

# **BODYMIND INTEGRATION\* UNDERSTOOD AND UNDERPINNED FROM AND BY SEVERAL PHILOSOPHICAL ANGLES**

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## **THE PREMISSES OF PSYCHOCORPORAL (BODYMIND) INTEGRATION \***

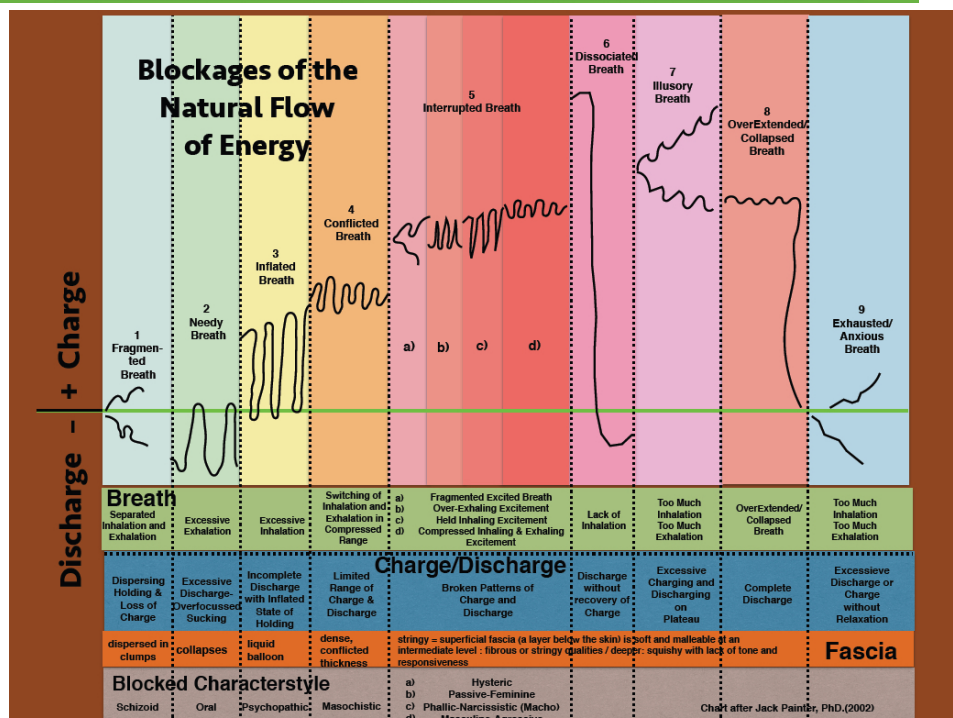
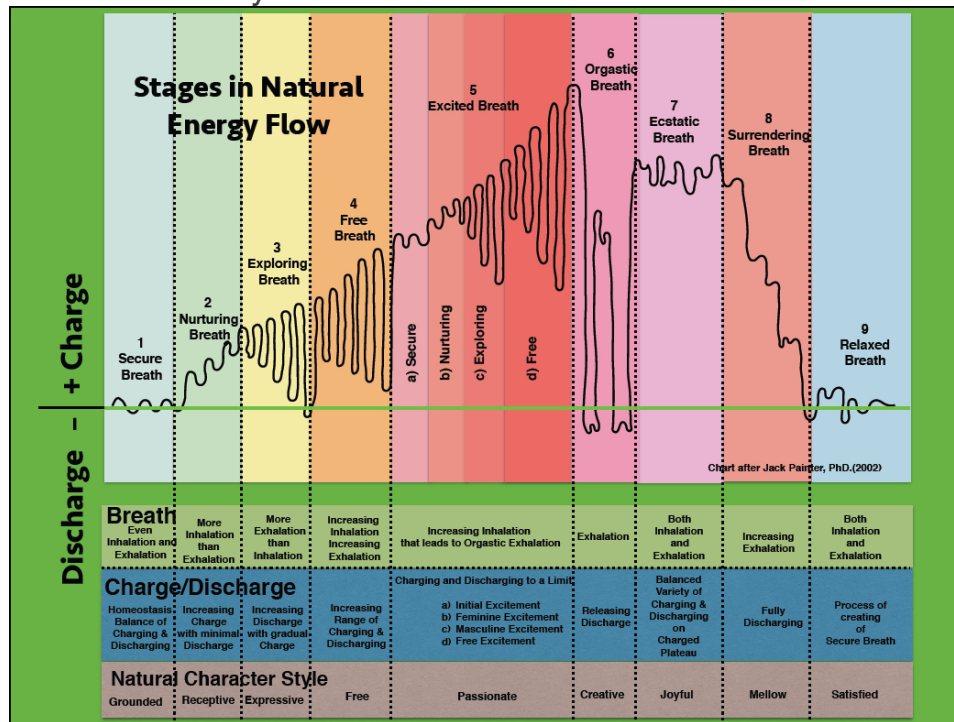
- 1 Central to “Bodymind Integration” as taught by ICPIT (also known as “PsychoCorporal Integration”) is the view that body and mind are inseparable and do not stand in a causal relationship with “each other” since they are dimensions of the same phenomena. Thus holistic psychocorporal work with awareness and consciousness is always simultaneous work with body expression, movement and energy. And conversely work with the body, including deep work with breathing and myofascia, is also simultaneous work with awareness and consciousness.
- 2 Bodymind Integration is furthermore based on the notion of an „energetic flow” which is taken as the core of human experience. The promotion of this flow is considered as health, its persistent blockage is considered as illness. “PsychoCorporal Integration” (or “Bodymind Integration”) presents a clear theory originated by Jack W. Painter, PhD, which uses but goes beyond the theories of F. Perls, MD and W. Reich, MD. It uses Gestalt claiming and experiencing as part of the process of transforming body armor.
- 3 Other presuppositions of PsychoCorporal (Bodymind) Integration are that
  - there exists a fundamental connection in the world, driven by energy and consciousness;
  - the focus of attention is on intrinsic health or the „essential self”;
  - pathology occurs as a consequence of the loss of connection with the essential self.
  - the focus is on embodied, current experience;
  - this experience can be verbalized in a descriptive manner;
  - it is practiced in relationship with the therapist; the work is both interpersonal and intrapersonal;
  - it is a mutual enterprise of therapist and client that is done with curiosity;
  - both therapist and client change through the experience; there is no set end goal;
  - given an appropriate climate, individuals discover their own process of healing and self-regulation;
  - from the concepts developed by C.G. Jung, we integrate in the work:
    - the collective unconscious and the archetypes (animus; anima; persona(e), shadow, the self....)
    - the postulate of the reality of the soul
    - the process of individuation as a lifelong process of psychic growth, becoming and realization of the self.

- the vision in which psychic suffering is not reduced to a pathology, but is seen as a passage in the process of individuation of the individual
- from other angles (see below) we integrate other fundamental insights around consciousness and what it means to be human

## **BODYMIND INTEGRATION UNDERPINNED AND UNDERSTOOD BY AND FROM SEVERAL ANGLES**

- As an **existential approach**, “Bodymind Integration” deals with whatever aspect of a given individual — body symptoms, sensations, feelings, images, thoughts, subtle energy, spirituality — is most accessible in this moment as a way of making contact
- “Bodymind Integration” treats *embodiment* as an intrinsic and important feature of human existence. It re-associates the spirit with the body in order to more deeply appreciate life; It helps dissociated parts of our spirit that have been fragmented from our body back into our body, re-united, re-associated.
- In “Bodymind Integration”, a „*somatic mindfulness*” is encouraged which includes the detailed moment-by-moment tracking of sensations, feelings, emotions and impulses to movement, as well as the use of charging and discharging of energy through the working through and completion of a „natural energetic cycle” (see below).
- As a **coaching, counseling, self development and body psychotherapeutic approach** it is a powerful way of making a profound and authentic contact with the Self in order to restore and promote energy balance, cognitive understanding, insight and equilibrium. The therapeutic alliance in “Bodymind Integration” is the powerful joining of forces which energizes and supports the long, difficult, and frequently painful work of life changing healing & transformation. The conception of the practitioner here is not of a disinterested observer-technician but of a fully alive human companion for the client.
- “Bodymind Integration” is a **resource-oriented approach**. It emphasizes helping clients establish connection to the parts of self that are already organized, coherent and functional with interest, curiosity and exploration. It tries to work inwards from that point to the more defended, disorganized, ignored, dysfunctional or excluded aspects of a person’s being, without however making these elements the primary focus of therapy or becoming a regressive model.
- Blockages in the natural flow of energy (see chart below) are dissolved in unique tailored sessions (different for each client) through the use of both : hands-on-bodywork and non-touch guidance depending on the client’s needs, encompassing a process of titration (the bit by bit discharge and minimization of dysregulation or excess load as a result

of traumatic suffering) and pendulation of internal experience (the gently back and forth rocking between contraction and expansion, between fear and safety, between anger and calm, between grief and acceptance, between inaction and action,...) in order to mitigate overwhelming, or not yet integrated emotional states, all while keeping the nervous system activation within a “window of tolerance.”



- “Bodymind Integration” as a **holistic bodywork approach**: A focus on the body (guided by 12 steps ( or paradigm sessions) in Postural Integration® and 12 steps (a paradigm energetic cycle) in Energetic Integration® (also included in Postural Integration® and Pelvic-Heart Integration®)), brings

dissociated parts of our spirit that have been fragmented from our body back into our body, re-united, re-associated. Specialized holistic sexological work, called Pelvic-Heart Integration focusses on and supports the integration of the split between love and sexuality (heart and pelvis), sexual ability, satisfaction and a fulfilling quality of life.

- All this “Bodymind Integration work” is the result of a **rich synthesis of many influences**, (not an eclectic usage) clinical and theoretical sources (see below): Reichian and Neo-Reichian work (e.g. with breath, muscular armoring and character defenses), Gestalt work, Peter Levine's Waking of the Tiger/Somatic Experiencing, Work with placeholders (Mother, Father, etc.), work with the theory of the 5-elements (connected with emotions, energy flow, etc.),... ”

## THEORETICAL CONCEPTS USED IN BODYMIND INTEGRATION ARE DERIVED FROM....

- **Integrative and Transcultural Medicine** - different pre-modern medical systems. We use a rotating “poly-ray cosmology” - e.g. 2 elements (Yin/ Yang); 3 doshas (Ayurveda - Kapha, Pitta, Vata); Hippocrates 4 elements water, air, fire and earth; Chinese Medicine and The Five Elements; etc. (Depending on the capacity for integration one can move up to a 10-ray system, like the Jewish Kabbalah, mapping the conditions of human consciousness and character.
- **Classical Hippocratic “Character medicine”** (Hippocrates (460-377 BCE) : “Know Thyself”; “balancing the elements of one’s character” - This notion of character is known to be closely related to the idea of “human resources”.
- **Existentialism**: The Humanistic thoughts of S. Kierkegaard (1813-1855) and F. Nietzsche (1844-1900)
  - focus on “hjælpekunst” (Danish: “the art of helping”)
  - the „awakening of the individual”
  - the confrontation with the myriad of „self-soothing defenses” by which individuals preserve their „sleepy complacency”
  - the transformation of all values into authentic values, the realisation of the human capacity to create the shape of one’s own life.
- **Phenomenology** (Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Binswanger, Boss, Laing,...), we integrate in the training that:
  - the human being is a “being-in-the-world”, that is, as an entity whose very fabric involves an immersion and openness to the surrounding world
  - the body is the primary site of knowing the world
  - the body and that which is perceived cannot be disentangled from each other
  - through intentionality human beings “co-create” phenomena, rather than just passively register what is there

- The **Thesis of Dialogical Existence**, developed by Martin Buber. We integrate in our work the idea that:
  - within the unfolding relationship of an 'I' to a 'Thou', the human person is born and unfolds to its full potential. When one human being addresses another human being as an "it," both the other and oneself are diminished
- The concepts developed by **C.G. Jung**. We integrate in the training:
  - the collective unconscious and the archetypes (animus; anima; persona(e), shadow, the self....)
  - the postulate of the reality of the soul
  - the process of individuation as a lifelong process of psychic growth, becoming and realization of the self.
  - the vision in which psychic suffering is not reduced to a pathology, but is seen as a passage in the process of individuation of the individual
- **Kurt Goldstein's Holistic Theory of Organism**. We apply:
  - the figure-ground principle from perception to the whole organism, presuming that the whole organism serves as the ground for the individual stimulus forming the figure.
- **Kurt Lewin's Field Theory**. In agreement with this theory, we suggest that neither nature (inborn tendencies) nor nurture (how experiences in life shape individuals) alone can account for individual's behavior and personalities, but rather that both nature and nurture interact to shape each person.
- The **Gestalt-psychology / therapy of Frederick Perls et al.**:
  - the existential dimension and the notion of the present „here-and-now”,
  - the existentialist responsibility for one's own choices as well as many creative means that are useful help in dealing with conflict situations, inner disunity and fragmentation.
- **Wilhelm Reich** (and diverse **post-reichian developments** (Alexander Lowen's Bio-Energetic Analysis, John Pierrakos' Core-Energetics, Stephen Johnsons additions on Character Analysis, Stanley Keleman's Formative Psychology, etc.):
  - the notion that the body is the living memory of the experience and family heredity, as well as keeper of withheld wounding and hereditary suffering. Specialized and original work is done with what in this tradition is called character armoring. A spiritual dimension is recognized herein.
- The **Concepts and Practices developed by Somatic Practitioners** like Elisabeth Dicke (Bindegewebsmassage), Ida Rolf (Structural Integration): a protocol for releasing chronic myofascial contractions, Tom Myers (Anatomy Trains: detailed anatomical insights of myofascial meridians), etc. the practical know-how and know-where of deep holistic bodywork, and from Somatic Disciplines like Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais' Functional Integration, Judith Aston Patterning, Bioenergetics, Yoga, Eastern traditions: 1) work with acupuncture points and Chinese 5-elements theory for

stimulating, sedating, self-regulating, etc. purposes 2) certain techniques to work with 'fine energy', based on polarity therapy., etc.)

- **J. Moreno (Psychodrama), Virginia Satir (Family Reconstruction and Sculpting), Albert Pesso (PBSP), Jack Painter (Bodymind Drama),** and others:
  - the use of dramatization, roleplaying and dramatic self-presentation to investigate and gain insight into one's life. A variety of action methods may lead to enactment, depicting, for example, memories of specific happenings in the client's past, unfinished situations, inner dramas, fantasies, dreams, preparations for future risk-taking situations, or unrehearsed expressions of mental state in the here and now. These scenes either approximate real-life situations or are externalizations of inner mental processes. Other members of the group may become auxiliaries, and support the protagonist by playing other significant roles in the scene in specified ways.
- The field of **Transpersonal Psychology**:
  - the notion of "development beyond conventional, personal or individual levels": the exploration of "experiences in which the sense of identity or self extends beyond (trans) the individual or personal to encompass wider aspects of humankind, life, psyche or cosmos".
- Other fields of influence are:
  - *Inter-subjectivity* (Relational Psychoanalysis (e.g. Daniel Stern), Applied to newborn infants (e.g. Colwyn Trevarthen), theory of embodied simulation (Vittorio Gallese – mirror neurons)
  - Modern *Somatic Psychotherapies* (e.g. Sensorimotor Psychotherapy (Pat Ogden), Somatic Experiencing (Peter Levine), NARM (Laurence Heller)
  - *Acceptance and Commitment therapy*
  - *Strengths based therapy* (e.g. emotionally focused therapy, play therapy, narrative therapy)
  - Elements of *CBT*
  - *Affective Neurosciences: Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory, Jaak Panksepp's work on Basic Emotional Systems, Core-Self, Dan Siegel's Mindsight, etc.*
  - *Trauma Theories stressing the importance of working with the body - derived from Bessel van der Kolk, Peter Levine, Pat Ogden, etc.*
  - 'Mindfulness'
  - *Contemporary relational themes in counseling and psychotherapy*
  - *Cranio-Sacral therapy*
- Raffaele Cascone, in the collective book "Transforming the Self with Bodymind Integration"\* suggests that P.I. may be further improved by taking in consideration and integrating :
  - *Chaos Theory* (Ilya Prigogine, Isabelle Stengers – Order out of chaos)
  - *Vinciane Despret's psychology and philosophy,*

- the current shift of focus in the scientific world from genetics to epigenetics and to epigenetic reprogramming;
- *the shift from Hans Selye's old stress concept to Henri Laborit's discovery of the inhibition of action syndrome (l'inhibition de l'action) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD7IMDXDvt8>) and to behavioral epigenetics,*
- *The discovery of the social engagement system.* (see e.g. The listening project) (S.W. Porges)
- *The anticholinergic anti-inflammatory reflex* (K.J. Tracey)
- Of influence is also **Aaron Antonovsky's** (1923-1994) concept of "**salutogenesis**" as formulated in his theory of "sense of coherence", which states that the healthy person has a sense of coherence – inwards towards life and inner self making him alive, and outwards towards the world, making him real. Being alive and real is what a sound person is, and loss of health is loss of the sense of coherence making the person emotionally dead, mentally delusional, and spiritually aloof.

Broader descriptive terms for this work are: humanistic, holistic, integrative, existential and trans-personal.

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\* Bodymind Integration is practiced by practitioners certified by **ICPIT** : *The international community of psychocorporal (bodymind) integration trainers and practitioners*  
 The International Community (&Council) of PsychoCorporal (Bodymind) Integration Trainings (&Trainers) (ICPIT) is the only official International organ worldwide regulating the practice of the different forms of "Bodymind Integration," developed by Jack W. Painter, PhD. and brings together accredited Trainers/Trainings in Postural Integration®, Energetic Integration® and Pelvic-Heart Integration® worldwide. See a list of current accredited members [here](#).

The International Council of PsychoCorporal (Bodymind) Integration Trainers (ICPIT) was founded in 1988 by Jack W. Painter, Ph.D. and gathers all active trainers in Postural Integration®, Energetic Integration® and Pelvic-Heart Integration®. Postural Integration® was invented in the 1960s and 1970s. Energetic Integration® and Pelvic-Heart Integration® were created in the 1980s and 1990s. All these methods are being refined on to this day. ICPIT is now a worldwide community of training programs, trainers, assistant-trainers, helper-trainers, master practitioners and practitioners in

these methods who support each other professionally and are motivated to make this work accessible and available to the general public.