

Transformation of
the Self
with
Bodymind Integration

Postural Integration - Energetic Integration - Psychotherapeutic Postural Integration

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Dedicated to

Jack Painter
and his life achievement,

and to those
who continue his unique creation.

Imprint

“Transformation of the Self
with Bodymind Integration”

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The logo of Postural Integration – the three drops for the elements earth, fire, water – is an ancient symbol in Taoism meaning “balanced power”. It is the goal of POSTURAL INTEGRATION to reach greater harmony and balance within the whole organism of a human being.

“Posture” here stands for the way we hold our bodies as well as for the way we stand in the world around us by our actions. “Integration” here means “completion”, it has its roots in Latin and implies the meaning “undamaged, unspoiled”. Thus POSTURAL INTEGRATION (PI) means: restoration of an unspoiled posture (posture in every sense) and thereby integration into a greater whole.

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Editorial

More than a year after the death of Jack Painter we are glad to honour his lifework presenting this compilation of papers about Postural Integration written by Jack himself and some of the former trainees who are now trainers of Postural Integration, Energetic Integration, and other different approaches in the field of bodywork, personal growth, self-development, body psychotherapy and healing.

This celebratory book is also an addition to the special publication of the German 'integration'-magazine which was issued in 1992 for the 10-year-jubilee of the German branch of ICPIT.

In particular, this edition can be understood as honouring Jack's lifetime achievement. All of us are very thankful for the development of his unique methods and for the experiences we shared with him. Jack was not only our trainer, many of us remember him as a father, playmate, consultant, colleague, explorer and good friend.

This publication presents innovative ideas and strategies that have evolved in the practice of the P.I.-method during the last 40 years in Europe and also the USA and other parts of the world, for example aspects of scientific neurological themes.

In different countries, different styles of working have developed and we feel happy about the creativity and different emphases trainers give to their work. We hope that the international public will realize the possibilities and richness. In a world with an increasing number of different diseases and psychosomatic issues, these methods are sufficiently thoroughgoing to be a real gift for all those seeking better health for their body, mind, or soul.

We had the challenge of collecting articles from P.I.-trainers from 10 different countries and 3 continents. This book is not about showing 'the only correct way of practicing P.I.' but shows rather that P.I. is a living and changing method to integrate aspects of the bodymind. It also shows different aspects of what it means to be a human being, different types of contact and different aspects of choreographies of emotional-bodywise-processes.

As editors we respect the fact that languages, and the meanings of terms in different languages, are not always the same and decided that the articles should go out into the world as they stand, even if non-native speakers have translated their articles in the context of their own cultural background. Each article has a similar introduction, with information about the author and their contact details.

For those interested in particular themes, we created an index of topics, so that this publication can also be used as a handbook of various aspects of bodywork and body-psychotherapy.

Many thanks to Jack Painter and the 'PI-family' – to all of the International Council of PsychoCorporal (Bodymind) Integration Trainers (ICPIT) who supported this creation.

Rita Erken, Bernhard Schlage
Summer 2012

Part One

Historical development of Bodymind Integration methods (Postural Integration, Energetic Integration, Psychotherapeutic Postural Integration) and their implementation into the development process of body psychotherapy

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Loving to network

The people who wrote contributions for this book are mostly trainers/teachers of Postural Integration. In fact they are responsible players in the network that formed around Jack Painter and his work over more than 40 years.

Jack was a true and original pioneer of the humanistic growth movement that developed in the 1950s and 60s. The network of trainers and practitioners could only exist thanks to Jack's vibrant search for the expansion of awareness and consciousness and the belief he had in the power of his work. It made him travel extensively and his method, Postural Integration, spread around the world.

In his 1986 book he writes:

"... I will share with you an attitude, an approach, a way of bringing together a variety of specific methods which is more than an eclectic combination, but is rather an effective, unified way to the direct, complete, and sustained unfolding of the whole person." (p. 16)

"In one sense I am making a rather grandiose claim for this work. I believe, however, that it is one of the most effective paths available, and I invite you to join me in its exploration." (p. 16)

This is what happened to thousands of people by now.

Jack was someone who found a natural pleasure in networking. He deeply loved connection, community and celebration with friends, colleagues and students. Before the digital age, he created this network by travelling around the world. He once said that he had a need to "inflate" himself, sharing insights and convictions that were precious to him. His tireless engagement towards his friends, his network and the world enriched him also in the "intake" side, he would say.

The seeds

The seeds of his engagement, social, political and moral, can trace to the fifties and sixties where he with his friends started to concretise the strong desire of nothing less than revolutionizing and reforming the world. Jack was a reformer. He believed in important issues like



Dirk Marivoet

Dirk Marivoet is a licensed physiotherapist (specialized in mental health), a psychomotor therapist and a bodypsychotherapist. He has been a certified trainer and supervisor in Postural and Energetic Integration since 1999 and he teaches the Advanced P.I.-training. Between 1983 and 1994 Dirk was employed at Leuven University (Belgium) where he trained psychomotor therapists and worked extensively with psychiatric patients. Since 1994, he has maintained a private practice and found the Institute for Bodymind Integration in Ghent. This is a centre for personal development and a training centre for body psychotherapy and holistic bodywork. Dirk studied with John Pierrakos, MD, a student of Wilhelm Reich, and became a teacher and supervisor in Core Energetics. ICPIT secretary since 1999.

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Overview and origins of Bodymind Integration

In 1981, at the beginning of my training in Postural Integration, when I first became personally acquainted with Jack Painter, one event still remains clearly imprinted in my memory. This was the first day presentation of his work. Jack entered the group room, took a glance at the large numbers present, smiled, and introduced himself with “My name is Jack”. He paused and made just one short statement. “This work is about bodymind!”, then he kind of chuckled and added “what I’d now like – is a volunteer for a demonstration”. That was Jack, no complicated theories or explanations. As a tutor he was unique. The effectiveness of his work could be seen in the demonstration. We were to learn by seeing, experiencing and practising it.

I recall being fascinated from the outset for the simple reason that I had never heard of the unusual word ‘bodymind’ previously. I was held in suspense while what I perceived to be the drama of ‘bodymind’ began to unfold before my eyes. Jack first saw that his ‘client’ kept up a deep rhythmic breathing and as he worked I was impressed by how carefully he positioned himself, how precisely and sensitively he used his fingers and balled hand, stroking along tensed bands of muscles. At the same time, he would encourage feelings and emotions to be expressed which were followed by what appeared to be a release by the ‘client’ of a long stream of forgotten memories and events, mingled with tears and laughter. And in the end, an amazed and relaxed ‘client’ who could hardly believe all that had transpired during the session. This was what Jack called, ‘work with the bodymind’. I was immediately taken by it.

The origin of ‘bodymind-bodywork’ is linked intrinsically with the life and legacy of Jack Painter (1933-2010), the remarkable individual who originally, over a period of three decades, developed different branches of what he came to collectively call ‘Bodymind Integration’.

In the early sixties, as professor of philosophy and psychology at the University of Miami, his body was causing him difficulties and discomfort and interfering with his career. He first sought relief through swimming, tennis, basketball and weight-lifting, then explored Yoga, breath work, traditional Chinese Medicine and acupuncture. He also got involved in a whole range of other new activities, workshops and sessions which were part of the blossoming New Age Growth movement begun in California. His extensive explorations included Eastern practices, Gestalt, Reichian work, Rolfing, Alexander, Feldenkrais, and Movement



Niall O'Siochain

The central themes of my approach as a Postural and Energetic Integration Psychotherapist trainer (APCI / ICRI accredited) are furthering self-healing, spiritual growth and realization of the true self. Since 1980, I have trained in a wide range of humanistic methods, all of which flow into my work and teaching. Particular themes include ‘the ancestral presence’ and the essence of optimal nutrition. I come from an earlier background of executive industrial management and later private practice.

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Relations within the Human Potential Movement



Birgit Beitter

Birgit Beitter earned her diploma in Psychology at the University of Erlangen-Nuernberg. She worked in the field of health-prevention before she started studying Postural Integration with Bernhard Schläge in Hanover, Germany. Her current focus in her practice is the counselling of women and couples desiring a child, as well as parents who lost a child during pregnancy. She's also teaching nurses and grief counsellors in the basics of psychology and communication.

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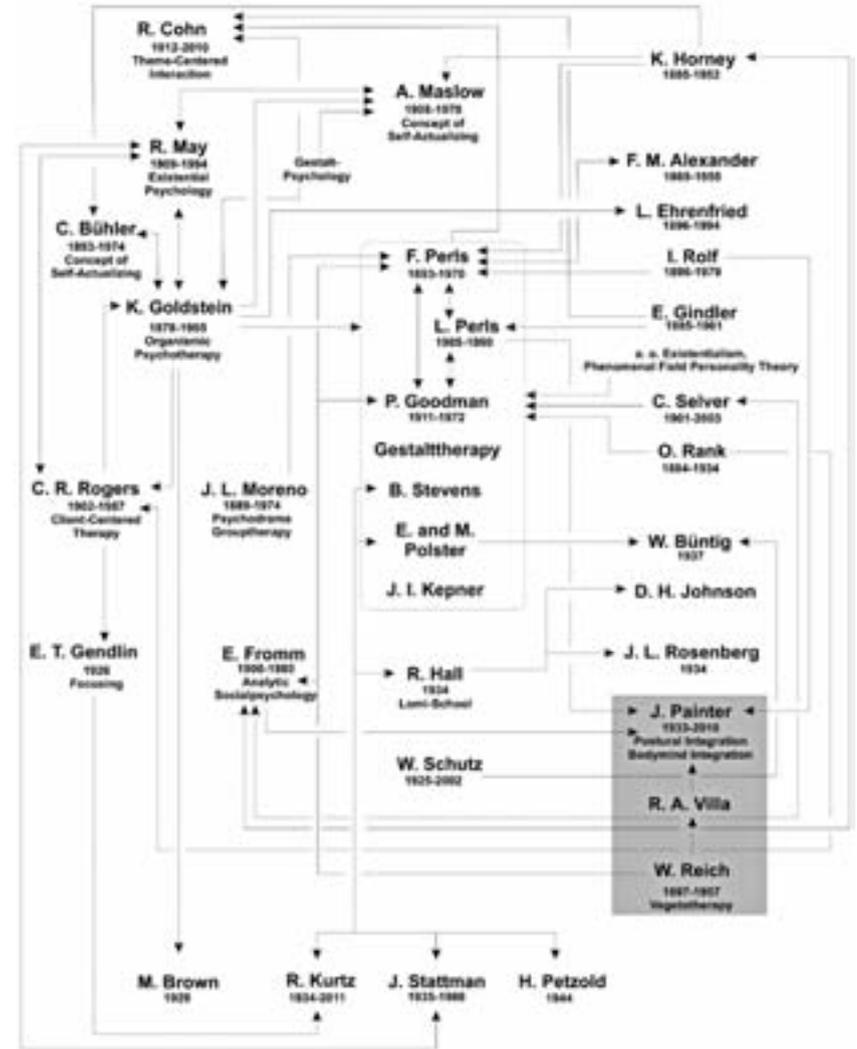


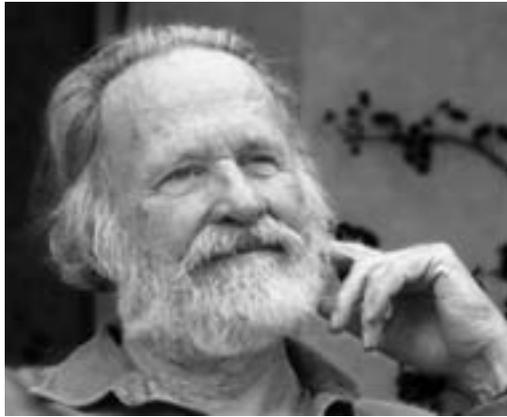
Chart by Birgit Beitter based on an image from german "Handbook for Bodypsychotherapy", Stuttgart 2007

Transformation of the whole self (1985)

It seems that most of us want to change, we want to be more relaxed, healthier, more alive. But here lies the basic problem of human transformation. Although we say we want a different kind of life – and may even be involved in many projects for improving ourselves – there is a part of us which stubbornly resists any fundamental redirecting of our lives. This part of us, which refuses to let go, is our armor. We call it armor because it is that aspect of us which being afraid of possible pain and confusion, hardens and desensitizes our bodies and keeps our feelings and thought in careful control.

Our armor is all those well-developed postures for dealing with life – rigid neck, held-in belly, fat, rubbery waist. It is all those guarded feelings either – covered up sadness, held back anger, or paralyzing fear. It is those often unstated but controlling beliefs “if I try I’ll be successful”; “if I am kind to you you should be kind to me”. Reflect upon your own behavior. Notice the little tricks for getting through the day; how you get yourself going in the mornings, how you keep high but not in indulging in negative thoughts, how you put your best foot forward when you want to impress people. A large part of this behaviour becomes second nature to us, set in motion unconsciously and works well for us up to a point since it protects us from pain and confusion. However, it also limits us and in due course forms a rigid structure which then inhibits our spontaneity.

One of the main difficulties in changing ourselves is that this armor is largely unconscious but remains in control even when we try to modify a part of us. Each time we attempt to change our lives, we are in fact, using our already developed (and unconscious) postures and attitudes to deal with our problems. For example, if you over-arch your lower back, creating severe back aches, you might try to find relief by doing yoga exercises. You would probably concentrate on those exercises which are easiest to execute and which at the moment feel good, such as arching your back even further into a fish- or cobra position. But in the long run such postures will simply increase your body imbalance and create more pain. Here, an unconscious attitude is driving you to find relief but in a way which reinforces the old body position. Even if you are very disciplined and work with yoga positions which flatten your back, you will, through the attitude you carry throughout your body, simply transfer the tension and imbalance to another part of your body. In flattening out your back, you may round your shoulders and overcontract the muscles in your chest.



Jack Painter

Jack Painter, born 1933 in Tennessee, USA. Studies of philosophy, psychology and literature (Ph.D.). Professor of philosophy at University of Miami, USA. Founder of Postural Integration©, a method of personal growth, self-development and healing – and the International Center for Release and Integration in San Francisco, USA. Trainings in Postural and Energetic Integration all over the world. Author of several books about his methods translated into different languages. Father of three daughters.

Biology, psychotherapy and somatic ecology

Postural Integration after Jack Painter

“To have a body is to learn to be affected, meaning ‘effectuated’, moved, put into motion by other entities, humans or non-humans. If you are not engaged in this learning you become insensitive, dump, you drop dead.” (Vinciane Despret) (10)

“Every bodily change in the direction of rigidity contains blocked vegetative energy.” (Wilhelm Reich) (3)

As a senior practitioner and trainer of Postural Integration (PI), personally trained by Jack Painter in San Francisco and in Europe, some of my goals are to participate in a clear re-construction of what Jack was doing and of his own system of cultural and scientific references and also to connect his legacy to the most recent developments in human sciences, in natural sciences and in therapy. These innovations may contribute to the advancement of the original method as well as to better contextualize it within the contemporary scientific, cultural and social world.

I find that part of the difficulty in describing and teaching PI comes from a general and almost inevitable occurrence: the gap between the descriptions an author gives of what she/he is doing and what she/he is actually doing.

My perception is that, also, in Jack Painter’s case, some of the crucial, active elements in his practice were being transferred via non verbal, expressive clues and, within his characteristic work, with simultaneous multilevel interactions; both in the training groups and in the therapy sessions. These processes were also very hard to describe by linear language. In reconstructing, redescribing, teaching and practicing his method and his Batesonian epistemology* how may we cope with these limits? And which resources should we gather from in pursuing this goal?

Some areas I am investigating are:

1. What I have observed over the years from my angle of vision of what Jack was doing in therapy. This is why I also bring your attention to my system of references.



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Postural Integration – Reich goes Tao

How to integrate aspects of bodymind in the tradition of Wilhelm Reich and the Chinese philosophy of Taoism



Rita Erken

Dipl.-Päd., lives in Aachen (Germany) at the border of Belgium and the Netherlands. PI-trainer according to the old standards (1985). From 1982 to 1992, participation of PI-trainings with Jack Painter in Germany (Munich, Aachen), USA (San Francisco), France (Trimurti), the Netherlands (Utrecht); with Hiltrud Lodes' trainings in Berlin, Canary Islands 1983/84; with Dr. Achim Eckert (Vienna), 'The Healing Tao' 1990/1992. Together with Jack Painter: Editor of the German newsletter INTEGRATION, also editor of the special issue of the German 'Integration' magazine for the 10-year Jubilee of the German branch of ICPIT, which was edited in 1992.

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During the last part of his third session in Postural Integration (PI) Frank is lying on his back with his eyes closed and a blissful smile on his face. For several minutes he has already been rapturously moving his arms and legs through the air. It seems as though he can't get enough of sensing the newly acquired mobility of his finger and hand joints, wanting to realize the new flexibility. "They're not cracking anymore", he says. "They haven't been that flexible for a long time... if ever..., incredible." His fingers are moving in a nearly graceful manner. His hands are performing rotating movements around his wrists, and these movements continue through the forearms and upper arms into the shoulder.

In the course of his PI-session, this relaxed state had been preceded by much more explosive moments. Through bioenergetic exercises, Frank's breath and the corresponding energy flow has been considerably charged up. The increased flow of oxygen had led to a prickling sensation in his face and arms and a restlessness had spread through his whole body. He was breathing through his energy blocks in the muscles of the neck, shoulders and arms while his "trip through the inner space" was reinforced from outside by the PI-practitioner applying pressure with his hands. The accumulating charge resulted in a wild, uncontrolled discharge: Frank had acted out the aggression against his father which had been pent up in his arms, by hitting his fists against the mat, exhaling loudly.

Now his breath is calm and regular with some sighs of relief in between. When asked what this new flexibility means to him, he answers: "I'm going to approach everything in life playfully, from now on." The reflective (Gestalt)dialogue with the PI-practitioner follows from here and he transfers his new experiences to different areas of his life: as a young teacher at his new school, as Marianne's lover, in horseback-riding etc. In the future, his handshake will be different, the way he holds his body, and his behavior will be more open and upright, as will as his eye contact, which until now had come in a more hidden and furtive fashion from the right side of his face. During the following perception of his body, Frank is both surprised and pleased by his reflections. He notices that in this session, the different heights of his shoulders have balanced out even more, his thorax seems fuller

Bodymind Integration and social evolution

Is armoring a transitional stage in the evolution of mankind?

One of Wilhelm Reich's dominant metaphors was that of "man in the trap", the trap of his own armor, a concept he introduced in Western psychology in the 1930s. In 1951, Reich, posed the following question:

"If nothing exists beyond the confines of natural processes, why does armoring of the human species exist at all, since it contradicts nature in man at every single step and destroys his natural, rich potentialities? This does not seem to make sense. Why did nature make a 'mistake'? Why only in the human species? Why not also in the deer or the chipmunk? Why just in man? His 'higher destiny' is, clearly, not the answer. The armor has destroyed man's natural decency and his faculties, and has thus precluded 'higher' developments. The twentieth Century is witness of this fact." (Reich, W., Cosmic Superimposition p. 288)

Myron Sharaf in Reich's biography "Fury on Earth", states that Reich did not attempt to solve the problem of how the armor developed but rather recast the problem. Where earlier, consistent with a Marxist interpretation of human history, he had seen the armoring as secondary to socioeconomic influences, especially the hypothesized shift in early human history from matriarchal to patriarchal forms of social existence, he now changed the sequence:

"The process of armoring, most likely, was there first, and the socio-economic processes which today and throughout written history have reproduced armored man, were already the first important results of the biological aberration of man." (Reich, W., Cosmic Superimposition)

Reich went on to speculate that man's reasoning, especially in the form of self-awareness, triggered the development of this armor:

"In thinking about his own being and functioning, man turned involuntarily against himself; not in a destructive fashion, but in a manner which may well have been the point of origin of his armoring ... Man somehow became frightened and for the first time in the history of his species began to armor against the



Dirk Marivoet

Dirk Marivoet has a background in Physical Therapy and specialized in Psychomotor Therapy, which he practised and taught at Leuven University (1983-1994). He is an advanced Postural Integrator and an International Postural and Energetic Integration trainer and supervisor as well as a teacher and supervisor in Core Energetics. Dirk is the founder and director of the Institute for Bodymind Integration in Ghent (B) where he still maintains his private praxis in holistic body-work and body psychotherapy.

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Character-related bioscripts

An integration of Postural Integration (P.I.) & Transactional Analysis (T.A.)

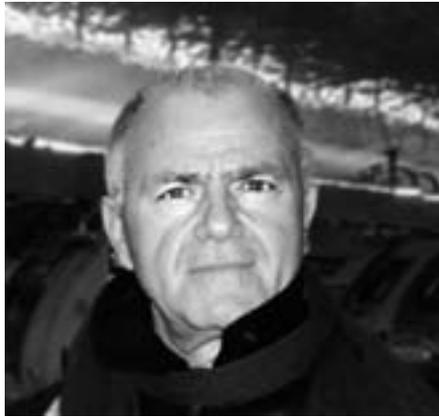
In the field of body-mediated therapies, utilized as a means of facilitating transformation and growth, a new way of conceiving of the body as the meeting point between various levels of consciousness (verbal, cognitive, emotional, imaginative and spiritual) has arisen. The expression, body-centered therapies, refers to a variety of therapies which share the common objective of modifying posture, self-image and personality, or improving well-being, psychophysical health and the quality of life, through the utilization of body-directed or body-oriented work, combined with exercises, which are carried out for the greater part of the therapy. Among such therapies, we can certainly include Postural Integration (P.I.), developed by my teacher, J. Painter, who passed away in 2010, and to whom I dedicate this article, as well as celebrating the 40th anniversary of his work.

With the advent of Postural Integration, experience-based anatomy was born. The body, in fact, is a storehouse of memorized experiences and we can access the physical memory by means of deep work on the fascial tissues, which has the effect of restructuring the psychological, physical and emotional consequences of present and past events. There is a very close interaction between emotional and physical functioning. Physical blockages are the result of conflicts rooted in our emotions. Integrating diverse traditional psychotherapeutic approaches with postural integration can contribute to changing our lives.

Postural Integration as a process of in-depth liberation of the body and the connective tissue, or fascia, and is important from a structural and experiential point of view.

The therapy is a dynamic interaction between people, and is only partially influenced by the models which guide its understanding. Korzybski wrote that "The map is not the territory". In practicing psychotherapy: "Keep your eyes on the road, not on the map." (S. M. Johnson, 1986).

Clinicians today are facing a number of changes which call for a reassessment of both the conceptual structure by which comprehension is accomplished and the tools suited to provide an effective psychotherapy.



Carmine Piroli

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Working with body image disorders

A unique field of body psychotherapy

There is but one temple in the universe
and this is the body of man.
Nothing is holier than this high form.
Novalis

As a point of departure for the ideas in this article, I would like to relay an experience from my childhood.

I was not yet five years old when I was lying alone in my bed at night and I started experiencing strange and new body sensations. My inner images of loneliness and emptiness changed into scenarios outside of my control. I was walking along a path, the contours of which were increasingly dissolving, eventually consisting of nothing but flowing colours. In addition to this, my fear made the scenario go faster which increased my fear all the more; thus further increasing the tempo of the experience. There was also a feeling of space which became wider and larger; somehow limitless, and, in that, it was also somehow soothing. Almost by accident I noticed my hands, which seemed huge, and streaming sensations flickered through my body. There was so much tranquility in this relaxed expansion. And it was still accompanied by the fear that I might freak out and so I did not dare, at the time, confide these unusual sensations to another person. I would have forgotten all of it if I had not read, accidentally, Michael Ende's book 'Momo' more than ten years later. There is a 'street' in this story where the same sensations appeared as in my dreams as a child: the more restless the spirit moves in this street, the faster Momo is carried by the turtle and as soon as there is a calming down in Momo the street seems to emerge out of time so to speak. (1)

I later found the "experience of the augmented hands", referenced by Wilhelm Reich, as an expression of early sexual sensations. (2) Coming from a home with a mentally ill mother, I had the tendency to see unusual physical sensations as something that might be pathological and hence went to great lengths to not let anything like this show. Although understandable in my family context, for years the habit of hiding also prevented me from getting a clarifying feedback from my male and female friends and thus the understanding that these sensations were common in society and normal. Both aforementioned texts made it obvious for me that these sensations are rather common



Bernhard Schlage

Bernhard Schlage has given workshops since 1980 in most of the European countries. Private bodypsychotherapist practice since 1984 and giving lectures at international congresses for example in San Francisco, Paris and Sydney. Author of more than 100 articles about this issue, and 4 books. He has co-founded an adult-education-center for health care in northern Germany in 1986 and later was in charge of a mental health center until 2003. He is PI-trainer since 1999 and ECP-holder since 2001. Specialised in treating psychosomatic disorders, he is now focusing his work on training the next generation of health care practitioners and body psychotherapy.

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Bodywork and transpersonal development

For many years I have practised and led groups in Postural Integration (PI) and have come to appreciate its powerful transformative approach.

I always wondered what was the best way to bring such an effective technique for personal growth to the greatest possible number of people. In my work as a psychotherapist I observed some people receive huge benefits, while others shunned the experience from the first contact. I knew it was necessary to improve my relationship skills to work with the latter group, who I considered most in need, but their distance from their own body was often combined with deep fear. These individuals, mostly, received their deepest trauma in their early years and had a great need to rebuild a positive primary contact with their body. Their chronically contracted, connective tissue was hiding deep stress that, with gentleness, skillful acceptance and containment, could be released; promoting a revival of energy and capacity to cope with life. This type of work, on deep trauma, has led me to consider a regressive dimension that has been relatively unexplored. Traditional psychotherapy is not able to regress to the pre-verbal level, and Reichian psychotherapy and bioenergetics contact this level, but in a way I find incomplete. I found a broad understanding of these experiences in the work of Stan Grof and his exploration of basic perinatal matrices. His assumptions were that in the period of gestation and physical birth enormous dynamic energies are unleashed. These intense experiences have a dramatic influence on early childhood and our subsequent development as adults. I found that PI was an excellent tool for working with these preverbal levels of development, much more than the Holotropic Breathwork techniques created by Grof.

Work on connective tissue allows us to dissolve many of the tensions accumulated in the perinatal period. During this period the lack of development of the muscular system makes for very basic defense reactions: a general contraction of the whole organism at a cellular level, in an 'all-or-nothing' response pattern. Reichian breathing and the Energetic Wave practiced in PI are much gentler and easier to modulate than techniques such as Holotropic Breathwork or Rebirthing; where the person enters into a very intense transformation mechanism that may itself be shocking without sufficient preparation. I developed a sensitive and gentle holding (contenitivo) approach in addition to the process of liberation of psychosomatic and emotional armor. These



Massimo Soldati

Psychologist and psychotherapist, author, Postural Integration trainer, Massimo Soldati lives in Milan where he has a private practice. He developed his own approach to transpersonal psychotherapy that he has exposed in several articles and the books "Body and Change" (Corpo e Cambiamento, Tecniche Nuove) and "Developing the Potential" (Sviluppare il Potenziale, Franco Angeli). He is a professor at the Psychotherapy High School of Cremona and president of the Association of Transpersonal Postural Integration, which diffuses PI and its methods through courses aimed at personal development.

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Body Psychotherapy at the crossroads of body, emotions and spirit

The place of Body Psychotherapy in the field of psychotherapy

Today four main movements prevail in the field of psychotherapy: cognitive behavioural therapy, family and systemic therapy, psychoanalysis and humanistic therapy. However, only the last two, psychoanalytical and humanistic therapy maintain a purely client centered approach to the psychotherapeutic process. Within this framework, body psychotherapy, Rogerian therapy, and similarly, Gestalt therapy and transactional analysis can be cited amongst other modalities. The family of Body Psychotherapies is composed of several different methods which are grouped within the structure of the European Association for Body Psychotherapy (EABP). The originality of the Body Psychotherapy approach is to give special place to the body in the therapeutic process. Although the common goal of Body Psychotherapy is to alleviate client suffering it can nevertheless be further broken down into two large families.

- Those that give a priority to control, the influence of the mind on the body.
- Those that emphasize receptivity, embracing emotions and being in contact with the sensations of the body; this makes room for the intelligence of the body in a Taoist sense.

The verticality of Body Psychotherapy

Michel Heller in his work, "Psychothérapies corporelles: fondements et méthodes " has done some important research and conceptualization regarding the Body Psychotherapy approach. He correctly underlines the dangers of an idealistic vision in which it is sufficient for the psychotherapist to feel something for it to be right; i.e. the illusion that what the therapist feels is necessarily right.

Of course, it is important to feel – but to feel what? What are the feelings and what are the sensations?

From my vantage point it is first necessary to have a methodology with a vertical axis that is sufficiently flexible but equally well structured. This is essential if the psychotherapeutic work is to fully use the support and resources that the body sensations offer. Furthermore, I consider that to be operational, this method should incorporate and



Claude Vaux

Certified psychopractitioner, holder of the ECP, Claude VAUX has created and manages with his wife, Eliane Fliegans, the Institute of Training in Psychocorporal Therapy (IFCC), accredited EAPTI by the EAP in 2007 to deliver the ECP to its students. Claude and Eliane, in association with Jack, made the Psychotherapeutic Postural Integration (P.P.I.), validated scientifically by the EABP. Claude is also assessor member of the Training Accredited Committee of the EAP.

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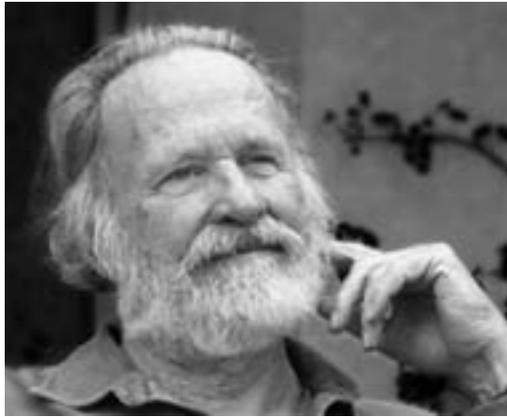
The healing process (1989)

The healing process is for me basically an act of communication and discovery. As the practitioner, I cannot presume to know what your need is and how you can best meet it. Your need as the client, as well as mine as the practitioner, becomes clearer as we interact, as we discover each other by touching, looking and speaking. I find working with clients a great adventure. I enter into this empty space, where I don't have the slightest idea what's going to happen. It's true that my experience gives me a lot to fall back on, but finally that's much less important than riding the waves of what's happening. And I don't have to rack my brains in trying to understand what's going on. I can ask you, the client, though you may not be so clear yourself. Sometimes, only in the last few moments of a session, do we both begin to realize just how much has unfolded.

Although in a session, I don't think about what part of the process I am following, I do, sitting back and looking at the process from the outside, find that there are some definite ingredients that go into making the dialogue – the adventure and discovery – satisfying or successful.

Honesty As practitioner, I have no 'objective' starting point. It is important for me to give my words, actions and feelings to you, my client, not only for your sake but also for my own self-clarification. The more I am honest – "I would like to see this from you; I like this in you; I dislike this" – the more you have the opportunity to be honest. You react and always give back to me some new information which I need. But I need to not impose myself on you. You need space to initiate and I to react. This clearly can happen without words. My hands and your body send messages which can be missed or received, and amplified. If there is no interaction, verbal or physical – if I insist, or, if you stubbornly refuse – there is no chance, no healing.

Confusion An essential part of interactive, healing communication is that there is necessarily some lack of clarity. I don't know what you, the client, needs exactly; I'm giving different feelings; I'm trying out different things. You're not sure what I'm offering will help or even if you know what I want. It's important for both of us to take risks and if something is not working to recognize and acknowledge that we are ready to start again. Without this groping there is no risk, no adventure, no movement through the unknown to a new cognitive and physical understanding.



Jack Painter

Jack Painter, born 1933 in Tennessee, USA. Studies of philosophy, psychology and literature (Ph. D.). Professor of philosophy at University of Miami, USA. Founder of Postural Integration© a method of personal growth, self-development and healing – and the International Center for Release and Integration in San Francisco, USA. Trainings in Postural and Energetic Integration all over the world. Author of several books about his methods translated into different languages. Father of three daughters.



Anton Adam Eckert

Being in the heart is the core of therapy. Whatever I do, I return to my heart affair/concern: body therapy – where the heart and soul speak directly. PI trainer since 1987; Body- and Gestalt therapist; wholesome Bioenergetic analyst GBA; Hypno- and Primary therapist; Biodynamic therapist; Psychotherapist etc.

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After the basic training, she did the Advanced training with Jack Painter in San Francisco/Mill Valley in the early 80s. Translation of the manual for P.I. practioners; participation in several workshops and in Energetic Integration with Jack. Turned out to be an enthusiastic bodyworker; lately translation for Anton Eckert.

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Self-regulation and affective cycle

In a healthy body, stress builds up through a mechanism for self-regulation and dissolves again automatically by the autonomic nervous system. If this process (controlled by the limbic system) is disturbed, it has serious effects; on the vegetative level, on muscles and connective tissue, on the cognitive level of mental convictions and attitudes, and on the stress level of the person.

A healthy body regulates itself: the therapist does not heal, but the client's inherent self-healing powers are activated. "Medicus curat, natura sanat" i.e. The doctor cures, nature heals. But how does this self-regulation work on a physical level and what happens if it gets disrupted? These underlying physiological processes have since Wilhelm Reich, been researched by many therapists, including pioneers of body work such as Alexander Lowen, David Boadella, Stanley Keleman, Gerda Boyesen and Jack Painter.

Neurosis and the body: The therapeutic beginnings

Already Sigmund Freud, and before him Georg Groddeck, believed in a biophysical force, which he suspected was behind the neurosis. He assumed this force is somewhere in the abdomen, but soon gave up investigations in that direction and devoted himself to the study of psychic functions – the Id, the Ego and the Superego – although the Ego for him always remained "first and foremost a body ego".

Wilhelm Reich observed that the psychological character corresponds to physical patterns of posture, in which resistance is ingrained in the form of muscular tension. He called this the "character armor". Wilhelm Reich's discovery, that resistance manifests itself in the muscular system as a posture, was the most important step to a new view of the body.

Gerda Boyesen observed in herself, as well as in her clients, that by special, physiotherapeutic massages autonomic discharges were triggered such as vomiting, diarrhea, or perspiration, which were accompanied by mental processes. For Gerda Boyesen the organ of self-regulation is the intestine, to which she attributed a double meaning – namely that of physical and mental digestion. Recent research confirms the results of these pioneers of the enteric nervous system (ENS), also called "gut brain".

Breath and aroma

Creating waves of emotions and consciousness

I was born in the South East of Mexico, in Paraiso, Tabasco, just about five kilometres from the Gulf of Mexico.

My childhood, there, was surrounded by tropical fauna and exuberant vegetation, big storms, hot weather and all the beauty and frightfulness of the tropics, soothingly tempered by unforgettable aromas emerging from all over. This is the origin of my passion and main virtue: my olfactory imagination.

Since 1979, when I started my Postural Integration training with Blanca Rosa Añorve, I became highly intrigued by the variety of odours emitting from the body tissues of those we were working on. After some time, I could relate particular odours with particular emotions and physical states, guided by my sense of smell. Along with this, I also became aware of my emotions and body reactions to that odour “signal” coming from my client’s bodymind.

It is known from psychology that the olfactory system is such an open gate to the unconscious, that the quality and nature of our smells reflect the diverse aspects of our personality. Sigmund Freud considered the repression of smell to be a major cause of mental illness and suspected that the nose was related to the sexual organs. This is because the olfactory nerves are directly connected to the limbic system, originally known as rhinencephalon (“smell brain”), which is the part of the brain that regulates the sensory-motor activity and deals with the primitive drives of sex, hunger, and thirst. Stimulation of the olfactory bulb sends electrical signals to the area of the limbic system concerned with visceral and behavioural mechanisms; they directly affect the digestive and sexual systems and emotional behaviour. In fact, the brain’s electrical response to odours is about the same as the one correlated with emotions. (In the French language the same verb, sentir, is used for “to smell” and “to feel”). The olfactory nerves terminate in a part of the brain that does not use the same kind of logic as our intellectual centres. Although odours form a kind of communication system, they cannot be developed as a language; they work through associations and images that are not analytical. This is without doubt one of the reasons why the world of odours arouses us, because we are rarely what we think we are, either in reality or imagination.



Rosa María Sevilla Padrón

Rosa María Sevilla Padrón is a Psychologist (ITESO), Jungian therapist, Sexual Grounding therapist (FSGT) and an accredited Energetic Integration and Postural Integration trainer (ACPI / ICRI). Rosa Maria has been practicing Psychoaroma therapy since 1990. She resides and has a private practice in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico where she regularly teaches ‘Characterology and Aroma’, Energetic Integration and Postural Integration.

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Touch is one of the most forgotten languages

“Massage is something that you can start learning, but you never finish. It goes on and on, and the experience becomes continuously deeper and deeper, and higher and higher. Massage is one of the most subtle arts. And it is not only a question of expertise; it is more a question of love.

First learn the technique, then forget it. Then just feel, and move by feeling. When you learn deeply, ninety percent of the work is done by love, ten percent by the technique. Just through the very touch, a loving touch, something relaxes in the body.

If you love and feel compassion for the other person and you feel the ultimate value of him, if you don't treat him as if he is a mechanism to be put right but an energy of tremendous value, if you are grateful that he trusts you and allows you to play with his energy, then by and by you will feel as if you are playing on an organ. The whole body becomes the key of the organ and you can feel that a harmony is created inside the body. Not only will the person be helped, but you also.

Massage is needed in the world because love has disappeared. Once, the very touch of lovers was enough. A mother touched the child, played with his body, and it was massage. The husband played with the body of his woman and it was massage; it was enough, more than enough. It was deep relaxation and part of love.

But that has disappeared from the world, by and by, we have forgotten where to touch, how to touch, how deep to touch. In fact, touch is one of most forgotten languages. We have become almost awkward in touching, because the very world has been corrupted by so-called religious people. They have given it a sexual colour. The world has become sexual and people have become afraid. Everybody is on guard not to be touched unless he allows it.

Now in the west, the other extreme has come. Touch and massage have become sexual. Now massage is just a cover, a blanket, for sexuality. In fact, neither touch nor massages are sexual; they are functions of love. When love falls from its height it becomes sex, and then it becomes ugly.



Bernhard Schlage

...grew up as fourth generation in a family with healer-tradition... private PI-practice since 1983...gave adult educational courses in most european countries...was once connected to the peace-movement, today linked to the human-potential-movement...after learning from indigenous shamans has integrated shamanic healing techniques into his work...focused now on training and qualifying younger colleagues to work professionally in the growing field of psychosomatics and body psychotherapy. PI trainer and editor of PI-newsletter.

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Postural Integration in schizoid processes

In the traditional approaches of psychotherapy, such as Psychoanalysis, Transactional Analysis, Individual Psychology, Logotherapy and others, bodywork is often viewed as dangerous and offensive. The fear is that loosening body armor might bring up feelings which would flood and overwhelm the unprepared client. In the worst scenario, these surfacing feelings may bring about a psychotic crisis. Bodywork, it is said, works too fast; clients cannot work through their feelings, emotions and thoughts to gain a deep understanding of their personal processes and behavioral patterns. But, especially with schizoid structures and other early childhood disorders, which originate in preverbal time, the approach of a body can reach where language cannot reach. Bodywork-techniques like P.I. and E.I., which combine physical, energetic, emotional and psychological aspects, are an effective way to reach those preverbal experiences and replace them with new ones.

There is also the fear that the close, intimate physical contact in bodywork might lead to such strong processes of transference and countertransference that both clients and therapists would be unable to handle them. I assume that this concern is only a projection of the personal fears and needs of anti-body-oriented psychotherapists. As bodyworkers who have experienced a lot of physical and emotional closeness, as clients, as students and as therapists, we have been trained to get both a natural and professional relationship to that closeness and to use it as an opportunity for new experiences for the client. Of course, it is essential that the practitioner builds up a good and solid relationship with the client, and takes enough time to build up trust and confidence, so that close physical contact, and trust and relaxation can come together. This is a profound, new experience for clients with schizoid structures, because, for them, closeness is mostly combined with fear and distrust. The meaning of physical closeness, touch and intimacy, which previously have very often been experienced as threatening, is slowly reframed.

The other objection – that bodywork may bring too much up in too short time, is more significant. It is pointed out that for clients with a schizoid structure and/or early disorders, it could be especially dangerous, since their character patterns have cut off awareness of very intense feelings such as anger, fear, sadness and rage. And, so the argument goes, if these emotions surface suddenly, schizoid individuals might be driven right into full-blown schizophrenia.



Günter Khadira Schwiefert

Psychotherapist, bodypsychotherapist, life coach, supervisor, trainer in Postural Integration. Lives in Salzburg, Austria. After his studies of architecture he followed his interest in bodywork, counselling and therapeutic methods, namely Postural Integration, Hakomi, Systemic Supervision, Traumatherapie.

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Treating trauma

A body-work approach to therapy

Bev Wilkinson, trained in Belgium, is South Africa's first "Postural Integration Practitioner"; here she argues for an integrated, "body-mind" approach to trauma treatment.

The natural defense mechanism of the body to any form of violence is the "flight or fight" syndrome. This pumps adrenalin into the system, resulting in increased circulation, access to protein and glucose, blood-clotting enhancement, pupil dilation, etc.

The secondary line of defense includes: the use of the mouth to cry, scream, shout, or just say "NO!"; body reactions, such as perspiration, trembling, or goose pimples; and the relaxation or contraction of muscles. I say "relaxation or contraction" because, contrary to popular belief, as many people relax their muscles in face of danger as tighten them.

A healthy response to fear is action through movement, thus using the extra energy produced by the adrenalin. This can take the form of running, hitting out, stamping, crying, laughing, pulling away, etc.

The lack of such action leads, in the long term, to physical problems. Becoming paralysed, or "freezing up", and thus not using the available surplus energy, leads to flabby and flaccid muscles; while internal contractive resistance, with no outward expression or movement, results in a rigid and inflexible core structure.

Whatever form violence takes – battering, rape, a household accident, or the emotional trauma of moving house – the body's response is the same. This is because the body is irrational and is not aware of what is causing the "flight or fight" syndrome. Our minds can interpret the source of a sensation: our bodies can only feel the sensation itself.

Never neutral

This is an important factor in body therapy, particularly in the case of young children. Once the body has experienced a "bad" sensation, every time, the physical area involved feels the same sensation, it re-experiences the original event, entrenching the same physical and emotional response of, for example, contraction or paralysis.



Beverly Wilkinson

Born South Africa in 1950, she lived in Belgium for 13 years. While in Europe she qualified as a Postural Integration practitioner in 1991. Later she qualified as a PI Psychotherapist trainer. For the past seventeen years she has run a successful body-mind practice in Johannesburg and has been training students in Postural Integration since 1999.

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BodyReading – listening deeply

I cannot be sure – memory is such a fickle process – but it seems that when I first learned Postural Integration from Jack Painter, in 1978, bodyreading was an exciting and very active, noisy, dramatic kind of event. We started each session with a bodyreading of the usually naked body of the person, looking intently for patterns of holding, of stress, of muscular tightness, of armouring. I remember a very active looking for and engaging with the physical patterns we could observe, as well as with the mental and emotional meaning that these physical patterns were expressing.

Over the many years that I had the good fortune to see Jack working, his style of working changed significantly. Both in the bodyreading, and in the sessions, he asked more, and gave more room to the client to find the internal perspectives, and internal realities, before suggesting possibilities. He became softer. Maybe my looking changed too, over the years – maybe I noticed more of that which I related to more easily, so that I felt supported in my style of working. But I treasure both, that which I learned and saw early on from Jack, and the softening which I saw in the later work. And I suspect that both are influenced too, not only by personal development and change, but also by the cultural climate in which all our therapeutic work performs finds its place. From the revolutionary 60's to the current depressed 2010s, the style of work has changed all around us. Caution rules the day at the moment, and our working climate reflects this. But within that caution also lies a quiet growth, a gentle, hopeful new-beginning.

So I would like to outline the way I work with and teach Postural Integration and Energetic Integration these days, which I believe carries a bit further the character of Jack Painter's later period of working. I may start bodyreading this way:

“Is it OK now to do a bodyreading, standing up? Where would you like me to stand in relation to you – where does it feel right to you?”
 ‘Beside you? Check it out. Closer or further away? Let me know. Ah, you would like me to move a bit further forward. Is this the right place? Check it out. No, a bit further away – OK. Is this the right distance for you? The place where you can breathe easily?’

OK. If you go inside now, what do you notice, what catches your awareness in your body first. Aha. You notice a tightness in your chest. Where exactly do you notice it? Aha. How is that for you just now?



Silke Ziehl

Silke Ziehl M. Sc. is the founder and director of the Entelia Institute for Creative Bodywork in London and Munich. She is an experienced bodyworker and bodypsychotherapist, an acupuncturist, Hawaiian Huna bodyworker and a trainer and supervisor in Postural Integration, Energetic Integration and Pulsing. She has been running bodywork groups and professional trainings in England, Germany and Greece since 1982. She brings a light touch to deep work, assisting primary processes through attention and non-interference. She has been a member of the Open Centre in London since 1982, is a member of EABP (European Association of Body Psychotherapy) and is current Vice President of the International Council of Psycho-Corporal Integration Trainers (ICPIT).

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