolve. I told him that it should not cause any pain. He agreed to let me know if he did feel pain. I started to work on his left shoulder using the side-lying Trager® moves I'd used on him before, to assess what had changed. Then I decided to try some decompression. I couldn't remember the neutral position I'd learned in the class so I decided to try and feel the correct position of the shoulder and arm. I closed my eyes and started to move his arm and shoulder into various positions until I could feel a position of no loading. With my eyes closed I was very sensitive to whether the weight of the arm and shoulder were evenly distributed on the three axes of the shoulder girdle: clavicle, superior margin of the scapula, and the posterior and anterior muscles of shoulder rotation.

**Finding and Following:** As I tried to find balance between these axes, I saw in my mind's eye, the stack of balancing rocks in Andre's photo. All of a sudden I realized that I was balancing the shoulder just like finding the delicate lines of balance in the rocks. I could feel little lines under my hands that seemed to go right into the middle of his upper chest. As I tried to follow these lines he started taking deeper and deeper breaths. And his shoulder and arm started to make slight reflexive jerks. With each one he would sigh and breath even deeper. I could feel deeply into his chest. It seemed as if I was balancing many rocks – some near the surface and some very deep inside. I could align the lines of balance as I felt one level after another. His shoulder girdle seemed to relax and collapse inward towards the ribcage. And the shoulder was also releasing its anterior rotation.

**Releases Emerging:** Periodically I would check the shoulder for movement using Trager® and find that it moved more and more freely. Finally Andre made a deep sigh and many tears started to flow. His shoulder had completely let go for the first time in our sessions. After the session was over he reported that he could breathe freely for the first time since he was 12 years old. He had been shot with a small caliber rifle. The bullet went through his upper chest entering just above the left lung and exiting in the rhomboid area between his lung and his spine. The wound had healed many years ago but the scar tissue was tight and painful. With the decompressions the effects of the gunshot wound completely disappeared. He felt that the scar tissue tonus had softened to normal. And I could feel the same thing deep inside his upper chest.

**Other Pathways:** After this session I decided to try decompression and other types of positional release, taking advantage of positions in which limbs and joints were lined up along the axis of gravity, so that the force of decompression was created mostly by gravity. Just as with stacking rocks, gravity does the work; I just have to keep positioning the bodypart so that gravity can do the work most effectively. Later I learned to use the axes of Tom Myer's Anatomy Trains, or along the pathways of Denise Deig's Dynamic Positional Release. But the use of balancing along the lines of force of gravity was the beginning and since our whole body is continually engaged with the vertical lines of gravity, we are always living in a field of sensory awareness.

**Finding Paths of Presence:** I can now feel very small increments of information coming from client's bodies as I follow the axes of decompression. And clients often respond by taking very deep breaths, a seemingly natural parasympathetic response of relaxation affected by the positions of alignment. I am guided by these results and I am learning to feel into areas of physical and emotional resistance and find the axes of deep releases as they are occurring. Years later I realized that I had been introduced to a similar approach when I studied and received sessions in Orthobionomy with Arthur Lincoln Pauls. The weighing and balancing of stones of improbable shapes along the lines of gravity is another way of aligning our minds and bodies with the present moment.



**Generating Case Reports From Our Practice:  
Writing: Our Client Sessions, Methods, Records**  
**\*\*October 11, 13, 16, 18th. Time 4pm PDT\*\***  
**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.



**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.

**\*Note\* Jack's personal email address is: [jackpresence@gmail.com](mailto:jackpresence@gmail.com)**

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