

EMBRACING THE BEAST
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INTRODUCTION

"Embracing the Beast" is a journey into the inner world of body experience. It is a journey that takes you 'behind the scenes' for an inside view of the interaction of body-mind relationships and brings them to life. Interweaving Jungian style imagery, the work of major thinkers in body therapy, insights into the physiology of brain function and illustrations from bodywork practise, this booklet will be your guide on a multidimensional journey.

The reader is taken on an exploration of body-mind responses to stress. Step by step you will follow along the pathway that leads to the psychological and physical creation we call tension. You will develop some understanding of the reasons for the creation of stress as a living experience in the body while gaining some insight into the answer to that most difficult problem: how do we free ourselves from its hold?

You will be entertained as you are informed. Using both scientific fact and the expressions of body myth, the reader will be drawn, like Alice as she followed the white rabbit, into that other inner world, the world of body experience.

Here we learn the value of commonly misunderstood and denied body expressions, and perhaps better prepare ourselves for that fateful and transformative meeting: embracing the beast. TM

1. LEARNING TO VALUE BODY EXPERIENCE

"Nothing influences our conduct less than do intellectual ideas"
Modern Man in Search of a Soul, pg.42
-Carl Jung

Not long ago, my attention was caught by an article written by Rabbi Akiva Mann. It addressed the problems that a modern Jew faces trying to keep the vitality of that ancient religion alive in our present day society. The article interested me because Rabbi Mann was writing about an issue of spiritual observance using a body perspective, and in doing so was creating an example that I feel clearly illustrates the problem of relationship between body and mind.

According to Rabbi Mann, the ways of our largely Christian and secular society have so insinuated themselves into Judaism that they have subverted the very ways of praying that distinguish the Jewish form of worship. Even the physical motions of Jewish prayer have given way to Christian forms.

"Were I to say to you right now, 'Let us pray'," writes Rabbi Mann, "our immediate response would be to bow our heads in Protestant fashion. Not one of you would adjust his hat, feel for the prayer sash, reach out for the little laver at the synagogue entrance to wash his hands, and get ready to assume the proper Jewish prayer stance. Our minds may be Jewish but our bodies are Protestant."

What Rabbi Mann describes here is something that we have come to call body language; non-verbal and largely unconscious communication through movement and posture. The study of body language has found that it is not uncommon for our bodies to be saying one thing when our minds are conscious of another. In fact, with just a little observance we can look around us and see people whose bodies are fidgeting while their owners seem calmly engaged in quiet conversation; people who act as if they are quite comfortable with each other except that their bodies are turned away as if protecting themselves; or in the example that Rabbi Mann brings to us, heads that feel definitely Jewish while the body shows that it has come to accept a religious view that is uncomfortably Christian. In each case, there would seem to be a separation between the experience of mind and that of the body. The mind is saying one thing, and the body another.

As Carl Jung and other students of human behaviour have realized, a conflict in expression between mind and body inevitably points to conflicting messages coming from within our own being. Although this

split is something that we all experience, at a deeper level it can produce a profound fissure that runs into the depths of the human psyche. Explorers of the body/ mind relationship such as psychologist Alexander Lowen have also found that identifying the existence of a separation between our experience of mind and body plays a critical role in the recognition and treatment of schizophrenia. In this 'split', as Lowen describes it, our sense of identity becomes divided, with each part drifting' further and further away from the other. Our sense of internal wholeness fades with the diminishing contact and we are left feeling out of touch with a part of ourselves.

In this culture, in this time, we all live so much of our lives in our heads, and are so terribly ignorant of life as it is experienced in the body; the non-verbal, or body enactment of our lives. Yet in every thing we do, our bodies act as mirrors, living mirrors of our lives. The shape of the body and its motion are the living, created form of human expression. Through the gestures that accompany talking, in the postures and movements that make dance and theatre come alive, and in the body language that tells so much about our natures to those about us, we continually read the commonly understood but seldom acknowledged expression of our inner lives, that is the body.

But the body not only expresses the image of who we are as human beings. More wonderfully, through the body, we feel · our experience as human beings. For it is not until we are moved by the expressive form of the body that its value and meaning truly come to life.

So it is through both the imaginal expressiveness of its form and the emotive depths of its content, that the body brings the richness of life to us. And just as it is for the Jew who tries to keep traditional spiritual practise in our modern society, the body not only is an accurate portrayal of our deepest, and often unconscious relationships with life (and one that may be very different from our conscious views), it also fixes that information at a very physical level, feeding that inner self perception back to us, and so strongly that we cannot truly have said to have changed our responses to life relationships until we can see that there is a change in their expression at a body level as well.

Obviously, there is much value in being in touch with body information, and yet learning to understand the language of the body isfi not all that easy. In fact, I have found just talking about body experience to be a most difficult task. If anything meaningful is going to be said, we want not to talk just to the head, but to the body as well.

Finding the right language when speaking to the body is important. It seems to be a language that does not have a lot in common with

conscious, rational thought. "...the language of the body is proprioceptive and not conceptual or logical...", says Rabbi Mann. "It is a language not for the reason but for the imagination; and it is not for our imagination as it becomes translated into thought, but for our imagination as it becomes translated into muscular responses."

Because of the body's capacity to both express itself and to be understood through image, I will use imagery; and so that the images will not speak only to reason, I will hope to invoke the feeling content of imagery as mediums through which to bring the living experience of the body to you. To this end, we will explore our relationship with the body through the metaphorical world of fairy tales. Through their stories we will bring the human experience of the body to life; experiences that can be imagined, and felt.

Why should a gap arise in the relationship between body and mind? In searching for the answer to that question, let us start with a story, the tale of the Frog Prince. The 'Tale of the Frog Prince' begins by telling us that there was once a princess who had a golden ball. One day, while she was playing with it, the ball bounced across the lawn, and down the well. Horrified the princess ran to the well and peered down into its dark depths, but with growing despair, for it was clear that she had no hope of getting the ball back herself. But as it is the luck of such things in the world of fairy tale, there was a frog who lived in the well, and the frog could talk. He would get the ball back for her, he said, but at a price. If he was to give her back the ball, she had to allow him to return with her to the castle, so that he may sit at her table, drink from her cup, and sleep by her side.

Well! She never takes him seriously. Nevertheless she makes the bargain. But as soon as she gets the ball back, still dripping from its fall into the waters below, she turns her back on him and hurries back to the castle, alone. He is left, hopping slowly behind, calling out to her to remember their agreement. She thinks that she will never see him again.

Students of myth and legend know the wonderful way in which the story can parallel real life experience, often at a surprisingly deep level. The story of the frog and the princess has strong parallels to the relationship that we often have with our own bodies. Like the princess, we too continually make bargains with our bodies to get what we want from them, never thinking that we have to keep our side of the bargain. Too often, once our bodies have performed „to the level they were expected to; whether that is shedding fat for the summer's beach, or lessening pain levels after an injury, we forget, and like the princess, put our awareness of the body aside for the moment. But if we have

forgotten, the body is faithful and never forgets. Slumbering, it only awaits the right moment to be awakened again.

If expectations of the body are seldom heard and often ignored, from our mind's perspective what is expected from the body/ mind relationship is easily understood. Commonly, we ask for no more than that the body should function well for us, look better than we could possibly hope for, and not bother us too much. Unfortunately, our bodies seldom live up to this short list of expectations, and at times they positively assail us with their imperfections. In fact, in spite of our wish for positive messages from the body, often the only time we get strong signals from our body is when something is not right.

What this all adds up to, is that for each of us, the relationship between body and mind could usually be much better. It is not surprising that our relationship with our bodies should be fraught with tension. It is one in which we usually have a low background noise of tensions, or aches; it is a body that could ambush us at any moment with a torn ligament, disease, and inevitable death. It often requires attention when we don't have the time, and it can seldom keep up with the daily pace that our minds would like to set for it. It would seem that it is our minds, and seldom our bodies that set the level of expectation in our lives, and yet like the frog, as we shall see, the body's needs are seldom far from us.

As much as we would like our bodies not to bother us too much, at the same time we do depend on them for sensory awareness. In fact, our ability to sense through body awareness is a survival skill at the most basic level. Through what we feel in our bodies we know if we are too close to a fire, if we have cut ourselves, whether a pain is heartburn...or heart attack. Our bodies give us a way of monitoring our physical world, and a guide that tells us how to most correctly respond to it.

But our bodies tell us more. Our bodies also tell us about the quality of our world experience, and of its effect on us at a much more subtle level than our minds alone would ever be aware of. When we touch another, it is through our bodies that we can tell if this is the touch that thrills, or one that leaves us cold. And it is through touch that we know ourselves, that we feel our very existence by the sensations our bodies bring to our awareness. Through the body we feel the pathos of life; not just the pain, but perhaps also of some time when we lay on a beach, or on a windswept hill top, and felt at peace with our body, and ourselves. We are moved by the touch of the world. And it is through touch, experienced in the body, that we are finally truly touched by life itself.

In all these ways, the body brings us information that is vital to us, and that speaks deeply of what it is to be human. But too often, because of the nature of the information they give us, the responses of the body are exactly what we don't want to feel. They reveal us, and tell us and others things about ourselves that we would rather not feel, or like the princess when she must explain to her father the frog's arrival at the castle gate, something that we might not want known. A blush at the wrong time, a racing pulse and dilated pupils, even the flicker of an eye - we all are to some degree adept at reading the body language of those about us, despite the best attempts of the bearer of these tell-tale signs to repress their expression.

While hiding body expression from the discerning eye of others can be difficult, we are all potential masters at denying ourselves full recognition of their reality. And for good reason. There is a common theme that winds its way through our experience of body information that often we would prefer not to feel, and hear, and that is the experience of pain.

The attempt to control discomfort and pain is a major factor in why we relate to information from the body in the way we do. Whether its source is embarrassment or bruise, we invest a tremendous amount of energy in controlling the pain of life's wounds. The instant discomfort is felt, we activate a whole array of defense mechanisms whose job is to control the influx of pain signals and armour the place where the injury has made us feel vulnerable.

Many of the ways in which we try to control the full brunt of pain are easily recognizable. If you fall and hurt yourself, you brace, wince, and tighten up - face, body and all. Control over breath and body movement by bracing is amazingly successful at controlling the intensity of pain. This can be seen in bodywork when often a client will stop breathing the moment they feel discomfort. From early in life, the lesson we learn is that the more we stop body movement, the better chance we have of diminishing the pain of injury.

Physical injury is body pain that we all know too well. It is pain like this that we pay the most attention to because this is the pain that calls out most for our attention. But there is also pain, like the pain of embarrassment, that is more subtle. The source of injury is not as easily seen; its wound cannot be as easily discovered. And if this kind of injury is so subtle that it has only slight impact on our consciousness, or if we have learned too well how to dull our awareness of it, how can we be sure of what effects these injuries, and our responses to them will have had on our bodies. How will we know what is happening in the experience of the body if we are so busy denying the messages that it sends us. Yet

whether we acknowledge them or not, like the spider that spins its web strand by strand, the effects of defensive control still quietly move into our lives, and I will inevitably have their influence over us.

Even when we successfully subdue awareness of our body responses, the impact of that experience on our lives is no small matter. In fact, our very attempts to control the discomfort of injury increase the long range effects of body trauma and the stress it puts on our systems. The result is a mental stopping of body processes, so that defensive bracing becomes lodged in the body, affecting metabolism, movement and posture, becoming the physical reason for the growing implication of stress in diseases of both body and mind.

Our talent for silencing body signals makes unravelling the language of the body no easy task. Even when we decide that we want to understand its language, we are still so entangled in the very ways we originally masked sensory information that it becomes difficult to understand what we are hearing. Bound up in a trap of our own making, like a spider caught in its own strands, it is truly a tangled web that we weave.

2. THE TWO WORLDS

"Let me go", cried Brer Rabbit,
"or I will punch you again"
-Uncle Remus

Untangling the web of control over body responses is no easy task. Anyone who tries, quickly learns some sympathy for Brer Rabbit as he struggles to disengage himself from the tar baby. A large part of the problem is that we have hamstrung a fundamental sensory ally, the human body. And this is not a problem we are going to solve out of our heads.

An example of how hard it becomes to understand body information when we have lost contact with the immediacy of its expression can be shown in the experience of one of my clients. She had come to see me because she was suffering from tension and badly wanted some relief from the pain in her shoulders. I began to work with the muscle tension, and as I did, she started to talk about the events of her day. She had been through a horrible time, involved in an ongoing fight with a co-worker.

Now, 'talking out' the tension is not an uncommon occurrence when working with the body. Bodywork brings a greater awareness of the body. As the tight muscles get worked with, we feel them more, and

associations are made with the experiences we had when we first tightened them; a kind of place memory, in the same way that the smell of baking bread might bring back a flood of memories of visiting Grandma's house when you were very young. As feeling and body are associated with again, the control that we had over the feeling becomes softened, and freed from that control, the body is able to respond with more immediacy to what is being felt.

For my client, as she talked, the feelings surrounding her experience of the day became more consciously recognized, and the muscles involved in controlling the experience, in this case in her shoulders, started to loosen their hold. What was held in limbo at a physical level could now be experienced again at an inner level, and the body is freed to a greater degree of expressiveness.

fl But then as her body began to respond and have more freedom of movement, and my client started to feel more, what she became aware of was the very anger that she had had that afternoon. She was horrified. "Now I'm getting upset again", she cried in dismay. "I'll lose all the relaxation you've worked so hard for." And of course, at the moment she said those words, her back indeed tightened again. Feeling was again controlled, body expression was stopped, and the muscles of the shoulder were tight.

From blush to gesture, the body is moved to express what we feel. Like the movement of Aurora Borealis across a night sky, every flicker of feeling excites and moves the tissues of the body in the places where we feel the experience. Control of that expression shows itself as control over body movement. A tight jaw, controlled breath - in fact any tension in the body can be seen, like the tight shoulders of my client, to have been control on the expression of what is felt.

When we try to control the onset of pain we hold it, suspended, as an oyster holds the irritation of a grain of sand, still there, but separated, and held away from our immediate awareness. But by distancing ourselves from the pain, and dulling the immediacy of its experience, we only manage to seat pain deeper into the body. In the same way that the princess dealt with the frog, we attempt to deal with the problems presented to us by the body by putting them at arms length, not seeing that through this very distancing, we become locked into a negative relationship with the body, dependent on maintaining our control over the disturbing demands of feeling. In our effort to push away the unpleasant experiences of the body we succeed, but at the price of binding ourselves to these experiences in a grip that, like the body tension associated with it, just won't let go.

Although it may seem to have some negative side effects, denial of pain is still something that we can all empathize with. After all, pain is not a popular word or experience in this world of ours. If we do relate to it, it is usually in terms of learning to eradicate it from our lives. We quiet the pain of the body with pills, with subliminal tapes, with surgery. When it comes to the body, our culture is on a fervent search for the perfect and painless body. And yet, as we shall see, in bodywork, transformative change happens at the very places where pain is greatest. It is the very experiences that we would most like to avoid that have the greatest need and offer the greatest possibility of healing. It seems as if because we seldom pay attention to our bodies when all is going well, the possibility for change needs to start at the place of discomfort, at the point where the body calls us most strongly to come to terms with it.

Body discomfort is a voice that calls to be responded to. It is the voice of the child, tugging at our apron strings, crying for our attention. Much of the reason for the continuation of bodily discomfort can be found in the decision of the frog's princess. She has little time for the frog. His only value to her is that he is able to move freely in the dark, moist world of the well, a world that she has little ability or inclination to explore. So too often with ourselves. We give a minimal amount of attention to the murky world of bodily needs and distance ourselves from exploring any deeper relationship with its sensory depths. And yet the exploration of that relationship is precisely the road to healing.

The difficulty in finding that road is that we are so completely caught up in the way of doing things that initiated the problem. Even when we try to deal with problems of the body, we continue to create solutions that are nothing more than a rehashing of the same way of dealing with the same old problems. Like Brer Rabbit embracing the Tar Baby, everything that we do seems to only pull us, deeper into the experience.

A newspaper article I saw recently is a good illustration of this. Apparently, growing awareness of the influence of stress on heart attack has caused stress-laden office workers to take up sports such as running. The idea, as you might assume, is to get their bodies in shape, and their tension levels lower.

The problem is that these fledgling athletes also incur a high number of body stress injuries such as shin splints, and sometimes heart attack. Now why should this happen? Apparently, exercise is being approached with the same attitude that created success, and too much stress in the work-place. Minds that were already well trained to drive bodies to long hours and high levels of anxiety were quickly applied to

driving the body into 'success oriented' exercise routines that were far beyond the body's capacities.

Once again, success was being striven for, but again at a cost. Without a change in attitude, exercise only replaced ulcers with painful joints and didn't lower the stress to the heart. The mind continues to reign as the only valued source of information with which to approach life, a view that leaves the perspective and needs of the body still crying out from far behind us.

In this relationship, the princess is the conscious mind. It is that part of us that wants to take the good out of life experience without any investment of our princess world into hearing the voice of the frog-world: the dark, moist and often treacherously swampy world of the body.

Let us take a minute to look closer at the world of the mind. Perhaps in doing this we can gain more of an understanding of what is needed to heal the rift that can arise between them. In the body-mind relationship the world of the mind is the world of image. It is a world that perceives, imagines and uses its imaginal abilities to organize information. Images allow the mind to take the rich array of information it receives, and 'get the picture'. But the imaginal capacity of the mind is not just a receptive one. Images have been called the "bridge between conscious processing of information and physiological change" spreading their influence through both the voluntary and involuntary nervous systems.

A large part of the 'picture' that the mind receives is made up of sensory information impressed on the brain at an area of the cerebral cortex called the homunculus. The homunculus is a cross section of the brain with one half devoted to receiving sensory information and the other for sending motor, or movement signals to the body.

The sensory half of the homunculus has larger areas for the parts of the body that have a higher concentration of nerve endings, such as the palm of the hand, and smaller areas for parts of the body we need less information from, such as the back. A picture of the body created on the basis of the proportion of homunculus used for sensing that area would have a huge face, with enormous lips and mouth, a huge hand with an enlarged index finger, a very small trunk and limbs with huge feet. The motor side of the homunculus has a similar look with only slight changes; a larger thumb and smaller index finger for example.

The amount of information received by the sensory side of the homunculus is fed to the motor side, and is decisive in the amount of control that the motor homunculus has on the body. The more

information the sensory side receives, the better able is the motor side to guide the body in the demands of body movement.

This ability to specifically affect the body has been found by researchers to show response not just at a muscular level but to effect tissues and organs, even cells. Recent research has indicated that human imagination may even have a strong effect on the workings of the immune system, influencing states of sickness and health. The effect of the imagination on the body can be so immediate that it has been called preverbal.

Our ability to learn and refine body movement is also affected here. It is actually possible to stimulate the sensory homunculus with an increased level of input by working that area of the body more. The result of this increased sensory information is that the motor homunculus is able to create more defined motor signals to that part of the body and a higher degree of movement control. This is the function used by the yogi who learns to control the movement of each joint of a hand. Continued practice of the movement brings increased sensory awareness, which in turn allows greater control over movement.

The ability of the mind to imagine is at the root of our consciousness of life. It allows us to form sensory impressions into pictures of existence, and use those images to direct our bodies to movement. The mind's ability to work with images allows it to seemingly have no bounds. In an instant, our minds can be in Moscow, or will have created a world never experienced before.

The body, on the other hand, lives in a slower, more prosaic world. The body has its strength in feeling. Just as imagery is the mind's way of 'getting the picture', of taking its information and creating wholisms or realizations, feelings take the sensations of the body and create a wholism of sensory experience. Feelings allow us to 'get a feel' for situations. They allow us to respond to body sensations in a conscious and intelligible way. They give content to images, engendering movement and form that has meaning and purpose.

The mind may bring us the structure of the world, but the body gives us its content. An assessment of body sensations can tell us whether we feel happy or sad, they can keep us in touch with important subtleties of life, such as whether we are too close to the car ahead, or whether there is something that 'just doesn't feel right' about someone we have met. And like the dancer who is moved in the creation of a dance, images give form to what is felt. But every good actor and dancer also has to "feel" the part before they can bring life to the image they are creating for the role. Our ability to read body sensation through

feelings tells us vital information about the inside story of life. Even more so for the bodyworker for whom it is vital to have an enhanced ability to feel his way through the subtleties of the work. Our bodies become essential eyes on our inner world. It is true that the eye can be deceived, but the heart, when listened to with a discerning ear, can tell us much more about our world than the mind will ever notice.

Working together, the body feeds the mind sensory information about life experience, telling us what is felt about them. Images, in turn, have a powerful effect on the body, bringing the many individual muscles of the body together to be used in concerted action. Input of sensation from the body allows the mind to form images that are as concise and immediate as the needs of body movement in that moment. This interplay between the sensory and imaginal strengths of body and mind has been used to good effect by athletes when they want to train the body to respond to the finest degree in competition. Between them, the body and mind bring a richness to human experience that can be especially felt when there is a lack of information from either sphere. Sensory deprivation has been shown to reduce the imagination to fantasy while those who have little sensory contact with their body (such as the sexually abused) have also been found to have a reduced ability to form clear images around the body. As we shall see, a lack of clear images about the body has a deep effect of our ability to move and respond through the body.

Like the athlete in training, we can use images consciously, but more often body images become unconscious and insinuate themselves, for better or worse, into our body image and its expressive language becoming for example the slumping posture of one who we say "doesn't have a good self image" But in whatever form they serve us, images and feelings bridge the gap between mind and body, and organize the individual muscles of the body, so that inevitably the body becomes 'created in our own image'.

This difference in perspective between the mind and the body is important to our understanding of the source of conflict that can arise between them. While the mind is quick, it is slow to appreciate the seemingly plodding motion of a body that absorbs and digests life through feeling. If our minds can be in Moscow this moment, it will take a lot longer for the body to get there. And if the body is hurt, the mind, not wanting to experience the wounds of bodily life is wont, like the princess, to desert the body, forsaking it because of the trials that the body brings us.

As in any relationship where there is no relating, tensions inevitably grow. Stifling expression, disregarding another's needs, unresponsiveness

to changing conditions; like a microcosm of everyday life these same issues are all to be found at play when there is a breakdown in the relationship between mind and body.

3. THE WORLD OF SLEEPING BEAUTY

In the last two chapters we started an exploration of the relationship between body and mind. First, we used the fairy tale, "The Frog Prince" to illustrate the problems that arise when denial of messages from the body causes a disruption in the integrity of body consciousness. Then, we looked at the worlds of body and mind, showing what is involved in their makeup that might contribute to the breakdown in relationship that we call tension and pain.

Now, let us leave the dilemma of the frog body and the princess mind for the moment and take a closer look at the process through which consciousness of bodily injury is denied. Let me give you an example, a revealing and powerful portrayal of one individual's response to injury and pain as given by Jeanne Achterberg, in her book, 'Imagery in Healing'.

"I am reminded", she writes, "of a young man who was working on a scaffold when a crane swung into it, sending him hurtling down two stories. His arm was nearly severed, he broke both of his knees, sustained multiple fractures, and injured his back. There was no logical reason for him to have survived, except that he's mentally as tough as nails. When I asked him how he did it, he said he knew he had to keep his eyes open, because if he became unconscious, he'd never wake up again. He remained awake throughout the whole ordeal, watching the blood and 'white stuff' flow out of his arm, acutely aware of the pain, and never going into shock. He focused on his breathing, holding his breath as long as he could and then breathing shallowly. A fellow construction worker helped save his arm by applying pressure in the right places. After hours and hours of careful surgery, it was successfully reattached, and has now become functional. He still fights general anaesthesia and every other situation where he might lose the self-control that pulled him through. He holds his breath, and steels himself for his next life crisis; but he's alive."

What Achterberg has described so well here is the 'damage control' that we all do whenever faced with injury to our being. It doesn't even take conscious focus. When faced with such a threat we all will instinctually brace with our breathing and fight the overwhelming of our consciousness from body sensation.

The blind determination of Achterberg's construction worker shows the response of mental control in the face of injury that is an essential part of our survival mechanism.

Bracing in the face of injury leaves us steeled against the injury, and keeps us alive.

So what is the problem with controlling body sensation in the face of pain? Nothing, in itself. The world of the body has a need for balance. If we feel overwhelmed by body sensation, such as pain, the mind will try to cut down on the input so that we are left with some ability to reason, some capacity for self awareness and self-control. But at a cost. We also lose some of our ability to feel whether each new experience that follows is a safe one or not. Like a stray dog that growls at a friendly hand, we are left blinded to the possibility of redemption from our pain. In bodywork, it is the most traumatized client who will hold themselves awkwardly above supportive surface of the massage table, and brace against the hand of the therapist. In the same way that the oyster learns to cope with the gradually increasing demands of the growing pearl by giving up some of its living space, we are left using more and more of our energy to cope with an unintegrated experience, still staving off the invasion of injury signals to our body consciousness.

In the Grimm's story of The Sleeping Beauty, we are given a powerful picture of the cost of control in the face of injury. In this case, the object of denial is an evil tempered wise woman, or witch who is not invited to the feast given in honor of the king's baby daughter. She arrives in any case but in a fury, and just before the last good wise woman is about to give her gift proclaims, "In the fifteenth year of her age, the princess shall prick herself on a spindle and fall down dead". The court is filled with horror. The king, not wanting his daughter to fall prey to the wicked woman's curse, burns all the spinning wheels in the kingdom. He hopes that he can remove the danger by banning all awareness of the instrument of her promised death. Although he has been assured by the last wise woman's prophecy that in the end all will turn out well, he wants to save them, castle and court, from the pain of the princess's fate, and yet in vain. Time goes on. The princess grows up to be beautiful in a land that does not spin. Because of her lack of experience she does not recognize the spinning wheel when she finally comes across one. Because the king has ordained that it should not be spoken of she has not been told of the deadly prediction. She reacts out to touch the beautiful spinning wheel, pricks her hand and falls asleep. So in the end, despite all the king's precautions, the wicked witch, unacknowledged and unrelated to, has her way at last.

Here, retribution for our denial of the frog world finally catches up with us. By 'forgetting' that which is unpleasant in life, we leave ourselves vulnerable to its effects, as they work unconsciously, casting their spell on our lives. In one of the most compelling passages in the whole book of Grimm's fairy tales we are told:

"And this sleep fell upon the whole castle; the king and queen, who had returned and were in the great hall, fell fast asleep, and with them the whole court. The horses in their stalls, the dogs in the yard, the pigeons on the roof, the fires on the wall, the very fire that flickered on the hearth, became still, and slept like the rest; and the meat on the spit ceased roasting, and the cook, who was going to pull the scullion's hair for some mistake he had made, let him go, and went to sleep. The wind ceased, and not a leaf fell from the trees about the castle."

So it is, and with as much completeness and finality that the life of our bodies, the movements and sensations that are its expression, can be quietly removed from our consciousness, and lost, into the world of the unconscious.

But there is more. The ability of bracing not only serves as a powerful agent in putting our body awareness away from responsiveness to life, it also builds a protection, both physical and psychological, around the place of injury, making sure that the spell will not be disturbed.

"Then roundabout that place", continue the brothers Grimm, "there grew a hedge of thorns thicker every year, until at last the whole castle was hidden from view, and nothing of it could be seen but the vane on the roof."

A powerful picture of the bracing that we too do around an injury. The hedge around the castle shows its twofold purpose. Besides bracing from the effects of further injury to our being, we control the movement of the injury into our lives. In the same way that we would respond to an oil spill or a nuclear disaster, we contain the area of trauma and attempt to control the spread of its influence on the rest of our body consciousness. This effectively controls much of our experience of body trauma but at a price, and although muffled, the voice of the trauma, and its effect on the body still refuse to go away.

As our connection with the sensitive life of our body fades, a bracing arises that protects, but is also a visible indicator that this part of the body has the bracedness of a cast, and the unresponsiveness and brittleness of a branch that has lost its sap. The form is still there, but the responsiveness and inner strength that come with life have gone. The brittleness of the bracing makes these parts of the body most vulnerable to reinjury and most resistant to any deep level of response to body therapy.

This bracing to form a protective circle around the place of injury requires a great amount of energy. Moshe Feldenkrais, the originator of Feldenkrais Method body therapy describes it like this:

"In every action in which a degree of difficulty is anticipated the body is drawn together as a protective device against this difficulty. It is precisely this reinforcement of the body that requires the unnecessary effort and prevents the body from organizing itself correctly for action... Further, this self-protection and superfluous effort in action are an expression of the individual's lack of self-confidence. As soon as a person is conscious that he is placing a strain on his powers he makes a greater effort of the will to reinforce his body for the action, but in fact he is forcing superfluous effort on himself. The act resulting from this attempt to reinforce the body will never be either graceful or stimulating, and will arouse no wish in the individual to repeat it." Here again, we find ourselves trapped in the web of body control.

As effective as bracing is in responding to stressful experiences, the containing and controlling abilities of bracing leave the traumatized area locked out of any sense of immediate connectiveness with post-trauma experience, including the need of the body and mind to heal. Sensory awareness of the body is lessened. Without this information the worlds of the mind and body begin to drift apart, with the mind only able to approximate the correct forms of body movement needed. In the face of a lack of information from the body, the mind moves faster, trying to compensate for the lack of body information by creating scenarios of how to respond to life. The mind becomes prone to misjudging new situations and creating fantasies built more out of its heightened defence awareness than the reality of the situation. It becomes more difficult for the racing mind to sleep and let go of control, unable as it is to sense the safety of the environment it would be leaving consciousness of. We become disconnected from a sense of immediacy of life, and any sense of aliveness in the body. But as Feldenkrais points out, where-ever we deny that awareness, we become locked out of body feeling and the sense of aliveness and energy that it brings us, left able to only mechanically manipulate the body by will, forcing our bodies onward through the motions of living. Like a runner blindly pushing his way to reach the end of a marathon, we submerge the calls of body pain so that we can go forward.

Aside from the ways in which bracing affects our ability to feel, and initiate movement, there is also an influence on the amount of conflict that is involved in movement. As long as imaginal commands are unconsciously controlling how we move our bodies, every movement will find that particular part of the body trying to listen to two messages at once.

Those of you who have had a frozen shoulder will know that as much as you might want to raise your arm, it seems as if there is another force in resistance, making the movement impossible, and painful to attempt. Every movement that we do in an area that is still under the control of old messages will have a similar experience to it. We will be constantly fighting against restrictive motion.

The accumulated effect of this conflict of messages results in every movement being harder to do, using up more energy, and leaving us with a feeling of limbs that are heavy and muscles that feel strained. Although we generally accustom ourselves to this slow closing in on the body's expressive freedom, a measure of the success of most body therapies will be a renewed sense of lightness and freedom of movement in the body.

Again the experience of being stuck in our own web shows itself. At this point, all attempts at change will be tainted with the still prevailing perspective of "damage control". With consciousness outside the protective hedge of control, we can't feel in touch with the place of injury, so every attempt that is made to affect change will move from the perspective of external control: force without feeling; deprived of feeling in touch with, and the body softening that feeling brings.

As our ability to feel in the traumatized area is cut down it becomes difficult for any new imaginal messages to take effect. This means that our mind's ability to define and direct movement becomes hazy, clumsy, and as Feldenkrais points out, forced. As well, the information that we need to form our sense of body image is cut down. In bodywork, this will show up when people will often say that they don't have a sense of parts of their bodies; that they don't have legs, that an arm feels thinner or shorter than its physical reality.

To the degree that we pull away from feeling the trauma, there is a tendency for the last imaginal message, most often the message to brace, to stay in control of the muscles. Muscle tension or 'bracing' becomes the physical expression of this stopping of body experience. And as we continue to distance ourselves from the pain we feel, we push away the whole experience of body connection, losing contact even with the imaginal directive of bracing so that it sinks more and more into the unconscious. A gap between what we consciously envision of our body and its nature, and the actual responsiveness of the body occurs. Not only are we left with gaps in body awareness, we also have tension that we can't seem to let go of: shoulders that will not relax, continual reoccurrence of pain in legs or lower back from muscles that will not release, and unhealthy postures that seem determined to have their way. The body, as Feldenkrais tells us, will not respond to our disenfranchised

attempts to 'fix' it. The messages we are sending to it can no longer adequately reach the world of the traumatized body. As the body feels segmented, the language of separation becomes stronger. It is then that people will often make statements to their therapist such as, "If only you could take off that neck, and replace it one that works better." Feeling separated and out of touch with the area, our bodies are caught in a frozen reaction to trauma, still fighting a battle whose purpose is long past. The body has been truly abandoned.

With body and mind asunder before the experience of pain, where do we turn for help? And where do those of us who are therapists turn as we attempt to help heal this rift that grows within human consciousness? For this question is not just one of the individual in society, bearing our private wounds. With all our wondrous ability to manipulate nature, this is a culture that is sadly and dangerously out of touch with nature. Learning to relate again through the body is not just a lesson for the individual, it becomes a profound lesson in healing the wounds between human-kind and the body of life that we are part of. Seen this way, our relationship with our body becomes a living metaphor for our relationship with life. With this in mind, let us once more hear the thoughts of Moshe Feldenkrais.

"The limit of ability", says Feldenkrais, "must be widened by means of study and understanding rather than by stubborn effort and attempts to protect the body." Here are words to be remembered when any of us are seduced into the use of force in an effort to effect change within ourselves.

But there is something else being said here that we shouldn't miss; some reference to a different way of relating to the body. It would seem that Feldenkrais is saying that we need not so much to do something to the body but rather to be a student of the body; to slow the rush of the 'fix it' perspective of the rational mind and learn to listen instead. After all, with the relationship between body and mind in disarray it is clear that some new way of relating to the body must be learned. In the next chapter we will explore what that new way of relating might be.

4. COMING HOME

"...for this my son was dead, and is alive again;
he was lost, and is found"
-Luke 16:24

How do we 'come home' again to the body? In Grimms' tale, the legacy of the king's approach to resolving the problem continues in the rescue attempt as well as we hear, "...from time to time many king's sons came and tried to force their way through the hedge. But it was impossible for them to do so, for the thorns held fast together like strong hands, and the young men were caught by them, and not being able to get free, died a lamentable death." Or as Feldenkrais warns us, "stubborn effort and attempts to protect the body" will not avail us in solving the problem of healing the rift between body and mind. Trying to break in by the use of force only brings up the stronger force of bracing that is our 'damage control' around the injury.

The very unconsciousness of the control can be heard in the experiences of those I work with. Bodywork is essentially involved in bringing consciousness to areas of unconscious holding in the body, the places we call tension. Despite the wish on the part of both client and therapist that the tension should leave, often the harder the therapist works at the tension, the more resistance he or she will encounter. When I work with areas where a deep bracing is at work, it is common for my client's first awarenesses of the area to come as I will be told, "I can feel myself resisting but I don't have any control over it. In fact, often, the first movements towards release do not come in a softening of musculature but in a heightened bracing as the body has a chance to fully feel and express its need to defend itself. Of course, reunification of body and mind, and the release of muscle tension that accompanies it occurs often enough to keep people going back to massage therapists since ancient times but any time that there is not any real depth of responsiveness, it is a sure sign that the experiences associated with the braced muscles have not yet resolved themselves enough that they are able to release the body to fluid expression again.

Bringing feeling to areas of unconscious control is best mediated through focusing the mind, and the use of breath. Just as breath control is so amazingly affective in pain control, breathing again can be the only way of finding feeling in the body again. Its action is so specific that I can sometimes find an area of the body that shows by its physical reactions that it is on the edge of wakefulness, except that my client feels nothing there, and the body is not responding. At these points, simply breathing in what is felt, even if it is only the pressure of my hand, will often be all that is needed for the place to immediately become sensitive, and for muscular awakening and response to commence.

Heightened awareness of the body is an essential first step to helping it heal but it is only the beginning. It is a long step from the initial awareness of resistance to the renewal of response that brings

with it the reunification of body consciousness. It is the challenge that faces any prince who stands outside the hedge of thorns pondering the enigma of its existence, and the question that it presents. How to find the way through the hedge of thorns that so capably pushes back any attempt to change its hold on the body? How to do more than raise consciousness of the wounds of the area? It is a problem that faces body therapists whenever they are working with any one in pain. But the same issues also quietly present themselves in bodywork whenever the body is still and unresponsive to the most determined attempts to reawaken it. It is certainly a problem each of us face whenever we seek to explore the sleeping worlds that lie within us.

At this point in fairy tale and life experience, when all the tools that we have about us have failed, we have need for something other than that which we know. This is the point we come to when all else has failed, when the attempts of our wounded perspective have not found the way, when every attempt to break down the wall of control that protects a wounded body have been rebuffed, and frustrated, we can find no way back into the world of the body, that world we so easily and quickly turned our back on.

In fairy tale language, the answer to the hero or heroine's troubles comes from the unexpected, from that which might have been overlooked, or perhaps looked down upon. Whether it comes as the frog, or one of the many other nature symbols that appear in myth and fairy tale to offer the opportunity of a new world view, only those seekers who find value in that which seems valueless may find the help needed to resolve the unresolvable problem, and eventually the secret's answer.

In bodywork, the answer to unresolvable body tension most frequently lies in the place where we would least want to look for it, at the place of greatest pain. For as we shall see in our next tale, the indication of where we must turn for release is at the very place we were not expecting it; in the world of the unknown, from the frog's well of the unconscious, where separation of body and mind locks our pain, in troubled sleep within us.

The question at this point in bodywork, when the area of trauma has been awakened to consciousness, its injury felt, is learning to relate to pain. This is the most difficult place to work through in bodywork. Pain is not a pleasant subject - we are not pleased to experience pain in our lives. As we have seen, we will go to great lengths to control its influence on our lives.

Yet learning to relate to pain seems to be the source from which healing comes forth in bodywork. In fact, there is every indication that

much of our continued experience of pain is bound up in the very tension that holds it. Ida Rolf, the originator of a deep pressure form of bodywork called Structural Integration, or Rolfing, once wrote that the intensity of pain levels increased directly with the degree of resistance in the body. From a psychological perspective, Carl Jung wrote a similar thing when he said that at their basis, he felt all neuroses were the result of the bearer denying his or her fate. It is as if, at the moment of greatest pain, we have said, "stop the world, I want to get off", and with that word 'stop', have pulled out from the body the life of conscious feeling and frozen that particular scene of life. Bereft of feeling, the stuff of life, the body lies then, like Sleeping Beauty's sleeping courtyard, or an insect caught in amber, in a frozen act. It responds only to the denied messages of pain; a physical monument, silently honouring a forgotten memory.

The connection between pain and denying life impulses is also a theme that arises in the drama of the fairy tale. Let us look at what happens in the story of fairy tales when there is no longer a denial of life experience and the hero or heroine finally turns to meet fate's call. In the story, 'Beauty and the Beast', pain moves through the story in many themes. First, there is the pain of the family's fall from fortune; their friends turn away from them and they move to a cottage in the country to toil in poverty.

Then there is the fear and pain of the father's meeting with the Beast. He has plucked a rose for his beloved daughter Beauty from the Beast's palace garden, where he has received shelter from the storm.

"Ungrateful wretch", says his previously unseen host. "Who told you that you might gather my roses? ...Your insolence shall not go unpunished."

The terrified father begs for the Beast's forgiveness and it is finally granted, but only on the condition that the father will return in one month to give the Beast one of the merchant's daughters. And she must come willingly.

The wretched man goes home to his family and, as they can see his despair, is eventually compelled to tell them the story. Feeling responsible for her father's misfortune, Beauty decides that it is she who must return with him to the Beast's palace. Having borne the sacrifice of her former life style with grace, she now is faced with the sacrifice of her very life for that of her father.

Our common reaction to pain is akin to that of Beauty's sisters, who unlike her, never fully accept their fall into poverty. We too would distance ourselves from the experience of our fall from grace, whether in

body or soul. We would try to make the experience of discomfort one of an object, and most particularly, an object that is other than ourselves. We disinherit the experience, projecting it out into a hostile outer world. In our language, this is commonly seen when we say things like, "This chair is uncomfortable", rather than saying, "I feel uncomfortable in this chair".

In bodywork, it is common to hear a client talk about their body and its experience in this objective way. When we become the victims of injury in the body, we tend to disallow any value to our own experience and more credence in the views of others, especially experts. As we disinherit our wounds, we also give up a degree of our own sense of empowerment. In this vein, it is interesting to note that when told that they have cancer, it is more often the person who gets angry and gets ready to fight the death sentence of the diagnosis who will live long past their medically projected life span.

Because we can feel at a distance from, and devalue body signals, in the initial interview of a bodywork session I especially want to hear what my client thinks and feels about their body, not the ideas, however »correct, of some other. And in the therapy session itself, I have found it important to place the highest value on what the client actually feels in the body; for in bodywork, all change starts at the places of feeling, where body and mind meet.

As she moves toward her fateful meeting with the Beast, Beauty shows the ability to meet life experience, even when it is most painful. Instead of turning away from the unpleasantness of life with denial, she is willing to engage with the reality of her experience. But now she must meet the Beast.

It is seldom that we go looking for discomfort in our lives. It is more often that it comes to us. Like the forgotten witch's curse in 'Sleeping Beauty', that which we have pushed away from our conscious life creates the conditions through which we are inevitably bound to that which we would deny, and eventually confronted with the coped with, silent wound.

5. EMBRACING THE BEAST

In my work, I very seldom see people because they feel good. I see them because they have not been able to find a way of dealing with their bodies any more. Either they have been so good at quieting that they cannot feel anything any more or more commonly, the beast in their body experience has become so strident and insistent that it breaks through all efforts to contain it.

But before we can come into any relationship with the caged beast within, we must find our way; like the prince, through the ring of thorns, or like Beauty, through empathy, and through her heart.

Every day, Beauty is confronted with the frightening and repulsive reality of the Beast but at night a strange thing happens. In her dreams she meets a young prince, handsomer than any one she had ever seen. And with a voice that goes straight to her heart, he comes and says to her: "Ah, Beauty!, you are not so unfortunate as you suppose. Here you will be rewarded for all you have suffered elsewhere. Your every wish shall be gratified. Only try to find me out, no matter how I may be disguised, as I love you dearly and in making me happy you will find your won happiness. Be as true-hearted as you are beautiful, and we shall have nothing left to wish for."

In fairy tale, love is won and transformation wrought, most often by those who are true-hearted. In bodywork the same is true. By a heightened sense of empathy, by exploring what is felt, by following the way of the heart, here too healing is wrought.

To get back in touch with the place of injury, we have to be able to feel the place again. For the reintegration of graceful and expressive movement at a place of bracing, we have to get a feel for the sense of self we have in that place, the sense of self that brings expression to motion...as in any thing learned, or relearned, we have to get a 'feel for it' again.

It is as if we have been pushed outside the experience of the body in that movement or that place. The movement of control, that movement that Feldenkrais describes, is the movement of form without feeling - like the movement of the robot. To find the feeling in movement, and new movement in the body, it is essential to get back in touch with what it feels like there, at the place where bracing shows the vulnerability of injury.

But how to open the heart, to learn to relate in feeling again? The answer is in those signs of life that are so immediately controlled when we brace in the face of stress: breath and movement.

Breathing connects us deeply with the rhythm of life. It is a rhythmical movement itself, moving breath in and out, the rib cage in expansion and contraction; and it has the amazing ability to move us into and out of experiences, feeling the intensity of body sensation more with an in breath, and less with an out breath. When we control breathing, we control that ability to expand and contract our dialogue with bodily life -

control on breathing physically controls our ability to enter into the experience of life.

Movement too has a connection with involvement with life. If breathing gets us in touch with the feeling of life, movement allows the expression of what is felt. We are moved to laughter and tears, we are moved to dance for joy and strike out in anger, we are moved to embrace with love, and push away with disgust. In fact, the only time we are not moved to anything is when we can't feel.

And here we have Beauty, not feeling as if she can embrace the Beast, and Beast, locked in his beastly form, needing her to embrace him, if he is ever to become human again.

How often do each of us feel so tight and locked up in our bodies that we don't even feel human? And yet this is the very beastliness that needs our connectiveness with its pain before it can be released to itself again.

Every night the Beast would come to Beauty, and every night before he left her side he would ask, "Do you love me Beauty? Will you marry me?" And each night, she would say that she could not, and he would turn sadly away.

It is only when she has left him, returning to her family for a visit, that she finally realizes how much he needs her, and how much she misses him. When she returns, it is almost too late. She finds him lying, almost dead, in the garden.

"Oh! he is dead, and it is all my fault," said Beauty, crying bitterly.

But she revives the Beast with water and cries, "Oh, Beast, how you frightened me! I never knew how much I loved you until just now, when I feared I was too late to save your life."

"Can you love such an ugly creature as I am?", says he.

And at that moment when she realizes her connectiveness with him, and acts on what she feels, he is returned to his true form, and they are united.

Working with healing the body is much the same. When there is no answer to all our attempts at manipulating the physical shell, touching through feeling, and being moved to the expression of what is felt frees the body from the spell of denied life experience and reunites the body with our being. We breath in, and with that breath allow the food of

sensory information to work on us, to move us. We give give up control, and in that moment, give ourselves the possibility of accepting and internalizing, and owning a part of ourselves again.

In this reuniting of body and being there necessarily comes a change in consciousness. In each of our stories, change is brought about in physical appearance by a change in consciousness. For the prince in Sleeping Beauty, it seems that he has to be there at the right time, to somehow be connected with the flow of fate. For Beauty and the Beast, she has to learn to act from her heart, not from the appearance of the eyes, the perceptual input of the rational mind. Strangely enough, the Frog King must endure a surprisingly different fate at the hands of his princess. But even she delivers him from his frogly constraints when she finally succumbs to her fury at his impudent and persistent demands, and gives it expression by tossing him against the wall.

In each case there is action out of feeling, and with it a deepening of relationship, and change of form or consciousness because of it. Although we are not told by the Grimm brothers of what it was about the prince in Sleeping Beauty that allows him to succeed where others have failed, here too we see hints of the theme of transformation when we are told that "When the prince drew near the hedge of thorns, it was changed into a hedge of beautiful large flowers, which parted and bent aside to let him pass, and then closed behind him in a thick hedge". What was there about this particular man that brought this thorny hedge into its flowering? Perhaps we have a clue if we know that the word, 'flower' has its etymological roots in a word "bhel" whose meaning speaks of creation at its moment of expression, and of masculine and feminine in creative relationship. Wonderful images of the creative union of body and mind.

In each of these stories we can see that transformation is wrought when there is a change in the relationship to the bearer of the problem, whether it be Beast, frog, or sleeping princess. The body, reduced to its unconscious or animal form needs a recognition of its inner needs, its hidden truth, before awakening to full participation in conscious life once again.

It is seldom that we are aware of the movement into the world of unconscious bracing in the way that the construction site worker was. More often we only recognize our created limitations by the constraints they put on our lives. How often have you suddenly been aware of a leg that has fallen asleep, but couldn't say exactly when it started to happen. In this same way, the act of distancing ourselves from body trauma puts the fairy's spell of sleep upon us. And just like the awakening discomfort of a sleeping limb, it is only in awakening that we truly start to feel again.

Reawakening is not all the experience of pain. All body sensation calls our attention to the body and gives us the opportunity of deepening our relationship with life as the body presents it to us. In bodywork, sometimes the deepest and quickest change will happen at a place where an itch has developed. Only when the sensation levels increase in intensity, and resistance to integrating the intensity develops does painfulness become a dominant part of body experience. Still, whatever the type of sensation, release from tension will always occur to the extent that we can allow ourselves to internalize and be moved by what we feel.

Whether in fairy tale or everyday life, allowing ourselves to internalize life experience means a change in consciousness. Although a frog may not leave a massage table as a prince, any time a release of body tension occurs, the person who has experienced that release will also feel different, released to the degree that they have experienced that release at a body level. Only those who can say, "I felt nothing", will feel no change at a body or inner level.

Of course, it is possible to create body change without a change in consciousness. Certainly, any release in the body, however it is achieved, will create a change in consciousness. It is, for example, part of the eternal attraction of massage that it leaves us feeling released and more at one with ourselves. But it is only a change that is as deep and long lasting as the extent to which it moves into the bearer's life relationships. Because of this lack of internal change, it is most common for the effects of bodywork to quickly wear off, usually within a day or two.

For this reason, I generally find most dynamic change in the bodies of those who are doing inner work such as on-going psychotherapy. But even though it is extremely helpful to work within a psychological form. Working at the temple of the body with a commitment to relationship will inevitably initiate changes in perspective. These will seep into life situations and create the opportunity for a changed perspective on life, one that has been described by one of my hardest working clients as an 'attitude adjustment'. Sometimes the realization can come in as simple a form as watching tensions move back into the body as the daily work schedule is moved back into - I remember one woman who told me that one morning she was reaching in the cupboard for her morning cereal and she suddenly realized that she was tensing up as she prepared herself for work - but in each instance that it occurs, a new awareness of the previously unconscious movement to bracing occurs at the same time as we see a previously unnoticed way in which we relate to our lives.

Bodily changes that are created by force or by the manipulation of body image will also create change -for example it is possible to train the

body to move in a more graceful way - but again, to the extent that these changes are not accompanied by a change in consciousness, that we are not transformed inwardly by their experience, the impulse that originally created the body tension will remain a subdued force that lurks below the level of our consciousness, waiting only until our will weakens enough for their impulses to influence our lives again.

The results of this approach to the body can be seen in the problems that often come to athletes as age approaches. It can also be seen in the failed treatments of body therapy, when the treated problem only surfaces again in the same or altered form as the ways of relating to life that created the problem in the first place work their will on the body again.

Creation of imposed body patterns that do not deal with the problems that initiated the symptoms can also be seen in the layering of releases in the body. This is something that is particularly noticeable as there is movement towards deep release in bodywork. What is initially presented as the tension problem will change to a set of tensions of a totally different dimension as the initial level releases. Like an archeological dig, the history of body responses is gradually laid bare, the first felt parts of the tension patterns poking up with tell-tale tenderness, like the bones of some long buried and forgotten skeleton.

In the body, the arrival at a new unrealized pattern of holding will be most often heralded as tenderness or, with less resistance surrounding it, at least as increased sensitivity. It is always a place of discovery, of sensations whose only awareness till now has been in our memory. Here is the place of the moment of truth. This is the place of meeting with the external face of the formerly denied body experience, it is the moment of touching the wound. It is the moment when the prince must brave the touch of the hedge of thorns, the Beauty must kiss the Beast, the princess must touch the frog. It is the moment when we must choose to touch the wound, with feeling. Only then can the thorny hedge turn to flowers, and open to the life contained within.

In bodywork this means that the therapist must find the right touch to meet the needs of the wounded body to open to what is felt. For the bearer of that wound, opening with breath into embracing what is felt, it means finding a way to express the release of experience, and the bound up life energy that has been held in that experience. The way to expression can be as simple as a deepened breath that turns to a sigh; for the athlete it may mean only moving in a way that moves from, and feels responsive to the place of injury; for one whose hurt runs deep into life experience it may mean dissolving the holding of that hurt with tears, or nurturing the hurt body with candle-lit darkness and warm baths. The

correct way to respond to the needs for release can never be fully fathomed by the rational mind, it must be felt, and brought to life in expression. Only then will the wounded body and being release to a new relationship with life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Matthew teaches and writes on the application of psychophysiology (the study of the mind-body relationship) to bodywork. His work on our relationship to the body has been presented to the public, professional groups, at educational institutions and in contributions to professional journals and magazines.