

## **Presencing Newsletter 31: Teamwork and Transformation: A Presencing Paradigm**

**From Jack in Tokyo:** *I have continued to explore the ramifications of working from a state of presence in these newsletters. I have described many of the experiences and benefits of joining with life while letting go of our mind's habitual patterns that have formed from the past. I have also spoken of ways we can bring a state of presence into our work with clients. I have briefly described a state of shared presence between practitioner and client. I also have alluded to an inner teacher that exists in every person. In this issue of Presencing I have laid out the individual steps of presencing, leading towards healing and transformation. I have described these steps as parts of a presencing paradigm in which both participants are reaching towards a new state of being.*

**Practicing presence:** Throughout the work we do we can apply tools that allow ourselves and our clients to enter and maintain a state of presence. As practitioners some ways we can remain present are maintaining awareness of: the sensations occurring within our own body; the sensations that touch and weight convey about the client's body; our own background thoughts and emotions, using of non-judgmental words to describe what we are doing and feeling; the conscious monitoring of his/her inner sensations by the client. In addition it is also important for practitioners to practice presence on their own to develop the subtle facilities and awareness that presencing brings.



**Sharing presence:** We are able to bring the client into presence by teaching her to feel into the sensations in her body. By doing so we are opening the possibility that both client and practitioner can share presence together. This sharing opens both persons into a deeper apprehension of what is happening in the body tissue. With the combined attention of both persons, the tissue responds more quickly and without much pressure or manipulation. The most interesting effect of shared presence is the sense of joining that both persons experience in the session... in that sense both are being healed.

**Somatic awareness:** The founder of the concept of somatics for manual therapists was Thomas Hanna. He described somatics as awareness that we are actively feeling into a part of our body as it is right now. We direct our attention into our bodily sensations as they reveal themselves in this moment. We start to

realize that our attention to our internal sensations directly affects our internal body state. We then start to play a creative role in how our body orchestrates itself moment to moment. The feeling awareness of presence is free of judgments and memories from the past. Hanna asserts that this 1st person experience with self is a powerful way to grow our consciousness.

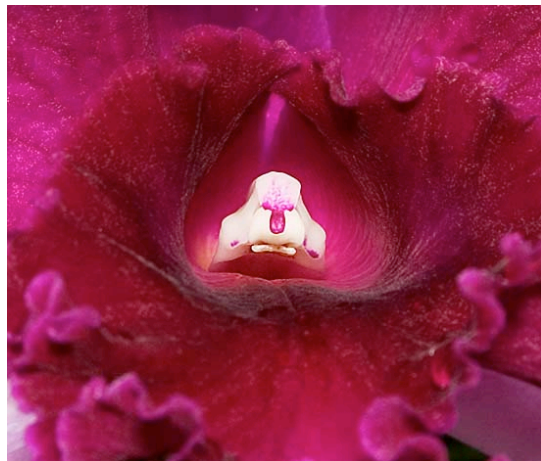


**Sympathetic and parasympathetic:** At the beginning of a bodywork session our clients are often in a sympathetic state: they are stressed out in their private lives, they are suffering pain in their bodies which is often accompanied by fear that the symptoms will continue to get worse. After we start our session the client's sympathetic reaction continues until we have established trust in the client that what we are doing will help their symptoms

to diminish or even disappear. About this time the client starts to display parasympathetic softening and relaxation effects in the body... often the client zones out or goes to sleep. Often the first and most noticeable place this happens is exactly the body part where there is pain accompanied by fear. The conscious mind does not want to revisit the suffering. In many forms of bodywork this parasympathetic shift is welcomed as an opportunity to release the bodily guarding responses with deep work.

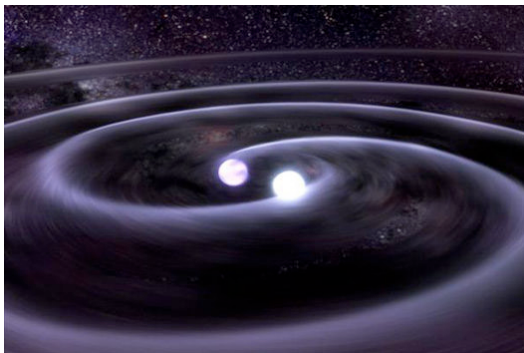
**Somatic doorways of perception:** When we recognize the shift towards the parasympathetic in the client it is a perfect time to initiate a somatic state of awareness right where the client would normally zone out. We can use our words along with movement, compression, tactile stimulation as incentives for the client's somatic awareness. We can encourage the client to reach towards us with the proprioceptive interaction: breathing, touching, reaching, expanding towards, and interacting with what we are doing with our hands and words. Now the client is both relaxed and aware at the same time. We let the clients know that we can feel them coming in... with conscious interaction.

This is particularly helpful with clients who are paralyzed or otherwise limited in neuromuscular response. The first thing that seems to happen now is that the client's state of fear is replaced by a state of curiosity. They have joined us in an exploration of their own sentience.



Together we can enter the doorways of bodily symptoms that have been debrided of fear. Both practitioner and client are actively present to what is now occurring in the body. The body is always in a state of presence, and when relieved of the past memories and fears, responds directly by releasing or diminishing symptoms.

**Shared Consciousness:** As both client and practitioner explore the changes that are occurring in the client's body they are joining in common purpose. Each is playing a role that more and more is guided from within. Both persons are being changed by this sharing of presence. As the client's body digests the fear and symptoms both persons are being transformed from within. Hana called this a growth of consciousness: The body is now communicating to its owner. Milton Trager touched on the same thing from a different place; he felt that the presencing state of the practitioner energetically changes the client's awareness. I believe that the interactive state of presencing produces a unity of consciousness that grows steadily within both persons. Amazingly, the body discomforts offer an opportunity for this apprehension of unity.



**Separation and suffering:** I'm now going to express a truth that may seem out of the sphere of bodywork. As a spiritual director as well as bodyworker for many years, I have noticed the effects of shared presencing so many times that I can unequivocally state that very profound shifts take place for both persons, client and practitioner, that deserve to be

spelled out. Both persons enter a state of oneness that changes the way they experience their lives. This state of oneness is a shift away from separation. We have all been trained to experience our lives as individual selves. When brain scientist Jill Bolt Taylor suffered a stroke caused by a ruptured aneurism on the left side of her brain, she experienced a state of peacefulness and oneness she had never felt before. My explanation is that she became present because our memories, judgments, interpretations, and fears are stored on the left side of the brain. I believe that our sense of individuation and separation are also formed on the left side of the brain and produces our ego identity. Suffering is caused by ego fears. When we presence by feeling bodily symptoms we shunt our attention through the right brain state of oneness. Our sense of individual suffering transforms into a joyous state of sharing life.

**Transformation and healing:** In the experience of shared presencing both persons lose their sense of separation. I have elsewhere described this event as true healing. This kind of continuous flow which we are all blessed to share together, we have convinced ourselves that life is a short term body-based struggle with one another. So the shift towards healing and no-separation produces a transformative joy of sharing the experience of life together. We also experience the essence of eternal life through the sentience of our own bodies... we are participating in life together as one being. event can happen in many forms. I have defined sickness and suffering as an expression of our basic human illness: our belief in separation creates our fears of one another. We teach ourselves that we are in competition with one another for the goods of life. Rather than seeing life as a continuous flow which we are all blessed to share together, we have convinced ourselves that life is a short term body-based struggle with one another. So the shift towards healing and no-separation produces a transformative joy of sharing the experience of life together. We also experience the essence of eternal life through the sentience of our own bodies... we are participating in life together as one being.



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