



INTEGRATING PSYCHOTHERAPY THROUGH MIND AND BODY *by John Reed MS LADC*

I have had many clients come to me after having years of psychotherapy, saying "I've done all this work on myself and learned how my problems are connected with *this* and *that* from my childhood or other events in my life.....but it hasn't changed." This is often because traumatic experiences are stored within the tissues and muscles of our body, becoming chronic holding patterns, or body armor. This keeps us from feeling energetic, healthy, and at peace. Unless we address the "issues in the tissues," our conscious responses stored in the body become habitual re-creators of patterns we would prefer to move beyond.

Talk therapy can be extremely helpful in understanding the source of these issues, but may do little to change health problems, or dissolve the chronic tension held in the musculature. Bodywork therapies, (i.e. Acupuncture, Massage therapy, Reiki and other forms of energy work), may do much to relieve tension, restructure one's alignment, or make contact with deeper issues, but if this material is not processed into consciousness, the mind cannot implement the necessary changes in one's life to make this healing permanent. Thus, we return to our body, working each week with the same sore shoulders or aching back.

Mind-Body Therapies work both sides of the equation at the same time----uniting the physical and the spiritual as an integrated whole. They link our psychological problems to the experience of the body and link our physical problems to the experience of the psyche. This gives us an embodied experience of being whole in the world. Fully active, present and aware.

The interface between mind and body is energy. We can think of the body as hardware, like a computer, and the mind as the software that we can run on that computer. What makes the hardware and the software work together is the electricity running through the system. Without electricity, nothing works at all. If the current is not flowing smoothly - if the voltage is too high or too low - the [programs will not run correctly, and the hardware itself may even become damaged.

This is true with the human being. It is energy that enlivens both mind and body, allowing them to connect. The body runs that energy through its cells, its muscles and converts it into action. The mind, both the conscious and the unconscious, holds the programs that tell the body how to channel that energy, when to hold it, when to let it out, how to coordinate a task, and how to heal oneself. The programs we hold in our minds, such as feeling unsafe, feeling unworthy, or feeling compelled to accomplish Herculean tasks, all run energy through the body in particular ways, creating either repression or overload. Bringing this into balance requires understanding the programs that are running us, and simultaneously getting down into the deeper structures in the tissues that have been hardwired for these programs.

The body is the unconscious mind. It is filled with nerve endings that all connect to that central processing unit that is called the brain, the body records everything that happens to us. It also speaks to us in its strange cellular language. Diseases are ways of telling us what our unconscious mind remembers that our conscious mind has ignored. When these messages come to awareness, it allows the body to be released from having to hold that message. Tension or disease (dis-ease) is then free to dissolve,

as the energy finds new and healthier pathways, reinstating the natural flow, thus softening the tissues and simultaneously expanding the mind.

Instead of "putting up" with the symptoms of unhappiness, dis-ease, or masking the pain with alcohol, drugs, other self destructive behaviors, or anti-depressants, some people are seeking change through Integrated Psychotherapy. By using a combination of verbal counseling, psychotherapy, meditation, breath-work, energy-work and bodywork a somatic psychotherapist can help a client come to terms with their emotional pain and/or move forward with strength and confidence in life.

Watch for the upcoming monthly lecture series, on this and related topics in the September issue of Lebanon Life, open to the public.

John H Reed, MS LADC, is a therapist with twenty-five years experience, a recently retired college professor and program director of a degree program that trains counselors specializing in addictions. He is a current faculty member of The New England Institute of Addictions Studies. You can contact him at 860-303-9540 or johnhowereed@yahoo.com ☛

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INTEGRATED PSYCHOTHERAPY

John H Reed MSLADC

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Office: BraveOnDownYoga & Wellness Studio
525 Exeter Rd, Lebanon CT 06249

johnhowereed@yahoo.com
860-303-9540