

Presencing Newsletter 33: Presencing Somatics

Jack in Japan: *Dear Ones, I am writing this newsletter in order to explain a whole new direction that I took with my work last year in Japan, when I was asked to teach a series of classes about healing. Some of the concepts have already been reflected in my recent newsletters. The overall approach is now called Presencing Somatics. It remains for me to explain what I mean by this concept to my colleagues, students, and clients in the U.S. I believe that the concepts apply to all kinds of caregiving. I believe that it is time to test the power of shared presencing in every form of helping profession. In Presencing Issue 32 I pointed out some of the factors that have been showing up in the Somatic Doorways explorations that I have been teaching along with Deane Juhan. I will explore them from a different perspective in this newsletter. I hope that I can break new ground in my own understanding and yours with this issue of Presencing. There are three metaphors I have been considering recently that I hope to draw upon: when humans study life systems in depth i.e. ecology, we discover relationships and wisdom that bring us closer to understanding our own role in creation; one thing we start to discover is that we are continually creating the world we are observing; another important factor is that creation is asymptotic meaning that creation is never complete. How do these three factors affect our roles as caregivers?*

Presencing: We live in a realm of presence. Everything we are experiencing is happening NOW, in this moment. It is very important to remember this because otherwise we overlay our world with our memories from the past. Indeed a part of our mind is continually focused upon the past. Our whole system of cause and effect reasoning overshadows our experience of the real world now. We are seeing reality through a lens darkly because we are projecting



the past, and our sense of right and wrong on what we are witnessing. Here is an example from our own professional practices. When we do intake with our clients we generally listen to a story of how the client accumulated the injuries and pains she would like us to fix. This story is an explanation; coming from the mind of the client... this story is carried in the client's mind. The purpose of telling the story is to recruit us into becoming participants in the story. The story is also a projection upon present reality in order to justify our reason for our present upsets.

Bringing the story into now: Let's check something out in reference to the "story." Ask our client: "What are you feeling in your body, right now?" What you will find out is that the client becomes baffled, and you will see a look of

confusion come over the face of the client. Why? Because the body only exists in the present moment. The past does not exist in the body. If we check into our body right now we can find some discomforts. But as soon as we come into the discomforts, the mind comes in with the story again to re-mind us that we are correcting the past. Actually if we train ourselves and our client to pay attention to the sensations as they are occurring now, we both will start to feel changes in the tissue. Why is this so? I am now convinced that by keeping the client present to what is now occurring, we are helping her let go of the story she has carried with her from the past. One added factor: as she focuses into her sensory information from her body, she is training her left brain to attend to her right brain information channel. Perhaps it is simplistic to say that she has switched her attention from thinking to feeling. Her past centered story thoughts are always an excuse for overlaying present body-centered reality with resolving a story from the past.

Somatics: At the level of body sensorium, there is no past. The body has an epiphenomenal relationship with the mind. In other words the body is always reflecting where we are placing our attention. If we are choosing to project the past upon the present, the body will reflect that choice. For instance if we think that life is happening to us, and we are victims of other person's actions, our bodies will give us the sensations that accompany those thoughts. What we don't recognize is that we are choosing the thoughts we are attending, and we are projecting that reality onto everything outside of us. Thomas Hanna who invented our concept of somatics in bodywork said that if we pay attention to the particular sensations we are experiencing in a certain body part, we will grow in consciousness. We and the therapist will experience changes in the tissue because we are no longer projecting the past into that part of the body. We are capable of experiencing both states of awareness, projection from the past or projection from the present. You can do this right now in your own body.

Presence vs. past: Close your eyes and breathe deeply into your body. Find a body part that feels uncomfortable. Focus into that body part. Notice any mental associations you have with the discomfort you are feeling. Almost right away you will start remembering how long you have had this discomfort; your mind will select out some incidents of injury and insult from the past; your bodyworker mind will start to assess the relationships between that discomfort and some probable causes for the type of injury you are experiencing; and also your mind will find something or someone to blame for the injury... yourself or someone else; there will be a whole series of examples flood into your mind accompanied with negative emotions; finally your mind will resolve itself towards a search for a solution based upon your assessment of the situation. Following this line of reasoning you will feel your body sensations confirming your conclusions... something needs to happen to correct the past.

Past vs. presence: Next we will examine the body part from a different perspective. Instead of relying upon the stories we are carrying from the past, we are going to approach the same body part with a series of mental and physical probes that ask questions based upon the felt experience of right now. We ask: "What are the sensations I am feeling here? Where are they located? Are they connected to another part of the body? What do I notice if I bring my breath directly into this body part? What happens if I expand this part with my in breath and contract this part with my out breath? What happens if I place my hands over this body part? What do I feel happening in the tissue I am touching with my hands? What do I notice if I touch my hands from the feelings in this body part? What happens if I tap this part of my body with my fingers and feel the tapping inside my body part? Finally what happens if I ask myself to describe what I am feeling here... or what happens if I magnify my awareness to feel into the region where the sensations are the strongest?

Presence vs. presence: All of these approaches are examples of probing the body part with questions that do not overlay the affected area with projections from the past. All of these approaches involve curiosity and no conclusions. They are all asymptotic and open ended. And they are not final because presence is always about now and now is never final because now is eternal process. In fact what we experience in this approaching is that we have entered a realm of eternal creation. If we investigate these two ways of approaching the body we find that one is actually missing the body experience, whereas the other is joining the body in the experience of eternal now. The first thing to change is that the body responds with a glowing aliveness when we approach it in its natural state. It is no longer reflecting the mind that is trapped in the past. On the contrary the body is released into its own state of presence. That state of presence allows the mind to reach into our natural state of creativity. When this is happening for both the client and the practitioner we join forces in healing our relationship with all of life

New world: Jesus said many years ago: "Whenever two or more are joined together, there I am." What I have tried to describe in Presencing Somatics is a process by which such joinings can happen. In fact we are much closer to realizing Oneness or Christ consciousness than we realize. The effects of such healings are life changing, not just offering symptomatic relief.. There is a pertinent quote from A Course in Miracles which states this same process in a different way:

*"God must have given you a way of reaching another state of mind in which the answer is already there. Such is the holy instant. It is here that all your problems should be brought and left. Here they belong, for here their answer is... Attempt to solve no problems but within the holy instant's (presence's) surety. For there the problem **will** be answered and resolved... The holy instant (presence) is the interval (now) in which the mind is still enough to hear an answer that is not entailed within the question asked."*

Holy instant: In all of my classes I attempt to teach the holy instant as a state of mind, *presencing*, in which we choose to bring ourselves and our clients into sharing "two or more are gathered." Amazing things happen for practitioner and client when we bring presence into our healing work. The upcoming classes below are two examples I will be teaching when I return from Japan. Let's share presence together. Blessings from Jack

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