

Biodynamic Embodied Compassion

Michael Shea, April, 2020

It is a different world out there right now. It will be a very different world when this Corona virus passes. We biodynamic practitioners and all healers have our work cut out for us. In reading the works of Andrew Taylor Still, the founder of Osteopathy, he recognized the spiritual component of manual therapy. He said: "I love my fellow man, because I see God in his face and in his form." Is this how we see our clients? Is this how we see the cashier in the grocery store while checking out? Is this the way we feel when reading about all the people dying alone and being buried without family members present? Every week we see pictures of body bags filled with patients who died of this virus. We are now meditating on the global charnel grounds of Covid from a distance in our own home. We are now practicing distance healing by default. We must therefore increase our spiritual healing capacities to meet the new demands of our clients when we return to work. We must realize that Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy is a compassion-based practice.

Compassion

I practice and teach a compassion meditation called Tonglen from Tibetan Buddhism:

- It starts with 20 minutes of calm abiding meditation.
- Then there is a moment of just letting thoughts go and seeing the clear light of the natural world.
- Then there is a phase of bringing to mind an event in my life that allows me to feel sad. I always think about going to the mortuary and seeing the body of my dead father and then some years later the body of my dead mother before they were cremated.
- I then work with a sense of breathing in a dark color and exhaling a light color.
- With a sad heart I can begin to contemplate my own fears and challenges and allow my heart to transform my dark fear into light courage. I simply create a space for my own hope and fear to coexist.
- I then extend this practice to family members, clients and loved ones. I bring in their challenges as a dark color when I inhale, and I exhale a sense of lightness and well-being to them. I simply create a space for their hope and fear to coexist.
- Finally, I take in the whole planet, everyone suffering especially emotionally and physically from Covid. I breathe that in and allow my heart to transform it into a sense of well-being to the entire planet. I simply imagine a space for planetary hope and fear to coexist and transform in the sense of "Thy will be done."

Tonglen is an ancient form of distance healing. I am always aware of this reality whenever I treat a client or walk through my daily life. Wholeness is the smallest subdivision of life. But compassion is also free from desire. It is based upon bearing witness, being totally present for someone yet completely non-attached to an outcome. It is humbling to feel helpless, the emotion of non-attachment during the contemporary situation. This is the birth of great compassion.

Intercessory Prayer

Distance healing is also called intercessory prayer. It is well researched and people with medical conditions who we don't even know, can get better when their names are given to prayer groups thousands of miles away. We can help people feel better and not even know them! Imagine such easy and effortless compassion. This is distance healing in the metaphor of intercessory prayer. Such prayer is based on devotion and humility, the hallmarks of compassion. It is also enough to pray for the highest or deepest good to emerge during a pandemic. Or perhaps the pandemic is the manifestation of a higher or deeper goodness? How do each of us pray for the planet and its well-being? In what form does that prayer take place such as with words or visualizations?

Biodynamic Shamanism

This notion of distance healing is also seen in shamanism which means outside normal sensory experience and perception. Shamanism is the original healing methodology on the planet developed in traditional cultures. Shamanic skills evolved from complete integration with the natural world. Isn't this component of integrating the natural world into biodynamic practice what Jim Jealous DO, the godfather of Biodynamic Osteopathy has insisted upon for a long time? Shamanism requires a phase of separation from the ordinary world. Isn't this social distancing? Everyone can feel the deeper energies stirring now that we are separated from each other and the world. The deeper energies are death and dying at many levels. This is the second step in biodynamic shamanism to acknowledge the depth of our current experience. The charnel grounds are multidimensional and ever present.

This is what Joan Halifax says about shamanism:

"Dissent to the realm of the dead, home of disease spirits, speaks to the fundamental helplessness of humanity. Encountered in the depths are ravenous spirits that instruct as they destroy. The shaman's receptivity to the world of creatures opens after he or she has surrendered to death... The shaman partakes of the raw nectar of the world of creatures. Raw death and a non-dualistic, amoral universe are revealed. There is no morality in the stare of the hawk; nor is there morality in death." Joan Halifax, Shaman - The Wounded Healer. 1982

Biodynamic shamanism means we are familiar with death by having had a near death experience and been initiated by it. We can also work with death through palliative care training as a spiritual aptitude. We relax around death. All clients are dying as we are too. Our contemporary situation demands we look at death in the eye without fear. We turn our face into the wind. In this way, ignition which is integral to biodynamic practice, becomes an initiation via the Breath of Life that emerges from the heart and the stillness that centers our heart. This is the final stage in our biodynamic shamanism.

The Gift

Each biodynamic practitioner has their own gift, their expression of the potency of the Breath of Life. We must integrate the skills that are given to us from outside via our teachers and those that emerge from inside from a devoted spiritual practice. Each of us is charged with forming our own method to heal ourselves and each other under the biodynamic guidance of

the Breath of Life and the stillness. Our unique individual therapeutic gifts are based on increasing our spiritual capacities as we are being asked to do and be right now. The clear intention of biodynamic practice, as I teach, it is to evolve the practice spiritually and not get stuck in one form. Primary Respiration is the Breath of Life. The Breath of Life means we are being spiritually guided by it while we work and live on this planet. We are always receiving a treatment from the Breath of Life and the stillness.

In the same way that Sutherland said in 1943, that you could consider the Cranial Concept to be “religious in nature”, by definition that would now include valid forms of distance healing, compassion meditation and intercessory prayer. These forms are not learned overnight but through long processes that ensure the ethics and morality of not harming others or causing fear. We must have a clear heart. The spiritual dimension of Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy is something that is rarely discussed and is now unavoidable. The portal to increase our spiritual capacities is now wide open. We must enter it, but in a way that does not scare people unnecessarily but rather increases our own gift of compassion and learning healing methodologies that others need. Can we make a **vow** to ourselves to increase our spiritual capacities in whatever way possible?

The real question is: *If Not Now, When?*